

# The Political Implications of the Evolution of the Electoral System in Jordan

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## Abstract

This study highlights the impact of the electoral system on the nature of the political system and applying it to the Jordanian case. The study followed the systems-analysis approach as the development of the electoral systems becomes an input that triggers change in the political system environment. Especially, In regard to the representation and the power of the political parties, levels of political participation, woman representation, fairness of parliamentary representation and the conflict management within the political system. The study concluded that the pattern of the electoral system translates the orientations of the political system and the objectives it seeks to achieve. In addition, the reform of the political system necessitates the reform or change of the electoral system. In the Jordanian case, the electoral system has witnessed a notable development, especially in the laws of 2012 and 2016, but their contribution to the promotion of the democratic levels of the political system remains marginal.

**Keywords:** Electoral System, Elections, Political System, Political Implications, Democracy, Jordan.

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## 1. Introduction:

The electoral process is the cornerstone of the democratic system. In the transition of society to democracy, the electoral system becomes particularly important. The electoral law is the practical means of transforming the will of the people into an elected council that plays an active role in the democratization of the political regime.

The electoral system adopted by the state clearly affects the voting behavior and the political participation. Besides, not only does it largely determine the distribution of political forces within the regime, it also significantly determines the nature of the party system of the state. IN addition, it determines the distribution of the parliamentary seats and the formation of the government. Thus, it becomes a reflection of the level of democratic progress in the political life.

Therefore, the choice of the electoral system is essentially a political process as the nature of this choice has an important impact on the broader political and institutional framework within the political system (Pinda, Alice, Vishk, Gay & Reilliey, 2005). The effects of the electoral system include the inputs of the electoral process and more, and the role it plays in formulating the frameworks of political and social interaction in the society whether negatively or positively (Al-Owaimer & Al-Taweel, 2012).

In this sense, electoral systems are considered today as one of the most influential political institutions in governance issues. There is a growing awareness that an electoral system can be developed to reflect local geographical representation, to promote relativity, and that through the electoral system, political national and powerful parties can be developed. They can also help assist build up cooperation and adaptation in a society divided by the creative use of certain incentives and controls within these electoral systems (Pinda et al. 2005).

Since there is no practice of democracy without honest elections, electoral systems are an effective indicator to evaluate the level of democratic performance, and the quality of the democratic political system. It is also a true indicator of the will of that system in performing political reform. It is, further, a standard to measure the efficiency, quality, and the continuation of the democratic transformation because it is a legal tool by which we can form the political map in the country. (Zaghoni, 2016).

If democracy is the sum of values and principles such as participation, freedom of expression, respect for law and co-existence with the opposition, then the Parliament is the custodian of these values (Al-Owaimer& Al-Taweel, 2012). This reflects the importance of studying the political implications of electoral systems in Jordan. If we look at Jordan, we find that the election law of the parliament is one of the most important laws of the Jordan because it is directly related to the ruling system which is determined by the Constitution as a system of a parliamentary, royal, hereditary system (Al-Owaimer& Al-Taweel 2012).

Theoretically, there is a debate over which of the electoral systems is most suitable to democracy. Some argue that the proportional representation system weakens democracy, whereas the majority system strengthens it. Others argue that the proportional representation system is more efficient for democracy and its principles because it is keen to represent the minority, and effectively reflects the citizens' choices. A third group believe that democracy is not linked to a particular system, but the majority system represents the value of stability, and the proportional representation system is linked to the value of representation (Zaghoni, 2016)

Despite this controversy, it is theoretically established that in order for the electoral system to effectively achieve the requirements of the democratic system, it must ensure the establishment of a Parliament which has an inclusive nature, promotes pluralism, ensures competitiveness, provides incentives for reconciliation and management of difference, as well as encourages opposition (Zaghoni, 2016)

This study aims to identify the patterns of the various electoral systems, their connections to the political system, and the nature of the political implications of adopting one of them by the state. Additionally, it studies the application of these all to the Jordanian case, especially since the resumption of the democratic parliamentary life in 1989 when Jordan began the democratization process after the parliamentary and democratic life was disrupted by martial law following the 1967 war.

There are a number of factors that contributed to the resumption of parliamentary life and the beginning of the democratic transition in Jordan in 1989, including international factors related to the collapse of the socialist system, regional factors related to the disengagement of the two banks (with the West Bank), the rise of the Palestinian uprising in 1987, internal factors related to the economic crisis that Jordan witnessed at the end of the 1980s, and the tendency of the educated elite to gain more rights related to political freedoms (Mahafzah, Abdul Rahman & Abdulhay, 2016).

Since then, Jordan has taken a series of reform steps as part of its democratization process such as ending the state of martial law, opening the way for civil justice to take responsibility instead of military courts, the issuance of the Political Parties Act in 1992 that allows partisan action to be practiced in public, the publication of a copyright law in 1993 to regulate freedom of the press, expression and writing, and the adoption of the Jordanian National Charter in 1991 which confirmed the democratic process and pluralism, in addition to the annulment of the anti-communist law in 1992 (Mashaqba, 2000).

Later, official initiatives related to the political reform and political development project continued. These initiatives were strengthened in the context of the Arab Spring and the pressures of the public movement in Jordan starting in 2011. The National Dialogue Committee was, thus, formed in order to achieve a partisan advanced political life and constitutional reforms, the establishment of a new independent law for political parties, and new electoral laws (Economic and Social Council 2018).

Nevertheless, the process of democratization and political reform in Jordan is still facing a number of challenges, including political challenges such as weakness of institutionalization, low levels of political participation, pressing regional environment, and social challenges, the most important of which is the nature of the clan-based social structure, the weakness of civil society organizations, along with economic challenges related to the dominance of the economic concern of high levels of poverty, unemployment, public debt and budget deficit (Al-Khraisha, 2017).

If the political reform procedurally includes many mechanisms, there is no doubt that the elections are at the forefront, because it is the most important issue in the democratic transition, and is the legitimate mechanism through which the legal transfer of power within the institutions and society (Al-Owaimar & Al-Taweel, 2012). Hence, the question arises about the impact of the electoral system in Jordan on political reform, and the deepening of the process of democratic transformation and ending with achieving the goals of political development.

## **2. The concept of the electoral system and its importance:**

The electoral system refers to the ways in which the electoral body manifests its sovereignty through the election of its representatives. This process is conducted according to computational rules determining the identity of the winner of the elections or the way in which the number of votes in the elections are materialized into the seats of the legislative councils or other elected institutions. Therefore, the problem the electoral systems try to solve is the distribution of the parliamentary seats among the winning candidates in the electoral process. (Al-Barzenji, 2015).

The electoral system is also defined as the translation of the electoral votes into seats that various parties and candidates obtain as well as connecting the electoral system with the electoral formula (majority system, proportional system, or mixed system), and the calculation formula used (method of counting and distributing

seats), and the structuring of the voting process whether to vote for the party or the candidates, the number of options and the number of the electoral constituencies (Al-Bazm, 2014). Thus, the electoral system is the mechanism that determines the winner or the loser according to the method of counting of votes which, in turn, differs according to the political systems (Zaghrouh & Adjrouh, 2014)

Perhaps the first building bricks of the electoral structure is to answer the following question: What do we want from the electoral law? Or what are the goals to be accomplished by holding the elections? In fact, identifying the end is the main controller underlying the process of formulating the electoral system, as the standards that respond to achieve the needed goal are set up, but the process becomes more complicated when multiple goals are to be achieved.

Generally, when formulating the electoral system, the following objectives should be considered: “ensuring the establishment of a parliament with wide representation levels, stressing that the elections be accessible to the ordinary voters and that they are sound, encouraging concord among the opposing parties, reinforcing the authority legitimacy, encouraging the establishment of a stable efficient government, enhancing a maximum level of responsibility for both the government and the elected members of the parliament, fostering rapprochement among the political parties, crystallizing a strong efficient parliamentary opposition, considering the administrative, and the financial capabilities of the country and encouraging the citizens to take part in the elections” (Al-Essawi, 2013).

The electoral system has a substantial impact on the political situation of any country at present or in the future since the results of the electoral process, no matter how fair and organized, depend mainly on the electoral system as it determines the form of the political regime of the state and decides the type of the government formed through the elections. The process also encourages the people’s participation by facilitating the procedures and motivating the individuals to take part in the elections. Moreover, it defines the type of the government, whether coalition government or other, to be formed after the elections. It, further, firmly establishes certain interests or weakens others. Furthermore, it determines the behavior of the political elite and the methods of propaganda. It encourages the formation of the national coalitions. Finally, it can escalate or deescalate the political conflicts within the society.(Al-Bazm, 2014). On the other hand, it contributes to the creation of a political vitality of the citizens and the constituencies, thus strengthening the organizational structure through building legitimate establishments that reinforce the government legitimacy which is the basis of the orthodox governance. (Rasheed, 2006).

### 3. Types of the electoral Systems:

There are various types of electoral systems classified according to certain standards. Traditionally, they have been classified according to the method followed to translate the votes gained by every group participating in the elections to seats of the legislative elected body (the parliament). In other words, the seats are determined according to the percentage of votes obtained by a group or party (Reynolds, Reilliey & Ellis, 2005). Most classifications try to categorize and sub-categorize these as follows:

1. The system of individual or plural elections: It is one of the oldest voting systems which represents a nominal personal election, i.e. voters vote individually for a particular candidate they prefer, or for the benefit of a number of candidates. Under this system, candidates can be representatives of parties or political movements, close associates or independents. In all cases, the candidates and the forces they represent have the task of presenting candidates and their personal qualifications, plans and ideas in order to gain the public's confidence and votes. The process of votes counting is carried out according to this system in various methods. That may allow for the majority system (50 +% 1) or the relative majority system which is represented by the higher votes (Abdulhay, 1998).

The individual or plural election system includes a set of important sub-systems, each of which has a set of characteristics (Abdulhay 1998; Ismail 2009), as follows:

- The system of winning the highest votes in a single-seat constituency: This system is based on dividing the country into electoral districts by the number of members of parliament. The individuals of each district elect one candidate from the total number of candidates in the district. Each voter has only one vote for one of the candidates. The candidate who gains the highest number of votes in the constituency shall be elected for the seat of the relevant Parliament, whether or not he obtains the absolute majority (50% + 1). (Ismail, 2009).
- The mobile voice system (the electoral bloc): This system is based on the existence of constituencies with different seats, and the voter has a number of votes equal to the number of seats allocated to his constituency. The voter can give his votes to a number of candidates from different lists according to his/her personal

preferences. The results are calculated on the basis of winning the highest number of votes for the candidates. This system does not require candidates to obtain the absolute majority (50% + 1). In fact, it is called the mobile vote system because the voter can choose multiple candidates for the number of seats assigned to the electoral district (Abdulhay, 1998).

- The two-round voting system: A system whereby a second round of voting is held when no candidate obtains the absolute majority of votes in the first round. In this case, only the two candidates who obtained the highest number of votes in the first round go for the elections in in the second round (Ismail, 2009).
- 2. The list-election system: The voting according to such a system takes place in the constituencies that have more than one seat, where the voter gives his/her vote for a list of candidates according to the number of deputies allocated to the district; the state is divided into districts that may be equal or similar in size. For each district, there are a number of seats which the candidates compete for. The state as a whole may be one constituency. The list may be open; that is, it allows the voter to choose a list of candidates according to his/ her wish, or the list may be closed so that the voters choose one of the lists as a whole; the voters have no right to rearrange the list or add or delete any of its members (Abdulhay, 1998).
- 3. The proportional representation system: It is based on the representation of political minorities besides the majority party by obtaining a number of parliamentary seats consistent with the percentage of votes obtained by parties in the constituency. This opens the door for all the persons who have the right to vote to elect the candidates representing them. This allows minorities to share government with the majority party. This system is more congruent with the democratic principle than the majority system. It allows the representation of the nation with all its political affiliations, hence representing the will of the entire nation (Kashakesh, 1997).

There are two primary forms for the proportional representation system. The first is the full proportional representation; the electoral process is conducted at the level of the whole country. This is done by considering the state as a single constituency. It is divided into large and multiple electoral centers. The unified electoral number is often fixed in advance by the electoral law. To win a parliamentary seat, the candidate must win the unified electoral number at least once. There is also the approximate proportional representation; the parliamentary seats are distributed at the district level. There is an electoral rate for each constituency. The rate is obtained through the division of votes for each constituency by the number of seats allocated to that constituency (Al-Barzenji, 2014).

- 4. The mixed (hybrid) systems: They are the ones that attempt to combine the previous systems as follows: (Abdulhay, 1998).
- Combination of the of individual election system and the proportional list system : The voter has two votes; one vote for one of the candidates who represents his constituency with one seat. Half of the seats of the parliament are distributed according to this basis. The candidate who gets the highest number of votes wins the seat of the constituency. The voter gives his other vote to a party list at the level of the district. The number of seats designated for the party lists is determined according to the proportional representation of each list; each list gets a number of seats proportional to the number of votes obtained.
- The single-vote system for a multi-seat constituency: The voter has a single non-transferable vote. There are several seats for each constituency. The voter votes for one of the candidates in his constituency and those who obtain the highest numbers of votes win the seats allocated to the constituencies.

#### **4. The evolution of the electoral system in Jordan:**

The first outline of the electoral law in Jordan was drafted in 1923, but the British authorities prevented its implementation at that time. With the signing of the Jordanian-British Treaty in 1928, the Jordanian government decided to establish a law for election. After the proclamation of independence, the 1947 law was passed, people could elect directly. The law of 1949 was passed to double the members of the House of Representatives. In the 1958 law, a number of seats were added to the House of Representative. Then came the law of 1960 which modified the method of election, where all Jordanians without any exceptions were granted the right of direct election. By the law of 1962, electoral cases of certain districts were modified. The law of 1974 allowed women to vote and run for a membership in the Jordan Parliament. Then, in 1986, a law was passed by which the parliamentary elections were held in 1989. The list voting was adopted in this election (Al-Museideen, 2015).

Then came the law of 1989 adopting the type of the mobile vote or what is called the closed constituency or the electoral bloc system. This was based on the existence of constituencies with various seats whereby the voter has a number of votes equal to the seats designated for his/her district. The voter can vote for a number of candidates from different lists as s/he wishes. The results are decided on the basis of winning the highest number of votes (Abdulhay, 1998).

In 1993 the Jordanian government issued a provisional law, known as the single vote law, amending the law of elections. The articles that enabled the voter to elect a number of candidates equal to the number of seats designated for the district were substituted for the single non-transferable vote. These articles attempt to combine the individual and single vote systems giving the voter a single non-transferable vote. There are several seats for a single district, but the voter can vote for one candidate. The candidates who obtain the highest numbers of votes can win the elections (Abdulhay, 1998).

In 2001, a new election law was issued which increased the number of seats from (80) to (110); the number of the electoral districts also increased. However, the law was amended in 2003. The most important amendment is the quota which ensured parliamentary seats for women- six seats only. In 2010, a new provision law was issued reinforcing the "single- vote for one seat" through distributing the electoral districts to sub-districts having one seat each. Thus, the number of the members of the parliament became (120) (Al-Tarawneh, 2018). The law of 2012 maintained the characteristics of the preceding law, but it was based on the closed proportional list in order to elect 27 members across the country as one electoral unit (Museideen, 2015) besides electing 123 members according the non-transferable single vote system. Accordingly, the number of the parliament members became (150) (Husseini, 2014).

The latest election law was issued in 2016. This law was adopted for the first time in the history of the Jordanian political regime: the system of the proportional representation (the open proportional list). This law enabled the person to vote for only one list, then chooses one or more candidates among the candidates of the list. This law divided the country into electoral districts having (115) seats, (15) of them are specified for women according to the woman quota (Al-Khawaldeh, 2017).

According to the previous developments, since 1989 the electoral system in Jordan can be categorized as follows:

- 1- Election by list (The system of electoral bloc): under this system the first elections were conducted after the resumption of the democratic life in 1989 when the eleventh council of parliament was elected. Through this electoral system, voting was conducted by the list system through which the voter can vote for several candidates of the district. in other words, the voter chooses the number of the candidates equal to the number of seats designated for the district of the voter.
- 2- The system of the single non-transferable vote: this system was adopted from 1993 to 2010. The voter could have only a single vote for a single candidate regardless of the number of the seats designated for the district. The twelfth council of the parliament members in 1993, the thirteenth in 1997, the fourteenth in 2003, the fifteen in 2007 and the sixteenth in 2010 were all conducted according to this system.
- 3- The mixed system by virtue of 2012 law that gave the voter two votes: one at the level of the local electoral district and the other at the country level according to the proportional closed list. This means that the law combines the individual electoral system (the single non-transferable vote) and the proportional closed list. Thus, the voter can vote for one of the lists of the general electoral district (at the country level). The seventeenth council was elected according to this law in 2013.
- 4-The system of the electoral open list: This system has been put into effect by virtue of the latest electoral law issued in 2016. This law granted the voter the suffrage for the number of the seats of his electoral district. The list nomination is exclusive to the electoral district and the sizes of the districts (The Election law, 2016). The latest election for the eighteenth council was conducted according to this law in 2016.

## **5. The Mechanisms of the Impact of the Electoral System Evolution:**

The electoral system evolution has had several impact mechanisms:

### **5.1. The representation and the power of the political parties:**

The impacts of the electoral systems involve the function, structure and number of the political parties of the political regime. Some of them encourage establishing political parties while others work through the individual candidates only. The electoral systems affect the number and the size of parties functioning in the parliament. This also applies to the integrity and the inner discipline of the parliament. Some systems can affect the electoral campaigns and the behavior of the political leaders. Some systems may motivate parties to broaden

their public bases as much as possible, or they may confine the parties into narrow ranges such as the tribe or kinship frameworks.(Reynolds et al., 2005).

On the whole, the proportional representation tends to create various independent parties, while the absolute majority system tends to create plural but cooperative parties. The proportional majority system tends to create a two-party regime (Zeinuddin, 2011).

The open list adopted for the Jordanian elections in 1989 had substantial role in representing the affiliations and various political currents in the parliament. The council consisted of major blocs like the Islamic bloc which gained (32) seats, in addition to the bloc of the national leftists that gained (13) seats and the conservative current that won (35) seats (Al-Amr & Omar, 2017). Yet, this system uncovered the disadvantages of the list system by magnifying the flaws of proportions of the number of votes and the seats emerging thereof. For example, the Muslim brotherhood movement gained 17% of the votes, which formed 25 % of the parliamentary seats. This means that the system of the open electoral list benefits the interest of the more organized parties (Al-Tal, 2010).

Since the approval of the law of the political parties in 1992, and conducting the 1993 and 2003 elections, more than 40 political parties have been established, but most of them failed to gain representation in the parliament. Moreover, some of them were merged into other parties due to the great similarity in slogans or programs. Not a party did gain a parliamentary majority. Most parties seemed to be weak and humble including the party of the Islamic Action Front which is the strongest among the parties, (Al-Museideen, 2015).

During this period, the elections were conducted under the single vote system, a system that aims to belittle the political roles of parties, thus weakening their chance, especially the opposition, for the benefit of the political tribal loyalties. For example, in 1993 (29) candidates were officially nominated under the names of political parties, that is (36.25%) of the members of the parliament. (16) seats belonged to the Islamic Action Front , the biggest party and the most influential (Al-Rashwani, 2019).

Several parties and political forces boycotted the 1997 elections. The step came as a protest against the single-vote system as it fosters the fragmented vote besides it does not represent the whole community in the election process. Moreover, it marginalizes the political parties and weakens the possibility of their reaching the parliament (Al-Tarawneh, 2018). There were (20) deputies who ran for the elections as representatives of the political parties, that is (25%) of the total number of the Parliament (Al-Rashwani, 2019). In 2003, the number reached (32) deputies out of (110) seats (Al-Amr & Omar, 2017).

The 2007 elections resulted in a severe drop of the parties participation in the parliament whereas the independent and tribal members enhanced their existence as they occupied most of the seats by gaining (97) out of (110) seats. However, (29) out of 120 deputies won their seats under the name of their parties in 2010 elections since the major political parties boycotted elections (Al-Amr & omar, 2017).

The political parties participated in the 2013 elections based on the 2012 law. (14) parties nominated their candidates for the elections and gained (33) out of (150) seats of the parliament (Al-Museideen, 2015). Seats of the general electoral district (the state level) were allocated for the lists without the condition of belonging to a party. This caused the parties to form alliances for a great number of lists which had no common political program. The only bond among them was a tribal one, or the capability to finance the electoral campaigns. This practice limited the number of the political parties in the parliament (Al-Khawaldeh, 2016).

In the late 2016 elections, (39) parties participated in the elections. Seven of them gained (24) out of (130) seats, i.e., (18.4 %) of the total seats of the council (Al-Khawaldeh, 2017). The National Alliance for Reform led by the Islamic Action Front whose lists were nominated openly but gained only (15) seats. The other winning parties gained (1-5) seats. The other winning candidates of the parties were individual nominations, i.e., they were not nominated openly under the names of their parties( Quds Center for Political Studies, 2017).

The foregoing results indicate the humble representation and presence of the parties in the parliament; the cause mainly pertains to the citizen reluctance to join the parties, the dominance of the tribal affiliation in the elections and the inefficiency of the parties in attracting the citizen (Al-Museideen, 2015). This can be attributed to the citizens' accumulated suspicion and negative attitude towards parties besides the general distorted image of the parties in the mentality of the citizens who deem the job of the parties as disseminating chaos and undermining the security and stability of the country (Al-Amr & Omar, 2017).

## 5.2. political participation

Proportional representations systems are often classified as the most popular electoral systems with the ability to increase participation rates. The electoral barrier therein is relatively small, and the number of seats elected from one constituency is greater than that under the individual system, hence greatly reducing lost votes. This makes each vote important in counting the seats, thus increasing the chances of small parties, whose voting

bloc is geographically fragmented in various parts of the country. This means with fewer percentages they can obtain seats in the parliament. This boosts the drive for voting among their supporters (Hassan, 2013).

Under the majority system, the proponents of the small parties may consider it futile to participate in the parliamentary elections. They believe that small parties are peripheral to party system- parties whose voting bloc may be scattered through various districts of the country. They believe it is futile to participate in the voting in circles that are not major districts because their participation will not cause a great difference in making a certain candidates win the seat of that district; candidates who form the government or the decision -makers of the public policies (Hassan, 2013).

As it has been clarified above, the system of the single non-transferable vote has been adopted with most of the Jordanian elections following the resumption of the democratic life though the system was not a motivation for the participation of the political parties. Rather, the system weakened their participation and representation in the parliament. Moreover, it was a major cause driving most of the parties to boycott the elections, especially the opposition. This system evidently contributed to the enhancement of the tribal presence at the cost of the political presence in the parliament , contrary to the system of the proportional open list which motivated the parties and the political forces to take part in the elections and form their lists.

The political participation of the voters reflected by percentages of voting in the successive elections has been low as of 1989 till the latest elections in 2016. It is noticed that the participation is generally low to the extent that the voting percentage did not exceed 58.9% as recorded in 2003. In 1989, it was 53%, in 1997 it was 55.7% 57.5% in 2007, 53% in 2010, 56.7% in 2013 (Al-Museideen, 2015). However, it went dramatically down to (37.1%) in the latest elections in 2016 (Al-Mashagbah, 2016).

Thus, the voting percentage in the successive elections had not been greatly affected as did as it relatively remained within the same range. This means that the type of the voting system did not affect the percentages of participation, besides the elections took place adopting the same 1993 voting system for a long period, that was based on the single vote, though the national lists were added in the elections of 2013. However, there are factor that negatively affect the political participation in Jordan for which the low participation can be attributed. The poor economy, mistrusting the parliament, boycotting the elections by major parties and major currents, the indifference of many citizens are among these factor (Al-Museideen, 2015). All these factors explain the low percentage of the citizen's participation especially in the latest elections of 2016.

### **5.3. woman representation:**

It is certain that the percent of women representation will be higher under the proportional systems than the majority systems, especially when the party system is adopted. There are three reasons for the higher percentage. First, the parties, in the case of adopting the proportional representation, are keen to present a list that represents all classes of the community so that it satisfies a wide spectrum of the voters. By doing so, parties avoid being biased. The second reason is the relative privilege that candidate enjoys. This privilege is less under the representations system, i.e., it is not equal to that privilege the candidate gets under elections by the majority system. The third reason pertains to greater possibility of using the electoral quotas totally allocated for women candidates under the system of the proportional representation than using the quotas when the elections are carried out by the majority system (Hassan, 2013).

In case of the elections by majority system, the parties are more concerned with harvesting the votes rather than representing all community sectors by the parties' candidates. As result, the parties become interested in nominating candidates who are capable of attracting the masses. This, in turn, reduces the possibility of women candidacy (Ismail, 2009).

On the whole, the electoral systems adopt one of the following methods for representing women in the parliament: women quotas, asking the parties to nominate a number of women, the parties allocate their unofficial quotas for women to be nominated for the parliament (Reynolds, et al., 2005)

The Jordanian woman was given suffrage and nomination in 1974, but she actually participated in the voting and nomination for the membership of the parliament in 1989 after the resumption of democratic life. In 2003, women were granted six seats according to the quota system and the number of seats rose to 12 in 2010. The number became (15) seats according to the election law of 2012 (the number remained the same in the last law of 2016). So, women were enabled to access the parliament in three ways: by winning one of the seats of the quota, through competition for all seats with the other candidates, and through the closed proportional list (Al-Musseidin, 2015).

In the first elections after the resumption of democratic life in 1989, twelve women out of 648 candidates were nominated as candidates for the parliament but none of them won as they obtained only 1.01% of the total votes. In the 1993 elections, the number of female candidates decreased to (3), but it rose in the 1997 elections to 17 women, i.e. (3.2% ) of the candidates. None of them won as they obtained 1.6% of the total votes (Al-Sheikhani, 2019).

With the endorsement of the women quota and its implementation for the first time in the 2003 elections, 54 women out of 760 candidates were nominated, i.e. (7%) of the total number of candidates. None of them won in the free competition (Al-Sheikhani, 2019). The same result occurred in 2007 elections when 199 women out of 880 candidates were nominated, but only 6 of them obtained the quota seats (Al-Khawaldeh, 2016a).

In 2010 elections, the number of female members of the parliament was 13, twelve of them won through the quota and one woman by free competition (Al-Khawaldeh, 2016b, p. 8). However, in 2013 elections, women won 18 seats out of (150), i.e. 12% of the total number, 15 of them won by virtue of the quota, and two won the local elections in free competition, while one was a candidate through the general circle at the (country level ) elections (Al-Khawaldeh 2016b).

With the adoption of proportional lists in the latest elections in 2016, twenty women won seats in the parliament, 15 of them by virtue of the women's quota, and 5 could win by competition. This means that the percentage of women winning in competition rose from (2%) in 2013 to (3.9%) in 2016, almost double (Quds Center for Political Studies, 2017).

The small number of votes won by Jordanian women in the elections indicates that the society is not convinced of voting for women. The quota system, combined with the small constituencies and the single vote system, drove the tribes to nominate women to represent the clan within the parliament due to the absence of chances of obtaining seats outside the framework of the women quota. This means that the quota system is exploited for the purposes of tribal competition (Al-Husseini, 2014).

Nevertheless, the allocation of quotas for women in the parliament since 2003 has significantly contributed to enhancing their participation as candidates. It is noted that even in the electoral lists formed by the parties and other lists, the number of female candidates has been low. Women were absent as candidates for 3% of the lists in the 2016 elections, while they were absent for 24% of the lists in 2013 elections. Nonetheless, the single vote system was the worst in terms of its ability to represent women in the parliament. It did not help any woman win by free competition outside the women quota (Al-Saleem, 2019).

#### **5.4. fairness of parliamentary representation:**

There is a set of criteria that determines the extent of the presence of fair political representation in the parliament; namely, the demographic criterion, the geographical criterion, the developmental criterion, the gender criterion, and the criterion of representation of religious and ethnic minorities (Al-Nimri, 2019).

Generally speaking, the proportional representation system is the fairest representation system whereby multiple parties, especially small ones, are allowed to have seats in the parliament. It represents all the political bodies in the state and grants each party a percentage of seats proportional to the percentage of votes the party obtains in the election (Zeinuddin, 2011). This was evident in the system of the proportional open list that was adopted in the latest parliamentary elections in Jordan in 2016. The system allowed the representation of most political forces, especially the opposition lists headed by the National Alliance for Reform led by the Party of the Islamic Action Front that won 15 seats, i.e. (11.5%) of the seats in the parliament (Quds Center for Political Studies, 2017). This is contrary to the single-vote system that marginalized the role of the parties and reduced their representation in parliamentary elections and drove them to boycott the elections more than once.

At the level of gender representation, the Jordanian electoral systems began to consider women's representation in order to achieve justice starting in 2003 through the women quota which witnessed a rise in the number of seats later. However, the distribution of women's quota seats also represents a sharp manifestation of imbalance and absence of gender fairness. While each of the 12 small and medium districts receives a seat for women's quota, the largest (3) governorates (Amman, Irbid, Zarqa), which account for (72.5% ) of the Jordanian population are allocated only three seats for women's quota. This requires some kind of balanced representation of women in various circles (Quds Center for Political Studies, 2017).

The evolution of the electoral systems in Jordan is criticized for not taking into consideration the justice of representation at the demographic and geographical levels. The governorates with high population density suffer from a low representation compared to the governorates with low population density. However, the imbalance in

representation extends to the districts as some circles have more representation seats than others do without a clear formal criterion for the way the circles are laid down and the seats are distributed (Al-Husseini, 2014).

This reflects a governmental priority predominant in the political representation. The rural and tribal areas are more likely to be represented in parliament at the expense of the urban areas. However, it is believed that this is due to the density of Palestinian refugees present in the urban areas. So, there is an inclination that these areas be less represented in the elections until final status of negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians reach a permanent solution to the refugee issue (Chambers, Al Horani, Kofnar, & Abu Rumman, 2007). This entails low levels of parliamentary representation of the areas of intensive existence of the Jordanians of Palestinian origin (Breizat, 2011).

As for the representation of religious and ethnic minorities, it is clear that proportional representation systems have a great advantage over the majority voting systems where minorities are more represented when they decide to form a political party or political parties and go for the election (Hassan, 2013). This is contrary to the majority system which is based on the individual district, which works to exclude minorities from fair representation, under which the competing parties work to nominate the person who is highly accepted in his constituency. This means that there are election campaigns and programs based on hostile, tribal, ethnic or regional bases, (Ismail, 2009).

At the Jordanian level, all the electoral laws have given special importance to the representation of minorities. Christians, Circassians and Chechens have been given specific seats (quota) which marked remarkable growth taking into account that the total number of seats in the parliament has also been increased (Mahafzah, et al., 2016).

### **5.5. conflict management and enhancement of sub-identities:**

Electoral systems can exacerbate tensions and conflicts in society or contribute to its pacification. Some systems may contribute to the involvement of minorities and some only contribute to the empowerment of governance by one-party. Yet, there are other systems that enable the opposition to win the coming elections. Some fail to do so, and losers see themselves forced to work outside the system, hence resorting to undemocratic and violent means (Reynolds et al., 2005).

In this sense, some electoral systems can manage the conflict in self-divided societies to achieve stability. Among these systems is the system of proportional representation which contributes to overcoming many social problems and ethnic conflicts so as to ensure the real representation of different social segments. This, in turn, achieves political and social integration of the society and enhances stability in contrast to other electoral systems (Mustafa, 2013).

The electoral system in Jordan, especially the one based on the small circles and the single vote, has contributed to the loyalty to the sub-tribal and regional identity at the expense of the political identity. Not only has this system negatively influenced the concept of citizenship but it has also threatened the tribe cohesion especially in the case of the presence of more than one candidate amongst the tribe in the same circle. The system of dividing the country into electoral districts led to having candidates belonging to one clan. The existence of small district and the single vote system will do harm to the tribal candidate. If the vote is not given to the tribal candidate, it will be given to the candidate who is expected to be able to provide services. In many cases the votes go to a tribal candidate who is capable of providing services (Al-Husseini, 2014).

Thus, the single-vote system that had prevailed most of the years of democratization as an electoral system in Jordan contributed to transforming the traditional social tribal frameworks to a political framework aiming to nominate one of its members or supporting one of the tribal candidates. Thus, the system is not concerned with political matters. Rather, it targets to fragment the collective work aiming to create local leaders and chiefs who can generate local leaders who are able to provide special services for the narrow circle of the candidate or they act as a link between this narrow circle and the state's executive institutions. They may not act in the framework of reviewing public policies. They become confined to their geographical areas and their goals and interests are limited within their local narrow community. (Al-Masri, 2019). Thus, this system reinforced and fostered the sub-identities at the expense of the national identity and interests.

Such practices developed an ingrained idea of electing a candidate who can extend services to the members of his constituency rather than carrying out the main functions of a deputy, namely legislation, supervision and representation. This necessarily indicates creating more sensitivities among the community components besides establishing a revenue relationship between the citizen and the state represented by the

deputies. This relationship is certainly not based on the values of citizenship, rights and duties (Al-Husseini, 2014).

This is what the latest elections laws Jordan issued in 2012 and 2016 tried to lessen by focusing on the proportional lists and national lists. However, with the weakness of political parties and the dominance of the clan social structure, the traditional view of the role of the deputy is still prevailing both on the voter's conception of the deputy duties and the voter choice of the candidates.

## 6. Conclusion:

In light of this study, there is a considerable and strong relationship between the form of the electoral system adopted by the state and the political system in terms of its structure as institutions, and in terms of the effectiveness of the political interactions within the political system. Such effectiveness is connected to the structure of political parties as one of the most significant political factors within the system. It is also connected to the extent of having multi-parties, in addition to their ability to manage conflict and represent minorities and women and political participation. Each electoral system has different and varying effects on the political system.

The study concluded that the system of proportional representation contributes greatly to establishing party pluralism, and to the consolidation of political and social integration in the state. This goes contrary to other electoral systems that clearly aggravate the social split, the fragmentation of national identity and the politicization of sectarian, family and tribal identities.

At the Jordanian level, the evolution of the electoral system in the period of democratic transition beginning in 1989 has rather contributed to getting rid of a single vote system, even if partially, especially under the evolution of the 2012 and 2016 laws. The evolution also contributed to augmenting political trends and women representation. However, this development did not significantly contribute to enhancing the political trends and pluralism of the parties, nor did it positively affect the increase of political participation rates. By contrast, it negatively sanctified the principle of the deputy of services in Jordanian political life, and strengthened the role of sub-identities and tribal loyalties and regionalism at the expense of the power of the political parties. It did not address the unfairness of the electoral districts representation.

The single-non transferrable vote adopted for a long period of the political life in Jordan has participated in curtailing the representation of the political parties in the parliament and led both to forming individual parliamentary councils based on the clan representation and the emergence of the phenomenon of the service deputies who are alienated from the public scope.

Despite the development that Jordanian electoral system has witnessed by adopting the woman quota, the hybrid system and the proportional open list system, the reality of the Jordanian political life has not substantially been improved as long as the parliamentary representation is still based on tribal representation and competition. The frail parties still introduce the names of their candidates covertly, because they depend on tribal and regional considerations. The women quota and the proportional representation lists are in effect manipulated for the tribal competition. Therefore, the social composition with tribal tinge had substantially undermined the impact of any political positive development of the electoral system on the effectiveness and vitality of the political life in Jordan that may realize the accomplishment of the political development.

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