Cultural Obstacles to Democratization in Jordan
The Reality of Political Culture in Jordan After Twenty Years of Political Openness

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the reality of the political culture in Jordan after twenty years of political openness by identifying the most important features of contemporary Jordanian political culture. In addition, the study aims to examine the main factors that shape this political culture. To build the argument on a solid ground, the study raises some significant questions about the reality of the Jordanian political culture such as: has political culture changed significantly since 1989 (after the political openness)? what are the main factors that contributed to shaping the political culture in Jordan?, and what is the main type of political culture that clearly prevails in the society? The study is carried out by using the descriptive analytical approach, as a method for examining the findings of the survey through distribution of 400 questionnaires to five groups of political elites in Jordan. The study concludes that there cannot be a real democratic system in Jordan without the establishment and consolidation of democratic values in the political culture of Jordanian citizens. Another conclusion of the study is that traditional political culture is still prevailing in Jordanian society which is dominated by social, tribal, and family ties despite the elapse of twenty years of the political liberalization.

Introduction

Political participation-which is closely related to democracy- is linked to three major elements which constitute the political environment for political reform; the economic and social situation of the citizens, the laws governing elections, and the prevailing political culture. This article discusses the political culture as a factor in and precondition of democratic change, in addition to exploring the major factors affecting the formation of political culture in Jordan.

Political attitudes and political culture are important concepts, as these factors have a strong influence on human behaviour, which plays an extremely important role in the stability and performance of a political system. Since the evolution of the science of politics and the emergence of the behavioural

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movement, the world has paid more attention to human behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, customs and traditions. Therefore, political culture in any society relies on certain values, beliefs, practices and psychological attitudes among a country's citizens.

There have been many trends in the study of political culture. Some authors have focused on the historical experience of the industrial societies and have felt that the political culture responds to changes in political, economic and social circumstances; others have stressed the analysis of political trends in communist societies by demonstrating the continuity and stability of certain aspects of the political culture in the face of changes. In the Arab World, studies have shown the importance of culture in economic and political behaviour, and that the Arab democratic experiences reflect political patterns which in turn are affected by religious and cultural factors (Al-quraan, 2010, p. 5).

Theoretical Approch

1. **The Concept Of Political Culture**

Elkins and Simon stated that "political culture is one of the most popular and seductive concepts in political science; it is also one of the most controversial and confused." (Obeidi, 2001, p.8). The term 'political culture' did not appear until 1956, when Gabriel Almond attempted to introduce this term in his Article 'Comparative Political Systems'. He stated that "every political system is embedded in a particular pattern of orientations to political action. I have found it useful to refer to this as political culture" (Almond, 1956, pp. 391-409). Almond added that the political culture "does not coincide with a given political system or society. Patterns of orientation to politics may, and usually do, extend beyond the boundaries of political systems" (Almond, 1956, p. 396). For Almond, the political culture is part of the general culture in society, despite being characterized by a degree of independence and, as described by Almond, "it is a differentiated part of the culture and has a certain autonomy" (Almond, 1956, p. 396).

The spread of democracy within the past decade has positive implications for political culture studies, but political scientists are divided on the relevance of political culture. Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba carried out an important empirical study and survey of political attitudes in five countries, which was published in their work, *The Civic Culture* (1963). They define political culture as "the political system as internalized in the cognition, feelings, and the evaluations of its population" (Almond and Sidney, 1966, p. 13). Here, political culture refers to "the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations toward politics among the members of a political system; attitudes towards the political system and its various parts, and attitudes towards the role of the self in the

system. Orientation refers to the internalized aspects of objects and relationships" (Almond and Bingham, 1966, pp.16-17).

Lucian Pye defines political culture as a set of attitudes, beliefs and sentiments that give order and meaning to the political process and provide stable rules governing the behaviour of the political system's members (Pye, 1966, p. 104). In 'The Individual and the Government in Islamic Political Culture', Dawood Feirhi defines political culture as a set of values, beliefs and ideals that show the conditions under which political activities can take root (Feirhi, 2010). Moh'd Almagreebi defines political culture as authorized patterns of orientation and adaptation to the political activities in any society (Almgeerbi, 2010). Mohammad Berroween adds that political culture is the sum of beliefs, values, and patterns exercised by citizens in a particular community, concerning political affairs and the system of governance in the State.

Despite some differences, all of the above definitions share the idea that all of the values found in the political system are part of the political culture. Moreover, the term political culture refers to the political orientation and attitudes toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system. As Verba wrote political culture "regulates who talks to whom and who influences whom" (Verba, 1960, p. 517).

2. Types Of Political Culture

Each country has its own form of governance and political system that affect the nature and concepts of its political culture, due to the fact that any political system needs to build a particular political culture in order to be sustained. In a democratic country where the political system is based on the rule of law, the system needs a political culture that stresses the democratic values of equality, participation, justice, and freedom. Under the authoritarian rule, however, the political culture is centered on the fear of power, a lack of inclination to participate in the political process, and the oppression of political opposition.

Almond and Verba assert that the orientations of individuals towards the political system can be measured through awareness, sentiments, and assessment to four aspects of political life: Firstly, the system in general through its components, elements, and constitutional forms. Secondly, input cognition refers to an awareness and understanding of politics and political issues in the society. Thirdly, the output cognition, or the citizens' knowledge of the results of the government action, includes the ability of individuals and their effectiveness in the political life, in addition to how to develop and implement public policies in the community; finally, the individual himself (what is the role of the individual

in political life? the extent of his knowledge about his rights, duties, political abilities and how to participate in political life) (Almond and Verba, 1965, p. 15). According to these four variables Almond and Verba identify three typical types of political culture and three corresponding citizenship orientations; parochial, subject and participant political cultures.

Parochial Political Culture

This type of political culture is associated with citizens who have no real understanding of their political system or are ignorant about politics in general. The parochial citizen tends to be unaware, or only dimly aware, of the political system in all its aspects, having no knowledge of how the political system works, no effective orientations, and as a result a lack of political participation (Almond and Verba, 1965, p. 19). The best example of this type of culture is isolated tribes, whose presence or survival is not affected by central government decisions (Al-Rashed, 2010). Therefore, it is impossible for this type of political culture to lead to democratic stability.

Subject Culture

In this type of culture, the citizens are characterized by high levels of political knowledge. They are aware of and oriented to the political system; furthermore, there is a high frequency toward a differentiated political system and toward the output aspects of the system, but are low in terms of input and show resentment towards political participation. It is essentially passive relationship (Ben-Dor, 1977, pp.43-63). Furthermore, in this political culture citizens perceive themselves to be uninvolved in the political process, but instead as subordinate and subject to authority, as is the case with people living under a dictatorship (Al-Rashed, 2010). Thus, this type of political culture is considered inefficient in building stable democracy, since citizens have no understanding of their democratic political power.

Participant Culture

The citizens in this culture are oriented to the system as a whole that encourages them to participate in political affairs. In this culture it is assumed that the citizen is educated and has a positive sense about the political system in which they live. It is an active and influential culture, which means that citizens participate in and are affected by the political process (Almond and Verba, 1963). It can be argued that participant political culture is inefficient because in such a culture the combination of high levels of political knowledge and participation might produce a danger of "democratic overload" which could lead to political instability (Huntington et al. 1975, p. 7).

These patterns or models are theoretical models or ideals, and there is no society controlled by one of these cultures in full. However, the three types of culture can exist in all human societies, and one can determine the political culture of any society by measuring the distribution of these patterns in the community, and whichever is the controlling or dominant, taking into account the existence of individuals or groups within the same community with any one of the other types of political cultures along with the prevailing culture.

Almond and Verba assert that these three types of political culture can combine to create the most effective political culture to promote political stability. This is the "civic culture" which is a type of political culture that mixes the best elements of subject and participant types with high levels of political knowledge and a feeling of effective political power among citizens. This culture, therefore, is the most favourable culture for the maintenance and development of democracy because it is based on the congruency of political culture with the political structure (Strazay, 2010).

The Democratic Political Culture

The modern democratic system is the outcome of general intellectual, social, historical and political transformations which come together to establish guidelines and limits for the behaviour of citizens and political leaders, enhance the legitimacy of political institutions, and articulate the thoughts and feelings of the majority of the population. Therefore, democracy is much more than the relevant formal institutions: a party system, a parliament, and universal suffrage. Democracy requires a special set of basic values of tolerance, political pluralism, practices and political orientations and free speech.

The democratic political culture involves cognitions and feelings toward the basic democratic principles such as political tolerance, an appreciation of liberty, support for the norms of democracy, realization of civil and political rights, support for an independent media and support for free, fair and competitive elections (Gibson et al. 1992, pp. 329-371). Accordingly, democratic citizens should also recognize that they have responsibilities as well as rights, believe in political tolerance and individual liberty, aware of their political rights and are can make choices and decisions and participate in competitive elections to govern themselves democratically (Verba et al. 1978, p. 71).

Democracy is about genuine freedom and the empowerment of the individual, in addition to a participating public with a reasonable understanding of the political process. The democratic political culture, as a set of values, attitudes and behaviours influenced by substantive changes in society, plays a crucial role in a democracy which shapes human behaviour, and it is considered

to be an important factor in establishing guidelines and legal parameter for the behaviour of citizens and political leaders (Leis, 2010).

The present researcher adopts a definition, which does not differ in essence from many other common definitions of the concept of culture, which is looking to this concept as a pattern of values, attitudes and behaviours acquired by individuals as members of the community. The political culture, then, is the dominant culture in the community concerning the relationship between community members with the political system whether direct or indirect. Furthermore, the political culture is affected by, and at the same time affects, the nature of the prevailing culture and is considered as a sub-component of that culture.

Political Culture And Democratization

There are many theories about the impact of political culture on democratization, the first of which is the" civic culture "theory of Almond and Verba. In their study, they have raised an important question of whether political attitudes of citizens have a significant impact on the establishment and stability of democratic regimes. They argued that the viability of democratic institutions and political decisions are affected by attitudes and beliefs of citizens. From their field study, they concluded that democracy, in countries with high levels of civic culture attitudes, was most likely to thrive and survive by time than countries with low levels regardless of socioeconomic factors (Almond and Verba, 1963). In subsequent decades, Inglehart argues that "There is no question that economic factors are politically important, but they are only part of the story. I argue that the different societies are characterized to very different degrees by specific syndromes of political culture attitudes; that these cultural differences are relatively enduring, but not immutable; and that they have major political consequences, being closely linked to the viability of democratic institutions" (Inglehart, 1988, p. 1203) .

Hudson stresses that political culture is the most important factor in understanding politics regardless of the country, whether in the Arab World or elsewhere (Hudson, 1988, pp. 161-163). Almond and Verba have argued that "the development of a stable and effective democratic government depends upon more than the structure of government and politics: it depends upon the orientations that people have to the political process upon political culture" (Almond and Verba, 1963, p. 498). Ayubi states that "Democracy is not simply a form of government; it is also a cultural and intellectual tradition" (Ayubi, 1995, p. 397).

Peteman argues that one of the most important correlations between political culture and participation is the sense of political efficacy or sense of political competence. She stresses that "people who have a sense of political efficacy are more likely to participate in politics than those in whom this feeling is lacking…..persons who feel more effective in their daily everyday tasks and challenges are more likely to participate in politics" (Peteman, 1970, p. 46).

Some scholars maintain that Arabic culture is incompatible with democracy. For example, Patai argues that Arabs are seen as "ambitious and eager to be the leader" (Patai, 1973, p. 20), and that Arabic culture has developed a state of mind that is not open to change because of its traditionalism (Ibid, pp.294-296). Kedourie argues that, as a result of the nature of Arabic culture, a vibrant civil society is not possible in the Middle East. Moreover, he doubts democracy's future prospects; to quote, "those who say that democracy is the only remedy for the Arab world disregard a long experience which clearly shows that democracy has been tried in many countries and uniformly failed"(Kedourie, 1992, p. 105).

In *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, Shrabi argues that modernisation in the Arab region has not replaced traditional, patriarchal structures, and that on the contrary these structures are becoming stronger (Sharabi, 1988, pp.4-5). Sharabi attributes this situation to the halting of the development process half way between the traditional and modern (Ibid, p.8). He argues that Arab societies are characterized by neopatriarchal values which often coexist in contradiction with modern values. "Whatever the outward (modern) forms material, legal, and aesthetic of the contemporary neopatriarchal family and society, their internal structures remain rooted in the patriarchal values and social relations of kinship, clan, and religious and ethnic groups. The modern and the patriarchal coexist in contradictory union." (Ibid, p.8).

Literature Review

Various empirical studies have been conducted on the significance of political culture in Jordan. In his study (2007), titled "Political Culture of Jordanian Society: Tribal, Nationalist and Islamic Dimensions" Naqrash aims to investigate the political culture of the Jordanian society, with a specific reference to three crucial dimensions, namely, tribal, national (Pan – Arab), and Islamic dimensions of Jordan's political culture. The study concluded that there is a strong and significant correlation between various dimensions of Jordan's political culture and the issue of identity. He also added, in his conclusion, that there is no clear evidence of political culture prevailing as forming an obstacle to democratization in Jordan (Naqrash, 2007).

One can say that the impact of political culture differs from one society to another and from time to time. For example, Graham, (2004); Al-Jsoor, (2004); Mansour, (2005); Bukay, (2003); Al-Hassan, (1981); Inglehart and Christian, (2009); Christian, (2009); Dawsin et al. (1998); Zizi, (2002); Almond et al, (1996); Al-Danani, (2001) manipulated political culture from different aspects and examined the role of mass beliefs and values change in the democratization process. They argue that political culture is a critical factor for a country's changes to become and remain democratic. Furthermore, the researchers concluded that political culture is important in facilitating the democratic transition. As for democratization in the Arab World, some scholars argue that attitudes and beliefs which predominate in Arabs' society constitute a real obstacle to democratization.

In the study "Political attitudes of university students" conducted in 1993, Al-Mashaqbeh concludes that students in Jordanian universities tend to participate in political activities; however, they have become reluctant to participate in political parties (Al-Mashaqbeh, 1993). The study "Attitudes of a Jordanians towards political parties" is another field study. Al-Azzam in this study concluded that there are positive attitudes and intentions towards civic and political participation; however, Jordanian citizens tend to refrain from voting and joining political parties (Al-Azzam, 2003).

Al-Hawmdeh carried out a study about the political development in Jordan from 1988 to 1994. Al-Hawmdeh's 1994 study entitled "Political Development in Jordan from 1988 Until the Present"[1] investigated the effects of education, economics, and urbanization on political development in Jordan. Al-Hawamdeh used a quantitative method to collect data and to identify the factors which encouraged the political development process in Jordan. Al-Hawmdeh's study sample was 510 respondents selected randomly from the population. He concluded that tribalism and communalism strongly influenced political development, in addition to arguing that Jordanian citizens appeared to be relatively highly politically informed, interested and active.

In "Jordan: A study of Attitudes toward Democratic Changes" by Maher J. Massis, The researcher's main objective was to assess Jordanians' attitudes and beliefs toward the political system and their role in that system. His study was heavily based on three surveys conducted from 1993 to 1996 by the University of Jordan Center For Strategic Studies (Massis, 1998). Following are some of the conclusions that Massis has arrived at: presence of both traditional and modern attributes ranges from clans to modern associations; to explain, Jordanians have different avenues for engaging in civic behavior, avenues that have helped shape a participant culture that should be conducive to the further development of a democratic society. Second, most Jordanians are quite aware

of political changes around them and consider their system to be less than halfway developed toward mature democracy. Third, Jordanians indicate that they understand and support democratic principles -separation of powers, political equality, and political secularism (Ibid).

Is It Democratization?: The Rule of Law and Political Changes in Jordan since 1989 by Anu Leinonen presented in 2006. The main aim of the study was to investigate the rule of law in democratization and whether the political changes that Jordan had witnessed since 1989 indicated the presence of a successful democratization process in Jordan. Leinonen argues that modern political democracy is not possible without a embedded rule of law practices. Moreover, he asserts that one of the first concluions to be drawn that political changes that have taken place since 1989 cannot be correctly understood as indicating a process of real democratization.

In the research under discussion, no comprehensive empirical study has been found, particularly discussing the impact of political culture on the democratization process in Jordan. However, there are other studies that tackled the subject in different ways. Some investigated the correlation between political culture and participation; others explored the rule of law in democratization and assessed Jordanians' attitudes and beliefs toward the political system. However, this research is different in a sense that it mainly concentrates on the political culture as a crucial factor influencing the prospects of democratization. Moreover, unlike previous studies, as its main objective is to explore properly the reality of the political culture in Jordan, and determine the main obstacles to democratization, this study has mainly focused on the political elite, being interested in political issues. This makes it different from earlier studies which relied on ordinary citizens.

Methodology

Research Objectives

Based on literature review and theoretical/conceptual approach, it can be argued that one condition for the stability of democratic systems is the development of a political culture that is congruent with the implemented structure. Moreover, the political culture is considered as an indicator for political and democratic life progress and a reflection for political maturity. Accordingly, the researcher in this article argues that although Jordan entered a new era of political liberalization nearly twenty years of political openness, "Traditional Political Culture" still prevails in Jordan society where social, tribal, and family ties are prominent.

Method Of Research

In this study, different methods were used to reach scientific conclusions. In the first part of the study, the research used historical approach to understand the political culture and the main factors which affect the political culture in terms of both the individual characteristics of Jordanian citizens and forces and events that shape Jordanians' political culture. While in the second part, the study used an empirical approach to collect the necessary data from the study sample to explore Jordanian political culture by identifying the reality of the political culture and the main factors that shape the political culture in Jordan.

The data collection instrument used in this research was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was designed using mainly closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions. Closed ended questions were used because these are quick to answer and provide respondents with choices among possible answers. Respondents were asked to rate their responses to close-ended questions on a five point Likert scale from strongly disagree (scale=1) to strongly agree (scale=5). This type of question may not offer sufficient choices to the respondents to express their real feelings and opinions, and therefore open-ended questions were included to allow respondents to add more information, such as feelings and attitudes. Consequently, this allowed the researcher to have a better access to the respondents' opinions. Moreover, this type of question gives respondents feelings that they have an opinion on the study issue.

Study Sample (Selection Of The Sample)

The most important factors that determine the appropriate sample for a survey are its survey topic and the nature of the questions posed in the questionnaire. The sample of the current study was drawn from the political elite in Jordan.

There are various definitions of the concept of political elite, but in *Mind and Society,* Vilfredo Pareto distinguished between two divisions of political elite in a society. "The governing elites" consist of those who play a key role directly or indirectly in government, exercise power, and make decisions and rules that run the society, and the "non-governing elites" are composed of groups with special capacities, and an appreciable influence on political affairs in the society; they might be intellectuals, professionals, partisans or individuals who have an economic influence on the society (Beardsley, 1943, p. 439).

The sample was drawn from the non-governmental elite, represented in five categories selected randomly from the political elite in the Jordanian society. These categories were selected to represent purposefully the members of the

society who are interested observers, and have a considerable influence on political affairs and the social structure in the Jordanian society. Most of the study sample members are known in the community in which they work whether at the level of political party or associations or in politics in general.

Questionnaire Distribution

The questionnaire was distributed by the researcher, delivering copies to respondents. 400 questionnaires were given to five members of the groups; political parties (100) questionnaires, journalists (100) questionnaires, academics (100) questionnaire, members of human right organization (50) questionnaires, and members of the professional associations (50) questionnaires. The questionnaire was distributed in Jordan from December 1, 2010 to January 10, 2011. 237 questionnaires were returned directly to the researcher; (183=77.2%) were male, and (54=22.8) female. It should be noted that this method achieved a reasonable response rate of about 60%.

This approach helps the researcher to understand the behaviour of Jordanians by looking to the individual and the situation he is in. The researcher takes into account all major factors that may affect the political culture of Jordanian citizens. These factors can be divided into three major categories: cultural, sociological, and psychological or personal. This article examines each of these elements that shape the political culture in Jordan.

Main Research Questions

In this article the researcher examines the reality of the political culture in Jordan by answering the following questions:

- What are the most important features of the contemporary Jordanian political culture?
- Has this political culture really changed significantly since 1989 after political openness?
- What are the main factors that shape the political culture in Jordan?
- What is the main type of the political culture prevailing in the society?

The Concept Of Political Culture In Jordan

Each country has its own cherished values and special cultural features which differ from those of other countries and from one time to the next. Furthermore, these values are dynamic phenomena which change over time and may be replaced by new values. Alternatively, previously-held values may be reverted to, perhaps due to socio-economic changes. The historical framework and the current economic, social or political reality have played an important

role in the formation of the political culture in Jordan. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on those factors that have most shaped the existing political culture in Jordan. This entails an analysis of economic characteristics, the roles of religion, and the role of social institutions such as the family and tribe, in addition to the political characteristics of the Jordanian society.

The Economic Characterstics Of Jordanian Society

Most theories on the prerequisites for democratization advocate that democratization is less likely to emerge and consolidate in countries with an abundance of natural resources. Papaioannou and Siourounis (2005), who provide evidence of a positive impact of economy on democracy argue that "recent theoretical work on the political economy of development (e.g. Acemoglu and Robinson, 2000, 2001) models how economic factors, such as income level, output growth and natural resource abundance, affect the type of political organization, democracy or autocracy" (Papaioannou and Siourounis, 2005, p. 4).

At the economic level, compared with other Middle East countries, Jordan ranks directly at the bottom of the other lower middle income state[2]. Jordan is a low-middle-income country with an average income per capita of $2,000 in 2004. Historically, Jordan relatively was a small underdeveloped economy in the Middle East with highly skilled human resources and limited natural resources, dependent on foreign assistance for its social and economic well-being. Such resources include remittances inflow from migrants working abroad, Arab and foreign assistance and loans and interaction with Arab countries in terms of population movements in addition to the value of direct investments flow to Jordan (Alissa, 2007, p.2).

Shahateet argsue that "to understand what life is like in a country, it is not enough to know its per capita income or the percentage of poor people, because quality of life in a country also depends on how income is distributed"(Shahateet, 2005, p.1735). He also argues that there is a regional economic inequality in Jordan as poor people are concentrated in some governorates, while wealthy people are concentrated in the other. Therefore, he arrived at the conclusion that regional economic inequality is serious and increasing. In addition, the Jordanian governments failed to tackle this issue by reducing the growing economic inequality (Ibid p.1743). As a result of income inequality, many people choose to migrate from poor areas to the wealthy governorates and from rural areas to the central cities looking for a stable source of income and governmental occupations such as military and administrative jobs (Anbar and Abu Sabha, 2009, p. 211).

Although Jordan has enjoyed one of the highest rates of human development in the Arab World in terms of levels of education and health, it is facing the problem of worsening unemployment. This affects young people in particular, and is threatening to have serious consequences. Experts attribute this to both internal and external causes and events. The most important is the culture of shame (*Thaqafat al-'ayeb*) through which society views certain professions as inferior especially those involving manual labours. Many families and young people desire to work only in professions with higher status such as medicine, engineering, and law. For example, Jordan has achieved the highest rate of education and literacy in the Arab world, according to a report released by the United Nations Development Program in 2006. It has doubled the rate of literacy from 47% in 1960 to 87% in 1995, and also provides 67% of Jordanian families with medical services close to their places of residence (Human Development Report, 2007).

But this positive picture is combined with a massive unemployment crisis, with official figures showing a current rate of around 15%. Moreover, unemployment rates are higher for females than males, and much higher among young people under 24 years, who account for about 60% of the total unemployed. One of the most serious repercussions of unemployment is its effect on the system of social and moral values that might lead to deviations as a result of looking for ways to satisfy material needs such as drug abuse and trafficking, gambling, fraud and theft. The continued decline in economic conditions and a widening gap between per capita income levels and real purchasing power as well as the worsening unemployment crisis have led to serious weaknesses in the institutional and real political participation. In addition, there is a continuing decline in the level of respect for democratic freedoms, and the continuing decline in the political performance in light of the official standpoint.

The Role Of Religion

Religion is a dynamic force in the lives of many peoples of different races, nationalities, and ethnicities. It interacts with the socioeconomic and political spheres and influences patterns of social change (Abootalebi, 2000, p. 55). It can be argued that the greatest influence on Jordanian society historically has been that exerted by religion. It significantly affects the structure, values and attitudes prevalent in Jordanian society because it forms the primary unit of loyalty and identity. Furthermore, whether as an ideology or a model of social organization, Islam plays an important role in the life of the individual in Jordan throughout his life, including his personal relationship to the universe, private and social affairs, customs and ceremonies, and ritual prohibitions.

However, the Jordanian state has not been religious in the sense that others have been such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which was established in the same period, or the Islamic Republic of Iran founded in 1979, or Pakistan based on Islamic nationalism in 1947. The state of Jordan was founded in 1921 based on a religious legitimacy derived from the leadership of the Sharif of Mecca, Al Hussein Ben Ali, to Arab revolution on the Ottoman State during the First World War. Islam was the major reference point for the government, culture and traditions of the state, and for King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein, the founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Gharaibeh, 2010).

Generally, the role of religion in Jordanian society has created features which can be identified in people's beliefs, patterns of behaviour, and values. Hammam Saeed executive officer of the Islamic Action Front Party (*Hizb Jabhat Al-Amal Al-Islami*) has asserted that "we do not differentiate between a political party and a religious party. In Islam, there is no separation between religion and politics, because Islam has comprehensive guidelines for all aspects of life".[3]

The Role Of Social Institutions

Each society reflects the prevailing culture among its citizens. That culture developed according to the sets of values, concepts and knowledge gained through the historical and cultural heritage, geographical reality, the social structure, and the nature of the political and economic system. Unlike in Western societies, traditional social institutions such as the family and tribe in Jordan, as in most Arab countries, have played and continue to play a significant role in political culture.

The social structure in Jordan is affected by historical lifestyles, where the vast majority of Jordanian society remains attracted to the social patterns of the nomadic life, especially in the social relations among members of the family, or between people in general. Therefore, Jordanian society is dominated by the culture of the Bedouin community, and the most important characteristic of the Jordanian family is the continuation of the basic patterns of tribal relations in the organization of the family and its relationships.

The Tribe

The tribal system is a social unit and an extension of the family. It links a group of individuals and descendants of the 10th grandfather who is said to have founded the tribe. The tribe usually inhabits certain territories, speaks one language and has among its members a common culture. This participation among tribal members in one location, language and culture facilitates social interaction and creates a sense of belonging to one community dominated by the

manifestations of friendship, cooperation, and social cohesion (Al-Khatybeh et al. 2005, pp. 135-136).

Each tribe has a leader (*sheikh*) who represents his tribe and supervises the tribe's political, economic, and social affairs. The sheikh can be selected in several ways; often genetically moving from father to son or brother. In addition, the sheikh might be another close relative, the most experienced member or one who has special features such as strength, wealth, or a reputation for his ability to inherit the title of sheikh.

The tribal system in Jordan has had to confront great social, economic, and political challenge such as the greater government presence in welfare provisions, and the migration of people from rural to urban areas. However, the tribe still has an important role in the life and behaviour of individuals and continues to play a crucial role in forming identities. Moreover, the Jordanian monarchy bases its political legitimacy on tribal connections.

The Reality Of Political Culture In Jordan (Empirical Study) - Analysis And Discusion

Democracy is a political system based on the political culture of pluralism and respect for human rights in addition to the devolution of power. Without doubt these features are totally inconsistent with the rule of the individual which is reflected in the absence of a state of law and institutions, a lack of respect for the opinion, and a lack of democratic human rights such as freedom of association, parties and freedom of movement. Therefore, democracy is not a set of regulations and laws, but it is rearing needs practice and behaviour that must be with the person since childhood in the home, school, street, party and other civil institutions.

The political culture is considered an indicator of the progress of political and democratic life and a reflection of political maturity, and participation in the political process. The first step in building a democratic governance in Jordan requires changes in the nature of the prevailing political culture in society, in addition to removal of the values and behavioural patterns that interfer with democracy building.

To achieve these changes requires determining what the prevailing cultural stereotypes, and what the reason is for its existence. Therefore, the following sections shed light on the prevailing culture in Jordanian society and its values and behaviour patterns that affect political life.

Culture Of Doubt Towards The Jordanian Governments

There is a culture of doubt and lack of confidence prevailing in the society that the government has no serious intention to combat corruption or to achieve democracy, since the government has not adopted any substantive laws nor created institutions to tackle these issues. The study results revealed that financial and administrative corruption ranked as the most important reason that the study sample considered an obstacle to political reform in Jordan. 35.4% of respondents stated that this reason constituted a major obstacle to political reform and participation.

In this study, respondents were asked to identify the most important of the various internal issues which constituted the biggest obstacle to creating a stable environment for democratization and political participation. Therefore, the question provided respondents with five main reasons, in addition to an open-ended choice to mention other reasons:

1. Administrative and financial corruption in Jordan.
2. The economic status of Jordanian citizens.
3. Lack of government seriousness to achieve democracy
4. Tribalism.
5. The current electoral system.
6. Other reasons (please specify).

Table 6.1 shows that the largest obstacle, according to 36% of respondents, was the spread of administrative and financial corruption.

Table 6.1. Respondents' views about the most important obstacle to political reform

Main obstacles	F	%
administrative and financial corruption	64	36
Lack of government seriousness to achieve democracy	54	30.3
Economic status of Jordanian citizens	26	14.6
Tribalism	13	7.3
Current electoral system (SNTV)	11	6
Other reasons	11	6
Total	178	100

The second most important internal obstacle, according to the 30.3% of respondents, was a lack of government seriousness to achieve democracy and to open the way for professional associations, political parties, and the media to participate freely in the political sphere.

Jordanian society is a society based on family and tribal ties which control the various spheres of life and are considered as a major force in both Jordanian

politics and society. Sometimes tribalism and social ties are held to be a major obstacle to democratization and the rule of law. Nepotism, favouritism, and intermediation (*wasta*) are the most common forms of administrative corruption in Jordan where the members of large families and tribes with influence can hold office and gain more benefits than others.

There is a close relationship between administrative and financial corruption and favouritism, nepotism and (intermediation) *wasta*. This has created a climate of distrust because of the adoption of personal and family ties rather than standards of competence, experience, and the proper evaluation of ability and suitability in recruitment for public offices. All of this has led citizens to doubt the effectiveness of the law, and eroded trust and confidence in the Jordanian governments which disregard such important issues, and, consequently, this has led Jordanians to have less trust in the ability of political parties and parliament to resolve national problems.

Disappointment and frustration prevail among ordinary Jordanians and cast a shadow on the process of political participation, particularly participation in parliamentary elections. Elections have become a matter of voting based on criteria of familial and social ties rather than concerning the substantive issues relating to democracy and political reform.

Culture Of Fear "Politically"

The culture of fear is one of the biggest obstacles to political reform and change in the Arab world. Moreover, this culture is one of the dilemmas facing political opposition forces and makes them unable to make people support them to claim their rights and interests in the face of political power. Consequently, this culture leads to fear of power, lack of political participation, lack a strong liberal political culture and value for individuals, and lack of a strong opposition which contradicts all principles of democracy. Understanding the status of political participation in Jordan requires an understanding of the political culture that prevails in the society where political participation takes place. This involves, in particular, the elements of basic human rights and freedoms whether these are guaranteed and protected by the constitution, legislations concerning political parties, and media and expression.

The questionnaire asked the respondents a series of questions about equality and the levels of political freedoms guaranteed by the constitution, the Political Parties' Law, and the Press and Publications Law. Furthermore, these freedoms are closely related to political participation, and the expansion of these freedoms is considered to be synonymous with democracy. Respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they agreed or disagreed that the following freedoms are

guaranteed in Jordan: freedom of opinion; freedom to participate in political demonstrations; freedom to join political parties; equality of citizens' rights regardless of their religion, ethnic origin, and tribal affiliation; freedom to criticize and disagree with the government in public without being subject to security consequences; and freedom to participate in peaceful oppositional political activities without being subject to security consequences.

The results revealed that the freedom to join political parties was considered the most guaranteed freedom by 57.4% of the respondents, compared to 30.8% who disagreed that this freedom was guaranteed, and 11.8% were neutral, as shown in table 6.2. It is worth mentioning that 51.6% of political party members agreed or strongly agreed that freedom of membership in political parties is guaranteed. The second guaranteed freedom is freedom of speech with 37.6%, compared to 54% of the respondents who believed that the freedom of speech was not guaranteed in Jordan.

Table 6.2. Indicators of political freedoms in Jordan

Political Freedom	SD		D		N		A		SA		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Freedom of opinion	45	19	83	35	20	8.4	82	34.6	7	3	237
Participate in political demonstrations	54	22.9	80	33.9	24	10.2	75	31.8	3	1.3	236
Joining political parties	30	12.7	43	18.1	28	11.8	109	46.0	27	11.4	237
Equality of citizens' rights	65	27.5	65	27.5	24	10.2	62	26.3	20	8.5	236
Criticizing the government	65	27.4	88	37.1	24	10.1	53	22.4	7	3	237
Participation in peaceful, political activities	45	19.1	84	35.6	25	10.6	71	30.1	11	4.7	236

SD= Strongly Disagree D= Disagree N=Neutral SA= Strongly Agree A= Agree

The percentage of journalists who believed that freedom of speech was not guaranteed is 46.3%, compared to 43.7% who agreed or strongly agreed that the freedom of speech was guaranteed in Jordan, whereas 10% were neutral. With regard to freedom to criticize and disagree with the government in public without being subject to security consequences, 64.5% of the respondents believed that this freedom was not guaranteed, where 25.4% thought it was.

Approximately 55% of the respondents believed that the freedom to participate in political demonstrations and peaceful political activities was not guaranteed, whereas about 33% agreed that these freedoms were guaranteed. Regarding the equality of Jordanian citizens, a total of 55% of respondents reported that they disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was equality of rights for all Jordanian citizens regardless of religion, ethnic origin, and family or tribal affiliations.

Accordingly, the ranking of political freedoms in Jordan being considered guaranteed according to the data is as follows:

1. Freedom to join political parties (57.4% of respondents)

2. Freedom of opinion (37.6%)

3. Participation in peaceful, political activities (34.8%)

4. Equality of citizens' rights regardless of religion, and ethnic origin (34.8%).

5. Freedom to participate in political demonstrations (33.1%)

6. The freedom to criticize or disagree with the government (25.4%).

Based on the data presented in table 6.2, only approximately one-third of respondents believed that political freedoms are guaranteed in Jordan, with the exception of the freedom to join political parties.

Freedom Of Expression

Freedom of expression and ensuring the protection of the expression of opinions from abuse are the root of all other freedoms at all times, to all peoples and in all societies. Most constitutions in the world regulate freedom to express opinions and provide some protection of this freedom. The Jordanian constitution states that "The State shall guarantee freedom of opinion. Every Jordanian shall be free to express his opinion by speech, in writing, or by means of photographic representation and other forms of expression".[4]

Moreover, this freedom is guaranteed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers"[5], and this is also guaranteed in Article 19 of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights.[6] In Jordan there is a fierce debate concerning whether or not freedom of speech, especially without fear of punishment, really exists and, if it exists, what are the limits of this freedom. 37.6% of the questionnaire respondents agreed that freedom of

opinion is guaranteed. This result indicates that freedom of speech exists and is guaranteed to a certain extent.

The government generally respects the rights of its citizens, at least in some aspects. However, in practice the government places some restrictions on freedom of speech. Generally, individuals in Jordan are able to express their opinions and criticize the government privately without reprisals. However, citizens tend to criticize the government in public less. The government imposes certain restrictions which impede political criticism, particularly on opposition political activists, and members of political parties, and other groups (such as journalists and members of human rights organizations) who criticize the governments' policies and practices.

Furthermore, the restrictions on the level of freedom to criticize and disagree with the government in public without being subject to security consequences vary from one group to another according to their practice of criticizing and opposing the governments' policies, in addition to the effect of this criticism on the public. Therefore, if those, who criticize the government, such as the members of political parties and journalists, have a wide popular support, they tend to face more limits and restrictions than others, as figure 6.1 shows.

Figure 6.1: Percentages of respondent groups who agreed that freedom of speech is guaranteed
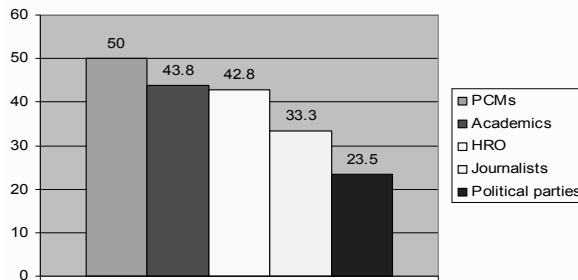
* Professional Council Members (PCMs) * Human Right Organization (HRO)

The results also revealed that the members of political parties who believed that the government does not guarantee freedom of speech in Jordan had been subjected to security consequences more than other groups, where 42.2% of them declared that they had been subjected to security consequences as a result of criticizing the government in public. In addition, 26% of journalists were subjected to security consequences due to their criticism of the government's policies, as had some members of human right organizations. In addition, some respondents who had not been subject to security consequences explained that they had never exercised this freedom; in other words, they believed that they could not criticize the government in public without anticipating punishment.

The Jordanian governments have shown intolerance of public criticism, as evidenced by the series of amendments to Press and Publications Laws in 1993, 1997, 1998, and 1999. All of these amendments gave the authorities sweeping powers to reduce the degree of press freedom. The temporary 1997 law which was ratified by a royal decree without parliamentary debate gives the government broad powers to fine, suspend, or permanently close newspapers found to be in violation of the new law's provision, and also impose on publications arbitrary and discriminatory financial obligations. According to the current law, it is prohibited to publish any information, news, cartoons, or commentaries about Jordan's armed forces and security services, offends the King and the royal family, harm national unity, general ethics, religion, security apparatus, and insults the head of Arab and friendly states. This is in addition to the last controversial amendment that allowed the jailing of journalists who break the press law.

The Political Culture Concerning Political Parties

An analysis of the political and legal reality of partisan action in Jordan confirms that until 1957 the establishment of political parties was permitted, but during the 35 years since then until the issuance of the Parties' Law 1992, the establishment of political parties was actually banned under martial law. In addition, the partisan activity was punishable by law and many party members were confined in prisons and detention centers due to their political activities. Therefore, the political parties witnessed a decline in the number of their members and affiliates due to the security consequences which faced them, in addition to the general harassment by the government of those involved in political activities. Moreover, many of the members left the party's activity due to the authority threats to the parties' members especially since getting any public job requires a prior approval of the security agencies.

The Reluctance Of Jordanian Citizens To Join Political Parties

The findings in table 6.3 show that the majority of the respondents (63.5%) are not members of political parties. It is worth noting that, with the exception of political party members, only 14.5% of the respondents were members of political parties, while 85.5% of the other respondents did not belong to political parties.

Table 6.3 Respondents' answers to the question: "Do you belong to a political party?"

Choices	Political party members		Academics		PCM		Journalists		HRO		Total	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
YES	60	93.8	7	19.4	5	23.8	10	13.5	2	5.7	84	36.5
NO	4	6.3	29	80.6	16	76.2	64	86.5	33	94.3	146	63.5
Total	64	100	36	100	21	100	74	100	35	100	230	100

Furthermore, the results revealed that the members of the professional councils (23.8%) were more likely than other groups to belong to political parties. 19.4% of academics belonged to political parties, and 13.5% of journalists were party members, while members of human right associations had the lower membership in political parties (5.7%). Those who said that they were not party members were then asked that if they intend to join any political parties in the future, which of the current political parties would represent their political aspirations so that they might join it. If they did not intend to join a political party, they were asked to mention the main reason for this. Table 6.4 below shows that 80.5% of respondents said that they do not intend to join political parties. Only 19.5% answered they would join political parties in the future.

Table 6.4 Respondents' answers to the question, "Do you intend to join a political party in the future?"

Choices	Academics		PCM		Journalists		HRO		Total	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
YES	5	17.5	9	52.9	9	13	5	17.1	29	19.5
NO	24	82.8	8	47.1	60	87	29	82.9	124	80.5
Total	29	100	17	100	69	100	35	100	153	100

On the other hand, the respondents who did not intend to join political parties were asked to mention the main reasons behind their decision. The majority of respondents (70%, n=42) declared that they had no confidence in the current political parties and their programmes as they did not offer clear proposals to address the country's main problems. In the prevailing political culture, the executive authorities in Jordan have adopted clear and negative attitudes for several decades towards political parties, and have tended to consider them as responsible for threats to the security and stability of the country's political life. Even after the issuance of the Political Parties' Law in 1992 which decreed the legitimacy and plurality of political parties, these negative attitudes continued. In addition, the government has shown caution, and sometimes hostility toward social movements and non-governmental organizations led by the opposition forces that play a political role, and which

seek to mobilize their members and public opinion to take political positions that do not agree with the policies of the government.

Therefore, the persistent culture of fear is clear evidence that the Jordanian political parties are still experiencing crisis reflected in the reluctance of Jordanian citizens to engage in partisan activities. This is a fundamental reason for the lack of growth of political parties in terms of the number of members.

Culture Of Political Participation

Political participation means the contribution of citizens and their active role in the political system to influence the official decision-making process. At the forefront of political participation patterns are electoral activity, partisan action, and union work which are all linked to the principles of political pluralism, freedom of opinion, freedom of peaceful assembly, and the right to form associations and political parties. Democracy is the best mechanism for effecting change for the better, through the peaceful rotation of power. This devolution of power is usually conducted through the empowerment of the people to exercise their right to elect their representatives in full freedom and fairness on the basis of the candidates' programmes.

The electoral process provides the opportunity for the owners of these programmes to exercise their role in the executive branch and therefore apply their programme, thus providing a chance for people to judge their success or failure. Accordingly, success in the application of these programmes demonstrates confidence, or, to the contrary, failure is reflected in the ballot box by withdrawing confidence. All of this guarantees the rights of individuals and groups to participate in public affairs, with devolution of power, and the possibility of change.

The parliamentary elections in Jordan raised many problematic and challenging issues concerning the electoral system, elections management, the results of the elections, and the degree of citizen participation. Therefore, respondents were asked about their participation in the 2010 parliamentary elections, the main reason behind their vote, voting for women in Jordanian parliamentary elections, the voters' behaviour, and their evaluations of the electoral system.

Respondents were asked if they had voted in the last elections (2010 elections) to explore their participation in parliamentary elections. Respondents were given two choices:

1. Yes   or   2. No.

As shown in table 6.5, the majority of the respondents (77.4%) had voted in the last parliamentary elections compared with a ratio of 22.6% who did not participate. It can also be noted from the table that the ratios of those who participated in the last elections among professional councils' members (85.7%) and political party members (84.4%) were higher than those in other groups of the sample.

Table 6.5. Respondents' participation in the 2010 parliamentary elections

Choices	Political parties		Academics		PCM		Journalists		HRO		Total	
	F	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**	**F**	**%**
YES	54	84.4	25	69.4	18	85.7	59	75.6	26	72.2	182	77.4
NO	10	15.6	11	30.6	3	14.3	19	24.4	10	27.8	53	22.6
Total	64	100	36	100	21	100	78	100	36	100	235	100

In general, the participation rate of respondents was around three-quarters, ranging from a low of 69.4% academics to a high of 85.7% of PCM. On the other hand, the ratios of those who did not participate in the last elections ranged from 14.3% of PCMs to 30% of academics.

The questionnaire asked respondents who said they had voted to identify the main reason behind this decision. The respondents were given five choices:

1. National duty and constitutional right,
2. Tribalism and social ties,
3. To enhance democracy in Jordan,
4. To put the right person in the right position
5. Others (please specify)

However, it is clear from table 6.6 below that tribalism and social ties represented the main priority for many of the sample. Over half of the respondents (52.2%) declared that this was the most important reason behind their decision to vote in the last elections.

Table 6.6. Respondents' reasons for participating in the 2010 parliamentary elections

Main reason	Frequency	Percentage
Tribalism and social ties	95	52.2%
National duty and constitutional right	33	18.1%

To put the right person in the right position	27	14.8%
To enhance democracy in Jordan	22	12.1%
Other reasons	5	2.7%
Total	182	100%

Only 12.1% of respondents supported the issue of enhancing democracy in Jordan, and putting the right person in the right position was third with 14.8% of responses. National duty and constitutional rights was cited by 18.1%, and 2.7% of the respondents declared that their participation was a partisan decision. The Jordanian citizen tends to refrain from political participation. Therefore, the electoral process for elections to the House of Representatives 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th and 16th has witnessed reluctance among voters to participate. Table 6.7 shows statistical comparisons and the proportions of the participants in the electoral process for the years 1989, 1993, 1997, 2007 and 2010.

Table 6.7. Participation of Jordanian citizens in the electoral process from 1989-2010

	1989 elections	1993 elections	1997 elections	2007 elections	2010 elections
Population estimates by the General Statistics	3,370,867	4,152,000	4,580,234	5,723,677	6,300,000
Number of registered voters	1,104,45	1,402,78	1,838,199	2,105,882	2,500,0000
The number of voters	541,426	822,294	824,664	1,052,941	
The ratio of the number of voters to the number of the election cards	51.58%	68.47%	55.72%	50.00%	49.8%

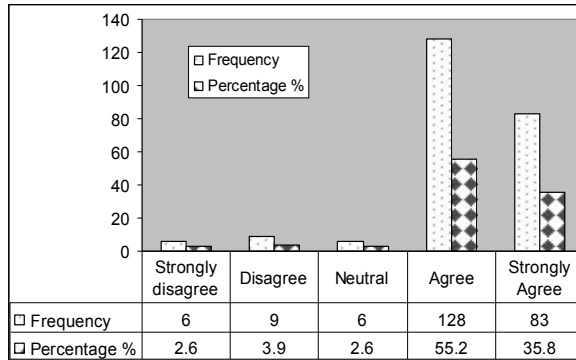http://www.electionsjo.com/ESubject/DefaultSub.asp?seid=82. December 2010

Voters' Motives For Participation In Parliamentary Elections

When voting takes place in parliamentary elections, respondtnts were asked one important basic question: why do voters vote? In other words, do voters vote according to their personal interests or for the interest of the community? In order to produce a clearer picture of parliamentary voting behaviour in Jordan, the respondent, were asked about voting behaviour in Jordan.

When respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement "Voting behaviour in Jordan is directly linked with the primary affiliations (tribal or familial) of voters". As figure 6.2 shows, nearly all respondents (91%, n= 211) either agreed or strongly agreed that voting behaviour was linked to tribal and familial affiliation. Only 15 respondents (6.5%) disagreed, and 6 (2.6%) were neutral.

Figure 6.2 Respondents, opinion regarding voting behaviour in Jordanian parliamentary elections

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
☐ Frequency	6	9	6	128	83
☐ Percentage %	2.6	3.9	2.6	55.2	35.8

Gender Culture (Masculine Culture)

Although Jordan has witnessed democratic transformation over the last decade, this requires the effective participation of women who constitute almost half of the Jordanian society. Despite the growing role of women in social and economic life, their role in the political sphere is still weak. Like other Arab societies, the Jordanian society from its inception and social composition is still a patriarchal society, where women are treated in such a way that hinders their access to the decision-making centres in the community.

Therefore, the head of the family, the tribal leader (Sheikh), and sometimes the Secretary-General of the political party has the final say in deciding whether or not to participate, in guiding public opinion, and defining the direction of the electoral votes, in addition to the identification of the candidates and ensuring their access to the council of deputies. Women have a limited presence in political positions due to the tribal nature of Jordanian elections. Consider the paradox in the last municipal elections in Jordan. A woman candidate[7] who ran for a seat in the municipal council in Mafraq was appointed a council member even though she did not obtain a single vote. She did not vote for herself and neither did her husband and five children.

Although the number of people registered for voting in her district was 144 men and 207 women, and voter turnout was 95 per cent, she got no vote at all. She justified the result by saying "I did not vote for myself because of my commitment to my tribe and the residents of my town to vote for another candidate, who unfortunately did not win… I would not break my commitment to the tribe. We are a tribal community and the priority is for electing a man".[8]

Women's Political Participation

Women have been deprived of political participation for many decades since the founding of the Emirate of Trans-Jordan in 1921. However, the right to political participation in the pre-independence period, which was restricted to males, has not really changed since independence, even during the 1960s and 1970s. Although women had no political and legal right to vote and to be elected for parliamentary elections until 1974, their struggle to be granted the right to vote and run for municipal and parliamentary elections started in the early 1950s. This struggle was led by the Women's Awakening Association, founded in 1952, which has been resolved as a result of its activities.[9]

The Jordanian constitution never distinguished between women and men in terms of rights and duties, and the 1974 election law granted women the right to vote. However, the theoretical equality in the constitution and election law did not reflect the reality of women's situation in the political sphere. Women remained subject to the effects of social values, traditions, and the prevailing culture.

Over the last decade, Jordan has witnessed important economic, social, and political transformations. At the political level, a new climate of political openness and pluralism encouraged women- as they accounted 49% of the Jordanian community according to the department of statistics in 2004- to strengthen their political role and participate in political life.

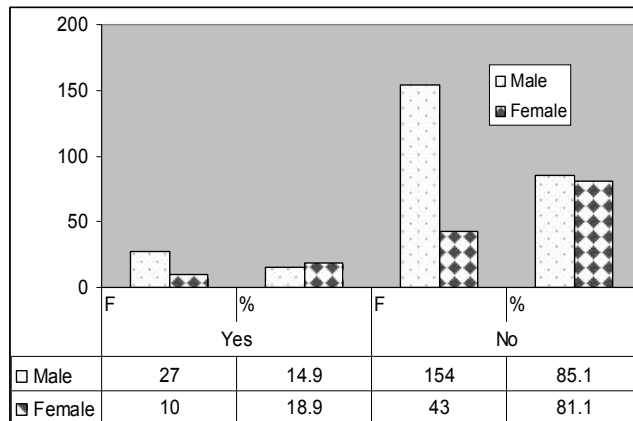- **Women in Jordanian Parliaments**

The number of women candidates for Jordanian parliamentary elections has increased steadily since women won the right to run for parliamentary elections in 1980s. But it will also be noticed that the increase in the number of women candidates has not been accompanied by an increase in the number of women MPs. To explore the problematic relationship between the number of women candidates and women MPs, the respondents were asked two questions to provide an overview about the reality of women's participation in parliamentary elections. Based on data presented in figure 6.3, the results revealed that an overwhelming majority of the 234 respondents (84.2%) had not voted for women, compared with only 15.8% who had.

Figure 6.3. Respondents' voting for women candidates in the 2010 parliamentary elections

	YES	NO	Total
☐ Total F	37	197	234
☐ Total %	15.8	84.2	100
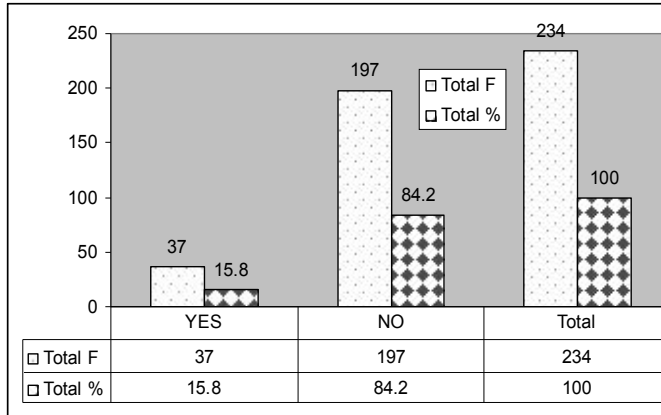
More importantly, the results also revealed that the ratio of women who voted for women candidates was very low (18.9 %) compared with 43 women respondents (81.1%) who did not vote, as figure 6.4shows.

Figure 6.4. Respondents' answers to the question "Have you voted for women candidates in the last parliamentary elections?" According to Gender

	F	%	F	%
		Yes		No
☐ Male	27	14.9	154	85.1
▣ Female	10	18.9	43	81.1

As a consequence of concern at the low rates of voting for women candidates in Jordanian parliamentary elections, as shown in the figure above, another question was asked that aimed at discovering an explanation for women's low representation in parliament, asking respondents for their main reason for not voting for women candidates.

Respondents were given five main choices:

1. Lack of women experience in political affairs.

2. Social obstacles (culture and traditions)

3. Religious dimension (for example urging women to be more conservative and calling for the separation of the sexes in the workplace).

4. Women do not have enough experience in public affairs

5. Tribal dimension (women could not get support from their tribes)

6. Other reasons (please specify)

the majority of respondents (43.8%) concluded that the absence of women candidates with political experience was the main reason for their decision. Social obstacles were the second most common reason (17.3%), and 6.1% cited, 5.1%, the tribal dimension and 4.1% the religious dimension.

Moreover, 46 respondents (23.5%) cited five other reasons for not voting for women candidates. 22 (11.2%) stated that there were no women candidates in their electoral districts, and 10 (5.1%) indicated that they were committed to their tribal candidates. Some respondents (3.5%, n=7) said that they opposed the quota system and, therefore, did not vote for women candidates, and another four respondents (2%) declared that there were no partisan women candidates in their districts. The current electoral law cited by (1.7%, n=3) of respondents as a reason not to vote for women candidates.

It is also important to note that 42% of political party members who did not vote for women believed that women do not have enough political experience to be elected to parliament. In addition, 54% of academics, 50% of PCMs, and 44.6% of journalists gave the same reason for not voting for women. More importantly, table 6.8 shows that 50% of women respondents who did not vote for women candidates justified their decision in terms of the lack of women's experience in political affairs.

Table 6.8. Respondents' reasons for not voting for women candidates, by sex

Statement		Men	Women
lack of women's experience in political affairs	F	64	21
	%	41.6%	50.0%
Social obstacles (community's culture and traditions)	F	30	3
	%	19.5%	7.1%
Tribal dimension (women could not get support from their tribe)	F	9	3
	%	5.8%	7.1%
Religious dimension (religion urging women to be more conservative)	F	6	2
	%	3.9%	4.8%

Others	**F**	37	11
	%	24.0%	26.2%
Total	**F**	154	42
		100.0%	100.0%

Conclusions

Despite the launching of political openness in Jordan which was crowned by the 1989 parliamentary elections, and despite the fact that the democratic process has received and still receives considerable interest from successive governments at the level of writing and slogans, the same level of success has not been achieved in terms of practical application. Addressing the issue of democracy in Jordan requires a search for the real reasons that hinder the fundamental building of a democratic society rather than simply focusing on external manifestations of this problem.

There is a series of subjective and objective factors that have led to drawing the development of the political culture of the Jordanian society. One of the most prominent of these factors is the political and intellectual despotism that led to the fall of the society since many centuries in the quagmire of civilization underdevelopment. Those factors led to a revival of negative values such as lack of interest, introversion, intolerance, refusal of dialogue, encouragement of the narrow loyalties, hypocrisy, preference for self-interest rather than for the public interest, and the promotion of male dominance.

- The most important conclusion to be drawn from the research findings in relation to political culture in Jordan, is that there can be no real democratic system in Jordan without the establishment and consolidation of democratic values in the political culture of Jordanian citizens. As Ayubi stated, "Democracy is simply not a form of government; it is also a cultural and intellectual tradition" (Ayubi, 1995, p. 379). This culture is the key element in the formulation of political relationships between the government and the population, because democracy is not just laws, political institutions and electoral processes, but first of all it is a set of values and principles which provide the cultural framework for a democratic system.

- Despite the remarkable progress witnessed by Jordan at the end of the 1980s, the culture of fear in the Jordanian society still poses a fundamental challenge to democratic reform. The fear of the security agencies and the consequences of criticizing governments in public and disagreeing with them based on perceptions and impressions generated among citizens. In addition, the culture of fear results in complaints about violations of their rights, or lack of the government's responses to cope with complain.

- The present study also concludes that the subject political culture still prevails in Jordan. Democratic values do not represent a major component in the structure of the political culture of the majority of Jordanians, which has led to the prevalence of an apathetic political culture. On the other hand, negative values and abstention from participation are common among the majority, in addition to the sense of their inability to influence national events and developments. Moreover, as Sharabi argued, Arab societies are characterized by patriarchal values (Sharabi, 1988, p.8). Patriarchal culture still dominates the culture of the Jordanian society. The social relations of kinship and the tribe are still dominant and constitute the main motives for Jordanians to participate in parliamentary elections. Furthermore, there is a culture of doubt and lack of confidence prevailing in the society that the government has no serious intention to combat corruption or to achieve democracy, since the government has not adopted any substantive laws nor created institutions to tackle these issues.

- Finally, regarding women's participation in Jordanian parliaments, although the quota system has brought women into Jordan's parliament, the presence of women there really only represents a facade of democracy and is purely cosmetic, as the majority of citizens do not believe in the importance of the political role of women.

المعوقات الثقافية للحركة الديمقراطية في الأردن

واقع الثقافة السياسية في الأردن بعد مرور عشرين عاما على الانفتاح السياسي

أمين العزام: جامعة آل البيت، المفرق - الأردن.

ملخص

تناولت الدراسة واقع الثقافة السياسية في الأردن بعد مرور عشرين عاما تقريبا على الانفتاح السياسي، إضافة إلى بيان العوامل الرئيسية التي تشكل هذه الثقافة السياسية عن طريق تحديد أهم سمات الثقافة السياسية الأردنية المعاصرة. وللوقوف على العوامل التي تشكل الثقافة السياسية، تم طرح بعض الأسئلة الهامة مثل: هل تغيرت الثقافة السياسية بشكل كبير منذ 1989 (بعد الانفتاح السياسي)؟ ما العوامل الرئيسية التي ساهمت في تشكيل الثقافة السياسية في الأردن؟ وما نمط الثقافة السياسية الرئيسي السائد في المجتمع الأردني؟.

أستخدمت الدراسة المنهج الإحصائي التحليلي لتحليل المعلومات والبيانات الواردة في 400 استبانة تم توزيعها على خمس مجموعات من النخبة السياسية في الأردن. وقد خلصت الدراسة إلى أنه لا يمكن أن يكون هناك نظام ديمقراطي حقيقي في الأردن دون إنشاء وترسيخ قيم الديمقراطية في الثقافة السياسية للمواطن الأردني. علاوة على ذلك، أكدت هذه الدراسة أنه على الرغم من أن الأردن قد دخل عهدا جديدا من الانفتاح السياسي -عشرين عاما تقريبا- إلا أن الثقافة السياسية التقليدية لا تزال سائدة في المجتمع الأردني الذي تسود فيه الروابط الاجتماعية والقبلية والعائلية.

Notes:

[1]   Present refers to 1994 when he completed his thesis.

[2]   National Council for Family Affiars, 2008 at
       http://www.ncfa.org.jo/Portals/0/VAW%20EN.pdf. July, 2011.

[3]   http://www.ammannet.net/look/Article. September 2010

[4]   The Jordanian Constitution, Article 15.

[5]   http://www.unhchr.ch/udhr/lang/eng.htm. September 2010

[6]   http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm. September 2010

[7]   Fardous Mohammad Al Khaldi, a candidate who ran for a seat in the Sabha and
       Dafianeh municipal council in Mafraq.

[8]   *The Jordan Times*, New Female Council Member Wins Seat with Zero Votes,
       February 2010.

[9]   http://www.electionsjo.com/Esubject/DefaultSub.asp?seid=240. December 2010

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