The Impact of Political Parties on the 2007 Jordanian Parliamentary Elections

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Abstract

Since 1989, Jordan has made remarkable progress towards establishing the basics of a pluralistic, organized political structure that can serve as a model in the Arab World. It resumed its commitment to the parliamentary elections launched by King Hussein and continued under his son King Abdullah II. Trying to do that successfully, Jordan's process of democracy has brought about positive signs. A number of process reforms have been adopted: Most notable among these are the National Charter, the reintroduction of political parties in politics and to Parliament, political parties are now legal, parliamentary elections have become more regular, and Women have long held the right to vote and have exercised it in large numbers. The process, however, has not resulted in a complete democratic change, it has been halfhearted and hesitant, driven by the government's desire to build its support base and maintain domestic political stability in the face of significant challenges. As a result, the changes have been limited. The government explains this arrangement as a reaction to the barrenness of parliamentary life, in which ideological parties are weak, personality cliques are powerful, and a blocking collation of Islamic and tribal conservatives regularly found common ground in opposing some of the government's more progressive reforms.

Research Purpose: - The purpose of this paper is to analyze the political Parties participation in Jordanian political life and its impact on parliamentary elections in democracy process. I.e., judging the degree to which political parties are participant in political life and how participant they were in the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections of 2007. It also explores the obstacles to Jordan's democracy

Design/methodology/approach: - to define and discuss the factors and developments have affected the form and scope of political Parties participation, as well as the obstacles to this participation. This paper will depend on the Analytical Approach.

Research limitations/implications: - To enhance the political parties participation in Jordan parliamentary elections, this article is proposing to government and national stakeholders that more serious consideration be given to the potential of electoral system, as well as to affirmative measures and quota for political parties, minorities and women.

Originality/value:-It is believed that the political Parties participation and reform issues posed by the different sets of regulations are developing little by little, as seen in the fact that different situation are passing their respective political Parties participation in Jordan parliamentary elections plans and involvement. This paper is different in that it makes suggestions that may help to develop political reform situation in Jordan parliamentary elections much advance.

Finding: the research found that, although political parties have existed since the establishment of the country, they still have a limited impact on political life in general and in parliamentary elections in particular. There are several reasons for this, some of which are related to the legal environment and social factors and some to the parties themselves.

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أثر الأحزاب السياسية في الانتخابات النيابية الأردنية عام 2007

ملخص البحث:

منذ عام 1989 ، قام الأردن بخطوات ديمقراطية مبنية على التعددية السياسية تصلح كنموذج في العالم العربي. لقد أعلن عن تعهده بالسير في الانتخابات النيابية في زمن الملك حسين واستمر العمل فيها في زمن الملك عبد الله الثاني. ومن أجل إنجاحها قام بخطوات إصلاحية تعتبر خطوات ايجابية منها السماح للأحزاب السياسية بالعمل ،وإجراء انتخابات نيابية بشك دوري ،وحصلت المرأة على حقها في المشاركة بالعمل السياسي.

لكن العملية الديمقراطية لم تكتمل بشكل كامل، حيث قامت الحكومة الأردنية بتسيير العملية الديمقراطية بشك يتناسب مع التحديات التي تواجه الأردن، مما جعل العملية السياسية تسير بشكل محدود.وقد نسبت الحكومة هذا البطء نتيجة لضعف الأحزاب السياسية الأردنية،وسيطرة القيادة الفردية فيها.

غرض البحث وأهدافه: لبيان فاعلية وأثر الأحزاب السياسية الأردنية في العملية السياسية والانتخابات النيابية في الأردن، والمشاكل التي تعترض طريقها وسبل حلها.وبشكل خاص لبيان فاعلية الأحزاب الأردنية في الانتخابات النيابية التي جرت في الأردن في عام 2007 .

منهجية البحث: من اجل التعريف بالبحث والعوامل المؤثرة في شكل وفاعلية الأحزاب السياسية الأردنية في الانتخابات النيابية لعام 2007 اعتمد الباحث على المنهج التحليلي.

أصالة البحث وقيمته العلمية: لقد بين البحث أن مشاركة وفاعلية الأحزاب السياسية في الانتخابات النيابية الأردنية بدأت تأخذ أشكالا متعددة وفقا لمخططاتها وأهدافها. وهذا البحث يختلف عن غيره من الأبحاث وطرح بعض التصورات التي يمكن أن تفيدها في مشاركتها في الانتخابات البرلمانية القادمة.

لقد توصل الباحث لنتائج في البحث منها أن الأحزاب السياسية في الأردن لا تزال محدودة النشاط والفاعلية في الانتخابات النيابية رغم السماح لها بالعمل منذ تأسيس الدولة الأردنية. يعود ذلك لأسباب تتعلق بطبيعة تلك الأحزاب وسيطرة العامل الشخصي بين قياداتها وهناك أسباب أخرى تتعلق بطبيعة المجتمع الأردني ذاته.

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1. Introduction

Political parties are nowadays receiving a great deal of attention in view to their potential effects. Considering that they determine: the success or failure of political reforms; and the stability of society, in governments and regimes where parties are a branch of the democratic process. Moreover, the transition to a multi party system has become a sort of criterion that measures how societies and states relate to the international environment surrounding them.

Talking about political parties' foundation and influence in parliamentary elections and even in the democratic process in Jordan makes one realize that, this country from the date of its political independence till now witnessed several different political experiences. In the 1950s of the previous century, for instance, political parties were permitted to operate, and parliamentary elections took place. However, this did not last long due to the internal and regional disruption during those days. Thus, the democratic process was brought to a standstill, and the Marshall laws were imposed, as was the case in most parts of the Arab world.

In 1989, Jordan started once again to the democratic life, parliamentary elections were permitted and the political parties participated in the process. This new trend of democratization is a positive step towards the respect of human rights; including the participation of the populace in the political life of this country. However, this step is considered an argumentative issue, posing many questions. Democratization and political participation in Jordan require studies and examinations because they are related to the human being and the nature of the political regime in this country.

1:1 - The Subject and Scope of this study

The participation and influence of political parties in the Jordanian parliamentary election of 2007 is the subject of this study. The study will deal with other aspects depending on their relevance to this subject.

1:2 - The Hypothesis and Assumptions of this research

The basic assumption made in this research is that: **"Despite the fact that Jordanian political parties have existed in the 1950s and 1960s; they are still weakly effective in the parliamentary elections. This stands contrary to the need for building modern, strong political parties designed to make democracy and the democratic experiment effective".** This is due to the fear that such transitions & reforms will result in a rise for a backward step and an access gate to political reforms and democratic changes.

1:3 – Research Concepts & Objectives

This article aims to do a review of the implementation and results of the political parties' participation in the elections conducted in Jordan during 2007, in order to answer certain questions and reach the following points:

Firstly: Establish the impact of the parliamentary and municipal elections in Jordan during 2007 on the political reform process and democratic transition. Have these been steps forwards or backwards?

Secondly: Study the impact of the participation of political parties in the political system and parliamentary elections. Also, to analyze if these movements have been successful in reaping the aims of their adaptation within the conditions of the political process; or if they have paid for this adaptation by reduced popularity?

1-4: The Significance of this Research

The significance of this research is that it brings forward more information about Jordan's democracy: reforms, political parties influence and participation in parliamentary elections.

2. *Methodology &Theoretical Approach*

2:1- Research Methodology

Research methods concern the methods used to collect information, direct or indirect contact is made with the subjects of the study such as individuals, organizations, communities, by using systematic methods of measurement such as interviews and questionnaires. Methodology is concerned with: what data the researcher collects, how often that data gets collected, why the data is collected, where it is collected from, and how it is analyzed **(Collis, J. & Hussey, R.2003:55).** Other writers defined methodology as referring to" the practices and techniques used to gather, process, manipulate, and interpret information that can then be used to test ideas and theories about social life" **(Johnson, S. 2000:192).**

As tools and instruments used by researchers to collect and investigate data, methods can be classified in several ways based upon different criteria. For example there are two main sources of data, primary and secondary, based upon status of evidence research gets classified as historical, descriptive, and experimental. Some scholars in "Basics, Methods and Procedures" classified research into four categories: a- Experimental studies to evaluate interventions; b- Historical studies; c- Descriptive studies; and d- Developmental studies **(Olayan, R.M.2001:41).**

Based upon the type of data collected research is classified as qualitative research which relies on qualitative data and quantitative research which relies on quantitative data. In social sciences there are two main types of research orientations: the quantitative approach which focuses on testing theories and correlations, and the qualitative approach which focuses on generating data **(Miller, R.L and Brewer, J.D.2003:192).**

Accordingly, there are different types of data collection methods that can be used in this study and each one has its advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, the researcher will choose methods in light of particular factors such as the nature of the study and the questions involved.

2:2-Theoretical Approach

In "Research Methods in Librarianship: Techniques and Interpretation", some writers state that: "In order to conduct a meaningful enquiry there is a need for sound theoretical knowledge about the problem from which the research task originated". **(Bush, C.H & Harter, S.P 1980:17).**

Therefore, this article gives an overview of the literature and debates on political parties and parliamentary elections, examining the key themes of this paper which are the party's political participation in Jordan and the role played by parties and other factors in the 2007 parliamentary elections. Therefore, the literature review starts by discussing the main terms and issues concerning the topic of the article.

Given the weakness and slow speed by which the number of party candidates in political participation is growing, there are increased calls for more efficient methods in order to reach parties' balance in political institutions and parliament. Political parties' participation presents one such mechanism. The introduction of political parties represents a qualitative jump into a policy of exact goals and means **(Dahlerup, Drude, Ed, 2006:21).** Because of its relative efficiency, the hope for a dramatic increase in political party's representation by using this system is strong. The field is divided into two schools of thought .And these paradigms that emerged in the twentieth century are: the rational- efficient model and the responsible parties' model **(as was argued by White, John K:2008).**

The rational efficient model emphasizes the parties' electoral activities at the expense of virtually all other functions. Winning elections is the principal "raison deter" for the party's establishment. Voters also act rationally, using the information provided by the party candidates to make selections that will benefit them personally. As political parties wane in influence, this model has become the "choice jour" among political scientists **(Wattenberg. M. P: 1991:18).**

While the Responsible parties model stated that "an effective party system requires two main steps .On one hand, the parties are able to bring forth programs to which they commit themselves and, on the other hand, the parties possess sufficient internal cohesion to carry out these programs **(APSA: 2008:1)** . Also, achieving party unity matters to this model because of many reasons among which are: firstly, to give voters a clear choice in election campaigns; secondly, to give the winning political party a mandate for governing; and finally, to ensure the party as the likely instrument whereby voters can make a legal resolution **(Karsh .E. and Karsh .I: 1999: 20).**

As already noted a key distinguishing feature of this debate is confusion over basic terms, such as democratic reform and political party participation. A number of researchers have produced methodologically pluralistic approaches. However, these have been based on a practical synthesis rather than any form of theoretical synthesis. They have argued that, in spite of their mutually exclusive nature, aspects from different paradigms can be combined in one research design **(Wildermuth 1993).** So, from this perspective, research methods from different paradigms can be used simultaneously or consecutively and are equally valid. Some purposes for combining methods in a single study have been put forward from this perspective.

Some writers believe that, these are: First, triangulation in order to neutralize bias, triangulation in the classic sense of seeking convergence of results. Secondly, that the two approaches are seen as complementary in that, by their use, overlapping and different facets of the phenomenon may emerge **(Creswell, J.W: 1994).**

Alternatively, the approaches may be used developmentally, where the first method is used to help inform the second method. He also suggests that a combined approach may be used to bring out contradictions and fresh perspectives. Finally, he argues that it may be used to add scope and breadth to a study.

This research will draw upon Giddens's Structration Theory, as used by **(Weaver and Gioia: 1994)** which offers a sophisticated solution to the problem of the irreconcilable nature of paradigms and, therefore, of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. It will not be used as a complete research program, but its meta-theoretical status, combined with its focus on ontological issues, allows its use as the keystone of a theoretically-based, pluralistic approach.

3. The Initiation of political parties in Jordan:

Jordan holds a strategic location in the Middle East, sharing borders with Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the West Bank. Since King Hussein took power over Jordan in 1952 democratic institution were introduced. The roots of partisan life in this country date to the founding of the state in 1921. They have gone through various experiences, phases of growth and turning points reflected also in the country's social structure and conditions at the domestic, regional, and international levels.

Accordingly, the experience of political parties in Jordan can be divided into four phases: the first phase from 1921-1950, called the Traditional parties; the second phase from 1950- 1967 called The Ideological parties; the third phase 1967-1989, the Martial law period; and the fourth one from 1989-2007, the initiation of political liberalization **(Al-azzam, Amin, 2008: 142)**.

Moreover, the party political map in this country includes Islamists such as the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Center Party; leftist such as the Jordanian Communist Party; political parties which are an extension of some Palestinian factions such as the Popular Front which is an extension of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and HASHED Party; and parties which might be associated with parties in other Arab countries such as the Arab Ba'ath Party in both Syria and Iraq.

In the 1950s also, the spread of pan-Arab nationalism, and the radicalization of leftist-leaning parties in the Arab Middle Eastern countries in general during that time highlighted the blurred concept of nation as opposed to state in domestic politics. The vulnerability of political parties to external influence and anti- Jordanian regime and ideology including pan-Arab political parties and Communist ones, constituted a major threat and obstacle to the participatory institutions **(Mahavzah, Ali, 1997:90).** Moreover, the devastated and frustrated Palestinian refugee population in Jordan became vulnerable to radical party ideology.

This situation resulted in a coup attempt in 1957 by a number of radical pan-Arab nationalist parties, and leftist groups and in a temporary imposition of emergency law, i.e., martial law was declared and, the role of parties was banned and has been illegal for more than three decades. Indeed, the state of emergency also, was declared at the outset of the 1967 War and the martial law continued until 1989.

During the absence of political parties, the Jordanian governments dealt with society through its various groups, the tribes in particular **(Jordanian Embassy in Washington .D.C: 2008).** This situation meant that parties were not necessary as a channel for people to reach the authorities, as providers of services or to solve problems. While tribal organization adjusted and evolved to become a pillar of society in its dealings with the state, the parties were not allowed to do this and were left outside the process of political development, and today various groups and tribes of society do not see parties as a means to achieving their goals.

Parliamentary life remained in limbo or banned between 1967-1989 as elections could not be held on the occupied West Bank .To avoid the pitfalls of the 1950s and the vulnerability of political parties to external intrusion when the decision to resume political liberalization was taken in 1989, an organizing consensus was established for Jordan's political liberalization through a National Charter drawn by a Royal Commission comprised of 60 members from all walks of Jordan's socio-political life in 1990**(Al Krasha M,1997:93).** The significant rules the National Charter established concerned the re-introduction of political parties into Jordan's domestic politics. These rules touched upon aspects that ensure party insulation from foreign subservience and manipulation, as well as the army's insulation from party politics **(Jordanian Embassy in Washington .D.C: 2008).**

However, in the mid 1980s, Jordan had a severe economic crisis and the government began to implement a structural adjustment programmed under the supervision of the World Bank This led to a popular uprising, which began to demand democracy. The separation from the West Bank in 1988 helped prepare the domestic political and legal climate for a return to parliamentary life. This situation has played an important role in the transition to democracy and allowed parties and party members to participate in the parliamentary elections **(Wiktorowicz, Q, 2000: 43-61).**

In response to these severe internal and regional events, the Jordanian monarchy system took important steps towards political reform and liberalization in order to ensure its political survival, strengthen the regime, gain public support, and control the possibility of unmanageable changes.

These series of pre-emptive measures have been termed by some writers as a 'defensive democratization' **(Robinson, G.E, 1998, 387-410)**, and described by other scholars as ' controlled pluralism', 'Managed liberalization' and 'façade democracy' to explain that the impact on democratic change in Jordan has been limited for the stability of the regime surrounded by regional and economic challenges**(Timothy, P, 2001:1).**

The Democratic process and Political reform in that period were seen as bargaining tools for the regime to outlast the strike period, and the regime refused to use force to quell the rioting.

Moreover, by adopting reforms that would allow some political participation through general parliamentary elections, the regime wished to turn the tide of public criticism away from the head of the state to the legislative body. In this direction, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Jordan Kamel Abu Jabir argued that " the King has come to the conclusion that he cannot control the country in the way he did in the 1960s and 1970s", and added that," if he wants to maintain the continuity of the regime, he must share power with the people" **(New York Times, October, 26th, 1989).**

Since 1989, Jordan's political reform process has brought about positive changes. Jordanian government opened its political system in the face of the repeated popular demands for political and democratic life, and as a result of other socio- economic and political changes. Parliamentary elections have become more regular, Political parties are now legal, and other sectors such as economic reforms have been introduced. Since that time Jordan had five elections, in 1989, 1993, 1997, 2003 and 2007, produced various types of practices connected with the election process, a type of election culture. Moreover, this state has over 31 political parties, but most of which are small and inconsequential. These parties came into existence following the passage of the 1992 Political Parties Article.42 **(Jordan Times, March 14, 2007)**

Moreover, the Jordanian government issued a new law in 2001. Under the 2001 law, the government added six seats for women, lowered the voting from 19 to 18, resized electoral districts raising their number from 20 to 45, and re-approved the one- person one- vote electoral system (Jordan .M of the Interior-Temporary Election Law No .34: 2001.). Also, this law reserves special ethnical quotas for Caurcasians, Chechens and Christians.

4. Political Parties' participation in the 2007 Parliamentary Elections:

The last parliamentary elections in Jordan were held on 20th, November, 2007. A total of 880 candidates, including 212 women competed for the lower house's 110 seats. Six of which are designated for females under a quota system adopted in the 2003 law **(Ministry of Interior).** The average turnout was 54%, slightly lower than at the elections of 2003, (58%). Approximately 2.4 million out of the 3.4 million eligible to vote registered for the elections, and the highest turnout was in the villages and Bedouin districts. The highest turnout was in Tafieleh with 82% and the lowest in Amman with 32% **(Jordan Times, November 21, 2007).**

Although Jordan's Interior Minister declared that the elections were free and fair, while the Islamic Action Front stated that they were framed. According to their own impressions, the IAF should win 16 seats compared to the outcome of the elections. IAF spokesman Jamil Abu Baker called for a rerun of the poll in constituencies where, he said, fraud had occurred: **"** This is an electoral massacre… violations by far exceeded even the last elections… it will have harmful repercussions on the country's political progress". He added: "It will force us to reconsider our participation in future elections" **(Al-azzam, Amin 2008:163).**

In term of the electoral campaigns of the 2007 Parliamentary elections, and a result of the economic situation of the Jordanian citizens, Jordanian people showed more interest in their daily affairs rather than being concerned with the thorny political files relating to the situation in the Middle East region. Therefore, the economic issues dominated most candidates' campaigns, and the majority of candidates for the parliamentary elections preferred to campaign with slogans related to the daily lives of Jordanian citizens contrary to the past when the Palestinian issue and the liberation of the occupied Arab territories and Iraq was occupying large areas in the program of the candidates in Jordan.

However, apathy, disillusionment, and lack of trust in the parliamentary council are rife among Jordanian eligible voters. For example, one voter justified his decision for not participating in the 2007 elections saying:" I am not voting for anyone because they're all liars- Islamists and all the others… they just want to grab seats in parliament and then they will forget about us and our needs**"(BBC News November20th,2007).**

Moreover, the 2007 parliamentary election results were a disappointment to politicians and the Jordanian political parties, since tribal and pro-government candidates strengthened their grip on Jordan's parliament, winning the vast majority of its seats.

Moreover, the parliamentary seat distribution is shown in the governorate as follows: 45 districts, 92 Muslims, 3 Circassians and Chechens, 9 Christians, and 6 seats for women were assigned at national level, i.e. the six women with the highest percentage nationwide won the six reserved seats, and the total was 110 seats **(Wikipedia: 2008:1-2).**

The above mentioned parliamentary election also witnessed more reduction and weakness of representation of the political parties and movements. In some constituencies in Jordan's Capital Amman **(Al Jazeera: 22 November 2007).**

However, the official results were: tribal candidates and candidates of conservative social forces achieved an important victory by winning a total of 98 parliamentary seats, the Islamic political parties and movements obtained only 7 seats, 12 less than 2003 and 6 seats were allocated to women by a special electoral panel, while leftist and Pan- Arab Nationalist political parties failed to win any seats in the parliament. **(Al Jazeera: 21 November 2007).** Compared to the elections of 1989, 1993, 1997 and 2003 there is a clear downfall of the representation of Islamic Parties, the secular Leftist and the Pan-Arab Nationalist ones.

5. *Obstacles & Challenges*

Participation of political parties and its influence in the Jordanian election system faces a number of obstacles among which are: First, the difficult historical legacy of the over a decade ban on political parties. The Second obstacle is the tribal factor and the 'one- vote system'. Thirdly is the funding of political parties. Fourthly are the Gender Equality and Women Quota. And finally, political parties orientations.

The First obstacle was and still is: the difficult historic legacy of the more than Three decades ban on political parties. Jordanians were deprived of the chance to exercise their constitutional right to party political activity, and society continues to suffer from its negative effects.

Moreover, in the absence of political parties with national concerns, political activity was oriented to Pan-Arab issues **(Al- Rawabdeh, A: 2009).** Also, for the political parties, the ban resulted in a weakening of their potential to develop their position as representing concerns to be put before the legislature and to develop convincing political platforms. The ban also resulted in giving parties a negative image and in a popular fear of belonging to them, thereby strengthening tribal bonds at their expense, as seen above.

The Second obstacle is: the tribal culture and the 'one-vote system'. This factor, some times known and called the services deputy phenomenon, and unfair districting are all obstacles that reinforce each other, to the harm of parties, women and the electoral system **(Majed, Z, 2007:20).** The tribe and its representatives are the factors most obstinately opposed to addressing party's issues and efforts to politicize candidates. Party candidates have indicated that they have been subjected to criticism and ridicule by tribal leaders and elders to retain the support of the tribe they represent; party candidates have to give up advocacy of party's issues. The tribal nature of the elections makes them seem more like family or social celebrations and gives the legislature a service-oriented aspect, which distances it from the wider political-ideological discourse and weakens the impact of political institutions. Because parties have a limited presence in political positions and influence, they believe that they can provide some limited services only **(Al Shannaq, A 2009).** Moreover, this culture and system gives tribes the strongest say in securing victories for their candidates, and tribes support tribal candidates over party candidate. This system means voting for individuals, which ignores the role of political parties, thus holding back the political development of the country needs **(Al- Majali, A.H. 2009).**

The Third obstacle is: the funding of political parties. Funding of political parties is very sensitive for any fledging democracy, and politically charged in Jordan in particular. Political parties in Jordan have therefore a reason to be concerned about how their funding is going to be conducted and on what basis. Leaving this process in the hands of the government may give rise to suspicion that political parties will be controlled and manipulated by the state. Therefore, it would be much wiser and politically more prudent to leave the issue of funding of political parties in the hands of independent institutions, as indeed some political parties in Jordan insist on.

As long as political parties adhere to the constitution of the land and remain faithful to the international norms that Jordan has officially subscribed to, they must be allowed enough freedom to operate as they wish politically and financially. Democracies across the globe do not directly control the funding process for political parties; Jordan should not appear to be different, especially if they do not wish their democratic process to become suspect in the minds of local and international observers **(Hamzeh .A. S:2007).**

More marginally, but as in some countries, candidates' financial capacities play an essential role. Although the financial resources of parties are strictly monitored, candidates rarely stand on the basis of party platforms or funds.

Much of the campaigning cost consists of expenses related to 'hosting' voters, which is not illegal, and of vote-buying, which is illegal. Party's candidates are clearly at a disadvantage in this area. This with the tribal system reinforcing the tribal and clan phenomena weakens the political parties.

The Fourth obstacle is: the Gender Equality and the Quota system. In spite of the certainty that the participation of women in political life represents a share in the building of civil society which is built upon the development of institutes as one of the principal ways in the supporting and developing of society, this structure, in the Jordanian society, is still in need of a considerable participation of women (Al- Sarayreh, R: 2008). This means that there are factors or components that are lacked by Jordanian women to guarantee a greater participation in political parties, as well as a greater interaction in Jordanian politics.

These components can be represented in social patterns, culture, and economic development, the political system of the country and its laws, and personal or private matters that are associated with the personality of Jordanian women. And in which there is no doubt, is that there is a relationship of interaction, influence, and interrelationships between these factors resulting in a cumulative effect upon the participation of women in Jordanian politics**(Ghazaleh.A.H 2006:18).**

Additionally, there is also a need for the parties mentioned beforehand to accept the concept of gender equality. However, in reality, the political environment in Jordan remains an obstacle confronting the participation of women in political life for this country; however, it is not the only obstacle.

Finally: political party's orientations. The positive side in Jordan's regional movement may be achieved when other Arab countries adopt the democratic approach and constructive dialogue for the achievement of national interests. However the negative side is reflected in the lack of democratic approach and intervention in the patrician life of this country, sometimes pushing those parties to act as instrument in the hands of Arab regions at the Jordanian theatre, under several different goals and themes. Thus we see divisions within the Islamic movement as well as the nationalist ones as reflected by the attitudes and trends of some Arab regimes. Divisions are also seen within the communist movements and parties.

Also, Jordan's movement at the international scene led to the creation of a number of liberal parties under different names reformation, programmatic, national or liberal. This is a new trend with no ideology and led by a group of political figures of the nation. Thus, we may conclude that Jordan's affiliation, geographically racially and demographically with the Arab countries influenced the emergence and action of political parties in the country. Its religious belief assisted the establishment of religious groups, while its objective conditions and external relations have led to the emergence of liberal parties **(Ben Hussein M: 2007).**

The first crisis, for instance was that, Jordan's political parties moved and declared support and solidarity with Iraq against the alliance forces without due concern to the country's limited potentials. As well as the desires and objectives of some other Arab and non Arab states in the Gulf region. In the second case the peace process an internal front was built to oppose the peace process

Actions of political parties, the parliament the country's internal conditions and those of the region pushed the political system to ask several political procedures reflected on the political parties as well as the democratic process as a whole in 2003 & 2007. The king delayed the elections from 2001 to 2003 due to - reasons and events we mentioned before in this article – like political instability in the region. In this, Jordan tried to work cautiously with political parties and attempted to clean the political process from any outside external ties and or interventions, as to avoid the economic risks and dangers of the Gulf wars **(Choucair. J: 2006).**

The absence of democracy in the patrician system in Jordan and lack of control and accountability on the conduct of leaders and members, and the lack of political qualifications are among the factors which may lead to friction among some of the parties. Such a situation may be a major cause of the weakness of patrician action in Jordan. For instance as mentioned earlier, the Islamic movement was divided into several grouping and the same can be said about both the nationalist and the communist organizations

In addition, there were certain obstacles on the road of political participation and the wide spread of parties in the country that have some relation with the nature of thinking of the majority of party leaderships. The political programs of those parties are mainly a reflection of the programs adopted by the political parties in the neighboring countries some of them even act as an extension to those parties **(Fisher, W.S:1995:578).**

Moreover, the departure of some political parties from the democratic process and the resistance made by some groups to democratization and patrician in Jordan to maintain their individual and institutional interests, all are added factors that impede the wide spread of political parties in the country. Aimed this variant situation Jordan expressed the desire to adopt democratization and continue on this route.

The government is still granting regulated liberty to political parties. Despite all the circumstances around the political democratization, the government still express the desire for the parliament to play a vital political role, taking into account all local , regional and international considerations and changes. So, if we try to examine the patrician participation in the parliamentary elections we could see that the government tried at the national building stage to enforce a constitution and legislative executive and judiciary system, conducted parliamentary elections and permitted formation of political parties within certain complicated political conditions and constraints, i.e. the country adopted the idea of democracy as it appears in the western ideology being a right for citizens and a good way for development **(Hamzeh .A. S:2007).**

6. Recomendations for a step forward

In light of the new comings witnessed by the factorial map after the passage of one year from the last elections, some writers say that the Jordanian political parties are capable of making another step forward .The volume and quality of this step is dependant to the degree of readiness these parties hold in elevating their expected performance and activity. The factorial life witnessed the integration and unification of parties during the past years and the appearance of new political parties during the same period. (Al Majali, A.:2008).

Therefore, it appears that the Jordanian political parities are going to encounter great requirements in the coming elections .On top of these requirements is their ability to stand for these elections; so that they appear to be eager to make these elections factorial and political, not to mention the importance of standing for the elections rationally and systematically. The candidates of one sector should not compete within the same electoral constituency. This necessitates providing a mechanism for selecting candidates that allows the participation of the advocates and supporters of this trend or that to choose their candidates **(Al Majali, A: 2009).**

The results of the elections have shown that the one vote had gone mainly to racial, ethnic, familial, sectarian or factorial associations. This indicates the necessity of searching for a modification to the present law of elections so that it allows the voter to practice his electoral belief on other bases that participate in showing the deputy as the representative of the country before being the representative of any other body.
In light of the above discussion, one can indicate the medications that I think meet the agreement of different categories of civilian society, and which may be acceptable to the government:

Firstly, simplifying the administrative procedures in front of the voter such as adopting the national number for the purposes of preparing voter lists and adopting the family book or identity card for allowing the citizen to practice his/ her electoral right,

Secondly, monitoring the electoral process as a whole by the legislative authority in order to maintain impartiality and keep suspicion away, as the legislative authority is known for its neutrality and impartiality; as well as lessening the burdens shouldered by the corps that protect the country and the citizen.

Also, opinions are divided about the proposed method for election adapted from the Jordanian experience, especially as the existing experience has been exercised in the open list more than once, while the principle of one vote was adopted in the 1993, 1997, 2003 and 2007 elections**.**

The researcher observed that there was almost unanimous opinion not to accept the principle of one vote in light of the division of constituencies available by various parliamentary factorial, social and trade union activists, the advocates of this endeavor refer the reasons of this rejection to the inequitable distribution of parliamentary seats to election constituencies, as well as to the encouragement of provincial and tribal ties at the expense of national and political ties. Those who have especial point of view calling for the adoption of a single voice explain their conviction by stating that this method produces deputies more representative of the people, as being "the first elites'" deputies of the candidates, and that this method prevents the phenomenon of the strongest candidate carrying the weak, and negates the effect of the interference of large parties (particularly the Islamic Action Front Party) to determine the prospects for successful candidates for seats allocated to minorities such as Charkas, Chechnya and Christians**(** **Braizat .F:2007).**

The researcher suggests here, in principle, the need to derive an electoral system in Jordan that is compatible with concrete reality, and takes into account international experience, without the need of citing it. This is so because the global experience has its own circumstances and particular expertise that produces the laws appropriate for the level of economic, social, cultural, political, human, scientific and philosophical development.

The adoption of the previous election method that had been applied in 2001 and earlier, or those that were practiced in 2003 do not have unanimous acceptance at the national, official and popular levels, and therefore we should search for a compromise which can get conformity by all parties.

This could be a temporary solution that is applied only in the electoral cycle for the upcoming elections; provided forming a national committee by a Royal Decree in which various political, economical and social activities are represented for drafting a new election law to be presented for discussion and approval of the Thirteenth Board in one of its regular sessions to elect the Sixteenth Board in 2011, according to its articles **(Al Shannaq, A 2009)**. Further, he suggests adopting the principle of two votes per voter in the one constituency seats after it has increased the number of representatives in the House of Representatives to 110 seats.

To complete this proposal concerning the legislature authority in the country, it's needed to make a constitutional amendment on the formation of the Senate, towards the adoption of the principle of direct elections by the people in the formation of the Senate, on the basis of the rule known as "the people are the source of authority," and here it suggests to elect from the current twenty-one constituencies, so that each constituency in the Kingdom is represented by two senates elected directly by the people on the same day, on which the parliamentary elections are conducted **(Al –Refaie Z: 2009)**.

In order to formulate new approaches of cooperation for providing the basic physical and spiritual needs of the citizens with a good awareness and recognition of how important it is to shift this country to the level of the modern world in its dealings with citizens and application of democracy. This may be accomplished through the application of a scientific objective and constructive dialogues and keeping distance from bias and extremism, for the benefit of the national interests of this country.

Saying that because the results of the parliamentary elections in 2007 showed the increase of the pro-government tendency among a vast sector of citizens; this may be attributed to the hard economical conditions lived by the citizen due to the residues of the Gulf War on the one side and the general political frustration as a consequence of the political conditions prevailing on the area due to the offense against Iraq by thirty countries on the other.

The failure of the political parties in getting parliamentary seats came to reflect the fact of their mass bulk due to their coalition; this made them lose the chance of being represented according to their actual weight in the House of Representatives.

A number of members from the middle parties succeeded without standing for the election in the name of their parties, rather than in their personal capacity. This indicates that the factional practice is still in the beginning of its way. Maybe these parties will be able to stand for the next elections through candidates under the names of their parties **(Al Majali, A: 2009)**.

The researcher notes, in the topic of the following parliamentary elections, that the Jordanian political parties have an important role that they have to play as they are an important pillar of the democratic process in Jordan. A lot of hope is counted on these parties to make the parliamentary campaigns political ones, and save them gradually from all obstacles and restraints that do their work by giving these campaigns a feature that does not harmonize with the requirements for the development and establishment of the democratic method.

Among those harmful features that come to the fore in any elections- especially parliamentary elections- are those features that drag people to directional, tribal, categorical, factional, racial, or masculine origins, etc (Al –Refaie Z:2009). It seems that overcoming these harmful features in the civilian society, i.e. the democratic society, cannot occur apart from establishing the political establishment and deepening the factorial phenomenon regardless of any remarks that can be listed against it in regards with the big number of political parties, weakness of the efficiency of these parties, newness of their experience, small number of their affiliates, weakness of their informational activity, weakness of their financial resources, their external associations, weakness of the democratic method within them, or any other remarks that can be listed against this political party or that.

7. Conclusion

To diagnose correctly and address the challenges of the main obstacles in the way of real and effective political party's participation in parliamentary elections as well as in the Jordanian political life in general, this article has aimed to investigate the reality of political party's participation. This has been achieved through an evaluation of the basic participation of political parties in the parliamentary elections; and of the electoral system. Therefore, this article derived from the findings and discussions some conclusive remarks.

The most important conclusion to be drawled from this article is that the experience of political parties has passed through several phases connected with the socio-economic situation of Jordan society rather than a political process. In addition, Jordanian parliamentary elections have traditionally related to social representation rather than political transformation.

Another conclusion is that in Jordan, although political parties have existed since the establishment of the country as discussed earlier in this article, they still have a limited impact on political life in general and in parliamentary elections in particular. There are several reasons for this, some of which are related to the legal environment and social factors and some to the parties themselves.

The legal environment that has surrounded the political parties can be described as more of an impediment than a help to party work. Since the foundation of the state until the mid-1950s when all political parties were banned until the late 1980s parties worked under laws that determined how they could demonstrate, set out, and carry out their functions and pursue their activities. In such a legal environment the parties were not able to articulate political objectives. In addition, the law had a negative impact on their ideological performance and on their relationship with both state and society.

It is also argued in this article that the participation of political parties in the parliamentary elections of 2007 and in political life in general reflects the political and social reality in which they work. The existence of a political and intellectual vacuum in Jordanian society has contributed greatly to the strengthening of tribal and economic dimensions in parliamentary elections. In addition, the way in which Jordanian people interpret the existence of political parties and the importance of their role in society is that they are still weak for many reasons. The most important of these is irrelevance of political parties to the political, economic, social, and cultural issues and problem experienced by Jordanian society.

Furthermore, this article argued that although the large number of parties in the Jordanian political arena is an unhealthy sign, political development cannot be achieved through legislation on parties, but rather through the development of electoral law and other laws which dispel the culture of fear and stimulate participation. By the last amendments to the political parties' law many parties will come out of the arena without leading to the emergence of large parties. Therefore, it is argued that political parties still have a long way to go in order to reach a significant level of political participation and even parliamentary elections under such certain, performance, culture, constraints and laws.

Indeed, the current electoral system has contributed significantly to the reduction of the role and presence of political parties in parliamentary elections, and has strengthened the role of the various tribes and families. What has made things more complicated is the distribution of parliamentary seats to a large number of constituencies, making the chances of success associated with place and social relations more than just opportunities given to partisan and political trends. Therefore, it is clear that the current electoral system has been designed in a way which the designer thinks will work to serve its own advantage.

To maintain social cohesion in Jordan, deepen and consolidate political party's participation in political life in general and electoral participation in particular, there will be a need for serious rational dialogue between the government and the various political organizations based on the national interests and or objective principles. The government also should support political parties and their activities in the political arena by consulting and involving them in the implementation of national policies, in addition to involving them in the formation of governments in order to achieve true democratic transformation. Political parties are the main tool of democratic transformation, and for promoting political knowledge and an awareness of democratic empowerment across society.

In addition, Political parties themselves should on the one hand, adopt practical and realistic national programmes to participate in and contribute to political life. On the other hand, they should be established through popular bases and not through individuals or small groups pursuing personal interests, if they are to gain credibility and play a role in institutionalizing and developing political life as well as participation.

Finally, Jordanian political parties should review their political and electoral performance and work to unify their perspectives about necessary reforms. This of course requires, above all, reducing the gap between the people and themselves, which would depend on their responsiveness to the people's needs and on the ability of their programmes to reflect the feelings of society, their aims and their aspirations.

The above mentioned points as well as the constructive dialogue serve the interest of democracy and strengthen its roots deep into society. At the same time it will keep the country away from extremism and violence. To accomplish this objective, there is a need to mobilize all political and ideological efforts to formulate new approaches for cooperation in the objective of providing the basic physical and spiritual needs of citizens with a good awareness and recognition as to how important it is to shift this country to the level of the modern world in its dealings with persons and application of democracy. This may be accomplished through the application of scientific objectives and constructive dialogues and through keeping distance from extremism, for the benefit of Jordan's national interest.

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