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The Political Status of Jordanian Women: Constants and Variables

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ABSTRACT

This study highlights the political status of Jordanian women in the past two decades through analyzing certain indicators that reflect women's presence and representation in political life in order to identify the level of the participation of Jordanian women in public life, reveal the most important obstacles facing this participation, and reach a number of recommendations that would improve the political status of Jordanian women.

The importance of the study stems from emphasizing the participation of women in political activity as a national necessity taking into consideration the fact that women comprise half of the society and support men in shouldering life's responsibilities. What makes the issue more urgent is the fact that the political status of Jordanian women is still weak and disproportionate to their abilities, potential and energies. It is also important to emphasize that the mobilization of women's forces and their active participation in various aspects of development will help boost the social and political progress in Jordan, which faces many challenges and problems. It would also enhance women's status in society and develop their capacity to educate future generations. The questions that this study purports to answer are the following: Are Jordanian women still suffering from the legacy of backward social and cultural heritage that prevents their active political participation? Has the constitutional, legal, administrative and political reform over the past two decades contributed to activating the role of Jordanian women in the political process?

Keywords: Political participation, Women's Empowerment, Institutions of civil society, Women's Quota.

Objective and Importance of the Study

The study aims at assessing the political status of the Jordanian women and monitoring it in the wake of the political reforms that Jordan witnessed during the last two decades, and this falls within the government directives to empower women politically.

The study also aims to document the presence of women in the leading positions in the country (different decision-making positions) to identify existing gender gaps, and propose some recommendations to decision makers and those interested in women's rights.

The importance of the study stems from the fact that it attempts to identify the points of strengths and weaknesses of women in the field of political participation in decision-making centers, in order to ensure the advancement and empowerment of women in this field, taking into consideration that the presence of women in this field is considered one of the most important indication of the advancement of any nation.

Methodology of the study:

The descriptive analytical method was used to identify the status of the political participation of Jordanian women, and to reach the desired results and recommendations of the study. This approach is based on a qualitative and quantitative description and analysis of the subject of the study, which will serve the objectives and monitor the lines of development of the subject matter in order to reach recommendations and scientific findings and interpret them objectively.

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Study Problem and Questions:

The problem of this study is to shed light on the reality of Jordanian women in Political life and how it fits with the weight as a proportion of the social population, and to identify the real obstacles to their political participation.

Therefore, the problem of the study attempts to answer a major question: What is the reality of Jordanian women in political life? This main question has the following sub-questions:

- What is the reality of Jordanian women in the leadership positions in the state (decision-making positions)?
- What are the government policies and trends to empower women in political life?
- What are the obstacles that limit participation of Jordanian women in the political life?

Terms of Study:

- **Political participation:**

It refers to the voluntary activities carried out by citizens, whether male or female, in the political process, either directly or indirectly, such as elections, participation in political decision-making and influencing it, affiliation with political parties, peaceful demonstrations or creating public views about details of the political process (Al-Kharouf and Al-Hussein, 2010). There is the so-called negative political participation, which is an expression of protest and dissatisfaction, such as boycotting election. Political participation in any society is the final result of a number of social, economic, cognitive, cultural, political and moral factors that combine to determine the structure of the society concerned, its political system, its characteristics and mechanisms of action, and define the pattern of social relations and their compatibility with the principle of participation (Al Azzam and Al Shara'a, 2006).

- **Women's Empowerment** (Habib, 2011):

It can be defined as the process that helps women increase their awareness of their social existence and change their immediate and future needs, which are reflected in the development strategies. Empowerment is not given, but rather acquired. This happens when the individual or group recognizes the importance of working for progress and of developing their skills and abilities to control the course of life or exercise this control without violating the rights of others, but rather, empowering them (Al-Kharouf and Al-Hussein, 2010). The concept of empowerment is surrounded with controversy regarding its ability to achieve the desired change because it focuses on empowering individuals and neglects the collective empowerment that aims to change the social, economic and political structures that generate persecution and discrimination not only against women but also against the majority of poor and neglected people (Arab Human Development Report, 2005).

- **Institutions of civil society**

These are socially organized volunteers who reflect social structures and public or limited activities in order to achieve general political objectives (political parties) or interests (trade unions). Political action is not required to be the main focus of the political activity of these entities, but at least it seeks to influence it.

- **Women's Quota**

A quota system is used to allocate a percentage or number of seats in an institution or board to a particular social group to ensure that they are represented fairly. Therefore, the women's quota is intended to determine the number of seats in the parliament or to appoint a number of women to municipal councils, i.e. there is a specific female quota that must be filled by women. The importance of applying the quota system lies in reducing the obstacles to women's participation in political life and ensuring women's access to decision-making positions. Women's quota does not mean that they are not allowed to compete for the rest of the seats in the parliaments or the municipality (<http://www.nazra.org/node/218>. 28/4/2013).

Previous studies:

Following are some of the significant studies that dealt with the subject of the Jordanian women participation in political life:

1. Amal Al-Kharouf and Iman Al-Hussein study, entitled "Experience of Jordanian Women Candidates for the 2007 Parliamentary Elections," which showed the need to change the stereotypical image of women by raising awareness among society members about the importance of women's participation in public life and in Parliament, and encourage media to focus on this issue (Al-Kharouf and Al-Hussein, 2010).
2. Abdel Majid Al Azzam and Mohammad Kannoush Al Shara'a study, entitled "The Attitudes of a Sample of Civil Societies Members Towards Political Participation in Jordan": This study found that Jordanian society is generally characterized by the phenomenon of abstention from political participation, especially partisan activities, concentration of political activities only in the capital, and unconcernedness (Al Azzam and Al Shara'a, 2006).
3. Hussain Mohammed Al-Othman study entitled: "Obstacles of the Political Participation of Jordanian Women - A Sociological Perspective". This study emphasizes that the relative absence of political participation of Jordanian women is not due to legal obstacles, but rather to cultural obstacles that prevent equality between men and women (Al-Othman, www.women.jo/documents).
4. Study of Al Quds Center for Political Studies, entitled: "The Status of Women in Jordanian Political Parties". It reveals that women in the Jordanian parties suffer from a lack of skills in political work, and from neglecting their role within the party and lack of confidence in their capabilities (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007).
5. Jamal Al-Khatib's study entitled "The Current Situation of Jordanian Women: Obstacles and Opportunities". It concludes that the women's movement is characterized by a lack of clear strategies and mechanisms of action and prioritization in light of the actual women needs at all levels (Al-Khatib, 2002).
6. Mohammad Ahmad al-Miqdad study, entitled "Women and Political Participation in Jordan - An Analytical and Statistical Study" it recommends, in the light of the 2003 parliamentary election results, that the responsibility lies on the woman herself. She is still not electing her gender, so she should benefit from the positions given by the government through the Quota System and from positions reached through appointment (al-Miqdad, 2006).
7. Saleh Abdel Razzaq Al Khawaldeh, entitled " Jordanian Women's Political Participation in the Arab Spring: an analytical study of Jordanian Women's Participation in the 2013 Parliamentary Election", it concludes that the Jordanian women actively participated in the 2013 parliamentary elections (Al Khawaldeh, 2016).
8. Al Quds Center for Political Studies entitled "The Evolution of Party Life in Jordan: A Historical and Analytical Study 1921-2016" The study confirms that 21 parties in Jordan, out of 43 parties included in the study, do not adopt the Quota System to enable women to reach the decision maker centers, and the proportion of women in 15 parties is less than 10% and more than 25% in 17 parties (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2017).

The present study is similar to those previous studies in the fact that it comes after the parliamentary and municipal elections witnessed by Jordan in 2016 and 2017 to confirm the political status of Jordanian women in the decision-making centers and to provide qualitative addition to previous studies by revealing the status of Jordanian political women in government decision (Government, Parliament, and judiciary) as well as in political parties and municipal councils.

1. Introduction:

Women have a primary role in building and developing the society, especially when they acquire sufficient education, qualification, and knowledge to develop their personality and this helps them enter the field of work and participate in public life. There is no doubt that Jordanian women have made progress over the past two decades in removing legal obstacles to their political rights and increasing their presence in the three executive, legislative and judicial authorities.

The issue of women's access to decision-making positions is one of the most important challenges facing them; however, their progress in this field is slow and insufficient. The importance of this issue is an indicator of the equality degree and equal opportunities between the two genders in the Jordanian society. Moreover, giving women more access to decision-making would change the traditional stereotype of women and increase their representation in

decision-making positions in a fair manner commensurate with women's practical progress and scientific qualification and effective presence in the political mobility. The role of women in society is not complete except by their active participation in public life, and by abandoning that view which sees the woman as a weak person not able to enter the swamp of politics and public affairs. Women must be decision makers and policy implementers in service of their nation. If women don't have a role in political life, there will be no comprehensive development.

2. Government Policies towards Women's Political Empowerment:

The political status of Jordanian women is still limited compared to their educational, health, cultural and social presence. Women have not been equitably represented in Government, Parliament, trade unions, political parties, media and other organizations to reflect the status of women in Jordanian society, a fact that is inconsistent with the principles of the Jordanian Constitution, which calls for equality and equal opportunities for all Citizens, men and women without discrimination.

Jordanian women remained outside the circle of political participation during the reign of the emirate of East Jordan; 1921 – 1945 when political participation was limited to men (Levant Institute for studies, www.levantri.com, 25/9/2016).

Women's participation in public work dates back to the aftermath of the Second World War, with feminist organizations raising their demands for participation, equality and equal opportunities (Al Khatib, 2002). When the constitution was founded in 1952, a Jordanian feminist union was established under the leadership of Ms. Emily Bisharat named the Arab Women's Union in 1954, which raised the slogan of "equal rights and duties, one Arab nation" its role was in empowering women politically and giving them their full right to political participation (Al Khatib 2002). However, the Union stopped operating after the imposition of martial law in April 1957 and the dissolution of political parties (Al Khatib, 2002).

In 1974, the Jordanian legislator approved women right to vote and to run for the parliamentary councils under an amending of the Jordanian election Law (8) of 1974 (Before that, the vote and nomination right was just for men), in the same year the Jordanian government allowed the establishment of the Women's Union, which was initiated by a group of leading women who had experience in the women work, most of them belong to leftist political parties, but in 1981 this union was dissolved due to the tension and clash with the government as a result of the activity of the political union, then returned in 1989 and changed its name to the Jordanian women's Union (Al Miqdad, 2006 and Bakeer, 2004).

The policy of integration of Jordanian women into the development process was also reflected in the National Plan of (1975, 1980) (Bakeer, 2004). The political situation and developments that Jordan has historically undergone have had a significant impact on the status of Women, as is the case for men, mainly the absence of parliamentary life as a result of the occupation of The West Bank after the war of June 1967. Jordanian women had remained deprived of the exercise of their rights to vote and to run for election until the return of parliamentary life in 1989, when the first parliamentary elections was held which marked by the first participation of women as voters and candidates (Al Quds for Political Studies, 2007), and the dissolution of political parties and the imposition of martial law from 1957 to 1989 (Saad Eddin, 2006).

Women's movements in Jordan were active in the 1980s, as a result of increasing international interest in the issue of women. The World Women's Conference was held in Nairobi in 1985 and had a positive impact on the issue of women in Jordanian society. Article III of the strategy of Governments and political parties states that it is the duty of countries to intensify their efforts to promote and ensure equal participation of women in higher organizations and positions (Salim 1991).

This was followed by Jordan's participation in several international conferences concerned with in women issue including: the Conference on Population and International development, held in Cairo in 1994, and the World Conference on women, held in Beijing in 1995.

In 1981, the General Jordanian Women's Union was established, which is still active. This union consists of 72 Women's charitable associations. The charity associations and voluntary organizations Act of 1966 prohibits such an association from engaging in explicit political activity (Al Khatib, 2002). In 1982, the municipal law was amended to give the right to women to participate in municipal elections in 1989, but there were no candidates. In the 1995 municipal elections, twenty women were nominated, one of them was elected by a municipality, and nine others have won the membership of the municipal councils.

In order to raise the level of Jordanian women and effectively integrate them in development affairs and raise public awareness of the importance and role of women, the National Committee for Women's Affairs was established in 1992 as a platform for these policies. In 1995, The National Committee of Jordanian Women was established under the chairmanship of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal, which is officially under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior and in accordance with the recommendations of the Fourth World Women's Conference held in Beijing in 1995 (Al Horani, 1996 and Al Miqdad, 2006).

In 1989, Jordan signed the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, https://www.unicef.org/arabic/crc/files/cedaw_arabic.pdf) and ratified it in July 1992, with some reservations confirming the advancement of the status of women. In 2009, the Royal Court approved the decision of the Council of Ministers to lift the reservation on article 15, paragraph 4, of the Convention concerning freedom of movement and housing for women, as men (Al Tal, 2014).

One of the strategic plans that have focused on the need to reduce the qualitative gaps between males and females is the 2002 National Population Strategy, whose objectives were that the human being enjoys all rights and freedoms without discrimination according to race, color, sex, language, religion or political opinion. Men and women have equal rights and full participation in policy and decision-making at all levels, promoting gender equality and empowering Women (Al Tal, 2014).

In 2002, King Abdullah Ibn Al-Hussein approved the "Jordan First" document, which included several items relating to Women. The Convention stipulated that the Government shall review the legislation on human rights and the status of women, children and family in accordance with the international conventions ratified by the kingdom (Al Tal, 2014). It also stipulates that the electoral law should take into consideration the objective of political and party development. It also takes into account the empowerment of women to participate in elections and to ensure women's access to Parliament. (Female Quota) (Al Tal, 2014).

Among the political pillars announced by the Jordanian government is "The National Agenda (2006-2015)", which addressed the issue of women in many areas in the context of enabling them to exercise their full citizenship and activate their role in the development process. The National Agenda (2006-2015) The need to achieve equality for women and the elimination of forms of discrimination in our society in all Jordanian legislation, and to ensure the increased participation of women at acceptable rates in the elected councils (The National Agenda 2006-2015, <http://menacircle.com/jPolitics/uploads/635256453313517977.pdf>). In January 2013, the Cabinet approved the National Strategy for Jordanian Women (2013-2017) with a view of empowering women socially, legally, politically and economically, and building their capacities, skills and knowledge. The Strategy also aims at enhancing the role of women in policy and decision-making in various sectors to achieve sustainable development.

The progress made in empowering Jordanian women was not the result of the activism of women movements, but was primarily an initiative of the political leadership and a reflection of external pressure. Some Western countries and foreign institutions linked their financial aid to improving the situation of women in the country. We also conclude that progress in the participation of women in decision-making positions is weak and is not based on broad community support or genuine conviction on the part of large sectors of the population, and there is a division among the political electors.

In the 2014 Global Gap Report, Jordan's status dropped from 119th among 134 countries to 134 out of 142

countries. Jordan is close to closing the gap in the areas of health and life chances (0.9655) and educational attainment (0.9906), but it is still behind in the field of political empowerment, where it came in 119 out of 142 in the field of opportunities and economic participation in the center 140 of 142 ahead of Pakistan and Syria (Ammon News Agency, published article in 28/10/2014 on <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/210096>). The country ranked 140th among 145 countries in the 2015 Gender Gap Report, placing the country among the lowest countries in terms of bridging the gap between women and men and achieving gender justice. In the 2016 report, Jordan ranked 134 out of 144 countries on the ladder Gender gap (Haddadin, 2016, <http://alrai.com/article/1021964/>).

The true political empowerment of women can only take place in the context of community empowerment, which aims to change the social, economic, political and cultural structures and this would ensure the restoration of confidence for women. This is because political empowerment will develop women's participation and develop their capacity, awareness and knowledge, then allow women to self-actualize themselves at the various political, social and economic levels, and enable them to participate in the building of society. In addition, the concept of political empowerment serves the idea of equality not only between genders but among all citizens.

We can analyze the Status of Jordanian women in political life through the following themes:

1. Public Positions In The Three Authorities

1. 1. The Executive Authority

Percentage of female representation at the ministerial level¹

Government Name	Date of Formation	Portfolios		
		Males	Females	Total
Mudra Badran	1979	----	1	
Ahmad Obaidat	1980	----	1	
Prince Zaid Bin Shaker	1993	----	2	
Abdel Raouf Al Rawabdeh	1999	22	1	23
Ali Abu Al Ragheb/1	2000	28	1	29
Ali Abu Al Ragheb/2	2002	26	1	27
Faisal Akef Alfayez	2003	18	3	21
Adnan Badran	2005	22	4	26
Ma'rouf Al Bakhit/1	2005	23	1	24
Nader Al Dahabi	2007	25	3	28
Sameer Al Refa'e/1	2009	27	2	29
Sameer Al Refa'e/2	2010	28	3	31
Ma'rouf Al Bakhit/2	2011	25	2	27
Oun Khasawneh	2011	28	2	30
Fayez Al Tarawneh	2012	29	1	30
Abdullah Al Nsour/1	2012	21	0	21
Abdullah Al Nsour/2	2013	16	3	19
Hani Al Mulqi/1	2016	24	4	28
Hani Al Mulqi/2 After the last amendment on June 2017	2016	27	3	30
Omar Razzaz	2018	21	7	28
Omar Razzaz After the last amendment on 11/10/2018	2018	19	6	25

The table above shows the level of women's participation in the executive authority as ministers. According to the

¹ The table is prepared according to the information provided by the Jordanian Prime Minister, previous governments: www.pm.gov.jo.

table, the first participation of Jordanian women at the ministerial level dates back to 1979 when Mrs. Ena'am al-Mufti was appointed Minister of Social Development. In 1984 Mrs. Laila Sharaf was appointed Minister of Media. Government of Prince Zaid Bin Shaker In 1994, two women were appointed to ministerial portfolio: Mrs. Salwa Al Masri, Minister of Social Development, and Mrs. Rima Khalaf, Minister of Planning. It should also be noted that Mrs. Rima Khalaf maintained her ministerial portfolio as Minister of Planning in the period from 1996 to 2000. She was the first woman to receive the post of Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Planning in the government of Mr. Abdel Raouf Rawabdeh in 1999. In the government of Mr. Faisal Al Fayeze in 2003, Mrs. Asma Khadr was appointed as Minister of State and Government Spokesperson (Jordanian Prime Minister, previous governments: www.pm.gov.jo).

We can also note from the table above that the presence of women was not stable in the Jordanian governments over the past years, especially the last ten years. In the government of Mr. Adnan Badran in 2005 there were four women ministers, in the government of Mr. Samir Refa'e the first 2009 the number of women ministers decreased into two women, in the government of Fayeze Tarawneh 2012 there was one woman minister, and the first government of Mr. Abdullah Al-Nsour in 2012 has no ministerial portfolio for women, and in his second government 2013 there were three women ministers. In Hani al-Mulqi's first government in 2016, four women received ministerial portfolios, while the number of female ministers in the second government of Hani al-Mulqi was three. In the government of Razzaz in 2018 (7) women had portfolios and after the first reshuffle of his government on 11/10/2018 the number of female ministers became (6). Jordan has made impressive progress in the field of women's ministerial representation, ranking fourth in the Arab world and 95th in the world by the end of 2018. Thus, it has five centers in the Arab world and 54 centers worldwide (Jordan was ranked 9th in the Arab world and 149 in the world at the end 2016) (Tadamon, 20/3/2019. <http://www.almadenahnews.com/article/733572>).

On the other hand, the representation of women in administrative and leadership positions in the executive authority (Ambassador, Director General, Secretary-General, Governor ...) is still below the required level, but her presence in the middle management positions (department manager, head of department, Witnessed a great development (Naser, 2004, and Saad Eddin, 2006).

It is clear that the number of women in successive governments is rising and decreasing, and that the numerical increase cannot be seen as a reflection or an indicator of women's political empowerment. We also note that the women ministers are in the same portfolios that they are used to allocate, which are closest their traditional roles imposed by society and family, with the exception of the exclusion of women as Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, while men have historically monopolized sovereign ministerial positions in the country such as: Foreign Affairs, Interior and Finance. The results of the fifth Arab Index showed that 75% of Jordanian respondents agree that men are better in political leadership positions than women. (Arab Index 2017/2018, <https://www.dohainstitute.org/ar/ResearchAndStudies/Pages/Arab-Index2017-2018-FullReport.aspx>).

Increasing women's access to decision-making positions may contribute building a range of powerful role for women, which will provide the necessary support to raise the social and economic status of Jordanian women.

1. 2. At The Legislative Authority²:

As a result of the political situation witnessed by Jordan since 1957, the continuation of martial law (1957-1989) and the occupation of the West Bank after the 1967 war, Jordanian women remained deprived of their rights to vote and run for election despite being granted the right to run for election and be elected under the Law of Election of the parliament No. (8) Of 1974 (al-Miqdad, 2006). During the legislative vacuum in Jordan (1976-1989), three national consultative councils were formed, whose task was to provide opinion and advice to the executive authority and to discuss public policy. The first council (1978-1980) was composed of 60 members, including three women. The

² The legislative Authority in Jordan consists of two Councils, a council elected by people and called the "Parliament" and a council appointed by the King, called the "Senate"

second council (1980-1982) appointed four women out of 60 members. In the third and final council, which was formed in 1982-1984, four women out of 75 were appointed (Parliament site, <http://www.parliament.jo/node/143>).

At the Arab Summit held in Algiers in 1988, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) requested the disengagement between the East and West Banks, and the considering of the PLO as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in accordance with the resolution of the Arab Summit held in Rabat in 1974. At the end of July 1988, Jordan issued a decision to dissolve the legal and administrative association between the two banks, and the government began to return to parliamentary life without representation of the West Bank.

After the return of democratic life to Jordan in 1989 the first elections marked the first participation of women as candidates and voters at the same time, 12 women out of 647 candidates, (1.85%) of the total number of candidates, but none of them succeeded in those elections (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007), and throughout the parliamentary elections that took place between 1989 and 2001 did not enable Jordanian women to reach parliament through the ballot except for the 12th Parliament in 1993 Mrs. Toujan Faisal, who won for the legislative seat of Chechnya and Circassian (Al Thbaitat, www.uop.edu.jo/kasimpaper.htm), to be the first Jordanian woman enter the parliament.

The same electoral situation which was characterized by the low participation of women in the parliamentary elections, would have been repeated without the amendment of the Jordanian election law for 2001 and the allocation of quota for women in the parliament with six seats out of 110, and this contributed to a bigger presence of women in the fourteenth parliament (2003-2007) which was 54 women nominated but only 6 women won, formed (5.5%) of the total number of candidates out of 110, while the female nominated in that year were 5% for the first time of Jordanian parliamentary elections history (Al Salim, 2010).

In the 15th parliamentary elections in 2007, the female candidacy rate continued to rise to 22.4% after 199 female candidates were nominated out of (885), but just a woman was given a parliamentary seat outside quota, bringing the number of women in the parliament to 7 out of 110 members in the percentage of (6.36%) (Al Salim, 2010). In 2010, the number of members of the women's quota was increased from 6 to 12 seats out of 120 seats in the percentage of (10.8%). So total number of women in the 16th Jordanian Parliament was (13) in 2010, only a women won the free competition.

In the 2013 parliamentary elections, women's quota seats were raised to 15 out of 150. Now there are 18 female candidates in the 17th parliament, three of them won in free competition. The number of female candidates was 115 out of 698 in the percentage of (16.7%) for the local electoral district and quota (Tadamon, Gerasa News Agency 7/3/2014, www.gerasanews.com/print.php?id=139103), and the number of candidates for the national or the public district was 88 women out of 829. In the last parliamentary elections of 2016, women won 20 seats out of the total number of parliament members, which were 130 members with the percentage of 15.3%. Under the results of the 2016 parliamentary elections, Jordan is currently ranked 10th in the Arab world and 122nd in the world in the representation of women parliamentarians (Al Sabeel, <http://assabeel.net/news/2016/09/28>).

The participation of Jordanian women in the Jordanian Parliament is increasing, and this also confirms the desire of the supreme political Leadership to strengthen the role of women in political decision-making positions, to enable them to reach the parliament, and the victory of 3 women in the 2013 parliamentary elections and 5 women in the 2016 free-competition elections indicates the maturation of their experience, also it indicates a real review of the clan's rule that it does not vote for women, but that it is women's performance that creates the conviction of voting. It should be noted here that no woman took the position of President or Vice-President of the Parliament and even no women nominated for these positions. However, in the 16th Jordanian Parliament in 2010, one woman, MP Nariman Rousan, was the Assistant of the parliament president at the second regular session of 2011, and certainly the overwhelming majority of committee chairmen are men.

One observation of the women's quota system is that the quota system means that women are unable to reach parliament in their personal capacity, which is a formal and quantitative empowerment of women. Moreover, the

provision of one seat to one woman from each governorate and the desert is not consistent with the distribution of the population in Jordan, where 75% of the Jordanian population lives in Amman and Irbid and Zarqa governorates however, only three women are represented quota. (Department of Statistics, Jordan Statistical Yearbook, 2017).

Quotas should be treated as a means to achieve women's political, economic and social empowerment, to move them from representation to empowerment level through a list of priorities and issues for women who succeed in reaching Parliament. Among the criticisms of female deputies in the Jordanian parliament in the words of the Jordanian women's movements and committees deny women's issues and rights in their speeches presented in the discussion sessions of the ministerial statement which did not address the economic concerns, political and service issues of women (Tadamon, Gerasa News Agency, 7/3/2014, <http://www.gerasanews.com/article/139103>).

On the women's participation level in the Senate, one woman was hired in 1989 out of 40, two women in 1993 out of 40, three women out of 40 in 1997 and seven women out of 55 in 2003 and 2007 (Women Against Violence Association, <https://www.facebook.com/womenav/photos/654857254564257>). In 2010, the number of women was increased to 9 out of 60 members in percentage 15%. This increase is a clear indication of the political will to involve Jordanian women in formulating public policies and enhancing their role in decision-making positions. Jordanian women have proven their ability to demonstrate their presence in the political positions it occupies, their will and capacity to hold political positions. In 2013, nine women were hired out of 75 members. In 2016, ten women out of 65 were hired.

In keeping with the global proportions of female attendance in councils similar to the Senate, such as the US Senate and the House of Lords in Britain, we note that Jordan is closer to these countries in terms of attendance of women in these councils (Women Against Violence Association, <https://www.facebook.com/womenav/photos/654857254564257>

1.3. At the Judicial Authority:

Women entered the judicial domain in Jordan in 1995, when the first woman was appointed as a judge and another woman in 1996. In 1998, the total number of women judges was five out of 406. In 2001, the number of women judges increased to 23 (Naser, 2004). According to the statistics of the Jordanian Judicial Council, in 2006, the total number of women judges in 2006 was (29) in the percentage of (4.2%) of the total number of judges, and 37 female judges in 2007. The number of judges in 2009 was (754), including 48 women (Judicial Council, 2009). In 2012, the number has increased to 911 judges, 141 of them were women in the percentage of (15.5%) of all judges (Judicial Council, 2012). More recently, on 14/9/2017, one of the women in the Appeals Court of Amman, Judge Ihsan Barakat, was promoted to the highest rank to be the first Jordanian judge to receive the highest judicial degree in the Jordanian judiciary.

In addition, 50% of the participants in the future judges program and the Judicial Studies Diploma granted by the Jordanian Judicial Institute are women. This is confirmed by the female admission rate which reached 50% of the number of admissions during 2012(Judicial Council. 2012). There are women heads of courts and some of them are in the position of (prosecutor), but women are still absent in the religious courts (Sharia and Church) and there are no judges in these courts, although there is no legal impediment to this, because of the obstacles and psychological and social challenges found in these courts' environment, so women feel a sense of dread, especially in their narrative of sensitive and embarrassing details in front of male judges (Haddadin, 2014 <http://www.alrai.com/article/647959.html>).

2. Participation of Jordanian Women in Political Parties

The first appearance of Jordanian women in political parties was in 1951 after the unification of the East and West Banks. The first Jordanian party which attracted women was the Jordanian Communist (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007). In general, the participation of women in political parties was limited and weak, due to the following factors:

1. Government froze the Political Parties From 1957 – 1992.
2. Most of the political parties were licensed after passing the Political Parties Code of 1992 and they did not

deal with the women issue and their status in an effective and independent manner in their programs.

3. Women themselves and their voluntary or involuntary adherence to the dominant masculine values of society.

4. The deterioration of economic conditions and the resulting unemployment and high prices have led to preoccupation with private affairs, moving away from public activity and indifference to political life.

These factors have left a negative impact on women's activity and their role among the founding members of a number of parties, but it goes without saying that this presence does not constitute the real importance of women in society. Also women's participation in the leadership bodies of the parties is still humble.

According to the role of political parties in supporting the participation of women as candidates in the Jordanian parliament, some studies have shown that this role is limited; this is what the parliamentary elections have shown since the return of parliamentary life in 1989. Thus, the impact of the parties was not clearly positive both in terms of adopting the issue of women's participation and defense, or in support of women candidates to compete and win the elections (Al Salim, 2010).

Studies published by Al Quds Center for Political Studies in February 2017 on the development of party life in Jordan during the period of 1921-2016 indicate that there were 50 licensed parties in Jordan until 2016. Two women occupy the post of general secretary of the party, Abla Abu Elba (Democratic People's Party) and Mona Abu Bakr (Jordanian National Party). The percentage of women is less than 5% in four parties, 5-10% in 10 parties and 11-25% in ten other parties, while the percentage increased from 25% in seventeen parties (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2017).

Engaging in party life will make it easier for women to enter the parliament through parties if we have active political parties. The political parties in Jordan are not attractive to men to begin with. So, it is just natural that they will be less attractive to women. Therefore, the political parties in Jordan should develop clear programs and mechanisms that address the issues of women in particular, and citizens and society in general, and not just slogans that do not reflect the reality of women and their role in the service of society.

3. Participation of Women in Municipal Councils

As to the status of women in local or municipal councils, the first participation as an elector and candidate was in the 1989 municipal elections, but none of the candidates won in those elections. The absence of women in municipal councils continued until 1995 when twenty women were nominated for municipal elections that year one of them won in the position of the head of village municipalities, and nine women were members of municipal councils. In the municipal elections of 1999, 43 women were nominated with a percentage of (0.325), In the 1999 municipal elections, 43 women were nominated, 8 of them were success and 25 women were hired (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007).

In 2003, the Municipalities Code No. (29) in 1955 was amended, and according to the reformed law No. (21) Of 2003, the government allocated one seat for women to the municipal councils of that year which were (99) council in order to ensure at least one female presence in each municipality. The number of candidates for the municipal elections in 2003 was 46 women with 2.4% of the total of the 1650 candidates, and just 5 women won with 5.9% (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007).

In 2007, the Municipalities Code was amended and the reformed law No. 14 of 2007 was issued which its Article (9) of paragraph (B) provided to stipulate least 20% of the members of the Council to the female candidates who obtained the highest votes. If the required number of candidates is not submitted, or if the number of such members is not equal to the number of members of the Council, the appointment shall be made by a decision from the cabinet upon the recommendation of the Minister. This provision applies to the Greater Amman Municipality in related to elected members (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007). This amendment encouraged the Jordanian women to participate in the municipal council. The number of women candidates for the municipal council in 2007 reached 355 women, of whom 226, including 23 women won with competition, and (6) women nominated for Mayor.

At the end of August 2013, municipal elections were held. 473 women were elected to municipal councils, 8 were candidates for Mayor with 16% of candidate total number. The results of the elections revealed that 51 women won free competition, 282 women won the quota, and 12 candidates won the nomination. The number of women seats in the municipal councils reached 345 seats out of 961, representing 35% of the total number of seats. In the 99-seat municipal elections, none of the eight candidates won a presidential seat (Tadamon, 29/8/2017, <http://alrai.com/article/10403786>).

The results of the municipal elections and the last provincial councils held on 15/8/2017 showed that the number of women candidates for municipal leadership reached (6) women who did not win any of them, noting that the number of municipalities in the Kingdom is 99. While women managed to get 583 seats in the local councils, including 240 seats in the competition and 343 seats in women's quota of the total seats of local councils in 1818 with 32%. In addition, women won 121 seats in the municipal councils and 326 seats in the women's quota of 1189 in the municipal councils. The total number of women seats in the municipal councils was 447 seats with 37.6% by Mayors with 41% (Tadamon, 29/8/2017, <http://alrai.com/article/10403786>). For the provincial councils, they obtained 52 seats out of 376 seats, with 13.8%. The percentage of women who won the elections was 10.7% and the percentage of women among the concerned members was 37.7% (17 seats for women out of 45).

Women's reluctance to run for decentralized elections (Provincial Councils) is due to several reasons, including: the lack of early preparation for women leaders who are able to run in the decentralization elections; and the low number of seats allocated to women in the provincial councils (quota) which is only 10% in Jordan (Haddadin, 2017, <http://alrai.com/article/10396816>).

4. Obstacles to the Participation of Jordanian Women In The Political Field

In spite of the multiplicity of studies that dealt with the political participation of Jordanian women at different periods, they agree in their results on common denominators, especially with regard to the obstacles that women still suffer in connection to the decision-making centers in general and representation in legislative councils in particular. These obstacles stand in the face of the aspirations of women to rise from their status, although there has been a relative change gradually over the past three decades. In spite of the legal, political and administrative changes and reforms that have taken place in the country during the last two decades, the Jordanian women have not been able to compete freely in the parliamentary and municipal elections, and this is a clear indication of the Jordanian society's lack of confidence in the ability of women to work in politics. The view of Jordanian women is still a traditional view, that is women play supportive roles, not essential and important roles, for example, women can participate in the elections by voting, donating money or participating in the candidates' election campaigns, i.e., their participation is restricted to the purpose of gathering votes or as an electoral power, this applies to political parties also. In order to change this, the Jordanian government used some methods of discrimination to compensate for this weakness for Jordanian women in the field of political and leadership participation. It should be noted that these discriminatory measures do not necessarily mean that women have political power and authority because of their lack of grassroots, public opinion support and informal policy support affecting political participation (Al Othman, www.women.jo/documents).

To sum up, the impact of women's participation in political life can be seen in
Several variables that can be highlighted as follows:

4.1. Cultural and Social Obstacles:

Jordanian society is a masculine, tribal, familial and domestic society governed by values, principles, patterns, relationships, customs and traditions that define women's social position and determine what is appropriate and inappropriate for the roles of men and women, thus affect the status of women in the field of political participation. The prevailing belief among the majority of society members confirms that the political action does not suit women because

they do not have the qualities of political work and skills found in men, such as the ability to persuade, rhetoric, communication, negotiation and alliances (Al-Rawashdeh and Al-A'rab, 2016), also women are unable to make decisions, because they live in a state of non-independence and they are subordinate to men in making decisions according to social traditions (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007). The lack of awareness of women themselves affects their political status, and this is what we notice during the parliamentary and municipal elections, not to give women votes for female candidates.

4.2. Political Obstacles:

The status of Jordanian women has been influenced by the prevailing political situation in Jordan since the establishment of the Emirate of East Jordan in 1921. However, the political status of women has changed due to the removal of legal obstacles to their participation and their political rights. In order to enhance the role of women and their political empowerment within the society, the supreme political decided to allocate the quota of women in the 2003 parliament, to appoint them in municipal councils and in positions of leadership as minister or judge (Al-Rawashdeh and Al-A'rab, 2016).

In spite of this, women's participation in political and parliamentary elections remains weak, as is the case of women's membership in political parties. For the presence of women in the membership of trade unions, is better but this, as stated in this study, is limited to the number without actual and real participation (Al Miqdad, 2006, Bakeer, 2004). The reasons for the weakness of women's political representation may lie to their movements and to women's support organizations, in the weakness of political parties in adopting women's issues in their programs, in women's participation in political party work, and in women's lack of interest in their issues through their legislative positions (Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2007).

4.3. Economic Obstacles:

Economic transformations in society affect women's active participation in face of men. One of these transformations are: 1. Women do not enjoy financial autonomy in most cases; 2. The low wages of working women compared to men in the same profession; 3. The high cost of living, such as education, health and housing; 4. Low participation of women in the labor market, the participation of Jordanian women remains the lowest level in the world (Jaber, 2016, http://centers.ju.edu.jo/ar/wsc/Lists/MostReadArticles/Disp_Form.aspx?Id=57/3/2016), and unemployment in the women's community has contributed to the low participation of them in politics (Al Miqdad, 2006).

The Social Security Institute revealed the low participation rate of women in the labor market, especially in the private sector, where the proportion of participation in this sector does not exceed 15% while in the public sector to 37% despite the high level of education reached by women in Jordan this is reflected in the low percentage of women participating in social security, with only 25 percent of the total number of active participants, with a total of 272,000 subscribers out of a total of 53,000 active subscribers. In order for women to take their role in the society development, their contribution to economic life must be increased (Al Ghad Newspaper on 8/March/2014, <http://www.alghad.com/articles/508169>).

4.4. Media Obstacles

Media and mass communication play a main role in advancing women's status through the development of media discourse to the extent that women are aware of their real role in society and the importance of their actual participation in its development. Studies on the status of women in the Jordanian media in general, and the printed press in particular, indicated their limited focus on issues related to women's affairs. The Jordanian press allocates a relatively small space for women's issues compared to other topics (Al Damiri, 2002). Most women writers in the daily and weekly newspapers prefer to address the general issues that the region suffers from, more than focusing on women's

issues and concerns. There is a lack of media interest in the role of women in political life, which affects the changing stereotype of women, and show their strengths and influence, so the media must highlight the wonderful models embodied by influential women in Jordan, was able to challenge the circumstances and highlight success stories. The first evidence in Jordan is the arrival of the first Arab woman in the Middle East to the position of editor-in-chief of an Arabic-language daily newspaper, the editor-in-chief of Al-Ghad newspaper, "Jumana Ghneimat" (Jaber, 2016 http://centers.ju.edu.jo/ar/wsc/Lists/MostReadArticles/Disp_Form.aspx?Id=57/3/2016), but this is an individual indicator that does not reflect a positive public reflection on women's issues.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the Jordanian participation in political life is a cornerstone of democratic development. Therefore, women's political awareness should be intensified. This responsibility falls on parties, unions and the various media in particular. The process of political empowerment of Jordanians must take place within the framework of empowering women educational, cultural, economic, political and social groups and this have to create a community-based cultural environment supportive of women's participation in all fields. This topic needs to be studied constantly moving on the issue of women's political empowerment in order to achieve quality political participation, not merely formal empowerment.

The study also found that Jordanian women continue to face difficulties in reaching the parliament through free competition, despite their high levels of education. The percentage of women in decision-making positions or positions of leadership is still below the required level despite the progress made in this area. The small number of women in decision-making centers is often ineffective in cases involving them. Women leaders need courage to be able to incorporate their views on women's issues, rather than practice and address issues that conflict with their vision and conviction.

Recommendations:

As before, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Enhancing the role of civil society organizations in Jordan (especially those which are concerned with the issues of women) in activating the political participation of women and bringing them to positions of responsibility.
2. Expanding media discourse and media policies on women's issues in order to enhance political awareness of citizens about the importance of women's participation in politics.
3. Continuing to allocate Quota of women in the parliament and municipal councils with the development of election laws in Jordan.
4. Ensuring that members of the parliament adopt women's issues and defend them.
5. Holding more seminars, panel discussions and training workshops by government agencies and civil society organizations to acquaint women with their legal rights as mandated by the constitution, international covenants and treaties.
6. Women's movements in Jordan must develop clear strategies and be able to formulate mechanisms of action in light of women's actual needs. Cooperation and interconnection among these movements and between them and the female MP's should also be strengthened
7. Developing economic policies that take into account the real role played by women in the process of community development, since such a role cannot be achieved in the context of poverty and exploitation.
8. Providing access to the line of education and curriculum to ensure graduation of generations that secure the role of women in the development of society.
9. Women need to change themselves, clarify a new role for them, and be close to public opinion, and if not change themselves and their personality will not be able to convey their image to public opinion.
10. Obliging political parties and civil society institutions to allocate seats for the presence of women in their senior leadership, because this reflects the commitment of political parties to the cause of women's empowerment.

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الوضع السياسي للمرأة الأردنية: (الثابت والمتغير)

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ملخص

تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على الواقع السياسي للمرأة الأردنية في العقدين الماضيين، وذلك من خلال بعض المؤشرات التي تعبر عن وجودها وتمثيلها في الحياة السياسية، وذلك للتعرف على مستوى مشاركة المرأة الأردنية في الحياة العامة، والكشف عن أهم المعوقات التي تواجه مشاركتها، والخروج بتوصيات تسهم في تفعيل الواقع السياسي للمرأة الأردنية وتنميته.

وتكمن أهمية الدراسة في التأكيد على توسيع مشاركة المرأة في العمل السياسي بوصفها ضرورة وطنية باعتبارها نصف المجتمع وتشارك الرجل مهمات الحياة، ولا سيما أن الوضع السياسي للمرأة الأردنية لا يزال ضعيفاً إلى حد ما، ولا يتناسب مع قدراتها وإمكاناتها وطاقاتها، فضلاً عن التأكيد على أن تعبئة قوى المرأة ومساهمتها الفاعلة في مختلف جوانب التنمية من شأنه أن يساعد في رفع عملية التقدم في الدولة الأردنية التي تواجه العديد من التحديات والمشاكل، ويعزز مكانة المرأة في المجتمع ويطور قدراتها في تربية أجيال مستقبلية فاعلة وواعية لمجتمعها، فهل ما زالت المرأة الأردنية تعاني من رواسب الموروث الاجتماعي والثقافي المتخلف الذي يحول دون مشاركتها السياسية الفاعلة؟ وهل أسهمت الإصلاحات الدستورية، والقانونية، والإدارية، والسياسية خلال العقدين الماضيين في تفعيل دور المرأة الأردنية في العملية السياسية؟

الكلمات الدالة: المشاركة السياسية، تمكين المرأة، مؤسسات المجتمع المدني، الكوتا النسائية..

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