

# Electoral Violence Impact on the Political Empowerment of Women in Jordan "Qualitative Study"

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify electoral violence phenomenon against women and its impact on the political empowerment of Jordanian women. Additionally, it aims to reveal forms of violence to which Jordanian women are exposed as voters and candidates and the extent of Jordanian women's awareness of electoral violence reporting mechanisms and proposals that help reduce this phenomenon. The study argued that electoral violence against women has its negative impact on their political empowerment and also breach basic women's rights. The study employed qualitative descriptive approach. Personal interviews were conducted to gather relevant data. The sample was taken in accordance with the purposive method. The sample consisted of (15) women who ran for political positions (Parliamentary, partisan and municipal) and (15) women as voters in the city of Amman for the period 2012-2020 . The most prominent results of the study are that (1) all respondents were exposed to one or more forms of violence whether as voters or candidates for the parliament, party or municipality; (2) they experienced violence during election period which was the most severe and harsh on them ; and (3) violence is not related to a certain gender as women participate in the practice of violence against women due to Jordanian cultural influence that is based on tribalism and that the most prominent sources of electoral violence against women are family and clan members. The study recommended communicating with international aid providers to establish links with local organizations to develop solemn strategies to combat gender-based electoral violence and integrating its topics into election period programs.

**Keywords:** Electoral Violence; Political Empowerment; Jordanian Women, Women's Rights, Political Culture.

## 1. Introduction

The twenty-first century addressed the issue of achieving gender equality in view of the growing global awareness of democracy and human rights issues. This was accompanied with a global trend to empower women through international treaties, covenant, declarations and agreements that addressed the necessity to practically integrate women in political life (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948; International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, 1966). One of democracy central pillars is the electoral system and political participation of all society segments where woman are equal with men while expressing their political desires. The political participation is not merely voting in elections and being parliaments' members but lies in taking decisions related to all aspects of political life through which the inclusive development process are naturally falls under the responsibility of the state and all the modernist forces that believe in the necessity of upgrading the roles of women. This can be achieved through expanding the scope of their contribution to political life in its broad sense.

The process of empowering women is a complex overlapping process giving that the relationship between women and politics has been marred by factors of disintegration rather than cohesion. Coherently, these processes include multiple variables such as economical and developmental reality of women; societal empowerment; the nature of the prevailing system, and the impacts of societal and cultural factors (Al-Edwan and Bani Salameh 2016). In societies

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Received on 7/11/2020 and Accepted for Publication on 27/1/2021.

where woman does not have equal rights with men, they are more likely to be denied electoral rights and political participation as well (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe "OSCE", 2012). Jordanian woman made confident steps on the paths of reconstruction, construction and political participation. However, women in Jordan still struggling while insisting to equalize with men in rights and duties which is grounded on fair citizenship. Locally, women participation in political life was and still a profound shift. Paradoxically, in spite of Jordanian women political participation as parliament representative; governmental minister; and member of the local or national board of directors, Jordanian women still face many challenges that made their political participation at its lowest levels. One of the challenges is electoral violence practiced against them before; during or after the election period.

## 2. Study Problem

Jordanian policies contributed to enhancing women's participation in politics in terms of amending the election law by introducing the "quota system". In 2006 and as a result to Jordanian women inability to obtain desired seats in the house of representatives through direct elections, the government amended the 2003 electoral law and thus increasing the quota seats to 6 out of 110 seats. Once again the government in 2012 amended 2010 provisional parliamentary election law resulting in increasing quota seats to 12 out of 120 seats. Then in 2013 the number of quota increased to 15 out of 150 seats (Bani Salameh & Shdough, 2018).

During the fifties of the last century, Jordanian women raised their demands to participate in national elections. In 1954 the Arab Women's Union gained its legal approval to locally function as a pressure group that aimed at educating Jordanian women in addition demanding more empowerment of women to achieve more women participation. Shortly after the establishment and in 1955 the Union was able to convince the government through protests of the crucial need to engage women in elections. The electoral Bill was issued giving the women the right to vote. Three years later the Union was dissolved. Continues and rapid feminist movements formed a new body in 1974 under the name Jordanian Women's Union. Years after, specifically in 1981 Jordan's General Women Union was founded to tackle issues related to women empowerment; dealing with challenges that face women and advance Jordanian women political capabilities through encouraging them to be active members and also prepare them to be leaders (Ibid:7-8).

A major shift took place after the 1989 democratic transition which positively resulted in the establishment of the National Commission for Women in 1992 and the Jordanian forum for women in 1995. During the era from 1950's till 1989 Jordanian women never have the chance to be represented in the Parliament due to the absence of democracy. However, in 1993 the women gained only one seat during the general elections (Bani Salameh & Shdough, 2018: 20). Shockingly, in cases of candidate women who ran for elections one can notice that the percentage of women who may won is in its lowest rates when comparing with men. In best cases, women seats - if we calculate seats from 1989 till 2020; in the parliament do not exceed 10%. For instance the percentage, including the quota seats, of 2003 elections was 5.4%; in 2007 it was 6.36% and 15.3 in 2016, and during the latest election of 2020 the percentage was 11.5%. The total number of women who ran for 2020's elections were 368; only 15 of them reserved seats in the parliament and that is the number assigned through the quota system (Al-Ghad Jordanian Newspaper, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020)

The main objective of Women's Associations in Jordan is empowering women for leadership and emphasizing the crucial importance of equal opportunities. This can be achieved through developing an ideal environment that is supportive and free from forms of violence. The Solidarity Institute Association (2020) launched *Eye on Women* program aiming at monitoring 2020's Parliamentary elections, through a gender lenses. The program motivated women voters to participate; and also sought to build capacities for women who wish to run for elections. The program concentrated on promoting equality between men and women; non-discrimination; and prohibition of bullying practices. The Association stressed that the election should be fair; transparent and take into account the obstacles imposed by the spread of COVID-19 (Ibid). Needless to say that 2020's elections relied mainly one social media to deliver electoral propaganda, that was due to the repercussions of Coronavirus and gathering restrictions and curfews imposed at the end of the week. The Solidarity Association monitored and documented an increase in cases of

electronic cyber violence practiced against women candidates and voters. It also monitored many violations against women especially pregnant among them. Voters and candidate women's were exposed to verbal violence through workers in counting and polling centers. Many of them suffered from bullying relating to their campaign personal pictures. The Association stated that female candidates were subjected to ridicule, threats, and public pressure to withdraw from the elections (Solidarity Association, 2020). A report published in Al-Ghad Jordanian Newspaper (16<sup>th</sup> October 2020) indicated that many female candidates were also subject to economic bullying giving their lack of financial independence, which imposes great challenges on them in financing campaign activities when compared to their male counterparts. The report emphasized that women during 2020's election were under the pressure of intimidation and coercion and many of them were forced not to vote resulting from the rule of the clan system (Ibid).

Quota system which was embedded in the electoral system since 2003 guaranties the women with 10% of the total seats of the parliament. Undoubtedly, the quota system enhanced Jordanian political legislature participation; and it was a major positive development that assured women political existence. Quota system main objective is integrating women in political parliamentary practice. A number is assigned and fixed to them through a system of percentages, regardless of the number of women who won seats in the parliament. The essence of this improvement of the electoral law is to recruit women and hence prepare them to any future political position. Quota system aimed at emphasizing that women are not isolated from political life, and that their presence in the parliament is essential for healthy democracy. However, it can be said that Jordanian women representation still below the level of hopes and ambitions and not in line with international democratic standards.

In the same vein, Jordanian women political participation needs more serious reconsideration. The Parliament database (2018) indicates that the participation of Jordanian women is still below the required level. The percentage of women's participation in the Second Legislative Council in 2018 was 15.4% while their participation in political parties was 34.5% (General Statistics Department, 2018) and in the Ministry of Municipalities the percentage of women's participation was 27.8% in 2018. The figures also indicate that the political participation index of Jordanian women is still low as Jordan ranked 140 out of 145 countries (World Bank, 2015). These percentages are indications that violence and electoral violence may preclude Jordanian women political empowerment and hence block any active political participation. Bardall (2011) in this matter shows that women are more vulnerable to electoral violence than men whether candidates or voters. This in turn will exclude women from political participation except in the narrowest limits (Ibid). Likewise, Jordanian women face many social and political obstacles ranging from stereotypes and cultural difficulties attached to inadequate gender discrimination or lack of legal measures, in addition to the lack of resources supporting women. Sometimes, the elected political positions are formulated in ways that downplay the importance of women empowerment (Al-Awn, 2016). Relatedly, Jordan women participation either in parties' leadership or membership is in its lowest rates. A recent study conducted by the Jordanian National Commission for Women's Affairs (2020) indicated that women membership participation in parties does not exceed 28.76% and only one woman holds the position of Secretary General (Jordanian National Commission for women's Affairs, 2020) . Therefore, the problem of the current study lies in revealing the forms of electoral violence against Jordanian women and its impact on their political empowerment.

### **3. Study Objectives**

The present study seeks to identify the sources of electoral violence. Meanwhile it aims at revealing the forms of electoral violence to which Jordanian women are exposed as voter and candidate. Then the study investigates Jordanian women awareness of electoral violence reporting mechanisms.

### **4. Study Questions**

A set of questions was formulated to systematically approach the research problem and the study accordingly will try to answer the following:

1. What is the gender of the source of electoral violence?
2. What are the sources and forms of electoral violence experienced by Jordanian women as voters and candidates?
3. To what extent are Jordanian women aware of electoral violence reporting mechanisms?
4. What are the proposals that help reduce the phenomenon of electoral violence against women from their point of view?

## 5. Study Hypothesis

To answer the study questions, the following hypothesis was formulated: The more electoral violence against women in Jordan, the weaker the political participation.

## 6. Study Terminology

- **Electoral violence against women:** Every act or group of acts that include persecution, pressure, harassment or threats committed by a person or a group directly or through third parties against women candidates, voters or workers in polling centers who exercise a general political role (Bardall, 2011).
- **Political empowerment of Women :** Making women possess the capabilities, ability and power to be an active change component and thus enhancing their ability to participate effectively in all activities of political organizations and decision-making positions in society (Al-Edwan and Bani Salameh, 2016).

## 7. Conceptual Framework

### 7.1 Violence against Women Concept

Violence against women or gender-based violence is defined as violence grounded on social roles formed and formulated by society based on biological role of both men and women relying on a system of customs, traditions and values that lead to biological sex-based inequality (United Nations Fund Population, 2005). Within the framework of sociology, the sociological meaning of violence includes whatever confuses social relations that exist between its members (Rashid, 1999). While Hassanin (1993) defined political violence as any use of threat and physical strength to achieve political goals. Al-Shayeb (2004) points out that the term violence has two characteristics in behavior; one of them is associating violence combined with compulsion, force or coercion against one's will; the second is violating the law itself. The electoral violence against women is defined as any act or group of acts that includes persecution, pressure, harassment or threats committed by a person or group of persons directly or through third parties against women candidates, voters or working in polling centers who exercise a general political role (Bardall, 2011). It is noteworthy to refer to Muqaddimah of Ibn Khaldun (Ibn Khaldun's Prolegomena), where he pointed out that violence is a natural human behavior tendency that rooted in injustice and aggression against each other (Al-Jabri, 1992).

### a. The Conceptual Framework Explaining the Causes of Electoral Violence against Women

The popular heritage is one of the important tributaries in defining the structure of culture in society. Violence is glorified in narratives and social norms with ideas such as "the end justifies the means" are embraced, and competition laws in social, political and economic transactions in a way that makes it the basic law of survival. Thus, the final result becomes the presence of basic cultures that acknowledges and glorifies violence and justifies its results in society which leads to its normalization in the end (Jassim, 2013). To one who speculates the Arab culture finds that it is full of an endless set of legacies devoted to the picture of the female in the private space, and even diminishes her rights in the name of religion, customs and traditions, deprives her freedom and classifies her existence on the basis of being a female only and not as a human being with rights to which society is bound (Al-Atoum, 2012).

The previous preference in favor of men is the product of the patriarchal system which represents one of the modes

of building society where the men domineers the woman and exploit her for their service against her will. The result of this mastery classifies women as a second-class gender and exploiting them to home production and private space where politics and public space become a male specialty with distinction (Al-Omar, 2015: 279). Who speculates the political culture in some societies finds out those political systems is attached to a group of beliefs, attitudes and feelings that give meaning to the political process. In this matter, Sydney Verba explained that those beliefs divide the political spaces, develop the values and expressive symbols, and determine the situation in which political behavior occurs, organize interactions in society and has that effective role in conducting the desired political modernization process in societies. According to Almond, political culture is at the same time all that we know, all that we believe, and everything we feel about politics (Almond, 1956: 395). The previous ideology with its subculture of violence serves as integrated intellectual systems that represent the guide for the political work as it provides a vision of history and gives existing systems existence legitimacy. In addition, it justifies economic and social practices, and legitimizes ruling elites and their political system (Easton, 1965).

On the other hand, Nicolas Machiavelli established his political thoughts based on political realism, whereby political practices are seen as practices that unite in terms of benefit and interest and not in response to the morals call. However, Hobbes believes that the reason for the emergence of violence is due to two factors: caution which is a kind of preemptive war waged by human beings to prevent others from attacking him. In addition, the human behavior is directed by a group of shared desires, which ultimately leads to conflict and competition over its fulfillment (Sheiha, 2015). Darndov attributes violent behavior to the violence of political and economic domination over the working class. To him, power and force ultimately produce violence (Ibid).

Marxists believe that achieving class equality begins with achieving equality and valence between males and females. To achieve this, it is necessary to participate in power, work and decision-making positions (Giddens, 2006). Hence, adopting gender equality is the essence of political empowerment which requires equal opportunities for both male and female while actively participate in political sphere and compete to obtain highest administrative governmental positions. However, the case never been ideal as discrimination between women and men dominates the scene and violence due to cultural, social and biological considerations still exists. This in turn affects the processes of political reform and economic development of women giving the nature of third World countries' political systems and domination of political culture that is rooted in cultural foundations (Al-Edwan and Bani Salameh, 2016).

#### **b. The Relationship between Women's Political Empowerment and Electoral Violence**

Elections are a personal civil right for all citizens of both genders as it does not relate to their membership in society only but as their rights being human beings. Jean-Jacques Rousseau described this as a right that citizens cannot be deprived of; which necessitates the application of universal suffrage system. Election is a social function requiring the electors to elect the most competent person to exercise power and achieve the public good, not the interests of his constituents or his personal interests (Al-Khawaldeh, 2017: 31).

Jordanian woman made progress in recent years in terms of legal recognition of her political rights to participate in voting and to run for local and parliamentary councils. However, there are many factors that prevent Jordanian woman from obtaining her full rights, some of which are social, cultural, economic and political (Lechkar, 2009: 146; Kaufman-Osborn, 2005; Eisenstein, 2007).

The reasons that hinder women's political empowerment include:

1. The prevalence of cultural stereotypes and social sediments that divide the spaces between males and females. Activities related to the home and the upbringing of children (the private space) is assigned to women and political activities (public space) are assigned to the man (Yazza, 2010). As a result of these perceptions it is natural as Assaf (1997) believes that the prevailing culture in any society affects the access of women to parliament, since customs, traditions and historical heritage effectively contribute to the results of parliamentary or non-parliamentary elections where patriarchal culture that gives power to men and oppresses women prevails in many societies.

The Legal Aid (2016) study indicates that the participation of Jordanian woman in the leadership of change and representation is limited in governmental positions. In return, women are allowed to participate in strengthening the agenda set by men that does not necessarily serve her interests which limits the understanding of the daily facts of political life at the society levels. It is specifically related to the daily political actions carried out by women that unfortunately make them largely invisible. One of the important obstacles is symbolic violence against women in the Jordanian society that prevents them from obtaining their election right either voting or running for elections. Accordingly, political positions such as municipal elections, for example, reflect the societal, familial and tribal reality of Jordan which in most cases does not intersect or respond to gender considerations. Therefore, it is easy to observe the presence of these representatives as it does not go beyond "demand coverage" and does not provide meaningful content for advancing women's rights on Jordan's political agenda. Consequently, it appears that the political system in Jordan is based on a male culture far from democratic ruling (Al-Aswad (1991: 291). To him, there should be a radical change in political culture that should practically reflect belief in equality among all citizens regardless of gender, race or religion (Ibid: 293). The matter as a whole here requires a degree of political mutual trust between political forces which are related to social trust and a willingness to accept the other and the opposite trend; in addition to an inherent commitment to the rules of the political game or the rules of political competition.

2. There are self-related reasons linked to the woman herself as regards her limited personal inclinations to occupy political positions. Woman only votes when having the opportunity to do so. In addition to her silence on the form of violence against her when entering the public space which gives the man a type of persistence to harm her and this is due to the lack of their political culture even among educated women. The results of the World Bank (2018) study proved that 53.3% of parliamentary women and 33.3% of the parliamentary female staff who experienced physical violence informed the police or other legal bodies and only 50% of parliamentary women who were threatened with death, rape or beatings complained to the police, the security apparatus in Parliament or another body. Moreover, 32.6% of parliamentary women who received online abuse reported to the technical intermediaries (entities that administer social networks and website hosts.)

Yazza (2010) stressed that the electoral climate in many Arab countries negatively impacts the participation of women. The mechanisms of corruption and the use of all kinds of physical, verbal and psychological violence in addition to black money dominate the political climate which leads to the reluctance of women to participate even in voting in the elections. For example, Baybars (2014: 23) indicated that the Egyptian women are reluctant to vote because they do not wish to be insulted if they do not agree to sell their voice to those who do not deserve and refrain from running for fear of contamination of their reputation and defamation because of the inability to meet the financial electoral advertising requirements. The same applies in Algeria where women did not participate in the electoral process in a certain period due to the threats of armed groups. The situation is not better in Lebanon where cross-sectarian violence dominates and affects electoral trends, not only for women but for men as well.

Bardall (2011) stated that electoral violence has many forms including physical, social, psychological and economic violence. Although these forms are not limited to women, many forms of electoral violence in each of the three groups have a greater impact on women. Ehrenreich (2005) pointed out that the evolution of women's roles in democratic political processes has diversified the ways in which women become victims of electoral violence. The women are victims of intimidation, verbal harassment, group clashes and even politically motivated theft. Bardall (2010) added that women often became victims while participating as candidates for parliament, parties and municipalities and as voters. This violence extends to the depth of the social fabric and hence affects power structures that govern them (O'Connell, 1993). According to O'Connell (1993), electoral violence against women is used to keep women in their own place in the patriarchy society and impeding her capabilities to organize her rights and demand them thus constituting a major obstacle to her empowerment and full participation in shaping social, political and economic life of her country. Bardall (2011) further highlighted that gender-based political violence in Bolivia is the most serious challenge facing them as a result of their increased political participation as candidates and elected

politicians and are often subjected to assault, threats, intimidation, physical and psychological violence and harassment by men simply because they dare to speak publicly in that patriarchy society which prevents them from participating in politics or withdrawing from political actions entirely.

Gannon (2008) pointed out that women voters are considered the second most victim of electoral violence world-wide. Women are subjected to various attacks at polling places, during the registration of voters or during other civic activities. They are victims four times more than the male voters especially in rural areas where women are discouraged from going to the polls as happened in 2008 Pakistan elections after the assassination of candidate Benazir Bhutto. During that election many isolated polling sites assigned for women were completely empty on Election Day, resulting from village leaders orders.

In addition to the previous two groups of victims, namely female voters and female politician candidates, it appears that another group who may be exposed to violence during and before the election period is women who have official roles such as government servants, police officers, election monitors, journalists, public opinion surveyors, and election management officials (Bardall, 2011). Bradall (2011) further highlights that electoral violence in traditional societies often takes the form of social censure, meaning that society may turn against women who are politically active in public due to their departure from traditional roles even within the family and clan. This is illustrated by the restrictions on freedom of movement and speech that husbands, clerics and the larger male community impose on women, in addition to isolation, marginalization and often rejection.

Demanding women's political empowerment including the elimination of all types of violence and discrimination against them is not sufficient for the state to refrain from any negative act that might hinder the enjoyment of some rights but it requires them to intervene and enact laws and take the necessary measures and procedures to fulfill international obligations which are the most effective way to guarantee a decent life for all people without discrimination (Ammar, 2009).

## **8. Previous Studies**

This section reviews the most important previous literature that dealt with electoral violence against women so that researchers can know the causes of violence and ways to prevent it in the cases studied. The studies are presented as follows:

1- Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU Issues Brief, 2018) study entitled "*Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in Europe*" which aimed to identify the phenomenon of various forms of violence and discrimination to which women are exposed in politics in European parliaments. Qualitative descriptive approach was used by using the qualitative interviews-based questionnaires. The study community consisted of 123 women from 45 European countries. The study results suggest that 85.2% of women experienced psychological violence during their tenure and 46.9% received death threats or threats of rape or beating. Meanwhile the results indicated that 58.2% of women were the target of sexual attacks on the internet and social networks, 67.9% were a target d for comments related to their physical appearance or based on gender stereotypes, 24.7% experienced sexual violence and 14.8% experienced physical violence. In terms of reporting these incidents, the study showed that 53.3% of women parliamentarians and 33.3% of female parliamentarian staff who experienced physical violence reported to the police or other agencies and only 50% of women parliamentarians who had been threatened with death, rape or beatings reported to the police or security apparatus in Parliament or another body, while 32.6% of parliamentarian women who received online abuse reported to technical intermediaries (entities that administer social networks and website hosts). 62.5% of women parliamentarians' staff who have been harassed reported through an internal parliamentary mechanism, but the aggressors were not punished for their actions in most cases. 23.5% of women parliamentarians and only 6% of female parliamentarian staff reported incidents of sexual harassment to people within their political party or to the police.

2- Kamel, *et al.* (2017) study entitled "*Violence against women and the economic cost resulting therefrom*" aimed

to identify traditional practices harmful to women and girls, as well as to measure the prevalence of violence against women of various types and forms, both by the family members, the husband or the surrounding environment. The study also aimed to reveal the consequences and cost of violence. The study employed descriptive analytical approach and concluded that the psychological violence is more common than physical or sexual violence where the percentage reached 42.5% and women less than 20 years and women who are fifty years and more were less exposed to violence in its various forms compared to other categories. The results showed the cost of women and the family due to the husband's violence amounted to 1.49 billion pounds, of which 831,236 million pounds as direct cost and 661565 million pounds as indirect cost. The study recommended paying attention to women's education because lack of education and culture leads to an increased risk of violence, in addition to raising awareness of institutions and bodies concerned with combating violence at all levels.

3- Amnesty International & Ipsos MORI (2017) study entitled *"Women's Experience of Abuse and Harassment on Social Media"* aimed to monitor violations and abuse suffered by women through social media networks. The study analyzed 288,000 tweets sent to 778 female politicians and journalists. More than 6500 volunteers from 150 countries participated and registered 2500 hours to evaluate the tweets and came out with the following results: female journalists and politicians are victims of an abusive tweet every 30 seconds as 1.1 million tweets are sent to women - approximately one tweet every 30 seconds and the company's response to abuse or harassment was insufficient as about 30% of female twitter users in all countries surveyed, with the exception of Denmark, reported that the company's response to abuse or harassment was insufficient. It also concluded that 63% and 83% of the women in the eight countries surveyed made some changes to the way of using the media platforms.

4- IPU Issues Brief Study (2016) entitled *"Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians"* aimed at identifying the phenomenon of various forms of violence and discrimination to which women are exposed in politics in various continents of the world. Descriptive quantitative analytical approach was used through employing questionnaire technique in addition to the qualitative approach. The study community and its sample consisted of 55 women parliamentarians of all ages from 39 countries (18 from Africa, 15 from Europe, 10 from Asia and the Pacific, 8 from the Americas and 4 from Arab countries). The study results showed that 81.8% of women parliamentarians suffered from psychological violence and 87.1% saw psychological violent acts against one or more of their female colleagues in the Parliament, 21.8% experienced sexual violence and 32.7% witnessed sexual violence against one or more of their female colleagues in the Parliament, while 25.5% were subjected to physical violence and 20% witnessed physical violence against one or more of their female colleagues in the Parliament. In addition, 32.7% were subjected to economic violence and 30.9% witnessed economic violence against one or more of their female colleagues in the Parliament. The results showed that 65.5% of parliamentary women received insulting or sexual statements and 27.3% received their own pictures or very disrespectful comments with sexual indications about them in the traditional media. Also, 41.8% received extremely humiliating or sexual images through the n social media, 44.4% received death threats, rape, beating or kidnapping and 32.7% have been subjected to harassment (exposure to unwanted or abusive behavior including unwanted attention, unwanted verbal contact, or interactions that may scare them). 46.7% of them said they feared for their safety and that of their friends and families. The parliamentary women added that this violence was in some cases continuous and repeated throughout the term of the parliament with a cumulative emotional and physical cost over time and it caused, for some of them, to reconsider running for another term. Moreover, more than half of those who experienced violence (51.7%) reported incidents to the Parliamentary security apparatus e and / or the police.

5- Al-Gawanmeh (2014) study entitled *"Violence against women from a gender perspective and its impact on political development in Palestine for the years (2000-2013)"* which aimed at researching violence against women from a gender perspective and its impact on political development in Palestine by clarifying the controversial relationship between them. Moreover, the study aimed to explore the availability of quantitative measures for this phenomenon. The researcher used the content analysis approach in reading and analyzing the quantitative studies and



statistics in a scientific way. Additionally, she used the historical method to review the emergence of the phenomenon of violence. The study concluded that Palestinian women are exposed to a kind of deliberate marginalization of their role and real position in the development process, as well as suffering from double violence by their community first and from the Israeli occupation second.

The results showed a failure in studying and tackling the phenomenon of violence against women and a lack of constitutional provisions that examine and address this phenomenon in an integrated manner. Accordingly, the main recommendation focused on the need to review the law of civil and personal status, in addition to activating the role of the Legislative Council and developing programs and policies that empower women in the field of political development as women have the right to enjoy the citizenship guaranteed by the law and the constitution.

6- Bardall (2011) study entitled *"Breaking the Mold: Understanding Gender and Electoral Violence"* provided a definition of electoral violence in transitional democracies. The study aimed to present a new framework for all forms of public and private violence against women. The study used the experimental approach for seven electoral projects in six countries of the world during the years 2006-2010. The study concluded that women in these countries exposed to all types of violence during and before the election period, whether as voter, candidate or polling stations worker. The results showed that 32% of women of the sample are exposed to all forms of violence (physical, economic, sexual, psychological and verbal). The results also showed that 11% of women are subjected to verbal harassment and 10% to physical assault. The results showed that women candidates for political positions are more likely to be exposed to political violence by 48%, while female voters came the by 22%.

7- A National Democratic Institute study (2016) entitled *"Analyzing Violence against Women in Political Parties"* aimed to identify the awareness of men and women of the existence of violence within their parties. It also aimed to reveal the spread of this phenomenon among men and women working in parties and to know the forms of violence that they were exposed to while doing their business in addition to the attitudes of women who were subjected to violence to complain and / or report the violence they exposed to.

The study population consisted of 26 different political parties from Cote d'Ivoire, Honduras, Tanzania and Tunisia. The study sample consisted of 64 female members and 76 male members from the party. To achieve the goals of the study, the study used the survey methodology and concluded that 70% of men and women were aware of the phenomenon of violence in their political parties while 44% of men and women were more vulnerable to violence than men compared to 4% reported that men are more exposed to violence compared to women. The study indicated that 55% of female members were exposed to some form of violence while carrying out their political duties. The results also showed that psychological violence is the most common form of violence by 48%, followed by sexual violence by 20%. The study also showed that women report and / or complain about violence the experience in political parties by 66%. The percentage of women who do not report and / or complain is 20%, and the members who reported violence resorted to the family or coworkers by 68%. The women who experienced violence reported that they reported informed the party's women and the party's men by 11%, and women organizations by 20% but they did not report to the party authorities or the police because of lack of confidence in reporting mechanisms inside or outside the party.

## **9. Study Significance**

The significance of the current study lies in aiding previous literature with up-to-date analysis that tackled the issue of electoral violence against Jordanian women, and its social, psychological, political and economic effects- not only on women; but the society as a whole. Violence against women certainly negatively harms their empowerment to enjoy their right as a citizen and restrain their participation in public affairs. The issue of women's political empowerment can no longer be limited to the digital treatment of the numbers of women in political institutions as much as it requires their active participation in managing their local affairs in a healthy environment free from violence, sharing decision-making positions to achieve the concept of integrating gender in political life. Its significance also lies in the importance of the results reached by it which may contribute to achieving this awareness

shift that we hope and break the silence that often obscures the depth of women's suffering and thus the exacerbation of this phenomenon. The results of this study in terms of intellectual and theoretical implications will provide feedback benefiting the Jordanian women who wish to enter the political life. It will also enable workers in women's empowerment programs to benefit from the proposed strategy of the study as a true response to one of the most prominent challenges and issues they face during their political empowerment.

What distinguishes this study from other studies is that it deals with accurate and descriptive analysis based on the women opinion survey in Jordan regarding the issue of their participation in the elections and the pressures and violence they suffer which in turn reduce their political participation. According to the researchers' point of view, this study is unique, at the Jordanian domestic level – as it addresses such sensitive issue which has not been systematically addressed by any researcher in Jordan. Therefore, this qualitative study tries to guide decision-makers in Jordan towards the mechanisms that must be followed to mitigate the violence against women, and thus achieving more political participation. The current study seeks to provide Jordanian and Arab libraries with a qualitative study of a problem that most women in the Arab world suffer from.

## **10. Study Methodology**

The descriptive (qualitative) analytical method was employed and the study population consisted of 30 women including a number of women who exercised their political rights whether as a voter or as candidate for parliament, municipal councils, or parties. The sample was a purposive sample and it consisted of the entire study population of 30 women. The study tool consisted of the interview guide to collect qualitative data which included six questions to conduct a number of in-depth personal interviews with the sample members in order to gain a deeper understanding of the forms of electoral violence to which Jordanian women are subjected, its patterns, incubators and motives that fuel its continuation, in addition to some suggested proposals to eliminate this phenomenon, besiege and strip it from perspective of the study community which consisted of fifteen women who ran for political positions (parliamentary, partisan, municipal) and fifteen women as voters in the city of Amman, taking into account the scientific basis when formulating personal interview questions.

The interviews were conducted personally at the homes and offices of the study community. The interview lasted from 30 to 60 minutes. The interviews were conducted individually for the entire study community. The number of interviews was 30.

## **11. Discussing the study results**

This section provides a presentation of the interviews that were conducted with the respondents. The interviews started in June 2019. Each case was interviewed three times, 30 to 90 minutes each interview. The first and second interviews (preliminary sessions) were to build positive relationship and confidence and acceptance with each case through acquaintance, dialogue and discussion of 30 to 60 minutes. The researchers introduced themselves, explained the reasons of his presence, and provided initial information on each case to enrich the evidence of the interview.

### **11.1 The Jordanian Women exposure to any form of violence before, during or after the election period:**

The study shows that the conditions of Jordanian women in politics are not different from those of their counterparts globally. Electoral violence is a behavioral phenomenon that transcends geographical boundaries, cultural particularities and class differences directed towards women like the burning arrow to deprive them even of their basic political rights. This makes the majority of Jordanian women, as the study shows; suffer from injustice, persecution, and violence practiced against them, almost continuously. The culture that sees women as not suitable for politics is a global culture, but at varying degrees depending on the maturity of the society and the degree of its awareness among given societies. Those who participate in the nomination and elections are still low due to a number of obstacles that hinder them including the prevalence of gender-based violence against them. It was clear from the respondents' words

that the concept of violence was confused and limited to physical violence first followed by verbal violence without mentioning the psychological violence in its broad and comprehensive concept, such as depriving them of some social rights and not recognizing their role or any non-verbal means aiming to insult women and make them feel bad as none of the respondents mentioned the sexual violence except after being asked about it, and their ignorance that the concept of sexual harassment falls within the definition of violence.

One of them said: "I was exposed to many forms of violence which was most intense during the election period. I do not think that a woman engaged in the political space in Jordan without suffering one or more forms of violence because she has challenged the male society who thinks that the most appropriate place for women is home and politics is the game of men." Who contemplates the Jordanian culture finds that it is full of an endless set of legacies devoted to the stereotypical image of the female in the private space away from her real political participation. All the respondents indicated that they were exposed to one or more forms of violence whether as voters or candidates for the parliament, parties or municipalities. The study showed that their exposure to violence during the election period is the most severe and effective.

It was clear from the respondents' reactions that the violent practices against Jordanian women are still inherent in the society, which indicates that despite some recent developments in the field of legislation, policies and practices, the social and political mental system is still largely the same as old system where men dominate the decision making process and they seek consciously or subconsciously to exclude women from public spheres by practicing various types of violence against them including the symbolic violence that Purdue referred to.

The results of the study agree with Hobbes' conclusion that the reason behind the emergence of violence is due to the human behavior directed by a group of shared desires, which ultimately leads to conflict and competition over its fulfillment. It agrees with Darndoff's conclusion that violent behavior against the vulnerable classes is based on political and economic control. The power and force of males ultimately produces violence against women.

The results also agree with Bardall (2011) study that women in these countries are exposed to all types of violence during the election period and the period that proceeds whether they are voters, candidates or working in polling centers. Moreover, it agrees with the results of Al-Gawanmeh (2014) study in which women are subject to a kind of deliberate marginalization of their role and real position in the development process.

#### **a. The Gender of the Source of Violence**

The study showed that violence is not related to a specific gender. Most women reported that the source of violence was only a man, while some reported that the source of violence was both men and women.

The previous result indicates that both men and women in Jordan like other patriarchal societies, adopt and reproduce the dominant male culture which sees that the man has the right in the political space. If we carefully reflect on this, we will find that we are dealing with a societal culture with a symbolic tyrant authority used as an excuse to define identities in the patriarchal society specifically. This gender ideology is introspective to the point of justifying inequality and hierarchy. Perhaps even justification of violence and repression and this representation of strength reach the point of convincing the affected party of the wisdom and legitimacy of this repression and they share again in adopting this system where women reproduce this culture.

The best evidence of this is what one of respondents said: "We cannot run for election if we do not take the permission of the man in the family. Sometimes the opposition of the mother is more than the opposition of the father fearing that woman would break the system of the family and being accused that she failed to upraise her daughter who competes with males without shame."

#### **11.2 Source of Violence or Threat:**

The elected women reported that the source of violence was from the clan, followed by close family members, then by unknown citizens at the polling stations. However, the sources of violence against the women candidates were

unknown citizens on social media and a colleague within the party, parliament or municipality, the clan and family members followed by a figure with political, religious or media authority in the society.

The results indicate that the political violence against women may be distributed among several sources despite the particularity and sensitivity of work in the political sector as it is the sector responsible for making decisions and policies in the state. This in turn may reflect on the efficiency of women wishing to enter the world of politics and their productivity in addition to their job security as a result of their work in an unhealthy environment. The cost of violence perpetrated on woman from these sources could be very high. This is expected in light of hierarchical political and social systems in which power is concentrated in the hands of the minority and often male. The persecution of the minority increases if it tries to move from the lowest social class to an upper class, which happens in the case of elected politician woman in particular. This is often a class and social secretion of marginalized societies especially the monopolists of power are far from any form of accountability and punishment under undemocratic systems.

### **11.3 Patterns of Violence to which Jordanian Women were exposed before, during, or after the Election Period:**

The phenomenon of electoral violence in Jordan is an increasing noticeable one, where it amounts to almost three quarters of Jordanian women according to what the respondents' answers confirmed whether they are voters or candidates. The study showed that Jordanian women are exposed to violence at varying degrees. It differs in its intensity from one type to another in addition to its different forms and methods and the ways in which it is practiced, with the aim of subjugating or exploiting women within an unequal power relationship, which caused them material or moral damage. The study is almost consistent with the majority of global studies on some facts and figures, but it differs in terms of the most prevalent type of violence. The psychological violence is the dominant type on most cases of violence among Jordanian women, followed by economic violence, sexual and a few cases of physical violence.

The study shows that the discourse employed by battered woman reveals violent practices against Jordanian women which in fact still rooted in society despite legislation developments. Their reactions to the interview questions indicate that despite some recent developments and reforms of legislation, policies and practices, the social and political mental system is still largely the same as old-days. The majority of respondents stress that men still dominate decision-making and men consciously or subconsciously seek to exclude women from public sphere by practicing different types of violence against them, including the symbolic.

#### **11.3.1 Forms of Violence against Jordanian Women as Voters**

The study showed that the most prevalent type of violence according to the respondents' answers is the psychological violence that occurs at home or the family. The verbal violence includes cursing her, calling her despicable names, and making her feel that she is stupid and does not understand anything in politics if she wants to choose a candidate that a family male member does not want. She may be threatened of divorce if she disobeys his orders, thereby making her lose her self-confidence and feel that she is an unwanted individual or unable to understand the political field as the males do. One of them said: "My husband threatened to divorce me if I do not elect his cousin who ran for election and cursed me with the ugliest words". Another said: "My husband kept calling me idiot because I wanted to elect a woman and he says you are only good for cooking and children. How would you understand politics! And he prevented me from going to the polling stations."

The results showed that there were some cases of physical violence if the woman disobeys the orders of the male in electing the person he decided to elect. One of them said: "My husband slapped me for not willing to elect a man from the clan and forced me to go and elect him." While the study showed that women refrained from participating in the elections because of permanent quarrels between males, especially in the parliamentary elections, which pushed a large group of males to prevent women from going to these centers, especially if they were young. One of them said: "My brother prevented me to go to these stations because of the quarrels that often occur between males and the closure of

some roads with burning tires in spite of the presence of the security services, especially after the well-known story of death as a result of societal violence in Karak region in the 2010 elections." Meanwhile, women also refrain from going to the polling stations resulting from fear of harassment, as most of the respondents indicated. One of them said: "It is impossible to go to the polling stations alone because there are a lot of men. I may get exposed to verbal harassment or any unacceptable sexual advances from the young men out there." She further stresses that "The female candidates did not demonstrate any desire for partisan elections as most Jordanian women lack partisan culture".

### **11.3.2 Forms of Violence Experienced by Jordanian Women as Candidates for Parliament, Municipal and Party Councils:**

The results indicated that Jordanian politicians' women are exposed to various forms of violence starting with psychological, economic, sexual and physical violence at varying rates. Sometimes a single female candidate is exposed to more than one type of violence. The results are as follows:

#### **A- Psychological Violence**

The respondents reported that they were subjected to one or more forms of psychological violence, meaning that they were subjected to abuse-based behavior in order to undermine their dignity and reduce their sense of their ability and self, starting from unjustified criticism, sarcasm, humiliation, discrimination, inequality at work, or exclusion of woman from participating in events and activities (social isolation). The main reason behind this is that she exceeded the male by running and not withdrawing before him. The remarkable is that she may be fought by her family to the extent that her father or brother may threaten her with death. One of them said: "I was exposed to violence by my brothers who first threatened me to boycott me completely. Then the threat came from the entire clan because they wanted to nominate a male because it is not acceptable for the clan to be represented by a female as if the males were not present. But I succeeded and wanted to run for a second session, and I faced greater challenges from my brother who had his wife to run for the elections against me after they totally boycotted me. The greatest violence was the clan's threat to kill me if I do not withdraw. I actually withdrew from running for elections". Another one said: "When I decided to run for the elections, I made sure at the beginning that no male from my clan nominated himself. I went on the deadline because I know their fanatical opinion that rejects the female candidacy. This is what happened. They asked the people not to vote for me because they stood beside each ballot box asking people not to vote for me because I did not take the opinion of the clan's males before running for the elections; and when I won the elections they unanimously boycotted me."

Based on the previous proposition, the role of the clan and tribal system in Jordan cannot be overlooked. The electoral system is based on stereotypes that reinforce this tribalism which transforms the elections from political competition into tribal competition for the benefit of the man in the clan. One of them said: "My slogan and pictures were torn apart in the town completely because of my competition for a man from the clan." This proposition indicates that Jordanian society members are unconvinced with the importance of women in political positions. Even the women who won through the (quota) succeeded with the help of men of the clan because they wanted to compete with another clan. So they supported them hoping to represent their clan due to the lack of opportunities to represent them through other seats outside the women's quota system. This behavior is clear evidence on using the electoral system for the purposes of clan competition between males to obtain service gains for their region, not because the male believes in the ability of women and their effectiveness in political work.

One of them said: "I was verbally abused by my colleague in Parliament as a result of defending a man who was harshly treated by the police during the election period in front of a large number of people. They started cursing the quota that brought me to the House of Representatives." The violence against woman in the above proposition is of the most danger invisible and the schizophrenic types even for its victims. Its danger lies in the fact that the law does not recognize it or punish for it because it difficult to prove and measure it.

The study showed the exposure of Jordanian women candidates to a new violence spawned by the globalization with its repercussions on Jordanian society. It is the electronic violence which played a negative role in perpetuating these stereotypes and violence against politician women as it expressed itself in our Jordanian society which is known for the cohesion of the structure and the importance of reputation and honor by spreading rumors that defame the reputation and credibility of women whether in the family or in the political workplace. One of them said expressing the opinion of the majority: "Several insulting publications were posted on fake websites bearing my name demanding to exclude women from political work and return to the kitchen. They also posted calls to write "we want a man candidate" in the election paper in the five columns".

### **B- Economic Violence**

Some respondents reported that they experienced some forms of economic violence either by infringing their property, signs, or pictures, which caused them to incur significant financial losses. One of them said "Some hired people attacked my husband's shops to induce me to withdraw from the candidacy. I was forced to borrow to reprint the signs after tearing them up. I am still paying their prices even after the elections are over." This violence may take other forms, such as discrimination between her and the man in choosing electoral lists, directly or indirectly, which often happens by causing problems, confusion, or tracking an error committed by her in order to exclude her.

The reason is attributed to the fact that women in Jordan suffer from weak economic empowerment and access to resources, which drives most women who want to run for elections to borrow or to look for somebody to fund their election campaign. In addition, men may, due to their excellent economic status compared to women, resort to buying votes, which represents double violence against women.

### **C- Sexual Violence**

Some respondents reported that they were subjected to sexual violence with reservations at the beginning to declare it. It is considered a dangerous form of violence. Despite the ambiguity of the concept and its many forms as defined by the International Labor Organization, the results showed verbal and kinetic harassment, such as the use of certain sexual movements such as gesture by the head or fingers, in addition to the cyberstalking spawned by the globalization, such as sending sexual images or emotional messages over the phone or e-mail. The respondents also pointed out that there is emotional harassment including behavior that separates two persons or expels the victim from his peers of his own gender.

One of them said: "I was subjected to a lot of sexual harassment from male colleague in the municipality, such as fingers and eyes movements." Another added: "I receive a lot of jokes and pictures that offend modesty from the party leader, but I cannot speak because of society's view that does not accept that." The sexual violence rate is low compared to other forms of violence due to the ambiguity of the concept of sexual violence and the lack of awareness of the Jordanian women of the details of this phenomenon, which in one way or another limit the responses to this issue. The reason may also be attributed to the low percentage of women who declared that they were exposed to sexual violence in Jordan; the victim is blamed in most cases in our Arab societies which prevents submitting complaints against perpetrators due to the sensitivity of the issue. The sexual oppression is one of men and male society means to control and subjugate the women.

### **D- Physical Violence**

The study showed a very low rate of Jordanian women exposure to physical violence, and it appeared only by the husband. One of them said: "I was beaten by my husband because I refused to withdraw from running for elections in favor of a famous man in Al Karak city." This could be attributed to the absence of political competition and the candidacy of women in Arab countries is often through the quota system reserved for women which means that women compete with women in this case and often do not compete with men. In addition, the competition takes the nature of

social type more than political type. In areas where the family and tribal customs and traditions still prevail, it is likely that the female candidate be exposed to violence because the people knew each other. So, any attack on a woman's body is considered an attack on the body of the entire clan which causes the man to think a thousand times before assaulting a female.

It appears from the previous comments that violence overlaps and the interconnection of its forms and causes in society based on cultural and social representations from within the family first, then the clan and the society as a whole. This enhances the culture of violence as well as the violence by the State by keeping silent, which revives these forms of violence and provides it with elements of continuity, whether due to the customs, tribalism, or even under the cover of religion. Violence is not justified because of customs, for example, which ultimately leads to the creation of distorted forms of behavior, which in itself is capable to reproduce violence in general and electoral violence in particular or even justifies the emergence of new types of violence such as electronic violence.

The previous results are consistent with the behavioral theory that sees culture and society as the primary reason for the existence of many forms of violence in society. It is also agrees with the subculture theory of violence in that the Jordanian society, like other patriarchal societies, is filled with an endless set of legacies devoted to the image of the female in the private space and diminish her rights in the name of religion, customs and traditions, deprive her of her freedom and exercise all forms of violence against her if she decides to exceed the limits set by males. The results are also consistent with the study of both (IPU Issues Brief, 2016; IPU Issues Brief, 2018) on the politician women's exposure to various patterns of psychological, physical, sexual and economic violence.

### **11.3.3 Resorting to a Complaint when Exposed to Violence**

The results showed that the majority of women were exposed to violence but they did not complain or submit any form of official reports to any party which jeopardizes their mental health. Reporting and complaint help catharsis fear, anxiety, stress and pressure, while not disclosing such feelings to any party represents a real threat to the woman's mental and psychological health, and may cause physical disturbances as well, and perhaps reluctance to political action at a later time, especially most women are exposed to more than one type of this violence in a systematic, synchronous and continuous manner. Perhaps the reason for not reporting violence is the system of habits that may affect the woman's decision, especially reporting sexual violence for fear of shame. The theory of stigma in Arab societies will not affect her alone, but her entire family which may make a woman prefer death over a reason to bring shame to her family. In addition, blaming the victim is a common feature to justify violence and hierarchy in patriarchal societies and to punish women for entering the public domain in the first place.

The foregoing results show that women in Jordanian society usually lack what is known as political culture which contributes to the formation of rules, institutions and symbols of the political system so that this culture turns into an element to integrate individuals and achieve their interaction with the political system. The politician women in Jordan lack the means that develop her such as informal discussions, awareness-raising, lectures, and carrying out political activity. This requires the transformation of political systems from the traditional to the modern stage characterized by rationality, democratic values and the active participation of women alongside men.

As for the legal bodies that the women complained to, the results showed that friends and family came first and second in terms of repeated resort to complaint in cases of violence against them. This type of complaint is not reporting, rather, it is merely revealing the problem to a trustworthy person, whether a friend or family member. It is not expected to lead to any results except the unloading of the negative emotional charge of the scolded women. In the same context, the women candidates resorted to reveal to the party or parliament colleagues at the same level, which may indicate that women don't trust the official legal action and its ability to deal with such sensitive matters, or their unwillingness to present official reports due to the sensitivity of political action and to preserve their image as strong women especially in light of the traditional male narration that whoever works in politics must be strong, tough, "thick-skinned" and weakness, sensitivity and complaint have no place in the world of politics. As the laws do not contain

provisions on violence against women in politics and operate legally within the general penal code, which in turn does not provide full protection for women who experience violence in the event of reporting and / or complaining. This in turn makes women afraid of resorting to the courts because they know in advance that they will not be safe as there are no deterrent penalties against the scolder and he can exercise his powers and many pressures to withdraw the lawsuit, as most of these cases may result in relinquishing the personal right, making the woman the loser and cause others not to report as well.

The results of the study agree with the psychological theory in that the severity of the perceived punishment by the individual and the consequence of that violent behavior may help prevent or hinder a person's resort to violence. It also agrees with the results of the National Democratic Institute (2016) study that women do not resort to the formal complaint, but to the family, colleagues and friends.

## **12. Proposals To Reduce the Phenomenon of Electoral Violence against Women**

Who contemplates the foregoing results notes that there is progress in awareness of the woman rights stemming from the majority's belief in the failure of definitions and penalties that ultimately provide social protection for women. The study also showed a lack of control over political institutions that operate legally within the general penal code, which in turn does not provide full protection for women subject to violence in the event of reporting or complaint which makes women afraid of resorting to the courts because they already know that they will not be safe. Building on the foregoing, the researchers suggested a number of proposals that could be developed into a national strategy to combat violent behaviors before, during or after the election period.

Some respondents suggested that the solution to the phenomenon of electoral violence to which women are subjected will not be fruitful with the participation of one party and the exclusion of the other. It is a continuous and interlinked work series in which all members of society participate in order to reach the desired reform. Everyone has a role in the development process without discrimination based on sex or other. She said: "It is necessary to unify the efforts of governmental organizations, elected bodies, and the media to combat all forms of violence and discrimination against women who want to vote and run for election." From this perspective, the desired changes will become faster and more effective.

Activation and development of strict laws to combat violence is the best solution in the opinion of most respondents. Without these laws, we will not be able to combat electoral violence and discrimination against women and provide protection for them to enjoy their rights as a human being. One of them said that the majority opinion is: "rights equality must be secured, not at the level of drafting laws only, but also on the level of their application. We do not ask for equality in law only but also before the law, and the punishment should be increased for the perpetrator of violence to deter others from taking the same violent behavior. "One respondent indicated the need to develop a code of conduct for the elections and clearly highlight the definitions of violence with the penalties prescribed for it, saying: "A code of conduct must be developed to hold the scolders accountable in order to deter them from committing such violent behaviors after explaining them in the code of conduct which often prevents women from participating in political work."

From these proposals, it becomes clear that it is important to harmonize national legislation governing the protection of women from violence in a manner consistent with international standards and taking the gender into consideration in drafting and amending these laws. One of them said: "A draft law must be submitted to the competent authorities that are compatible with international treaties and agreements, to find a law that criminalizes electoral violence against women and include provisions related thereto. In the same context, one of them suggested: "The performance of the police, the judiciary and the Independent Election Commission should be improved and their competency must be developed in the field of dealing with cases of electoral violence against women, and combating the phenomenon of selling and buying votes."

Based on the results that indicate that the dominant culture in Arab societies has a significant role in the traditional



woman industry that is afraid to report violence and even accepts some of its patterns, the results have shown the importance of adopting clear policies and procedures for complaining and reporting all cases of electoral violence against women and ensuring clear procedures and deterrent penalties against everyone who practices violence against her to break the silence in which women live and which gives the male community the right and justification to go much further against them because he sees that they do not use any means of defense and did not resort to a social or legal deterrent that limits his violent behavior. One of them said: "There must be clear and deterrent complaint measures as most women do not trust the ability of law to obtain their rights. Another added: "I suggest creating a permanent line of complaints before and during the election period supervised by a multidisciplinary team such as legal, social and psychological not only for reporting but also for psychological and social assistance to the victims of violence".

One of them suggested activating some discriminatory laws for women to help them gain access to political positions, saying: "The quota system must be reviewed and activated in the system of proportional lists to reduce the inherent tribal representation in our Jordanian culture".

The study showed the correlation of the causes of violence with the cultural and social legacies that encourage acceptance of this phenomenon. The importance of spreading a culture of non-violence in the uprising agencies in terms of the family, school and the media and thus represents a long-term strategy to combat electoral violence against them. The psychological, physical and social well-being of women by establishing services and mechanisms to support, direct and train them in facing electoral violence against them as an introduction to their political empowerment. One of them says: "Women should have increased legal awareness, training and qualification in specialized centers to confront violence against them, especially if they will run for the parliament because of the difficulties she will face from her society. Another one shares her the same previous view and adds: "Awareness campaigns should be launched for males before females by the Independent Election Commission and supported by the media and civil society organizations collectively because we cannot eliminate the phenomenon of violence by educating women without men." While another one sees that it is necessary to educate family members to establish the gender-nonviolence and equality culture and respect the other. She says: "The family must be educated to teach the children from a young age to respect and treat women as human beings, just like men, and have political rights he must respect."

As for the last proposal, it calls for the development of database and information that is credible and closely related to the topic of gender-based electoral violence and to conduct broader and more in-depth studies on that phenomenon due to the scarcity of information and indicators about that phenomenon in Jordan. One of them said "I did not hear about the electoral violence against woman in spite of my candidacy for the parliament. I heard about electoral violence in general so I hope that there will be a solid study on this topic. Another one adds: "A database should be created with numbers and indicators to shed light on this phenomenon, identify its causes and try to find appropriate solutions for it."

The results of the study are consistent with the Marxian theory which holds that achieving class equality begins with achieving equality between males and females. To achieve this, it is necessary to participate in power, work and decision-making positions. Since gender equality is the essence of political empowerment, this requires equal and similar opportunities available between them to actively participate in political life, in terms of participation and influence in senior government political and administrative positions.

It also agrees with the results of the Kamel, *et al.*, (2017) study in terms of paying attention to the women's education because the lack of education and culture leads to an increased risk of violence, in addition to raising awareness of institutions and bodies concerned with combating violence at all levels.

It is clear from the foregoing that it is difficult to narrow or bridge the gap between men and women unless we establish comprehensive development that reduces all forms of discrimination and eliminates violence and gives real opportunities for women through expansion of the right to citizenship and active participation in running public affairs

in a free of violence environment which could not be achieved without acknowledging the human rights and values agreed upon in international treaties, which Jordan has ratified as the first step to address the violence, prejudice and discrimination that women wishing to enter the political battle may face whether as a voter, a candidate or even working in the polling centers. Bridging the gap between the rights-based laws and between their implementation is one of the most important issues for those concerned with women's rights. So appropriate empowerment legislations should be enacted and adequate resources should be allocated to enforce international human rights obligations on women internally, thus effectively and successfully addressing all kinds of violence and discrimination against women as established by the CEDAW Convention.

### 13. Conclusion and Recommendations

The current study has a special nature in the literatures of political and social development of women. It shows the reality of women's political empowerment and their exposure to electoral violence as one of the political building mechanisms produced by heterosexual culture which in turn built a concept of gender through which different identities were created for men and women making this violence against politician women to appear as the tool, means, and umbrella for making a woman completely absent from public affairs and from the competition between the active forces in the arena of political rivalry .

The study argued that the more electoral violence against women the more they are unable to contribute effectively in political life and thus negatively affect the processes of political development in society. The study aimed at identifying the extent and nature of the phenomenon of violence; the gender and source of violence; the patterns of violence experienced by Jordanian women as voters and candidates; the extent of Jordanian women awareness of the mechanisms for reporting electoral violence, and finally presenting proposals that help reducing this phenomenon.

By surveying the opinions of a sample of women who have been nominated for political positions (Parliamentary, partisan, and municipal), consisting of fifteen politicians in addition to fifteen women as voters in the city of Amman, the study was able to answer its questions to reveal whether or not Jordanian women are exposed to various types of electoral violence. The study showed that most women were subjected to one or more patterns of violence. Meanwhile the study indicated that Patriarchy in Jordan has its central impact when it comes to women political empowerment giving men cultural domination. The results also show that political violence against women may be distributed over several sources despite the particularity and sensitivity of political participation. Elected women reported that the source of violence was from the clan, close family members or by unknown citizens at the polling centers. Additionally, sources of violence against candidate's women were "unknown citizens" on social media and a colleague within the party, parliament or municipality, members of the clan and family.

The study also revealed that Jordanian women are exposed to various forms of electoral violence, starting from psychological, economic, sexual and physical violence at various rates and sometimes a single female candidate is exposed to more than one type of violence. Some types of violence are rooted in the society based on cultural and social representations from within the family, the clan and the society as a whole. It also extends to the violence carried out by the state due to its silence about it which revives these forms of violence and provides them with elements of continuity, whether due to customs, tribalism, or even under the cover of religion. As for the issue of complaint and reporting, it appears that the majority of women has been subjected to violence and did not make a complaint in front of security agencies. The respondents' suggest that it is necessary to adhere to international treaties and activate the role of local laws to combat electoral violence against women, developing a code of conduct during the election period, spreading non-violence culture mainly through family, school and the media. Meanwhile, they emphasized that it is deemed necessary to adopt long-term strategy that aims at combating electoral violence against them. And they also suggested reconsidering and activating the quota system in the proportional lists system and increasing community awareness programs for males and females.

As for the last proposal indicated by them in which they called for establishing a database and information

availability that is credible and closely related to electoral and gender-based violence in addition to conducting broader and more in-depth studies on that phenomenon giving the scarcity of information related to the phenomenon in Jordan.

All respondents dreamed of a political environment in which society should resist male domination; and that political sphere should be a broad space to exchange consonant and opposing speeches alike, away from the ideology of violence and seek to transcend its provisions and facts. Or as Aristotle once said "Virtue is between two vices". The political reform will not be fruitful with only the participation of one party and the exclusion of the other. It is a continuous participation of all society members to achieve the desired reform in various fields. The political empowerment is a fully integrated process that begins with the women and ends with their presence in decision-making. It is a full cycle that begins where it ends and ends where it begins.

Based on the results, the study recommends the following:

1. Activate international conventions and treaties on eliminating violence and discrimination against women that Jordan ratified and adhered to. Besides implementation of gender-justice principle.
2. Communicate with international aid providers to establish links with local organizations aiming at developing sensitive strategies that are capable in combating gender-based electoral violence and to integrate its topics into election period programs.
3. Train security forces, the ballot box workers, and social service providers on understanding security challenges women faced during the election period, and coordinate with the local police to establish complaints centers in areas where women feel safe and comfortable enough to submit their complaints and taking into account the existence of clear mechanisms for complaints or reporting and deterrent consequences for perpetrators of electoral violence against women.
4. Build research capacity and documentation centers, providing civic education materials and encouraging the circulation of information on gender-based electoral violence.
5. Encourage quantitative studies and research and integrating qualitative approaches in research design giving that electoral violence against women may be at a personal level that requires in depth interviews.
6. Pay high attention to education programs as one of the preventive means aiming to change attitudes regarding the importance of the woman's role in politics and the necessity of providing an appropriate environment for her.
7. Develop a code of conduct which contains clear definitions of electoral violence against women and stating its penalties, especially when dealing with electronic violence and sexual harassment.

Support and empower women leaders and provide them with tools and capabilities to lead promotion campaigns aiming at confronting violence against women.

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## أثر العنف الانتخابي على التمكين السياسي للمرأة في الأردن 2012-2020

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### ملخص

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تعرّف ظاهرة العنف الانتخابي ضد المرأة وأثرها على تمكينها السياسي. كما هدفت إلى معرفة أنماط العنف الذي تتعرض له المرأة الأردنية كناخبة ومرشحة، وقياس مدى وعي المرأة الأردنية بالآليات التبليغ عن العنف الانتخابي. جادلت الدراسة بأن العنف الانتخابي له أثر سلبي على تمكين المرأة وبالتالي التأثير حكماً على مشاركتها السياسية وهذا يعدّ تجاوزاً على الحقوق الأساسية الممنوحة لها. وقدمت الدراسة مجموعة من المقترحات التي قد تساعد في الحد من هذه الظاهرة. تم سحب العينة بطريقة قصدية تكونت من (15) امرأة ترشّحن لمناصب سياسية (برلمانية، حزبية، بلدية) و (15) امرأة كناخبة في مدينة عمان للفترة الزمنية من 2012-2020. وعليه تمّ توظيف المنهج الوصفي التحليلي النوعي للتعامل مع العينة ومناقشة النتائج للخروج بالتوصيات. وكان من أبرز نتائج الدراسة أن جميع المبحوثات تعرضن إلى نمط أو أكثر من العنف سواء كنّ ناخبات أو مترشحات للنيابة أو الأحزاب أو البلديات، ابتداءً من العنف النفسي فالاقتصادي فالجنسي فالجسدي بنسب متفاوتة. كما أنهن تعرضن للعنف خلال فترة الانتخابات الذي كان أشدها وطأة وتأثيراً عليهن. كما أظهرت النتائج أن العنف لا يرتبط بجنس معين؛ حيث تشترك المرأة مع الرجل في ممارسة العنف ضد المرأة وذلك بتأثير من الثقافة الأردنية القائمة على العشائرية؛ حيث تبين أن أبرز مصادر العنف الانتخابي ضد النساء هم أفراد الأسرة والعشيرة. وبينت النتائج أن النساء المعنفات لم يتقدمن بأي بلاغ رسمي واكتفين باللجوء إلى الأصدقاء والعائلة. وأوصت الدراسة بضرورة التواصل مع المنظمات غير الحكومية المحلية والدولية لوضع استراتيجيات هادفة تسعى إلى محاربة العنف الانتخابي المبني على النوع الاجتماعي ودمج موضوعات العنف ضد المرأة في برامجها خلال فترة الانتخابات. إضافةً إلى تدريب قوات الأمن والمشرّفين على صناديق الاقتراع ومقدمي الخدمة الاجتماعية على فهم وإدراك التحديات التي تواجهها النساء في فترة الانتخابات مع مراعاة وجود آليات وإجراءات واضحة للشكوى أو الإبلاغ مع ضرورة وجود عقوبات رادعة لمرتكبي العنف الانتخابي ضد المرأة.

**الكلمات الدالة:** العنف الانتخابي، التمكين السياسي، المرأة الأردنية، حقوق المرأة، الثقافة السياسية.

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تاريخ استلام البحث 2020/11/7، وتاريخ قبوله 2021/1/27.