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## **Obstacles that Limit the effective participation of Jordanian women in parliamentary life (1989-2021 AD)**

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**Abstract**---This study aimed at identifying the obstacles that limit the effective participation of Jordanian women in parliamentary life (1989-2021) as well as their satisfaction with their performance in parliamentary work. A questionnaire of three axes: obstacles before candidacy, obstacles after winning, and the extent of satisfaction with participation in parliament was designed as an instrument for this study. The participants were (71) women parliamentarians. The study revealed that there were obstacles before running elections as well as after winning the parliamentary seat. The study also revealed that Jordanian women parliamentarians are satisfied with their performance. Several recommendations were put forth.

**Keywords**---obstacles, effective participation, parliamentary life.

### **Introduction**

During the era of emirates, women did not participate in political work alongside men despite their participation in agricultural works. After the independence, they were involved in volunteering and charity works. During the fifties of the last century, women's interests in the rise of political organizations that seek democratic freedoms, political participation, equality, and equal opportunities grew, leading to the interaction of women with the events. The level of awareness of Jordanian women has developed to demand their own issues such as demanding equality, social justice, equal opportunities and lifting discrimination

against them. In 1954 AD, 100 women announced the founding of the Arab Women's Union which one of its goals is to increase community awareness of women's issues and activate the role of women in society through community activities. The Union also demanded the amendment of laws and the right of women to vote in the parliamentary elections. The Arab Women's Union submitted memoranda and petitions demanding that women be granted their political rights. Therefore, in 1955 AD, the Cabinet issued a decision approving the draft electoral law which allows educated women without illiteracy to vote. This matter led to raising thousands of fingerprints of illiterate women demanding their right to vote, like the illiterate male brother (Al-Borini and Al-Hindi, 1994).

The right to vote for educated or illiterate women was not achieved until 1974 AD, after the issuance of the Parliament Election Law No. (8) amending the Election Law No. (24) for the year 1960, which stipulated in the second article the necessity to modify the definition of the word Jordanian male as male or female (the Official Gazette, 1974). Women did not exercise this right until 1984 and at the level of by-elections only, after parliamentary life in Jordan stopped because of the Israeli aggression on June 5, 1967, and the occupation of the West Bank, and thus the difficulty of holding elections there. Moreover, this matter was due to the decisions of the Rabat Summit in 1974 AD, which considered that the Palestine Liberation Organization was the legitimate representative of the Palestinians. It was later replaced by the National Consultative Council by appointment, the first of which was on April 20, 1978, AD, the second on April 20, 1980, AD, and the third on April 20, 1982, AD, which was dissolved on January 7, 1984, AD. The ninth parliament was called on January 16, 1984, to convene by royal decree, and on October 22, 1987, the term of this parliament was extended for two new years. It was considered the tenth Parliament and continued to exercise its powers until 1989 (Khair, 1993).

Women exercised the right to vote in 1984 AD at the level of by-elections only, noting that no female candidate was nominated, whereas the number of male candidates rose to (101). In 1989, after the resumption of democratic life, the parliamentary elections were marked by the parliamentary participation of women when 12 women were nominated with a rate of 1.9% out of (647) candidates and for (7) districts out of twenty districts. Zero women were elected. In the 1993 AD elections which witnessed the change of the electoral system from the open list to the one-vote system, only three women out of the total number of (534) candidates ran for the elections with a percentage of (0.6%). One female candidate won for the Circassian and Chechen seat in the third district in Amman against (79) parliamentarians. In 1997 AD, (17) women ran for elections with a percentage of 3.1%, and the result was zero against (80) parliamentarians, while only one woman won the by-elections for the vacant seat in the parliament on 13 of March 2001 by vote of parliamentarians (General Statistics Department (2008), Makhdameh and Fraihat (2020).

After these results, the Women's Coalition was formed in 1996, including representatives of women's non-governmental organizations and associations and Jordanian society organizations, to coordinate efforts and exert pressure on the decision-maker to achieve fair participation for women by allocating (20%) of the parliamentary seats. The Coordinating Committee of Non-Governmental

Organizations was active and collected (150,000) signatures on memoranda submitted to officials demanding the allocation of a women's quota of no less than (20) of parliamentary seats in order to allow women to enter the Parliament, but efforts failed with the issuance of the Fifth Election Law for the Interim Parliament No. (34) for the year 2001 AD (Fraihat, 2020).

In 2002, a national commission was formed by a royal will which developed the Jordan First document, whereas the Women's Quota Committee recommended that election laws consider the empowerment of women to participate in elections and bring women to the parliament through a temporary and transitional women's quota by allocating (8) seats for women in the parliament. Considering this situation, the government has proceeded to amend the electoral law, and for the first time under the amended temporary election law No. (11) of 2003 and under the amended system No. (17) of 2003, six seats were added to the (104) seats in all the electoral districts to be filled by female candidates in the various electoral districts in the Kingdom in addition to having the right to compete for all other seats. Therefore, the number of seats in Jordan was increased from (104) to (110), and the law determined the mechanism for selecting the winning women for these seats based on the percentage of the number of votes each female candidate received from the total votes cast from the electoral district where she ran. In the event of equal percentages among the female candidates, a lottery will be held to select the winning candidate. The reasons for issuing this amendment are an embodiment of the principle of women's political participation in the parliament in compliance with the royal directives, and in implementation of the recommendations of the National Commission (Jordan First) formed by a royal will, and the recommendations of the Women's Representation Committee in the parliament (the women's quota) formed by the prime minister (the Official Gazette, 2010), and (Fraihat, 2021 AD).

According to the amended temporary election law No. (11) of 2003, Article (4/f) stipulates that if a seat reserved for women in the parliament becomes vacant, it shall be filled by by-elections in the electoral district for those who occupied that seat, in accordance with the provisions of this law and within a period not exceeding sixty days from the date on which the parliament notified the prime minister of the vacancy of the seat, provided that the nomination to fill it is limited to women who meet the conditions for nomination in that district (Official Gazette, 2001), and (Fraihat, 2021). In the elections of 2003 AD, women participated through the women's quota system. (54) women out of (760) candidates ran for the elections with a percentage of (7.1%) and won (6) seats compared to (104) males. None of the female candidates won based on free competition. In the 2007 AD elections that were held to choose members of the fifteenth parliament, (199) women ran and won (7) seats in the parliament compared to (103) males. They won the six seats allocated to the women's quota and won the seventh seat in competition with men (General Department of Statistics 2008). Despite the emergence of a trend of supporters and opponents of the quota system, it remains the only way for women to reach the parliament until the circumstances change and allow us to abandon this system (Fraihat, 2020).

In general, the quota system is used in cases where non-use of the quota may lead to an unintended dysfunction or imbalance in the issue of representation. One of the quotas levels mentioned here, quotas for elected representatives, is the quota that targets election results. This is sometimes known as the “reserved seats” system whereby a number or a percentage of parliament seats are reserved for candidates belonging to marginalized or targeted groups through the quota. This is usually stipulated in constitutional articles in order to confirm the efforts made by the country concerned to improve the levels of representation of minorities. Among the justifications that lie behind the call for a quota system is the aim to improve the levels of women's representation because women represent half of society, and thus have the right to obtain half of the representative seats (justification based on the principle of justice). Moreover, women have different experiences (biological or social) that must be represented (justification based on the principle of experience), and women and men have somewhat conflicting interests, so men cannot represent women as they should (justification based on the principle of belonging to groups with different interests). (<http://aceproject.org/>).

A percentage of (20%) of the seats in the parliament was not allocated to women until the provisional election law No. (9) for the year 2010 AD was issued. According to the electoral district system No. (26) for the year 2010 AD, (6) seats were added to the total parliamentary seats allocated to the sub-districts, so that (12) seats had to be filled by female candidates in the various sub-electoral districts of the electoral districts in the Kingdom for the winners of these seats. Based on the percentage of the number of votes that each candidate received from the total votes of the voters for the sub-electoral district in which she was nominated, the number of women winning seats for women in each governorate or in any of the Badia electoral districts may not exceed one winner. If the ratio is equal between two female candidates one or more candidates will be selected by lottery (The Official Gazette, 2010).

The number of women who participated in the 2010 AD elections to select the members of the sixteenth parliament reached (134) candidates out of the total number of (763) candidates, or a percentage of (17.5%). (13) women won with a percentage of (10.8%), so that the total number of female parliamentarians reached (13). They won the 12 seats allocated to the women's quota and won the thirteenth seat in competition with men (papers obtained by researchers from the Independent Election Commission). Due to the political movement in 2011 and its demands to abolish the one-vote law, the parliament issued the election law No. (25) of 2012 which preserved the one-vote law and divided the kingdom into several local electoral districts according to a system, allocating one hundred and eight parliamentary seats to these districts. Fifteen of these seats were reserved for women after adding (3) more seats than the previous law for the Bedouins of the north, the center and the south. In addition to the seats that women obtain during the election, the names of the winners are determined by a special committee formed by the parliament. The names of the winners of the seats allocated for women in each governorate and in each of the Badia districts are determined based on the percentage of votes each candidate received from the total votes cast in her local electoral district, whether it is in the governorate or in one of the Badia districts, provided that the number of women winning the

allocated seats for women is in accordance with the provisions of this paragraph in each governorate. Moreover, in each of the Badia electoral districts, the number of the winning female candidates does not exceed one winner. If the percentage of votes is equal between two or more female candidates at the governorate level or in one of the Badia districts, the election shall be repeated among the female candidates with equal percentage of votes. The Chairman of the Special Committee publicly announces to the audience the names of the winners of the seats reserved for women. If a seat reserved for women in the parliament becomes vacant, it is filled by by-elections in the electoral district for those who occupied that seat in accordance with the provisions of this law. This occurs within a period not exceeding sixty days from the date on which the parliament notifies the government or the Independent Election Commission when the seat is vacant, provided that the nomination to fill the vacant seat is limited to women who meet the conditions for candidacy in that district. The term of membership lasts until the end of the term of the parliament (Official Gazette, 2012 AD). As for Article (54) of the election law and its amendments No. (6) of 2016 AD of the parliament, it stipulates that if any seat designated for women in the parliament becomes vacant for any reason, it will be filled by the candidate immediately following the holder of the vacant seat (Official Gazette, 2016 AD).

For the 2013 parliamentary elections for the seventeenth parliament, the number of female candidates (independents) reached (105) compared to (501) males with a rate of (17.33%). The number of female candidates for the lists reached (86) compared to (733) males at a rate of (10.50%). (18) women won (15 quotas, and 3 competitions). As for the parliamentary elections which happened in 2016 to elect the 18th parliament, they were held based on the open proportional list after canceling the closed proportional list stipulated in the previous law. The number of female candidates reached (252) compared to (1000) males at a rate of (20.13%), and (20) women won (15 quotas, and 5 competitions) which is the highest percentage obtained to date. The number declined in the 2020 parliamentary elections to elect the 19th parliament as (360) women ran for the elections, but only 16 women won (15 quotas, and 1 competition). This number represented 12% of the total number of the members of the parliament (papers obtained by researchers from the Independent Election Commission).

### **Statement of the Problem**

By reviewing the participation of Jordanian women in political life under the dome of the parliament, researchers noted the weak performance of female parliamentarians in the legislative and oversight fields, and the control of male representatives over the work of the parliament such as chairing committees and opinion-making as well as representation in parliamentary delegations in general. Despite the achievements that Jordanian women have achieved in all fields, their participation in parliamentary life is still very weak compared to men even though they were granted the right to vote and to run for elections since 1974 AD according to the amended election law No. (8). Since the resumption of democratic life in Jordan in 1989 -2003 AD, the election results for women were either zero or one seat. Despite the intervention of legislations with a clear political will that pushed women to advance after allocating them seats in 2003 AD, the number of seats won by women in the period between (2003-2021 AD) in competition with

men did not exceed (5) seats. Therefore, the study came to reveal the obstacles that women face in parliamentary life, especially from the point of view of Jordanian women parliamentarians from the eleventh parliament to the nineteenth parliament.

### **Purpose and Questions of the Study**

The study aims to answer the following questions around which the subject of the study is focused, that being the obstacles that Jordanian women parliamentarians face limiting their political participation in our Jordanian society:

- What are the most important obstacles that Jordanian women face before running for participation in parliamentary life from the point of view of the study sample (Jordanian women parliamentarians)?
- What are the most important obstacles that limit the participation of Jordanian women in parliamentary life after winning and getting access to the dome of the Jordanian parliament from the point of view of the study sample (Jordanian women parliamentarians)?
- What is the extent of Jordanian parliamentary women's satisfaction with their performance and participation in parliamentary life from the point of view of the study sample (Jordanian women parliamentarians)?

### **Significance of the Study**

The theoretical and practical importance of the study arises from the realization that the issue of women's participation in parliamentary life is closely related to their rights granted to them through laws, regulations, and amendments to the electoral law since 1974 AD and the activation of the women's quota since 2003 AD which enhances their role in parliamentary life and the representation of society. Moreover, the process of women's participation in parliamentary life is an issue linked to democracy. Therefore, this study examines the obstacles that limit the level of Jordanian women's participation in parliamentary life, especially when compared to the level of Jordanian men's participation considering the development witnessed by Jordanian society in line with the comprehensive national development process. The results of this study also reveal the most important obstacles that prevent and limit women's participation in parliamentary life which helps decision-makers in building appropriate plans and finding strategies that lead to activating women's participation in parliament.

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

- **Obstacles:** problems or challenges that Jordanian female parliamentarians face before running for parliamentary elections, and after winning parliamentary seats.
- **Parliamentary life:** the parliamentarian devotes himself/ herself completely to the tasks for which they presented themselves to serve the country. They tackle the most important issues of the parliament which are supervision, legislation and following up on public issues about the government's work according to the rules.

- **Parliamentarian in the parliament:** representing a party of the nation, elected by the people to represent them, to preserve and defend their rights. The parliamentarian works on enacting laws in the parliament, monitors the work of the government, and holds it accountable.
- **Parliament:** the place where the people's representatives meet. Those who are included in the parliament are called parliamentarians.
- **Candidate:** every Jordanian whose candidacy application has been accepted for the parliamentary elections.
- **Jordanian women parliamentarians:** the winning candidates for membership in the parliament according to the provisions of the constitution and according to the election law.

### Related Studies

Rouhi (1995) conducted a study to reveal the role of the women's movement in Jordanian society. This study showed that the women's movement in Jordan is a social movement that does not carry within it the concept of the collective identity of members at the general level, but rather depends on the existence of a collective identity for small organizations. The Jordanian women's movement within that movement lacked total solidarity, as the women's movement was dominated by partial goals and its lack of spread in general, affecting the awareness of the general and specific goals of the women's movement. Ashour (2003) conducted a study on the political participation of Jordanian women (1989-2001). This study concluded that the activities undertaken by women in order to change the circumstances they are going through are limited and do not enable them to participate politically in the parliamentary elections, membership in parliament, the ministry, or any political position. One of the most important results is that tribalism and society's view of the role of women are among the most important obstacles to women's access to parliament. The study recommended the need to reach the best means to enhance women's participation in the electoral process, which are women's support for women in first place, men's support for women in second place, and the strengthening of confidence in the integrity of the electoral process in the third place.

Al-Smadi (2002) conducted a study on the role of women in Islamic political parties in order to compare the roles of women in the Jordanian Islamic Action Front Party and their role in the Lebanese Hezbollah. This study found that women in Hezbollah gained high confidence in leadership, while women's leadership in the Islamic Action Front did not gain similar confidence. The study also revealed the existence of a supportive position within Hezbollah regarding the participation of women while opinions differed in the Front Party regarding this issue. The study also showed that there is no problem in the theocratic jurisprudence vision about women's political participation in the Islamic movement, but the problems and achievements in this field are related to the political and social environment surrounding political and public work and their repercussions on women. It was found that women in Jordan believe that there are many obstacles that impede the political work of Islamist women while activists in Hezbollah believe that the party offers wide opportunities and facilities for women's participation.

Barakat (2006) conducted a study on the challenges that Jordanian women faced in the parliamentary work during the time period from (1989-2006 AD). This study concluded that there are several challenges and obstacles that obstructed women's political participation such as the self-obstacles of the women's movement, which included the size of women's groups, the leadership of the women's movement, its resources and means of work, the extent of its organization, and the absence of motivation for political action, and obstacles related to the political work environment. This study includes also the historical inheritance, from ancient Arab history to the modern Jordanian experience, which reflects the decline of the position of women in political work and social obstacles, including the patriarchal system in the Jordanian family and clans, the prevailing culture, and economic obstacles represented in the decline in the role of women in economic life which led to the weakening of their political role.

Al-Khuza'i (2006) conducted a study entitled "Women's Participation in Parliamentary Elections in Jordan" as an application to the results of the 2003 parliamentary elections. It aims to show the extent of Jordanian women's participation in the parliamentary elections and to discover the reasons behind the incapability of reaching the parliament, using the survey method that adopted the results of the 2003 parliamentary elections recorded by the Ministry of the Interior, in particular the part relating to the participation of women. The study showed that the reasons for the failure of Jordanian women in the parliamentary elections are related to the large number of female candidates for the 2003 elections, the weakness of their electoral and tribal bases, and the emergence of tribal consensus on one candidate during the unofficial primary elections for persons wishing to run, often males, in addition to the quota for women by female candidates and other reasons.

Al-Kharouf and Al-Hussein (2013) conducted a study to reveal the factors affecting the victory of Jordanian women in the 2007 parliamentary elections. The results of the study showed that the economic factors affecting the victory of female candidates, through the support they received from their husbands or friends or through parties by sending some cash, came in the first place, while the support from the field of audio media ranked last. Regarding the social, cultural, and demographic factors, it appeared that there are various subjective and cultural factors that have an impact on women's victory in elections, especially in the areas of personal strength and self-confidence. As for the political factors, it appeared that the most influential factors are the political will, then the political culture of society, then the degree of awareness of women regarding politics. The political experience came last.

Al-Rawashdeh and Al-Arab (2016) conducted a study to reveal the most important obstacles that limit the participation of Jordanian women in political life, considering some social variables. The study concluded that the social, cultural, political, legal, economic and media obstacles are among the most important obstacles that limit the participation of Jordanian women in political life. The study also showed that there are no differences between social variables and barriers to participation except for the age variable. The study recommended the need to work on educating society to change its beliefs about women's



participation in political work and try to improve their status and empower them economically.

The researchers Fraihat and Abu Libdeh (2016 ) conducted a study on women's political rights in Jordanian legislation (1952-2014) represented by the Jordanian Constitution of 1952, the electoral laws, parties and municipalities, the independence of the judiciary and their amendments. The study showed the impact of these legislations on women's access to their political rights. However, after reviewing the rights, it was found that there are real intellectual and social considerations that still practice discrimination against women, and thus prevent the enforcement of their equality with men. Therefore, the legislation alone is not sufficient to secure women's political rights. Women's participation in political life remains in need of a popular base to achieve women's successes by changing the stereotypical culture about the role of women and replacing it with a humanistic view based on the equality of women and men in human rights. Moreover, women called for intensifying efforts through unions, women's associations, parties, and other civil society institutions to enhance women's participation in political life.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Upon reviewing the previous studies in general, it was found that the studies have examined women, their role in political life and the obstacles they face. This indicated that the researchers' interest kept pace with the historical development associated with the general cultural awareness of the importance of the women's role in political life. All studies unanimously agreed that there are obstacles that limit women's participation in political life and their expected or entrusted performance. The most important matter that distinguishes this study from other previous studies is that it has focused on the obstacles that women face in parliamentary life from the eleventh parliament to the nineteenth parliament, starting with women's candidacy for elections for the first time in competition with men until the present time. This study included addressing the obstacles not only before running for the elections but also after winning from the point of view of Jordanian women parliamentarians. Another asset of this study is that it is one of the studies that examined the extent of Jordanian women parliamentarians' satisfaction with their performance in the parliament.

### **Study Methodology**

The descriptive analytical method was used for the sample due to its relevance to the objectives of this study.

### **Study Population**

The study population consisted of women parliamentarians who won parliamentary seats in Jordan (1989-2021 AD).

### **Study Sample**

The sample consisted of (71) women representatives from the study community who were deliberately chosen to know their views on women's participation in parliamentary life, the most important obstacles they face before their candidacy

and during their participation, and their satisfaction with the performance entrusted to them.

### **Study Instrument**

A questionnaire was developed by researchers as an instrument for the study on a five-ranked Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree) and then distributed to a sample of women who won parliamentary seats (1989-2021 AD). The questionnaire consisted of three axes (obstacles before candidacy, obstacles after winning, and the extent of satisfaction with participation in parliament).

### **Validity of the Instrument**

To verify its validity, the questionnaire was presented as a draft to a panel of arbitrators consisting of five members from the teaching staff in Jordanian universities and educational supervisors from the Jordanian Ministry of Education, with experience in teaching social and national civics and history. They were asked to express their opinion on how relevant the parts and axes of the questionnaire were to the subject of the study. Based on the suggestions and modifications offered by the arbitrators, some modifications were made to the questionnaire's parts until it reached the final version that would be adopted. Based on the foregoing, this questionnaire has validity indications that make it convenient to the purposes of the study.

### **Reliability of the Instrument**

Reliability was tested to know the degree to which the parts contribute to measure the feature according to internal consistency, by applying it to a survey sample consisting of 20 leading women in political action outside the study sample. Reliability coefficients were calculated for all fields; the total correlation coefficient for the tool of the study was 0.85.

### **Study Procedures**

The Researchers followed these procedures in the implementation of the study:

- Preparing the questionnaire.
- Extracting validity and reliability indications of the questionnaire.
- Applying the questionnaire to an intentional sample of women parliamentarians.
- Extracting findings through statistical treatment.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

**Findings and discussion of Question 1:** What are the most important obstacles facing Jordanian women before putting their candidacy to take part in the parliamentary life from the point of view of the study sample (Jordanian women parliamentarians)?

To answer this question, arithmetic averages and standard deviations were calculated for each statement of the first axe of the questionnaire, which is Obstacles Before Candidacy. Findings are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1  
Arithmetic average, standard deviation, and order of statements related to  
Obstacles Before Candidacy

| Axe                        | No | Statement                                                                                                                              | Options        |       |                            |          |                   | Arithmetic Average | Standard Deviation | Order |
|----------------------------|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                            |    |                                                                                                                                        | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |                    |                    |       |
| Obstacles Before Candidacy | 1  | Women's decision to run for elections depends on the man's approval (father, brother, or husband).                                     | 40%            | 34.3% | 2.9%                       | 17.1%    | 5.7%              | 20                 | 16.65              | 5     |
|                            | 2  | Women's decision to run for elections depends on the clan's approval.                                                                  | 34.3%          | 28.6% | 20%                        | 8.6%     | 8.6%              | 20.02              | 11.60              | 4     |
|                            | 3  | Lack of sufficient support from society to women to win the competitive seat.                                                          | 37.1%          | 51.4% | 5.7%                       | 5.7%     |                   | 24.97              | 23                 | 3     |
|                            | 4  | Lack of sufficient policies and legislations to engage Jordanian women in the decision-making process.                                 | 34.3%          | 60%   | 2.9%                       | 2.9%     |                   | 25.02              | 27.61              | 2     |
|                            | 5  | Some customs and traditions that confirm that women can't shoulder burdens and make decisions.                                         | 28.6%          | 48.6% | 8.6%                       | 11.4%    | 2.9%              | 20.02              | 18.62              | 4     |
|                            | 6  | The traditional view of women's job, which is raising children and taking care of household affairs.                                   | 28.6%          | 34.3% | 17.1%                      | 11.4%    | 8.6%              | 20                 | 11.07              | 5     |
|                            | 7  | Women's unawareness of their legal rights, represented in the possibilities of running for parliamentary elections or participating in | 11.4%          | 37.1% | 11.4%                      | 34.3%    | 5.7%              | 19.98              | 14.57              | 6     |

|                          |    |                                                                                                                              |       |       |       |       |      |       |       |   |
|--------------------------|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-------|-------|---|
|                          |    | the political work through political life.                                                                                   |       |       |       |       |      |       |       |   |
|                          | 8  | Lack of women's sufficient knowledge of their rights and duties, which enables them to run for elections with a strong will. | 5.7%  | 51.4% | 8.6%  | 28.6% | 5.7% | 20    | 19.99 | 5 |
|                          | 9  | Difficulty incurring financial expenses of candidacy.                                                                        | 68.6% | 25.7% | 5.7%  |       |      | 33.33 | 32.13 | 1 |
|                          | 10 | Lack of confidence in the election's fairness.                                                                               | 51.4% | 28.6% | 11.4% | 5.7%  | 2.9% | 20    | 20.19 | 5 |
|                          | 11 | Lack of women's self-acceptance in participating in parliamentary life.                                                      | 8.6%  | 37.1% | 8.6%  | 25.7% | 20%  | 20    | 12.06 | 5 |
|                          | 12 | Failure of media outlets to sufficiently highlight women as active, visionary citizens.                                      | 42.9% | 45.7% | 5.7%  | 2.9%  | 2.9% | 20.02 | 22.21 | 4 |
| Total Arithmetic Average |    | 21.94                                                                                                                        |       |       |       |       |      |       |       |   |

Findings illustrated in Table 1 indicate a very high response of the sample members to the first axe that contains 12 statements related to Obstacles Before Candidacy. This means that obstacles facing Jordanian women prior to announcing their running for the parliament were numerous. Rawashdeh and Arabs (2016 AD) considers that obstacles limiting women's participation in political life begin before running for elections because of the prevailing culture, regarded as patriarchal, in society. This type of cultures considers men as the most capable of making decisions and that they have the right to work in all fields without any limitation. This is in harmony with Fraihat (2020 AD) who believes that some people still think that women should stay at home where their main role lies. They should play their traditional role that is in line with their feminine characteristics. Until now, their ability to make decisions like men – who have competence, “knowledge and experience” – is controversial.

It is also clear from Table 1 that Statement 9, “Difficulty incurring financial expenses of candidacy”, got the highest arithmetic averages. Its arithmetic average reached 33.33 and its standard deviation 32.13. This finding could be interpreted by the high cost of electoral campaigns, especially because huge amounts of money are being spent on them, and by the fact that women can't leave their professions to run for elections, a step they consider unguaranteed (Al-Ibadi, 2010). It is also clear from Table 1 that Statement 7 “Women's unawareness of their legal rights, represented in the possibilities of running for

parliamentary elections or participating in the political work through political life” is the lowest. Its arithmetic average was 19.98 and its standard deviation 14.57. It can be explained by women’s unawareness of the possibility of their running for elections without their men’s approval, and by their working on empowering themselves. This finding is in harmony with Ashour’s (2003) who believes that women’s subordination and the culture of society, subjugated to traditional political systems granted to men, have prevented the investment of Jordanian women’s power in holding political positions. It is also in harmony with Fraihat (2020) who believes women aren’t independent in deciding which candidate they should opt for. They sometimes do so under the man’s interference pressure and social and family pressures. Therefore, women’s decision to run for elections depends on the man’s approval first, and the clan’s second. Thus, a reason behind the success of some of this small percentage in reaching the parliament is the unanimous consent of the clan in the first place. Findings related to Axe 2 “Obstacles After Winning” are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2  
Arithmetic average, standard deviation, and order of statements related to  
Obstacles After Winning

| Axe                     | No | Statement                                                                                                                                                          | Options        |       |                            |          |                   | Arithmetic Average | Standard Deviation | Order |
|-------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                         |    |                                                                                                                                                                    | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |                    |                    |       |
| Obstacles After Winning | 16 | Unfamiliarity with legislative oversight roles and lack of understanding of their mechanisms.                                                                      | 5.7%           | 54.3% | 8.6%                       | 25.7%    | 5.7%              | 20                 | 20.89              | 7     |
|                         | 17 | Absence of electoral programs.                                                                                                                                     | 17.1%          | 48.6% | 20%                        | 11.4%    | 2.9%              | 20                 | 17.26              | 7     |
|                         | 18 | Predominance of the service side over the legislative and oversight side.                                                                                          | 62.9%          | 37.1% |                            |          |                   | 50                 | 18.24              | 1     |
|                         | 19 | Citizen’s unawareness that the parliamentarian’s true role is legislative and oversight, and that is not related to material aid, mediation, or service provision. | 68.6%          | 31.4% |                            |          |                   | 50                 | 26.30              | 1     |
|                         | 20 | Parliamentarian’s interference in other roles and draining his power away from his main role because of the citizen’s endless requests for service provision.      | 74.3%          | 20%   |                            | 5.7%     |                   | 33.33              | 36.19              | 2     |
|                         | 21 | Control of male parliamentarians over the parliament’s                                                                                                             | 20%            | 48.6% | 8.6%                       | 8.6%     | 14.3%             | 20.02              | 16.66              | 5     |



Findings illustrated in Table 2 indicate a very high response of the sample members to the second axe that contains 14 statements related to obstacles after winning. These findings confirm the necessity of researching and solving the causes of these obstacles in view of the importance of this stage and its critical requirements that reflect on Jordanian women parliamentarians' performance. It is clear from the table that Statement 18 "Predominance of the service side over the legislative and oversight side" and Statement 19 "Citizen's unawareness that the parliamentarian's true role is legislative and oversight, and that is not related to material aid, mediation, or service provision" ranked first among all other Axe-2-related statements. If carefully studied, you would notice that they are linked.

It also clear that Statement 16 "Unfamiliarity with legislative oversight roles and lack of understanding of their mechanisms", Statement 17 "Absence of electoral programs", Statement 26 "The parliament doesn't seek, as an institution, to develop the capacities of women parliamentarians or new parliamentarians", Statement 27 "Financial burdens due to debts incurred by the parliamentarian after the electoral campaign, and thus there is a conflict between paying the debts and fulfilling the roles requested from her", Statement 28 "Weakness in ability to deal and communicate with media outlets", and Statement 29 "Absence of strong, programmatic blocs to which the winner could be affiliated" ranked last with an arithmetic average of 20. Statements 16, 17, and 26 are consistent with the findings of Al-Khuzai (2006) that say Jordanian women's weak electoral bases impede Jordanian women's winning in parliamentary elections. Statement 29 is in harmony with Fraihat (2020 AD) that a single parliamentarian has no value except in the presence of parliamentary groupings or blocs, i.e. group of members from the same party or electoral alliance in the parliament, which has a lot of advantages when speaking, expressing opinions, voting, forming committees, and forming and holding a government accountable. The core of parliamentary work is the arrival of a group of competing programmatic movements and parties to the parliament, then forming parliamentary blocs that represent their programs and seek to develop these programs into legislations and policies. It should be borne in mind that laws regulating political work, namely electoral law and law on political parties, are the foundations of shaping party life and forming parliamentary blocs.

Findings of Statements 27 and 28 are in harmony with Al-Kharouf & Al-Hussein (2013) that found that women who received financial support from husbands, friends, or parties are among those who won the 2007 parliamentary elections, whereas media outlets support to women themselves ranked last. These findings reinforce the fact that financial burdens and inability to deal with media outlets negatively affect Jordanian women parliamentarians' performance. Findings related to Axe 3 "Satisfaction with Participation in Parliament" are illustrated in Table 3.

Table 3  
Arithmetic average, standard deviation, and order of statements related to the  
Extent of Satisfaction with Participation in Parliament

| Axe                                                         | No. | Statement                                                                                                     | Options        |       |                            |          |                   | Arithmetic Average | Standard Deviation | Order |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------|----------------------------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|-------|
|                                                             |     |                                                                                                               | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |                    |                    |       |
| The Extent of Satisfaction with Participation in Parliament | 30  | My performance in Parliament was equal to men's.                                                              | 57.1%          | 31.5% | 11.4%                      |          |                   | 33.33              | 22.9               | 2     |
|                                                             | 31  | I outperformed men in Parliament.                                                                             | 42.9%          | 31.4% | 20%                        | 2.9%     | 2.9%              | 20.02              | 16.1               | 4     |
|                                                             | 32  | I sensed change in society in terms of women's candidacy after proving themselves in political participation. | 40%            | 48.6% | 8.6%                       | 2.9%     |                   | 25.02              | 22.65              | 3     |
|                                                             | 33  | I dealt with many issues, especially with fighting corruption for the benefit of the country.                 | 42.9%          | 48.6% | 8.6%                       |          |                   | 33.36              | 21.63              | 1     |
|                                                             | 34  | I contributed in tackling issues the government was silent on.                                                | 34.3%          | 51.4% | 14.3%                      |          |                   | 33.33              | 18.56              | 2     |
|                                                             | 35  | My role exceeded the service provision issues for the benefit of my electoral district.                       | 42.9%          | 48.6% | 8.6%                       |          |                   | 33.36              | 21.63              | 1     |
|                                                             | 36  | I contributed in forming parliamentary blocs that were able to earn the public's trust in Parliament.         | 22.9%          | 40%   | 34.3%                      | 2.9%     |                   | 25.02              | 16.37              | 3     |
|                                                             | 37  | I managed to achieve collective visions for the benefit of the country.                                       | 31.4%          | 48.6% | 20%                        |          |                   | 33.33              | 14.39              | 2     |
|                                                             | 38  | I positively contributed to achieve goals that serve the national issues.                                     | 42.9%          | 54.3% | 2.9%                       |          |                   | 33.36              | 26.99              | 1     |
|                                                             | 39  | I contributed in particular to achieve goals that serve women's issues                                        | 57.1%          | 37.1% | 5.7%                       |          |                   | 33.3               | 25.9               | 2     |
|                                                             | 40  | Keeping pace with reform and change process in                                                                | 40%            | 42.9% | 5.7%                       | 11.4%    |                   | 25                 | 16.03              | 4     |



|                          |    |                                                                                |       |       |       |  |  |       |       |   |
|--------------------------|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--|--|-------|-------|---|
|                          |    | Jordanian society wasn't easy for me.                                          |       |       |       |  |  |       |       |   |
|                          | 41 | I managed to bring achievements on all political, economic, and social levels. | 31.4% | 51.5% | 17.1% |  |  | 33.33 | 17.28 | 3 |
| Total Arithmetic Average |    | 33.14                                                                          |       |       |       |  |  |       |       |   |

Table 3 shows that arithmetic average was at its highest for Statement 33 “I dealt with many issues, especially with fighting corruption for the benefit of the country”, Statement 35 “My role exceeded the service provision issues for the benefit of my electoral district”, and Statement 38 “I positively contributed to achieve goals that serve the national issues”. These findings reflect the self-confidence of Jordanian women parliamentarians and their satisfaction with their performance.

However, statements that ranked last are Statement 31 “I outperformed men in Parliament” and Statement 40 “Keeping pace with reform and change process in Jordanian society wasn’t easy for me”. This finding indicates the satisfaction of Jordanian women parliamentarians with their performance even if they rank last. It implies that some women imposed themselves as a successful example of the Jordanian political woman, while acknowledging, at the same time, the level of difficulty of the reform process which may require deep, comprehensive changes so that reform would be integral, balanced, and comprehensive of political, economic, social, cultural, educational, and moral aspects. That’s to alleviate unemployment, poverty, and high prices, and to fight corruption issues, the spread of taking advantage of one’s contacts, nepotism, and social violence, and other challenges with which Jordan is grappling. Table 4 summarizes the response of sample members to the three axes of the questionnaire.

Table 4  
Arithmetic average, total standard deviation, and the order of all axes

| No.   | Axe                                                         | General Arithmetic Average | Order |
|-------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------|
| 1     | Obstacles before candidacy                                  | 21.94%                     | 3     |
| 2     | Obstacles after winning                                     | 25.95%                     | 2     |
| 3     | The extent of satisfaction with participation in parliament | 33.14%                     | 1     |
| Total |                                                             | 81.3%                      |       |

Table 4 shows that Axe 3 “The Extent of Satisfaction with Participating in Parliament” ranked first whereas Axe 1 “Obstacles Before Candidacy” ranked last. When comparing obstacles before candidacy and obstacles after winning, it turns out that the arithmetic average for obstacles after winning (25.95%) is higher than the arithmetic average for obstacles before candidacy (21.94%). It may be due to the absence of organized work for Jordanian women parliamentarians, which results from entering this experience unprepared, unorganized, and without any support from certain parties. This fact is in harmony with Fraihat (2020 AD).

To determine how Jordanian women parliamentarians are satisfied with their performance after winning, researchers used the statistical model for ratio scale to classify the averages of behavior scale as shown in Table 5.

Table 5  
Statistical model for ratio scale

| Arithmetic Average | Level of Responses of Study Sample |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1-1.80             | Very low                           |
| 1.81-2.60          | Low                                |
| 2.61-3.40          | Medium                             |
| 3.41-4.20          | High                               |
| 4.21-5.00          | Very high                          |

Based on Table 5, arithmetic averages in Table 4 indicate that the number of obstacles before candidacy and after winning for Jordanian women parliamentarians is very high, and that Jordanian women parliamentarians' satisfaction with their performance is also very high. The high degree of satisfaction they feel may be due to high number of varied obstacles.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study attempted to identify obstacles before candidacy and after winning that limit the participation of Jordanian women parliamentarians in elections, as well as women parliamentarians' satisfaction with their performance. That was by surveying the opinions of a sample of women parliamentarians who won the parliamentary seat between 1989 and 2021 AD. The study showed the presence of obstacles before candidacy as well as obstacles that have limited the role of Jordanian women parliamentarians after winning the parliamentary seat. It also revealed a very high level of satisfaction of Jordanian women parliamentarians with their performance after winning. In light of the aforementioned findings, the study came up with a series of recommendations that could reduce the obstacles that limit the participation of Jordanian women in parliamentary life and help them engage in political work effectively. Recommendations are as follows:

- Updating laws governing women's rights, especially election law so that women's participation rate reaches 50%.
- Raising Jordanian women's awareness of their rights in political participation, as guaranteed by the 1952 AD Jordanian Constitution and the 1991 AD National Charter, which laid down explicit texts stressing equality between men and women to prevent the continuous discrimination women suffer from.
- Raising the society's awareness to change its beliefs on women's participation in political work. These beliefs are represented by the clan's preference to vote for its men, and by believing that women are subordinate to men, that they should stay at home and play their traditional main role, which is in line with their feminine characteristics, and that they are unable to make decisions like men do.

- Empowering Jordanian women economically, by providing them with enough job opportunities.
- Empowering them on the executive level in government and in all Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), in particular professional syndicates that are considered the foundations of political work, as well as party orders, by amending their legislations.
- Supporting women to participate actively in party life and raise the level of their capabilities.
- Empowering Jordanian women to organize electoral campaigns to change the perception of women.
- Activating the media's role in supporting women politically.
- Developing the communication skills of Jordanian women.
- Engaging Jordanian women in political work and intensifying efforts by non-governmental women associations and CSOs to put pressure on decision-makers to achieve a fair participation of women.

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