

# *On the Cusp of Change*

*Field analytical study of the situation of Jordanian  
political parties and expected paths*

**Mohammad Abu Rumman**

**Wael Al Khatib**

**Abdullah Al Jubur**

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## Dedication

To those who believe that our future in the Arab region, and in Jordan, is linked to strengthening public political participation in the decision-making process and enhancing democratic values and institutions, human rights, citizenship, as well as political, intellectual, and party pluralism.

To Jordanian youth who aspire to a better life and to active participation in public action and creating a brighter future through which they seek to achieve progress and development.

## Team

- **Dr. Mohammad Abu Rumman** – Academic adviser at the Politics and Society Institute and senior researcher in the project
- **Wael Al Khatib** – Jordanian researcher, principal researcher in the project
- **Abdullah Al Jubur** – Jordanian researcher, principal researcher in the project
- **Hussein Al Sarayreh** – Program development manager at the Politics and Society Institute, project manager
- **Mohammad Al Amin Assaf** – Researcher at the Politics and Society Institute, project coordinator
- **Field researchers:**
  - Juhaina Marwan Al Zureiqat**
  - Lujayn Taysir Al Hasan**
  - Rawad Awad Dassah**



**Tuqa Mohammad Al Sarayirah**  
**Shadi Abu Rashid**  
**Anas Usamah Al Dabbas**

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## Introduction

The results and recommendations of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System (announced in October 2021) have ushered in a new political path in the country, which is expected to bring about a significant qualitative shift in political and party life, especially in the wake of the approval of the Election Law and the Political Parties Law and the constitutional amendments. This is also the case due to the noticeable changes in official policies toward party action in the field of education and at universities. These developments have, in turn, triggered visible political action by the existing political parties, which started exploring ways to rectify their conditions to align with the new law, and by political figures and groups, which embarked on efforts to form new political parties.

This situation has created a state of optimism and hope to fulfill an old/new dream to see different parliaments whereby equations and dynamics are linked to the relationship between political parties and competition between different platforms, as well as a partisan government that is formed based on political party considerations to produce political and technocratic leaders who have well-known platforms and agendas and whereby people will know how those leaders take office and why they remain in power or leave. Thus, the era of political riddles involving the formation and departure of governments will be over.

Yet, hope remained captive to caution, concern, and even reservations by numerous community and political forces, let alone doubts whether the party situation in the country—or even what it would develop into—would be able actually to achieve what is needed. This involves building grassroots, getting to parliament through ballot boxes, and developing party platforms and visions to be capable of governance if they assume power. On the other hand, other politicians think that Jordanian society, by virtue of its very nature and composition, is neither qualified nor prepared for party action. Consequently, the danger of the outcomes of the Royal Committee—from this perspective—is that it appears as if they want to coerce society into having political parties, which is something that did not succeed.

The idea of this project emerged in light of this political debate and the disagreement over the party scene in its current and potential form in the next stage, in collaboration with the Politics and Society Institute and the King Abdullah II Fund for Development. The project is an investigative field study based on examining the actual reality of Jordanian political

parties, which number more than 50 (as of the launch of the project).

The key questions that the project sought to answer are the following:

- What are the characteristics of the current party landscape in Jordan?
- How can we classify political parties—not ideologically—on the basis of the criteria of strength and weakness and indicators linked to them?
- How are the current political parties going to deal with the challenge of adaptation and regularization as per the outcomes of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System?
- Which parties are more capable of rectifying conditions and maintaining political presence based on the realities of the next stage? Which parties will face greater difficulties? What are their options?
- How will the outcomes of the modernization committee change the party landscape?
- What are the features of party action? What are the expected paths and possibilities for this action in the next stage?

### **Project Methodology:**

To answer the previous questions, a multidimensional methodology was developed based on combining theoretical analysis, which examines the situation of parties through official documents about parties and the documents and statements kept by parties about themselves, and field analysis, which is based on a survey of all political parties through a questionnaire that includes the key questions related to the goals of the survey and forming a team of field researchers who would visit parties and conduct the field survey.

Numerous focus group sessions were conducted. The team and field visits were selected as follows:

- The selection of the principal researchers (2) and assistant researchers (6) based on multiple criteria: They included submission and comparison of CVs, invitation for personal interviews, submitting research plans, and mechanisms of collecting information systematically by using a special form for in-depth interviews.
- Developing themes of interviews and in-depth questionnaires.
- Training assistant researchers on conducting in-depth interviews and assigning parties to them.
- Defining and collecting sources of the study and building background information.
- Compiling the historical backgrounds of parties, each separately.
- Conducting surveys of 35 parties through interviews and visits, which totaled more than 50.
- Inputting the content of reports and interviews electronically, documenting it, and doing a preliminary analysis.
- Conducting 5 focus group sessions with the secretaries general of parties and political activists.
- Transcribing the content of focus groups, documenting it, and doing a preliminary analysis.

Here, we can focus on a number of key issues in the project methodology and the course of the study:

**First – Design of the Field Questionnaire:** The team designed a field questionnaire and trained researchers on using it. The questionnaire included main and detailed questions related to a number of key changes:

A. Institutional structure and hierarchy of political parties.



- B. Internal structure of the party: Social, intellectual, and cultural backgrounds of party members.
- C. Leadership structure in the party and leadership composition: Whether there is rotation of persons in key positions and existing leadership patterns.
- D. Youth participation in the party: Youth representation in leadership positions and in youth activities and wings involved in this.
- E. Women's participation in the party: Women's participation in party activities and representation in leadership positions and women's wings, and how much party rhetoric accommodates women's issues in general.
- F. Geographic presence and reach of political parties: The number of party branches, party activities in the governorates, and the party's adoption of issues related to the governorates and different and diverse social segments.
- G. Human and financial resources of the party: This is related to the number of active and effective party members, the financial resources of political parties, and the diversification of sources of funding.
- H. Party participation in the public sphere: The scope of the party's participation in parliamentary, local, union, university, and other elections.

The research team (made up of 6 researchers) conducted 50 field visits that included 35 political parties. The team was divided based on key information about the strength, activities, and intensity of work of parties. The remaining parties rejected the requests for visits and interviews, either directly or indirectly. Some of them provided various excuses, such as not approving of the

outcomes of the modernization committee, COVID-19 and the epidemic situation, or being too busy and not having free time.<sup>1</sup>

The field interviews provided an important database of realistic data. The research team not only prepared reports based on the official answers by party figures, but also compared them with the official information and data of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs. The researchers further used the tool of direct "social observation" to assess the visits and what is related to party building and the potential for holding various activities and events. The team reviewed the activities through social media websites to assess how much the answers agree with actual reality.

**Second – Focus Groups:** These were held with party leaders, experts in party affairs, and youth leaders (male and female) in the parties. During these sessions, the outcomes of the modernization committee were discussed, in addition to reviewing the state of political parties and their reading of the current party scene, their views of the next stage, and plans to handle the changes in the Election Law and the Parties Law, as well as the deadline to rectify conditions for political parties, which will come before the middle of 2023.

**Five brainstorming focus sessions were held as follows:**

- **Discussion session on "developing party life in Jordan: Intellectual and strategic conceptions."** A group of experts and specialists in the issues of democracy and political parties took part in the workshop. The participants discussed the current situation and how to frame the roadmap to develop party life in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> A report about the field visits, dates, and persons interviewed is available at the end of the book.

The session was held on Tuesday, 8/3/2022, in the Adnan Abu Odeh Hall at the Politics and Society Institute.

- **Discussion session on the future of party work in Jordan** with the participation of 15 political and party activists, during which they discussed the current scene and its impact on the reality of political parties in Jordan and their plans in the next stage and recommendations for developing party and political life in Jordan. It was held on Wednesday, 16/3/2022 in the Adnan Abu Odeh Hall at the Politics and Society Institute.
- **Focus group (1) titled "Between ambition and limitations...future of political parties in light of the legal amendments that followed the recommendations of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System."** It discussed the current scene and its impact on the reality of political parties in Jordan and their plans in the next stage and recommendations to develop party and political life in Jordan, with the participation of eight party leaders. It was held on 12/3/2022 at the Mövenpick Hotel in Amman.
- **Focus group (2) titled "Between ambition and limitations...future of political parties in light of the legal amendments that followed the recommendations of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System."** It discussed the current scene and its impact on the reality of political parties in Jordan and their plans in the next stage and recommendations to develop party and political life in Jordan, with the participation of seven party leaders. It was held on 19/3/2022 at the Mövenpick Hotel in Amman.

- **Focus group on "the future of party work in Jordan"** with the participation of 15 political and party activists. It discussed the current scene and its impact on the reality of political parties in Jordan and their plans in the next stage and recommendations to develop party and political life in Jordan. It was held on Thursday, 31/3/2022, in the Adnan Abu Odeh Hall at the Politics and Society Institute.

**Third – Personal Interviews and Desk Research:** In parallel with the collection of field information and holding focus groups, the team reviewed official papers, analyzed available data and social media pages, and conducted personal interviews to complement the information received from the party leaders and experts who are watching the party scene. The data was gathered, classified, and analyzed to answer the questions that formed the purpose and content of this research-investigative project, and this was included in the chapters of the book.

#### **Methodological Difficulties:**

The project encountered several methodological difficulties, which hindered the accomplishment of its mission, key of which is the lack of cooperation by numerous political parties. Many of these parties refused to be interviewed, while others who were interviewed by field researchers did not specifically answer the questions in the questionnaire and objected to some questions. Others concealed their true convictions while answering the questions. The answers of many leaders to many of the questions were characterized by exaggeration and lack of evidence and documentation. For example, someone would say "There is active youth participation," when, for example, the declared

activities of the party, media sources, and social media websites do not reflect this participation in these activities. Thus, a lot of the information that was provided lacked accuracy and was limited.

To overcome the above difficulties in field work, the research team exerted huge efforts to collect data and desk information, especially from social media websites, which have become a key source for following the news, activities, and events of parties and gauging the extent of interaction with these activities and their geographic reach. Also, the data of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs was compared with field data and desk research to develop more accurate approaches in answering the questions of the study.

### **Chapters of the Book and Division of the Study:**

The study consists of an introduction, a historical narrative, and five chapters. Each chapter covers a number of topics. The historical narrative provides an overview and summary of Jordanian party life over the course of 100 years. It explores the factors that led to the emergence of the party phenomenon and its shift from the Emirate of Transjordan. It reviews the stages of the development of party life and local and regional challenges and their reflections on the environment and political action of parties, and how party action contributed to speeding up independence, the establishment of the Jordanian state, and the development of its political identity over the decades.

The first chapter of the study discusses the institutional structures of political parties. What are the key structures, forms, and institutions of Jordanian parties? Are they different from one another? To what extent have they managed to develop their structure and institutions. Then, there is the question of internal unity within the party, and whether there is rotation or monopoly of leadership and responsibility. Finally, it

discusses the financial resources of Jordanian parties. Where do these come from? How do the parties fund their expenditures? What is the money spent on? How transparent is the financing situation within the party?

The second chapter discusses the reach of the parties in the governorates and their adoption of field plans to speed up this reach by measuring their participation in the local, parliamentary, and union elections, especially the last elections. This is in addition to whether parties have headquarters and the affiliation of members who represent diverse and numerous geographic and tribal backgrounds. This, in itself, is an indicator of the reach of the party and its field effectiveness as it is not enough to have an office or branch of the party in the governorates without it being active and capable of engaging the people to examine their concerns, issues, and daily, service, and economic problems in different areas.

The third chapter analyzes the age structure of political parties in Jordan, the rates of political representation of youth and women within the structure of parties, and the level of leadership and decision-making positions available to them. This chapter provides indicators of the ability of parties to reach and engage different components in society, on the one hand, and their ability to adapt and keep up with the stage of political modernization and the decisions and legislation resulting from it, on the other. According to these decisions and legislation, youth between 18 and 35 years of age must not be less than 20% of the members, and women must not be less than 20% of the members.

The fourth chapter examines the situation of media and political communication of parties and their capacities involving mainstream media, including newspapers, satellite channels, and radio stations. It

also discusses digital media and how to handle modern means of communication and employ them in the platforms and activities of parties, especially electoral activities, as well as the popularity of parties on digital media platforms, while focusing on social media platforms, particularly Facebook. The chapter provides a numerical analysis of the effectiveness and capacities of the pages and their performance evaluations.

The fifth chapter highlights the conclusions of the study about the situation of Jordanian political parties and the challenges facing them, along with the opportunities available to them. It underlines future trends and prospects for political parties and their programs in light of the stage of political modernization and outlines a number of recommendations that could help parties to develop themselves and renew their tools to continue to strengthen and deepen democratic change, which is based on party action.

## **Prefatory Chapter**

### **Party Action in Jordan: Milestones of the Historical Path**

*The emergence of a group of political parties on the current party scene (until 2022) goes back to the 1990s with the resumption of party life and the approval of the Political*

*Parties Law. Most of these are ideological in nature. There are parties that go back to the period 2007-2011, but the majority of existing parties today emerged after the Arab Spring.*

*The authors*

This chapter provides a historical overview of Jordanian party life over the course of 100 years. It examines the factors that led to the emergence of the party phenomenon and its shift to the Emirate of Transjordan. It also reviews the stages of the development of party life, local and regional challenges and their reflections on the environment and political action of parties, and how party action contributed to speeding up independence, the establishment of the Jordanian state, and the development of its political identity over the decades.

**First – Party Scene During Establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan**

**Second – Scene of Party Life: 1921-1945 (Parliament and Harbingers of Party Action)**

**Third – Scene of Party Life: 1945-1957 (Kingdom and Parliamentary Government)**

**Fourth – Scene of Party Life: 1957-1989 (Martial Law and Repercussions on Party Action)**

**Fifth – Scene of Party Life: 1989-2021 (Resumption of Democratic Life and Party Action)**

**Sixth – Examination of Current Party Scene (Until 2022)**



## Concluding Observations

### First – Party Scene During Establishment of Emirate of Transjordan:

Transjordan remained part of the Ottoman state until the end of World War II (1918). After the collapse of the Ottoman state and its withdrawal from the region, Transjordan became part of the Syrian state, which was formed by Emir Faisal bin Al Hussein, whose arrival in Syria contributed to the declaration of an Arab government on 5 October 1918. This marked the declaration of the first Hashemite kingdom in Bilad Al Sham (Greater Syria), led by King Faisal. It continued until the entry of the French occupation into Syria and the end of the rule of King Faisal in October 1920. The king departed Syria in the wake of the victory of the French in the Battle of Maysalun.<sup>2</sup> These successive developments made a number of national and political leaders seek refuge in Transjordan. They included members of the Syrian Independence Party who established a branch for the party in Jordan in 1921.<sup>3</sup>

The Emirate of Transjordan had not been familiar with political action as an organized form before 1921. There was no legislation in the early stage of the Emirate to regulate party and political action except the Ottoman Law on Associations of 1909.<sup>4</sup> Even the work of municipal councils, which took place in Jordanian society between 1880 and 1920,

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<sup>2</sup> Khalil Al Hajjaj, History of Jordanian Political Parties (1946-1970), National Library, deposited in 2001. A copy of the book is available at Abdul Hameed Shoman Library in Amman under number (324.2565).

<sup>3</sup> Wadee' Bashoor, Syria: The Making of a State and Birth of a Nation, Damascus, 1994.

<sup>4</sup> Development of Party Life in Jordan, Historical Analytical Study, Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2016, Amman.

focused on services provided to the population. Political action in the stage that preceded the Emirate was confined to protests and rebellions without clear ideological foundations. Yet, some educated groups, which received education in the latter part of Ottoman rule, developed political awareness, which helped in the emergence of a clearly defined Jordanian national character, especially with the start of the colonialist project that sought to divide the region between Britain and France.<sup>5</sup>

The Emirate of Transjordan was a natural extension of the political action taking place in the countries of Bilad Al Sham, Egypt, and Iraq. Many people who assumed political government posts afterward with the early governments of the Emirate joined parties that had nationalist, leftist, and pan-Arabist leanings. The first government that was established in 1921, led by Rashid Tali'a, included members of the Syrian Independence Party, which was formed to counter the consequences of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This party, which was the mouthpiece of the Young Arab Society, was one of the first political parties to move its branches from Damascus to Transjordan.<sup>6</sup> A number of national and political figures who led governments and assumed several posts in the Emirate of Transjordan and in the Hashemite

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<sup>5</sup> For more information on political action before the establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan, see the book by Dr. Faisal Al Ghuwayin "100 Years of Jordanian Party Life" (issued by Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs), in addition to what was documented by Dr. Ali Mahafzah on Jordanian political history, and the memoirs of Aref Al Aref. You can also see the book by Nahed Hattar titled "On the Arab Jordanian Issue." To see the work of local administrations and municipal councils before the establishment of the Emirate, you can go back to the report titled "Decentralization and Governorate Councils" published in the State of the Country Report 2018 issued by the Jordanian Economic and Social Council.

<sup>6</sup> Mohammad Rayyan, Political Parties in Syria and Their Role in National Movement (1920-1939, Al Kindi Publishing and Distribution House, 2006.

Kingdom of Jordan later joined the Independence Party, whose key principles included Arab unity and opposing French colonialism.<sup>7</sup>

In parallel, a number of the members of the Damascus-based Al Ahd Society worked to find an umbrella to carry out political action in Transjordan. They moved the headquarters of Al Ahd Party from Damascus to Amman in 1921. The objectives of this party included the call for the independence of Arab countries from colonialism and for these countries to be under the rule of Sharif Hussein bin Ali and his sons. Ramadan Al Balabaki was the secretary general of the party.<sup>8</sup>

## **Second – Parliament and Harbingers of Party Action (Scene of Party Life 1921-1945):**

Political awareness in Transjordan started slow and lagged behind the rest of the peoples of Bilad Al Sham. If we exclude the parties of Umm Al Qura, Ahrar Al Urdun, and Al Ahd Al Arabi, the Arab Independence Party was the main player on the political scene at the time. The party emerged in Damascus under the rule of Faisal and its leadership moved, after the French occupation of the Syrian capital, to Amman in 1921. It remained in control of political life in the Emirate of Transjordan until 1924. The Independence Party included traditional tribal leaders who gave legitimacy to the rule of Emir Abdullah Bin Al Hussein and his descendants afterward. Additionally, the party advocated confronting the British Mandate over the country, which led to it being classified as one

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<sup>7</sup> Omar Al Omari and Mohammad Bani Younes, *Jordanian Governments Under King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein (1921-1951)*.

<sup>8</sup> Mohammad Rayyan, *Political Parties in Syria and Their Role in National Movement (1920-1939)*, Al Kindi Publishing and Distribution House, 2006.

of the national opposition parties.<sup>9</sup> The party included a number of national figures who were opposed to the British Mandate and who called for supporting the Syrian revolution and opposed the French colonialist forces' pursuit of the Syrian rebels inside the Jordanian territory to which they fled.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the Umm Al Qura Party embodied a political secession movement from the Independence Party, led by Ali Rida Al Rikabi after he formed his government in March 1922. Many people did not consider his government to be democratic as numerous political activists complained that it demonstrated arbitrary behavior toward them. The party declared allegiance to Sharif Hussein bin Ali. However, it was considered a one-man party. The establishment of this party was meant to strike and confuse the other parties,<sup>11</sup> especially the Independence Party. This is why no documents or references were found to highlight the activity of this party in the public sphere. Besides, the structure of this party reflected its centralized administration. The party did not receive support from Jordanians, who lodged a complaint against Al Rikabi and members of his party, which did not last long.<sup>12</sup>

A few years later, a number of political parties and organizations emerged, such as Al Sharq Al Arabi Association and the Transjordan Officers Party. The stage saw the establishment of the first political party that had an opposition identity in the country, the Jordanian People's Party, in March 1927. It was a reform party whose objective was to seek, in legitimate ways, to support the independence of the country, educate

<sup>9</sup> Issam Mohammad Al Saadi, *Jordanian National Movement (1921-1946)*.

<sup>10</sup> Ali Saadah, *Jordanian Political Opposition in 70 Years 1921-1991*, Amman 1998.

<sup>11</sup> Terez Haddad, *File of Political Parties in Jordan (1919-1994)*.

<sup>12</sup> See Faisal Al Ghuwayin, *100 Years of Jordanian Party Life*, and Khalil Hajjaj: *History of Political Parties*.

the public, improve economic conditions, preserve individual freedoms, and spread the principles of equality and fraternity among the citizens.<sup>13</sup>

The role of the People's Party gained prominence and fame in the wake of the signing of the Jordanian-British Treaty and the publishing of its official text. The party led the national and popular opposition movement that erupted against the treaty. Protests were staged in various areas of Transjordan on 27 April 1928. The authorities confronted these movements by arresting key leaders in the country for a few days, but this did not stop the stream of delegations, petitions, and statements of protests and condemnation of the treaty. The protests continued for several days in Salt and Amman, and the personalities of the country submitted petitions to the British High Commissioner over Palestine and Transjordan, in which they declared their rejection of this treaty. Jordanian intellectuals published dozens of articles against the treaty in Palestinian and Syrian newspapers. National and popular struggle against the treaty culminated in the call for convening the first Jordanian national conference on 25 July 1928. The leaders of the People's Party were behind organizing and preparing for it.<sup>14</sup>

This period saw actual efforts to form a parliamentary assembly in Jordan after the enactment of the Basic Law of the Emirate of Transjordan on 16 April 1928. The law gave the Emirate of Transjordan constitutional legitimacy to run the affairs of the country. Likewise, an election law was passed and published on 17 June 1928 to elect the first legislative assembly at the time. Five legislative assemblies were elected during the Emirate 1921-1946. The first was in 1929. The legislative

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<sup>13</sup> Ali Mahafzah, *Jordanian Political Opposition in 100 Years (1921-2021)*, p 21.

<sup>14</sup> *Development of Party Life in Jordan, Historical Analytical Study*, Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2016, Amman.

assembly initially comprised 16 elected deputies in accordance with the Basic Law, as well as the prime minister and the cabinet members (who were six). The cabinet members were entitled to vote in the legislative assembly.

### **Classification of Emirate Parties:**

At that stage, the parties of the Emirate could be classified according to their intellectual background and political positions and attitudes into three groups: loyalist parties and organizations, opposition parties and organizations, and ideological parties and organizations.

#### **1- Loyalist Parties and Organizations:**

These parties include a diverse group of organizations, including parties that are loyal to the government, such as Umm Al Qura (1921), the Jordanian Al Tadamun Party (1923), and the Jordanian Al Ikha' Party (1937). Some of them were against the opposition, such as the Free Moderate Party (1930); advocated Jordanian patriotism, such as Ahrar Al Urdun Party (1920), reestablished in 1930; were concerned with a certain sector, such as the Jordanian Labor Party (1931); or opposed annexing Transjordan to Palestine within the region of the Balfour Declaration, such as the Transjordan Officers Party (1926). There is a group of parties that were established against a nationalistic background, such as the Al Ahd Al Arabi Party (1921) and Al Sharq Al Arabi Association in the district of Ajloun (1923). In general, these organizations did not last long.<sup>15</sup>

#### **2- Opposition Parties and Organizations:**

The organizations that emerged against the backdrop of political opposition to the British Mandate and the Jordanian-British Treaty were

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<sup>15</sup> Development of Party Life in Jordan, Historical Analytical Study, p (30), Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2016, Amman.

also diverse. They included the Jordanian People's Party (1927), the first opposition party and the most important party that had a clear impact on countering the Jordanian-British Treaty and working for the independence of Transjordan; the Party of the Executive Committee of the National Conference (1933), which was reestablished in 1944; the Jordanian National Youth Association (1933); the Jordanian National Party in exile (1936); and the five national conferences that formed an umbrella for institutionalized opposition action between 1928 and 1936.<sup>16</sup>

### **3- Ideological Parties and Organizations:**

A new group of parties and organizations with an ideological background and identity emerged in the last decade of the Emirate of Transjordan. They were the first of their kind within the group of parties and organizations that emerged under the Emirate. These projects include two types of organizations: The first is made up of Jordanian branches of organizations with a nationalist character, while the second involves ideological organizations that cover the three major families—leftist, Islamist, and nationalist, such as the Syrian Nationalist Party, the Arab Union Party, Arab Unity Party, Marxist circles, and the Muslim Brotherhood.

### **Third – Kingdom and Parliamentary Government (Scene of Party Life 1945-1957):**

As far as political parties are concerned, this stage was characterized by two important developments: The first is the issuance of the Jordanian Constitution of 1952 under King Talal (second kingdom). For the first time in the history of the kingdom, it included an explicit text

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<sup>16</sup> Development of Party Life in Jordan, Historical Analytical Study, p (31), Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2016, Amman.

about the right of Jordanians to form political parties provided that they have a legitimate end, follow peaceful means, and have bylaws that do not violate the provisions of the Constitution (Article 16). The other development is the issuance of the first law for political parties in 1954, and then the issuance of an alternative law for it in 1955. Both laws defined a political party as "an entity made up of 10 or more persons whose aim is to organize and unify its efforts in the political field."<sup>17</sup>

The political movement experienced many milestones during the period between 1946 and 1957, some of which served as a source for maturity and motivation, while others provided grounds for halt and decline. Perhaps, the key milestones include the independence of Jordan from the British Mandate, its recognition as an independent and sovereign kingdom, and the proclamation by the Jordanian parliament of King Abdullah I as king. Afterward, local and regional political developments unfolded, affecting the course of party action, starting with the Arab-Israeli war and the creation of the Zionist entity (1948), Jordanian-Palestinian unity (1950), the issuance of the Jordanian Constitution (1952), the Law on Regulation of Parties (1954), and the Baghdad Pact (1955). All these milestones had effects on the party environment. One has to examine the social and economic conditions under which the Jordanian political movement emerged and developed before managing to take root at a later stage despite the obstacles and hurdles in its way.

During these milestones, Jordanians experienced a national economy that was unable to provide the necessary capital to set up economic projects and the skilled labor that can build these projects or work in

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<sup>17</sup> Development of Party Life in Jordan, Historical Analytical Study, p (49), Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2016, Amman.



them. Therefore, ownership of major companies in the country was confined to foreign capital, which attracted foreign labor. Jordanians could not find jobs in these companies, which were small in number. There was a company for extracting minerals from the Dead Sea, and there was the Iraqi oil pipeline company. Faced with this situation, Jordanians had no choice but to express their discontent. The expression took a violent form as a group of free Jordanian youth blew up the oil pipeline in 1946.<sup>18</sup>

Amid bad social and economic conditions, there were weak political organizations that did not live up to developments. Nor did they live up to the demands of the people. These organizations were fragile because of the lack of harmony between their members and their differences. Some of them gave precedence to their personal interests over the public interest. This is in addition to the class policies of the Mandate government, which tried to discriminate and court tribal chieftains at the expense of political leaders. All these conditions combined generated a feeling of bitterness on the part of citizens and made them raise the slogan "Jordan for Jordanians." This was about to lead them to form a party to demand these rights, but the outbreak of World War II and Jordan's siding with the Allies in the War, which resulted in the declaration of martial law in the country, did not allow this to materialize.<sup>19</sup>

### **Emergence of the Brotherhood Group:**

The Jordanian Brotherhood group was registered as a charitable association under the name "Muslim Brotherhood Association,"

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<sup>18</sup> Khalil Ibrahim Al Hajjaj, History of Jordanian Political Parties 1946-1970, p (53). A copy of this book is available at the National Library and Abdul Hameed Shoman Library.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

according to the Law on Associations and Clubs, on 19 November 1945. Sa'id Ramadan, son-in-law of Hassan Al Banna, had a role in the creation of the Brotherhood in Jordan and Palestine. He established a branch for the Muslim Brotherhood in Jerusalem on 26 October 1945. He had ties with King Abdullah I, who hosted him in Amman during that period. He delivered a sermon at the Al Husayni Mosque in Amman. This relationship helped in giving the group a license to operate in Jordan. However, the actual founder of the Muslim Brotherhood group in Jordan was Abdullatif Abu Qurah, who was in touch with the general guide, Hassan Al Banna. He was a member of the founding assembly of the group in Egypt. In 1945, Abu Qurah succeeded in obtaining a license that allowed him to carry out the work of what he called "Muslim Brotherhood Association." The decision of the Council of Ministers then stipulated the following: "The High Council of Ministers decided in its session, which convened on 9 January, to allow the dignitary Isma'il Al Bilbisi and his brothers, Abdullatif Abu Qurah, Ibrahim Jamus, Rashid Darwazah, Qasim Al Am'ari, and others, to establish an association in Transjordan called Muslim Brotherhood Association." The head office of the group was inaugurated in Jabal Amman under the patronage of King Abdullah Bin Al Hussein. King Abdullah lauded the group by saying that "Jordan needs the efforts of the Brotherhood."<sup>20</sup>

The stage of establishment saw support and encouragement from the Jordanian authorities, and the group conducted its various activities while adhering to the goals of the Jordanian political system. The group held its meetings publicly and in the presence of official representatives, army officers, and prominent religious leaders.

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<sup>20</sup> Faisal Al Ghwayin, Suleiman Al Nabulsi and His Role in Political Life, pp 127-128, publications of the Jordanian Ministry of Culture, 2020.

The relationship between the political regime and the group remained special because both sides had shared interests in the face of King Farouk in Egypt and then Gamal Abdel Nasser after the Egyptian Revolution in 1952. Upon the start of King Hussein's rule, the relationship between the king and the Brotherhood remained strong. One of the reasons for the strengthening of this relationship was the need of the king for a popular and ideological backer to confront leftist and nationalist currents. The Brotherhood supported the king against his opponents in moments of crises. This explains why the group was excluded from the ban that was slapped on parties in the wake of the dismissal of the government of Suleiman Al Nabulsi until 1992.<sup>21</sup>

### **Free Jordanian Youth Movement:**

The Free Jordanian Youth Group/Movement emerged in the summer of 1946. It set a number of objectives for itself and issued 11 political statements, which included its positions toward national issues and its political vision for resolving the problems facing the Jordanian people. The group submitted an application to the Jordanian government to establish the Jordanian National Party in May 1946, but the government rejected the application. Thus, the group established the party secretly, led by Dr. Subhi Abu Ghunaimah. It set for itself a number of objectives, chief of which is drafting a democratic constitution based on the principle of separation of powers, holding free and fair elections, and forming a government that emanates from the people.

This youth group comprised graduates of Arab, especially Syrian, universities. It followed a pan-Arab track in its political orientations. It

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

also proposed an ambitious development program, which covered various aspects of the life of Jordanian society. The program largely focused on agriculture, industry, trade, education, and public freedoms. It is noticeable that this group raised its ideas and principles boldly and held the government to account and confronted it. On the other hand, it lacked the necessary political experience and accurate organization. It simply rehashed the previous slogans that were adopted by the opposition.

#### **Islamic Tahrir (Liberation) Party:**

The Islamic Tahrir Party was founded in 1953 by Judge Taqiy Al Din Al Nabhani in Jerusalem. The party included, alongside Al Nabhani, Dawood Hamdan, Munir Shuqair, Adel Al Nabulsi, and Ghanim Abduh. The party's aim was to resume Islamic life by establishing an Islamic state that implements the systems of Islam and carries its call to the world.

The party submitted an application for licensing. Based on the application, it rented an office in Jerusalem. However, the application was rejected since the proposed platform of the party violated the principles of the constitution. This prompted the party to go underground. Before the establishment of the party, Al Nabhani took part in the 1951 elections for the district of Jerusalem, but he did not win. In the 1954 elections, the party fielded five candidates. Only one of them, Ahmad Al Da'ur, won. The party ran in the 1956 elections with six candidates, and only Ahmad Al Da'ur won for the district of Tulkarm.

Although the party did not obtain an official license to carry out its political activity, this did not prevent it from continuing to spread its ideas and advocating them secretly. It intensified its activity in the first years after its establishment among schoolchildren and at mosques. Its activity

was in main cities and villages in the kingdom. The party could not form a large organizational base and did not have political weight, but its danger lied in its extremist ideology more than in its followers.

In view of the seriousness of the democratic issue and its confused understanding by Muslims, according to the vision of the party, it issued a leaflet titled "Democracy Is a System of Nonbelief, and It Is Not Permissible To Take It, Implement It, or Advocate It." Yet, the party did not mind running in parliamentary elections, while arguing that democracy is an act of nonbelief. This also applies to the regimes adopting democracy in the Islamic world.<sup>22</sup>

In 1958, nine members of the Lower House of Parliament were dismissed, including Ahmad Al Da'ur, who was sentenced to two years in prison. At that point, the party did not take part in later elections and experienced ups and downs. Al Da'ur's traits and personality influenced the party, and the opinions that he expounded on women in the 1950s remained unchanged. The party has yet to see independent judgment exercised or to change the ideological foundations behind its rhetoric.

### **Rise of Opposition Parties:**

The Jordanian political opposition parties, comprising the Communist Party, Arab Socialist Baath Party, Arab Nationalists Movement, Islamic Tahrir Party, National Front, and National Socialist Party, had developed without permission from the authority and carried out their activity publicly and secretly. Social solidarity within one family and between families within a single tribe or clan had guaranteed that the families of detained opposition activists were cared for. Society had also admired

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<sup>22</sup> Mohammad Zahid Jul, Islamic Groups in Jordan, Problem of Relationship With the Other, a research paper within the book "Islamic Movements in Jordan," p (102), Al Mesbar Center for Studies and Research, 2012.

and appreciated those people and considered them national heroes. Their intellectual convictions had bolstered their resilience and challenge of authority and made them face imprisonment and arrest with satisfaction and national pride.

### **Formation of Party-Parliamentary Government:**

In 1956, Jordan witnessed major political changes as the command of the Jordanian Army was Arabized by relieving General John Glubb and all English officers in March. Then, in October of the same year, free and fair parliamentary elections were held. The opposition parties, led by the National Socialist Party, ran in the elections. The party, along with the Communist Party, sought to ally on one list that included all the opposition parties under the name "National Front." However, the leadership of the Baath Party rejected and foiled this bid.<sup>23</sup>

The winners in the parliamentary elections included 13 deputies from the National Socialist Party, 3 deputies from the National Front, 2 deputies from the Baath Party, and 4 deputies from the Muslim Brotherhood group. King Hussein asked the secretary of the National Socialist Party, Suleiman Al Nabulsi, to form the government. He formed a coalition government from his own party and from the Baath Party, National Front, and independents on 29 October 1956. It coincided with the first day of the Tripartite (Israeli-British-French) Aggression against Egypt.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For more, see Ali Mahafzah "Jordanian Political Opposition in 100 Years," pp (83-84), Arab Establishment for Studies and Publishing, Al Faris House for Publishing and Distribution, Amman, Jordan.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p 87.

The Nabulsi government sought to lay the foundations of constitutional, parliamentary democratic life, ensure rule of law, and unlock freedoms for citizens. It allowed the following party newspapers to publish: Al Mithaq (National Socialist Party), Al Yaqazah (Arab Socialist Baath Party), Al Jamahir (Communist Party), Al Jabhah (National Front), and Al Kifah Al Islami (Muslim Brotherhood group).<sup>25</sup>

The Nabulsi government established relations and held meetings in Damascus with the Soviet Union to look for alternative support to U.S. aid, which is linked to the Eisenhower Doctrine. On 2 February 1957, King Hussein addressed a letter to his prime minister, in which he called for stopping destructive communist propaganda. Jordanian security agencies started collecting communist publications and books and prevented the screening of Soviet films. The disagreement between the king and his cabinet intensified over the activity of the communists. On 10 April 1957, the king asked the prime minister to submit his resignation, and he did. The dismissal (resignation) was followed by a military coup in favor of King Hussein on 13 April 1957, which resulted in the arrest of a large number of the free officers in the army and accusing the Baath Party and the members of the Nabulsi government of staging the coup attempt against the king. Consequently, many ministers, deputies, and army commanders fled to Syria. Meanwhile, dozens of other fellow members were put in prison, and Suleiman Al Nabulsi was placed under house arrest for more than 4 years.<sup>26</sup>

We notice how, over time, the identity of party action, which had an Arab and nationalist character, contributed to the identity of the state and

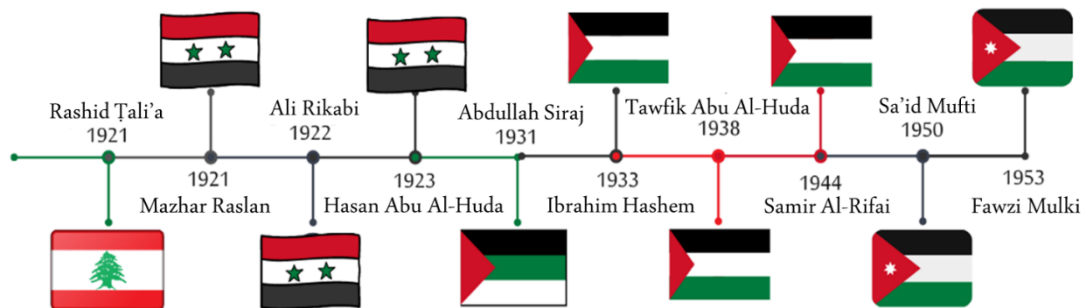
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<sup>25</sup> For more, one can see: Faisal Al Ghuwayin, Suleiman Al Nabulsi and His Role in Jordanian Political Life, (1908-1976), Arab Establishment for Studies and Publishing.

<sup>26</sup> Ali Mahafzah "Jordanian Political Opposition in 100 Years," p (92).

governments, as well as the creation and development of the state. We notice in the following chart the impact of the Independence Party and its political identity on the administration of executive authorities (government) from the creation of the Emirate and until independence:

28 Jordanian governments were formed between 1921 – 1953, led by 10 prime ministers



#### Fourth – Martial Law and its Repercussions on Party Action (Party Life 1957-1989):

The tense security situation in the wake of the dismissal of the Nabulsi government pushed the country into a political crisis, which continued until 25 April 1957 when Ibrahim Hashem was entrusted with forming a new government. The new government soon declared martial law, dissolved political parties, and suspended the political parties law in the country. The government began to crack down on the opposition, which went underground. Thus, political organizations disappeared from the public sphere, and student political movements began to move abroad in order to grow and form, with the exception of the Muslim Brotherhood group since it emerged within the framework of the Law on Charitable Associations and not as a political party in spite of its political activity.



Throughout that period, ideological political parties continued to carry out their work secretly. This is why their influence and activity on the political level was weak, while moderate and conservative parliamentary parties, which basically relied on the persons of their leaders and their moral and political influence, declined.

After 1957, Jordan suffered from a political vacuum as the existing parties lacked a legal umbrella and their activities continued to be considered illegal, while the opposition parties faced systematic crackdown and arrest with the exception of during some periods of political lull that allowed them to carry out their activities within certain limits.

Despite the creation of the Arab Union between the Jordanian Kingdom and the Iraqi Kingdom on 14 February 1958, there was no significant change in political life in Jordan. Martial law continued to be imposed on the country until the end of November 1958. The Baath Party, Communist Party, Arab Nationalists Movement, and Islamic Tahrir Party all carried out their activities clandestinely and continued to issue leaflets and circulate them secretly. The members of these parties were chased, arrested, and tried by the military administrators and the State Security Court.

The effects of the confrontation were harsh and confusing and made Jordan experience a period of tension and instability, during which it felt the need for calm to develop economic, social, cultural, and health life.<sup>27</sup> The collapse of the United Arab Republic and the end of unity between Egypt and Syria in September 1961 contributed to an internal breakthrough in Jordan after the elimination of the danger that

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<sup>27</sup> Khalil Al Hajjaj, History of Jordanian Political Parties (1946-1970), p (295).

threatened its system of government. The beginning of 1962 saw the formation of the first government of Wasfi Al Tal. The Jordanian regime realized that strengthening stability lied in easing the measures taken by successive governments against the national movement and political parties. King Hussein seized the opportunity of the birth of his son, Prince Abdullah, to announce, on 30 January 1962, his intention to pardon political prisoners. Indeed, he submitted a draft of a general amnesty to the parliament, which the parliament approved in early February of the same year. King Hussein issued an amnesty that included many army officers who were sentenced during 1957 and 1958 on charges of "conspiracy to overthrow the system of government."<sup>28</sup>

Afterward, Prime Minister Wasfi Al Tal announced the wish of his government for the return of political detainees to contribute to the development of the country and its establishments and to hold new parliamentary elections. However, the opposition did not trust this wish and considered it a political ploy by which the government aimed to achieve political gains. The Arab Nationalists Movement asked the people to boycott the parliamentary elections, which the government was about to hold. The Tal government dissolved the parliament, which was elected almost one year before. Two thirds of the members of the parliament had won without a vote. Candidates at the time were asked to obtain a certificate of good conduct from the General Intelligence. The parliament was the object of criticism and ridicule by Jordanians. Parliamentary elections were held on 25 November 1962. Some of the opposition candidates, including Baathists, Arab nationalists, and Nasserists won in these elections.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Suleiman Al Musa, History of Jordan in 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Part 2, p (51).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p (45).

On 6 April 1965, a general amnesty was issued, covering all political prisoners and detainees and Jordanians who sought political asylum in Egypt and Syria. A large number of them were appointed in the official agencies of the state.<sup>30</sup> However, party life remained paralyzed because of the continued ban on political parties in the country. Jordan began to implement plans of economic and social development, which achieved tangible economic prosperity and progress in education that covered the cities, rural areas, and Bedouin regions. On the political level, however, there was no progress. Parliamentary elections were held 51 days before the outbreak of the June 1967 war. The ninth Jordanian parliament was the one to last longest.

### **Arab-Israeli Conflict and Identity of Party Action:**

The defeat in the June 1967 war, which resulted in the loss of the West Bank and the Al Karamah Battle in March 1968, and the repositioning of the Palestinian resistance in the cities and towns of the East Bank after they were removed from the border areas with "Israel," followed by the events of September 1970, were key developments that influenced Jordanian party action and had an impact on the development of political and party life. Jordan received a new wave of Palestinian refugees, which affected the composition of party life in Jordan and its platforms and trends. The establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the vanguards of fedayeen action led to a revival of the Palestinian identity of the Palestinian people, thus pushing many Jordanian political parties to merge within the framework of the Palestinian resistance movement. The structure of the Jordanian political

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, pp 82-83 and 87-88.

and party movement, which had existed until 1967, was undermined. Additionally, party members were linked to the professional associations whose establishment was linked to public political activity. Some activists in the unions were leaders of political parties who helped in establishing them and conveyed their ideas to them, and therefore their performance was mostly marked by political activity rather than professional character.<sup>31</sup>

In the wake of the 1967 defeat, fedayeen organizations found an opportunity to present themselves as a substitute for the Arab armies that lost the war, taking advantage of the growing public sympathy with them. They managed to attract recruits from inside and outside Jordan and build more military bases, initially in the areas adjacent to the Jordan River, and later in the cities and villages, especially Palestinian camps and popular assemblies. They dominated the public political scene.

On the other hand, the Jordanian national movement in general, and Jordanian political parties in particular, found what they were looking for in the Palestinian fedayeen organizations. Thus, they merged with them or used their cover to achieve what they wanted. The Palestinian resistance movement used this situation—the need of the national movement and the parties for it—and presented itself as a leader of the liberation movement not only on the national level, but also on the pan-Arab level. They started operating under the slogan "dual struggle against the dominant bourgeois classes and against the pan-Arab enemy."

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<sup>31</sup> Eman Freihat, Historical Development of Laws Regulating Political Life (1921-2021), publications of the Independent Election Commission, Amman-Jordan.

Amid this atmosphere, the Jordanian national movement found itself weak in its means of struggle compared with the Palestinian resistance movement. Thus, the former tried to benefit from the potential of the latter. However, the aims of the two movements were different, and this difference became clearer when the Palestinian resistance movement suddenly raised the idea of "overthrowing the Jordanian monarchy" by the force of weapons. This was not part of the aims of the struggle program of the Jordanian national movement. The aims of the two programs diverged and the contradiction became visible. In spite of this, the Jordanian movement and Jordanian political parties had recourse to the resistance to escape their own situation in the hope of being able to overcome the state of despair and powerlessness that afflicted them in the previous period.

As for the Jordanian national movement during the period 1967-1970, it is noticed that Jordanian political parties abandoned their daily struggles and turned themselves into fedayeen organizations with political frameworks, thus "melting" their national identity and becoming just an echo of what the Palestinian revolutionary forces used to repeat.

This stage was characterized by broad conversations between the components of the political and party movement in the kingdom over the identity of the national movement. In other words, is it Jordanian or Palestinian Jordanian? Or does it consist of two parts, one Jordanian and the other Palestinian? Each one of these trends had supporters. Although the conversations in this regard did not resolve the issue once and for all, the major forces had decided their options to adopt a Jordanian national program that includes a part concerned with struggle for the Palestinian cause as it is an indivisible part of the components of national democratic struggle.

On the level of party action, this stage was characterized by underground action. The exposure of the affiliation of a party member would cost him years of imprisonment. Arrest campaigns intensified and involved senior political echelons whenever the security agencies sensed the activity and effectiveness of this or that party. It is common knowledge that the existing political parties, which used to identify themselves as political organizations or parties, are essentially the leftist and nationalist organizations and parties. These organizations and parties found what they were looking for in union work through the Student Federation of the University of Jordan before its dissolution and in labor unions and professional associations, besides the Jordanian Writers Association and some other associations. These served as an outlet for them to implement their struggle programs regarding each sector and to promote their parties.<sup>32</sup>

Moreover, Jordan witnessed, in the late 1970s and more clearly in the 1980s, a revival of the Jordanian political identity and a growing demand for the creation of Jordanian political parties that are independent of the PLO and the ruling parties in the neighboring Arab countries. This was tangibly achieved after the passing of the Jordanian Parties' Law No. 32 of 1992. Parties began to appear officially, and these parties were distributed over four political trends: Nationalist trend, leftist trend, Islamic trend, and conservative center trend.

**1. Nationalist trend:** Examples include the Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party, Progressive Arab Baath Party, Nationalist Action Front Party, Freedom Party, Popular Unity Party, Socialist Democratic Party, and the Democratic Assembly Party.

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<sup>32</sup> Development of Party Life in Jordan, Historical Analytical Study, p (71), Al Quds Center for Political Studies, 2016, Amman.

**2. Religious trend:** Examples include the Islamic Action Front Party, Arab Islamic Democratic Movement (Du'aa), Al Tabligh Group, Al Salafiyah Group, and the Islamic Jihad Movement.

**3. Leftist trend:** It adopts socialist Marxist ideas as a key approach for action. However, it amended its ideas in the wake of the collapse of the socialist bloc to be in line with the Jordanian Constitution and the Parties' Law. It includes parties such as the Jordanian Communist Party, the Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD), the Democratic Popular Unity Party (Al Wahdah), the Jordanian Socialist Democratic Party, the Jordanian Progressive Democratic Party, and the Popular Democratic Nationalist Movement Party.

**4. Conservative/liberal/center trend:** It focuses on general principles that are not organized by a single ideology or idea, such as belief in democracy, public freedoms, political pluralism, national unity, and social justice. This trend is represented by parties, key of which are: The National Constitutional Party, Al Mustaqbal (Future) Party, Jordanian Al Salam (Peace) Party, Arab Land Party, Arab Al Ansar Party, Al Ummah (Nation) Party, Jordanian Labor Party, Jordanian Al Nahdah (Renaissance) Party, and the Jordanian Constitutional Front.<sup>33</sup>

## **Fifth—Resumption of Democratic Life and Party Action (Party Life 1989-2021)**

Political action in Karak led to the activation of the underground leftist political parties, which constitute the key pillar of political opposition in the country and include the Jordanian Communist Party, both branches of the Arab Socialist Baath Party, the Democratic People's Party

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<sup>33</sup> Eman Freihat, Historical Development of Laws Regulating Political Life (1921-2021).

(HASHD), and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. They took advantage of these developments and incited and led them. They also issued statements urging citizens to demonstrate to overthrow the government. Professional associations, writers, intellectuals, the democratic unionist assembly, and many national figures in Amman, Salt, Karak, Madaba, Zarqa, and Aqaba, as well as labor unions and representatives of some tribes, acted in unison and submitted political demands that focused on the importance of a Jordanian shift toward democracy.

The shift toward democracy began with the government of Mudar Badran (18/6/1989 – 4/12/1989). The prime minister announced in front of the Lower House of Parliament that his government had decided to return confiscated passports to their holders and that they could receive them from the Passport Department, while allowing the renewal of passports that had expired. He stressed freedom of movement for all citizens, confirming the intention of the government to release political detainees and to form a committee to examine the conditions of all sentenced persons and to reconsider martial law and emergency law. On the next day after these statements were made, the government issued a decision to cancel the Economic Security Committee, which it adopted on 24/8/1988. The decision had dissolved the boards of directors of the companies that own the three daily newspapers: Al Ra'y, Ad Dustur, and Sawt Al Sha'b. The decision of the government provided for the return of previously elected boards of these companies. The government also issued a decision canceling the decision of the general military administrator to dissolve the Jordanian Writers Association.

Jordanian political parties—leftist and nationalist—ran in the elections that were held in 1989 although they were not registered (licensed).



These parties had been banned for many years, which forced them to resort to "clandestine" or "underground" action, as reported in the literature of these parties. The Muslim Brotherhood group, which had not been banned throughout the years of emergency and martial law, also took part in these elections and managed to win 22 out of 80 parliamentary seats that make up the Lower House of Parliament. Additionally, 13 other seats were occupied by political parties and figures from the opposition.<sup>34</sup>

Jordanian men and women became heavily involved in forming and registering their own parties. The period between 1992 and 2007 saw the establishment of dozens of political parties, thus raising the number of political parties registered according to the law to 45. Ideological parties, including leftist and nationalist, secured a legal cover to carry out their activities. The Muslim Brotherhood group set up its own party/political arm, known as the "Islamic Action Front Party." Dozens of national figures submitted applications to register new political parties, characterized in general as "national," "center," or "platform" parties, to distinguish themselves from the ideological or historical parties.

This stage in the history of Jordanian party life witnessed a flurry of internal activity, which was not confined to the phenomenon of growing number of parties, but also included dissolving and merging some with each other. The stage also saw the establishment of party alliances and coalitions to tackle the existing challenges, whether on the national or regional levels. Many Jordanian party members and activists prefer to describe the stage between 1989-1993, which is the term of the 11<sup>th</sup> Lower House of Parliament, as the "golden stage" in the course of

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<sup>34</sup> Political Parties and the Post-Parliamentary Resumption Stage, Qasim Amr and Zaid Omar, Al Quds Center for Political Studies.

Jordanian democratic change and political reform. Jordanian men and women also recall the Lower House of Parliament as being the most effective and impactful in terms of participation in making public policies and approving legislation on political action.<sup>35</sup>

### **Significant Change in Laws and Regulation of Action of Political Parties:**

The draft Political Parties Law of 1991 was prepared by the government of Mudar Badran and amended by the government of Taher Al Masri and then submitted to the Lower House of Parliament. It was published in the press under the second government of Al Sharif Zaid on 23 March 1992 and was commented on in the press. The Lower House of Parliament started to discuss it and approved it on 5/7/1992. It was issued under the name "Political Parties Law No. 32 of 1992." The registration of parties with the Ministry of Interior began afterward, and a total of 9 parties were registered during October and November. The parties were: Jordanian National Assembly Party, Popular Unity Party (Al Wahdawiyyun), Jordanian Al Ahd Party, Islamic Action Front Party, Future Party, Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD), Jordanian Progressive Democratic Party, Arab Socialist Baath Party, and the Jordanian Communist Party. The number of parties that received a license by mid-February 1993 totaled around 15.<sup>36</sup>

This law was followed by the passing of the Parties Law for the years 2007 and 2012 when the parties' file was within the mandate of the Ministry of Interior. Then, Parties Law No. 39 of 2015 was issued, and the file of regulating parties moved to the Ministry of Political and

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ali Mahafzah, *Jordanian Political Opposition in 100 Years, (1921-2021)*, p (167).

Parliamentary Affairs. Three decades after the launch of the shift toward democracy, which started in 1989 and was effectively embodied by the Parties Law of 1992, the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System proposed that the file of regulating party affairs enjoy greater independence and be removed from the cloak of the government. Afterward, the Political Parties Law of 2022 was passed. The law was proposed by the committee and approved by parliament. The law provided for transferring the file of regulating party affairs to the Independent Election Commission. It also provided for expanding party participation, independence and governance, financial empowerment of parties, strengthening the principle of rule of law, and democratic action within and between parties. This is in addition to creating a concept and defining the party as "a national political organization made up of Jordanians who are united by the values of citizenship and common goals, programs, visions, and ideas. The party aims at participating in political life and public action by peaceful and democratic ways for legitimate purposes through running in all kinds of elections, including parliamentary elections, and forming or participating in governments according to Article 35 of the Constitution."

The draft law stipulated that youth whose ages are between 18 and 35 must not be less than 20% of the founders and that women must not be less than 20% of the founders. Additionally, at least one of the founders must be a person with a disability. The number of founders who are present at the constituent conference must not be less than the majority of its founding members. The law further guaranteed that no citizen may be harassed or held accountable because of his party affiliation, and his constitutional or legal rights may not be affected. It gave students of higher education establishments who are members of a party the right to

exercise all party activities within the campus of those establishments without any restriction or infringement on their rights provided that a special regulation should be issued to organize these activities.<sup>37</sup>

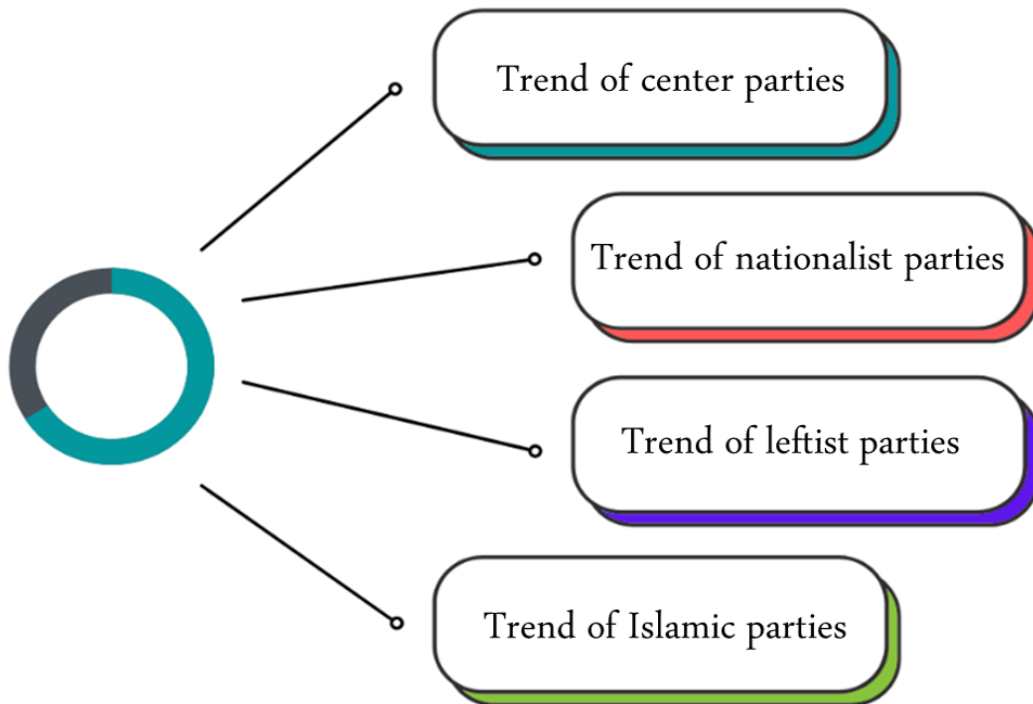
### **Sixth—Examination of Current Political Scene (until 2022):**

Anyone who studies Jordanian political parties finds it difficult to classify the political parties, especially in light of the lack of an agreed classification, on the one hand, and the inability of many parties to classify themselves, on the other. Some people follow a dual classification emanating from the party's intellectual principles and ideological foundations. Here, some people speak about Islamic parties and platform-based parties.

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<sup>37</sup> See the website of the Royal Committee To Modernize the Political System: <https://tahdeeth.jo> .

### Classification of party trends in Jordan



Based on its aims, this study adopted a broader classification, which is closer to the existing party situation, and which is necessitated by the descriptive analytical approach that is followed. The approach classifies the large number of parties into party trends, and under each trend, there are parties that are similar in their view of the social situation and that have similar intellectual foundations and principles. In light of this, party trends can be classified as follows:

- **Trend of Islamic parties:** Islamic Action Front Party and National Coalition Party (it was formed after the merger between the Islamic Al Wasat Party and Zamzam Party)<sup>38</sup>

<sup>38</sup> The new Parties' Law of 2022, in Article 5, prohibits "the creation of parties on religious grounds" and based on regularization, the parties will amend their names, but their identity will remain religious,

- **Trend of leftist parties:** Jordanian Communist Party, Democratic People's Party (HASHD), and Democratic Popular Unity Party (Al Wahdah).
- **Trend of nationalist parties:** Arab Socialist Baath Party, Progressive Arab Baath Party, and Nationalist Movement Party.
- **Trend of center parties:** National Constitutional Party, Al Resalah Party, Jordanian National Party, Jordanian Al Hayat Party, National Current Party, Justice and Development Party, Freedom and Equality Party, Jordanian National Union Party, Jordanian National Youth Party, Justice and Reform Party, Islah (Reform) Party, Reform and Renewal Party (Hasad), Jordanian Democratic National Assembly Party (Tawad), Al Fursan Party, Jordanian Equality Party, Jordanian Al Shahamah Party, Stronger Jordan Party, Social Justice Party, Al Balad Al Amin Party, Jordanian Al Ansar Party, Al Wafa Al Watani Party, National Unity Party, Jordanian Al Awn Al Watani Party, Jordanian Social Democratic Party, Shura Party, Jordanian Democratic Nature Party, Jordanian Future Party, Ahrar Al Urdun Party, Jordanian National Current Party, Jordanian National Renaissance Front Party, Conservative Party, Jordanian Al Shu'lah Party, Al Nidaa Party, Al Rayah Al Urduniyah Party, Modernization and Change Party, Partnership and Salvation Party, Civil Alliance Party (removed from party map), and Al Urdun Baytuna (Jordan Our Home) Party.

It is clear, based on the classification of parties into four party trends, that the trend of the center parties represents the largest number of Jordanian political parties. If we review the history of Jordanian parties

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especially the Islamic Action Front Party. As for Al Wasat Party, it merged with the Zamzam Party and changed its name to become "National Coalition Party." See Political Parties' Law of 2022 in the Official Gazette: [bit.ly/3GayjhS](http://bit.ly/3GayjhS)

over the past three decades, we will find that the general trend has been for establishing parties that have a center-leaning identity in light of the fragmentation of Islamic parties and the total absence of leftist parties.

On another level, we can look at the party map chronologically, starting with the return of party life through the approval of the Parties Law at the time until 2022. We can note three main levels here:

First level: It includes the parties of the 1990s until the year 2002. Here, we are talking about 10 main parties that include leftist and nationalist parties, the Islamic Action Front, Al Wasat, Al Resalah, and the National Constitutional Party.

Second level: It covers the parties that came between 2007 and 2010, which are 6 main parties (United Front, Al Hayat, National Current, National Constitutional Party, Justice and Development, and Freedom and Equality).

Third level: Between 2011 and 2022. It is made up of the majority of the remaining political parties.

### **Concluding Observations:**

- Numerous factors contributed, over time, to shackling and weakening Jordanian party life during the stage of the Emirate. When going back to the memoirs of Aref Al Aref, we notice how the Mandate government had a hidden hand in obstructing the activation and regulation of party action in Jordan in general, especially the trends that had nationalistic and liberation terms of reference.
- Apparently, the phenomenon of names moving between parties was present during that period among a number of founding

members in more than one party. This could be due to the limited activity of these parties within the main cities and not having geographic reach. Those members were also linked to the nationalist groups that were concentrated in the major cities of Bilad Al Sham. This situation affected the course of key political developments in Transjordan and made the impact of parties limited within the general social and tribal context.

- It should be noted here that many political parties did not last long during that period and did not have broad reach. These parties were concentrated within the circles of political elites in both Damascus and Amman. This indicates their weak influence and competition or at least creating confusion for some other platform-based parties, like the Independence Party, which had a strong impact and engaged in intensive action on the official and popular political levels.
- When World War II broke out, the Jordanian government took strict security measures and activated the Defense Law in Transjordan on 29 August 1939. The country was governed by this law throughout the war, and government control over public freedoms intensified. The Defense Regulation issued on 4/5/1941 specified the radio stations that Jordanians are allowed to listen to. These included London Radio, Al Quds Radio, and Cairo Radio. As a matter of fact, Jordanian political opposition was so weak and did not resume its activity except after the end of the war.<sup>39</sup>
- Parties and national conferences of an opposition nature under the Emirates played an important role in representing the aspirations

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<sup>39</sup> Ali Mahafzah, Contemporary History of Jordan: Emirate Period, p (89).



of the masses in Transjordan toward liberation from the British Mandate and toward independence, freedom, and democratic development. This contributed to laying the foundations of the process of democratic transformation through adhering to the Constitution and regularly maintaining parliamentary life and party pluralism.

- The period between 1946 and 1957 was characterized by the birth of new political parties that included ideological parties representing the three main families—Islamic, leftist, and nationalist—in addition to other parties that focused their attention on participating in governance. There was an attempt to emulate the British model in rotating power between two main parties, but it lacked the factors of success because those parties had not yet had strong roots within society.
- The development of party life in Jordan was strongly influenced by regional conditions. Developments across the region reflected directly on the country in different forms, not only on the level of political positions, but also on the level of formation.
- The severe security restrictions imposed on party action under martial law helped political parties in getting closer to each other. The parties, especially leftist and nationalist parties, used to issue positions jointly, such as signing a statement carrying all their names or using common wording that symbolized these parties without naming them, such as "Jordanian national parties and forces."
- During the period between 1957 and 1970, party action suffered numerous upheavals, which affected the natural growth of parties

and their political action. Dissolving political parties in April 1957 was a severe blow and turned into a terrifying specter that moved into Jordanian society and continued to haunt them for a long time. Also, the defeat in 1967 marked a turning point when political action supported by armed force became part of democratic political action.

- The family played a major role in party political mobilization for the generation of youth over the past decades. On the other hand, the collective memory of party action in Jordan during the period of martial law still constitutes a psychological barrier to the active participation and political role of the new generation.
- The closure of the political sphere during the period of martial law not only restricted political activity, but also extended to successive political governments, which neglected programs of political development and democratic empowerment. This weakened the general political culture and made it unable to launch a new stage in which parties are more effective and based on platforms in all walks of life and in which parties play their role and assume their natural position in political mediation between the people and governments.

## **Chapter One**

# Institutional Structures and Leadership Hierarchy

*The Jordanian social structure contributed to the emergence of the phenomenon of party pluralism away from the existence of a political identity, direction, and program with clear features for a large number of parties. This phenomenon became more visible during the incidents of the so-called "Arab Spring," which led to the creation of a large number of parties compared with the stage of the resumption of political life in 1989. The Jordanian social character moved to the new parties, which were mostly marked by sub-identities besides the political head (personal rule).*

*The authors*

This chapter discusses the institutional structures of political parties. It covers the Jordanian institutional party structures and hierarchy, the nature of differences between them, and the degree to which they managed to develop their structures and institutions. It then discusses the subject of internal unity in parties and whether there is rotation of leadership and responsibility or monopoly over them. Finally, it looks at the financial resources of parties: Where do they come from? How do the parties secure funding for their expenses? What do they spend on? To what degree is there financial transparency?

It is common knowledge that the institutional structure and hierarchy of the party reflects more than one indicator: The ability to develop and renew, flexibility and adaptation to changes and developments, the level of democracy and internal participation, and whether there are institutions that allow for broad representation of the members and give them powers and vice versa. As for rotation of leadership within the party, it is an important indicator of the democracy of the party and its ability to control the members within institutional action. This distinguishes institutional parties from parties that have a personalized character and totalitarian parties that give a higher value to the personality of the leader.

The idea behind the previous variables is that the political party is a political institution and that its weakness and strength are measured based on the strength of its institutional structure. Samuel Huntington defined four indicators to measure the strength and weakness of institutions: Adaptation, complexity, autonomy, and coherence. These criteria are within the scope of this chapter, but implicitly, since there is no clear information and data that turns them into a numerical reading to help make a comparison between the political parties and evaluate their institutional strength.

### **First – Organizational Structure and Party Institutions:**

Most parties in Jordan adopt conventional and similar models when it comes to the organizational structure. Obviously, the institutional structure of the party did not take into consideration the changes and developments that occurred in sociopolitical movements or what Samuel Huntington calls "political modernization" of the party and considering

the equation of adaptability versus rigidity since "the more adaptable, the more institutionalized the organization is, while the more rigid, the less institutionalized it is."<sup>40</sup> Going back to the party's institutional structure, we find a classical model that assumes the form of a congress and a political bureau within the trend of the parties of the center.

Since the passing of laws that regulate party action in Jordan,<sup>41</sup> these laws and their amendments have not provided a standard model for the structure of the political party. They simply refer to the importance of having a bylaw and committees in institutionalizing the party whose job is to organize the relationship between the party and its members and to manage financial resources. These laws state that the "secretary general" is the legal name of the position of the leader of the party provided that this takes place through general elections. This is perhaps one form of not interfering with the internal affairs of parties. This is why today we see diversity and differences in the form and structure of the existing Jordanian political parties.

### **1- Organizational Structure of Parties With Islamic Identity:**

When going back to the organizational structure of parties, we find that Islamic parties, such as the Islamic Al Wasat Party and Islamic Action Front, stick to the Shura Council as the highest authority in the party. This council is formed through the elections of the constituent assembly. The Shura Council in the Islamic Action Front consists of 100 members, 80 of whom are elected from the branches and 18 are elected by the

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<sup>40</sup> For more on social forces and political institutions, one can refer to Samuel Huntington's book "Political Order in Changing Societies" p (17), translated by Sumayya Abbud, Al Saqi House, Second Edition, 2015, Beirut, Lebanon.

<sup>41</sup> To look at legislation regulating political and party life in Jordan, one can refer to the book by Eman Freihat "Historical Development of Laws Regulating Political Life 1921-2021," which is one of the publications of the Independent Election Commission in Jordan.

congress, and at least one third of them are women. Meanwhile, the general assembly includes the members of the current Shura Council, whose term has expired; the members of the Executive Bureau, whose term has expired; the members of the Administrative Assembly, which represents the branches of the party; and the members of the party in the parliament. On the other hand, the Shura Council of the Al Wasat Party has an executive role in litigation entities, such as the judiciary and dispute resolution within the party and the branches. More importantly, the Shura Council elects the members of the Political Bureau of the party.<sup>42</sup>

As for the organizational structure of the Islamic Al Wasat Party, it consists of the following organizational divisions arranged hierarchically from top to bottom: (Leadership of the party, Shura Council, Bureau of Shura Council, General Assembly, Congress, Central Committees, Expert Council, Central Court, Court of Appeal, and a number of administrative bodies of the branches).<sup>43</sup> Meanwhile, the organizational structure of the Islamic Action Front consists of the following organizational divisions: Constituent Assembly, General Assembly, Congress, Shura Council, Executive Bureau, administrative bodies of the branches, general assemblies of the branches, and the consultative councils of the branches.<sup>44</sup>

## **2- Organizational Structure of Parties With Nationalist Identity:**

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<sup>42</sup> Interview of research team with Engineer Murad Adayleh, secretary general of the Islamic Action Front Party, on 14/2/2022, and the secretary of the Islamic Al Wasat Party on 4/3/2022.

<sup>43</sup> See the page of the Islamic Al Wasat Party in the "Guide to Jordanian Political Life" on the website: [bit.ly/3GStyK5](http://bit.ly/3GStyK5)

<sup>44</sup> For more, refer to the website of the Islamic Action Front Party: <https://jabha-jo.com/>

Regarding nationalist parties, they adopt the classical organizational structure followed by Arab totalitarian parties, which emerged noticeably during the period of the Arab nationalist tide. For example, we see that the Progressive Arab Baath Party, in its organizational structure, still maintains the "regional conference" that elects the central command, under which there are the commands of the branches. When necessary and in emergency cases, an "extraordinary regional conference" is convened. On the other hand, we see great similarity in the Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party as the organizational structure consists of the higher leadership followed by the leaderships of the branches and sections, and then there is the leadership of a division for the affairs of organization and for discussing developments, and under it there are the active party members.<sup>45</sup> As for the Nationalist Movement Party, the congress is its highest body. It elects the central committee, which in turn elects the political bureau. The latter elects the secretary general. The party also has departments: Youth Department and Woman Department, besides a department named "Mass Action" and the Finance Department and Legal Department.<sup>46</sup>

### **3- Organizational Structure of Parties With Leftist Identity:**

Regarding leftist parties, we see, for example, that the organizational structure of the Jordanian Communist Party consists of the "party organization," which is an administrative apparatus whose job is to implement the policies of the party within limited domains, besides the mass connections of the party. Then comes the Local Committee, which

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<sup>45</sup> Interview of research team with the member of the leadership and director of the Bureau of Secretariat in the Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party on 19/2/2022, in addition to the secretary general of the Progressive Arab Baath Party and secretary of the party on 17/2/2022.

<sup>46</sup> Interview of research team with the woman in charge of the Youth Department in Amman and rapporteur of the Media Committee in the Nationalist Movement Party on 14/5/2022.

leads all activities of the party and expanding its membership and submitting periodic reports to the leadership. Then, there is the committee of the region, which leads the local committees and is elected by the "conference of the region." Then comes the party congress, which represents the highest level of leadership, and the party council, which comprises the members of the Central Committee and the other committees. Then, there is the Central Committee, which is closest to the executive authority of the party as it leads the party and organizes its affairs. Then, comes the Political Bureau. The implementation of the decisions of the Central Committee is at the heart of the tasks of the Political Bureau. Then, comes the position of secretary general, deputy secretary general, and secretary of financial affairs.<sup>47</sup>

Concerning the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (Al Wahdah), the organizational structure consists of the national congress, whose job is to amend and approve the platform of the party, besides the Central Committee, which is the highest executive body in the hierarchy of the party. The committee implements the decisions of the congress and the platform of the party and monitors the work of the Political Bureau, which carries out daily leadership within the party and its implementation is led by the secretary general. The forms of meeting have different names (region, league, cells, and circles).<sup>48</sup>

#### **4- Organizational Structure of Parties With Center Identity:**

The center parties are the largest in number among the licensed political parties in Jordan. The number of the political parties that have a center identity in Jordan totals 40. Upon examining the organizational

<sup>47</sup> Interview of research team with the deputy secretary general and person in charge of organization in the Jordanian Community Party on 4/3/2022.

<sup>48</sup> Interview of research team with the secretary general of the Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party on 6/3/2022.



structure of these parties, we notice, for example, that the National Conference Party (Zamzam), which split from the Islamic Action Front Party—before its merger later with the Islamic Al Wasat Party—adopted a new organizational structure that differs from the one that exists in Islamic parties (Shura Council and higher authority driven by religious ideology). It adopted an institutional structure whereby the general assembly of the party consists of the congress, which is made up of administrative bodies from all the branches that are directly elected by the members of the branches, members of the Advisers' Council from the branches, members of the party courts, holders of representative positions (they are now 175), and then the Advisers' Council, whose members total 48, in addition to the current secretary general, the deputy secretary general, the former secretary general, and the former president of the Advisers' Council. The Advisers' Council elects the members of the central court (5 members), the members of the higher court (7 members), and the integrity and transparency body. It also elects the committees that represents it. The secretary general and his deputy are elected directly by the congress. The secretary general nominates more than 16 persons to the Executive Bureau (he typically nominates 20). The Advisers' Council elects 11 from them to the Political Bureau.<sup>49</sup>

When we compare the parties with a center identity, we find that the general feature of the organizational structure adopts a similar conventional model. They are similar in having a political bureau, central committees, secretary general, and consultative council. We observed

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<sup>49</sup> Interview of research team with the member of the Political Bureau of the National Conference Party (Zamzam), who is also the person in charge of the branches, and the secretary of the coordination office for the merger with the Islamic Al Wasat Party on 17/2/2022.

here a minor difference in the formation of a structure that is closer to the institutions of the state and the division of authorities. For example, in the Jordanian United Front Party, the basic system is like the institutions of the constitutional state. The secretary general is similar to the position of prime minister, and the executive committee is similar to the executive authority. All of them are elected by the National Council, which is similar to the Lower House of Parliament, and which is elected by the members of the party. The party also has 24 specialized committees, including women, youth, higher education, language, social committee, political committee, economic committee, financial committee, and the self-rule committee.<sup>50</sup>

We notice that the center parties that were formed after 2016 follow a simple structure that is removed from pragmatism, such as Al Urdun Baytuna (Jordan Our Home) Party, whose structure includes the secretary general and his deputy, an executive bureau that comprises 7 members whose job is to supervise the work and activities of the party and the estimated draft budget, an executive council that comprises 25 members, and a committee for disciplinary control. Compared with Future Party, for example, we see a simpler model whereby the executive council is the highest authority, then the central council, followed by the congress and a control committee that plays the role of judiciary and arbiter.

Apparently, there is an issue with the concept of the "party congress" as some parties consider it as the "party parliament" in terms of its function, while others consider it an expanded regular meeting to follow up on activities and events. Some parties deem it a higher authority in

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<sup>50</sup> Interview of research team with the secretary general of the Jordanian United Front Party on 22/2022 [sic]

the administrative apparatus of the party. On the other hand, there are parties that consider it the launch of the party and the stage of its foundation. In terms of the frequency of holding the congress, some parties hold it every few months while others hold it annually.

## **Second – Internal Democracy and Rotation of Leadership in Parties:**

Huntington says that "the simplest political system is that which depends on one individual. It is also the least stable." This applies to the parties and rotation of power within them. The internal democracy of parties is measured through several angles, key of which are: Average of rotation of party power, average of political representation of different components of society within the leadership positions of the party, and the percentage of inclusion of women and youth as political actors within these parties.

When studying the existing Jordanian political parties as of November 2021, we see that the number of women within Jordanian political parties totals 12,710 accounting for 34.86% of the total number of party members, which is 36,461. The Justice and Reform Party is the party that has the most women in it, followed by the Freedom and Equality Party. As for party youth of the age group 18-40, they number 12,826 young men and women, accounting for 35.18%. The Jordanian United Front Party is the party that embraces the youth category the most, followed by the Justice and Reform Party.<sup>51</sup>

The Jordanian social structure has contributed to the emergence of the phenomenon of party pluralism away from the existence of a political

<sup>51</sup> State of the Country Report 2021, the Economic and Social Council, in addition to documents of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs.

identity, direction, and platform with clear features for a large group of parties. This phenomenon emerged more clearly during the developments of the so-called "Arab Spring," which led to the formation of a large number of parties compared with the stage of the resumption of political life in 1989. The Jordanian social personality moved to the new parties that were mostly marked by sub-identities, besides the political head (personal rule).

Jordanian party life has not witnessed the phenomenon of the resignation of the leadership or secretary general after failing to lead his party in the elections or failing to implement the party platform and aspirations, as happens in nascent or advanced democracies. This reflects the low level of democratic life within the party, just as it reflects the party's "dependence" on the personality of the "leader," whether he is the secretary general or chairman, especially in terms of the funding of the party, which mostly depends on the person of the "first man" in the party.<sup>52</sup>

### **Splits, Resignations, and Coherence in Jordanian Parties:**

The phenomenon of major and minor party splits is considered one of the illnesses of politics. It reveals, on the organizational level, weak party coherence. As for the members, it reveals, on the one hand, the power struggle and lack of independence in decision-making.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, it shows the desire to achieve private interests. If the power and effectiveness of parties are linked to the extent of their internal

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<sup>52</sup> See Development of Party Life in Jordan, Analytical Study 1921-2016, Al Quds Center for Political Studies.

<sup>53</sup> Hazem Omar, Splits in Political Parties: Theoretical Study. The study is published on the website Academia Arabia accessed on 22/6/2022. The study can be accessed on the following link: <https://academia-arabia.com/ar/reader/2/136169>

coherence and ability to manage their differences to prevent party splits, then the phenomenon of splits is considered one of the key features of party instability and weak organizational coherence.

Going back to the personal interviews with the leaders of parties in this study, we see that there are numerous reasons and motives for splits, resignations, and dismissals within Jordanian parties. These include political and interest-based reasons and economic motives, such as the failure to pay subscriptions and the wish of party youth to get a job in security establishments, like the army. This situation was clearer within the Jordanian United Front Party, Justice and Development Party, Jordanian National Trend (Al Ittijah Al Watani) Party, and Jordanian Equality Party.

As for splits and mass resignations in Jordan, most parties have seen instances of dismissal, resignation, and split. For example, according to the answers of the same party leaders in the interviews of the study, the Islamic Action Front Party witnessed resignations and dismissals in 1997 because of the party's position on the elections. In 2010, the same reasons resulted in a wave of dismissals within the party—the greatest split or "exit", as the secretary of the party termed it. The party faced this situation when a group exited to establish the National Conference Party "Zamzam." This was followed by the exit of the group of "Partnership and Salvation." The exit had a deep impact on the front because of the symbolism and quality of the members who split.

Some parties also saw mass resignations, such as the Nationalist Movement Party, as a result of what was dubbed "rectification process," which resulted in resignations and dismissals that totaled 20% of the party body. The same thing applies to the Jordanian Progressive Arab Baath Party, whose fourth regional conference saw exit from the party by

10% of the members. On the other hand, some parties, like the National Conference "Zamzam" and the Social Democratic Party implemented what they termed "vitality of members" through applying a periodic policy of dismissing non-active members with the aim of producing new leaders and maintaining the coherence of parties from within.

There were cases of individual resignations due to lack of adherence to the bylaw and payment of monthly dues, as happened with the Jordanian National Party. Some 80 of its members resigned because of not paying dues. The same happened to the Jordanian Shura Party and Reform Party. There were cases of resignations, which the parties attributed to reasons related to security pressures, including the Partnership and Salvation Party and the Jordanian Al Hayat Party. On the other hand, a group of parties maintained a state of internal coherence and did not witness splits or mass resignations, like the Social Democratic Party, the National Conference Party "Zamzam," and the Freedom and Equality Party.<sup>54</sup>

**When asked if there is a stipulation about rotation of power within the party and a defined term for the secretary general or chairman or members of the executive or political bureau, the answers of political parties were as followed:**

Is there a stipulation related to the term of rotation of power?	Number of parties
Yes	<b>29</b>
No	<b>6</b>
Total	<b>35</b>

<sup>54</sup> Interviews conducted by the research team with leaders of parties and members of political bureaus and leadership positions within parties at the headquarters of parties during the preparation of the study.

Before the passing of Parties' Law of 2022, which defined the term of the party leadership as 4 years, some parties had done their best to keep the person of the "leader." This is clear in the totalitarian and leftist parties, which consider this a reflection of the stability of the party and accumulation of experience. On the other hand, there are parties that define in their system and bylaw the term of the leader of the party and that establish the principle of rotation of power. This is noticeable in the Islamic Action Front Party, whose basic law states that "the secretary general may not be elected for more than two successive terms. A supplementary term is considered a full term if it exceeds two years."<sup>55</sup>

When considering the classification of political parties from the angle of rotation of power, we see that we are before more than one party tier: The parties of the nineties (mostly ideological) until 2001, the second tier between 2007 and 2010, and then the third tier between 2011 and 2022, which includes the majority of existing political parties.

The first tier comprises ideological and even center parties founded between 1992 and 2002. We can exclude the Islamic Action Front Party (9 secretaries general of political parties, and the party established periodic elections and change of leadership) and the Islamic Al Wasat Party (11 secretaries general. It was established in 2001, at an average of two years per secretary general<sup>56</sup>). As for the other parties (Socialist Baath, Progressive, Communist, HASHD, Popular Unity), they did not exceed 3 persons for each over almost three decades. This agrees with the nature of these nationalistic and leftist parties, which did not develop

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<sup>55</sup> Basic Law of the Islamic Action Front Party. A copy is available on the website of the party: <https://jabha-jo.com>

<sup>56</sup> In the records of the Ministry of Political Affairs, 13 secretaries general. This is due to the reelection of the same secretary general more than once. Hayil Dawood and Mohammad Al Qudah were reelected, as indicated by the field interview of the research team.

traditions for rotation of power, as is the case of totalitarian systems in general. Meanwhile, the Nationalist Movement Party (1997) had 5 secretaries general.

The irony is that the other center parties, such as Al Resalah (2002), have not seen a change in secretary general (for almost 20 years). The National Constitutional Party (1997) saw only 3 secretaries general.

As for the second tier of political parties (2007-2010), there are 6 parties. The United Front Party (2007) saw rotation of power between 6 people. The National Current, Al Hayat, and the Jordanian National Party were chaired by two secretaries general. In the case of the Justice and Development Party and Freedom and Equality (2009), there was one secretary general.

The third tier of parties is the stage of party boom from 2011 until today. It represents the majority of political parties. It is noticed that the position was assumed by one person or two persons with few exceptions, including the National Union Party, 5 persons, and Al Shu'lah Party, 3 persons. Therefore, it is difficult to reach conclusions related to certain patterns for rotation of power in the majority of these parties because they are fairly new and because they will most probably be involved in the process of regularization based on the current Parties' Law, which was approved in 2022. Most probably, most of these parties will either choose merger or disappear from political life.

Obviously, based on experience, we are before clear patterns. In terms of ideological parties, including leftist and nationalist parties, they are not inclined to have a rotation of power. Rotation mostly results from a split, an internal problem, or the death of the secretary general. This excludes Islamic parties, especially the Islamic Action Front Party and the Islamic



Al Wasat Party, as the rotation of power is clear in internal regulations, and both parties are committed to it.

As for the center parties, there is a vast majority that has not seen the rotation of power, some for decades. The others are new, and it is hard to judge them.

### **Third – Financial Resources of Parties:**

Financial resources, including movable and immovable assets, represent an important dimension in the analysis of the strength of parties and their capacity for development and growth. The research team devoted a part of the study to learning about the financial capability of the parties and the resources they rely on in implementing their programs and activities. It designated a set of questions for this purpose in the questionnaire that the researchers filled out in person with the leaders of the parties inside their headquarters. We found that many parties refused to disclose their financial resources. This was noticeable for the research team, which relied also on implicit questions on the movable and immovable assets of the party, besides the financial reports submitted by the political parties through the office of the legal accountant to the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, which used to manage the regulation of these parties. The ministry makes these reports available to the public on its website. We notice after reading and analyzing these reports and comparing them with the answers of the parties to the questionnaire that most of the parties rely on the financial support provided by the government and that the membership dues account for a small portion of the budget of the parties. Here, it is worth noting that most of the existing political parties lack the instrument of investment funds, which parties rely on in any

country to implement and develop their programs. A parallel result of this is the weak economic culture and weak capacity for self-reliance. (See the table in the appendices.)

It can be said that the system of financing parties has contributed to strengthening the rentier phenomenon of parties and their weak ability to establish self-reliance. It also contributed to reducing the coalition and merger of parties. The parties were further affected by the change in legislation when it comes to government funding. In parallel, the absence of legislative stability of election laws obstructed the activation of the dynamics of party development from within and the development of their political, economic, and social programs. Thus, political parties are established in reverse order, top-down. They are not established based on a social rule that gives them the elements of legitimation. Consequently, a large number of parties do not have a clear political identity, with the existence of political sub-identities within the single party. This makes it difficult for the party to find integral and concrete platforms in which it outlines its approach, position, and view of the social, political, and economic reality and presents its view of the problems and crises that beset society. Here, ideological parties, especially the Islamic Action Front Party, HASHD Party, and Popular Unity Party, are ahead of others as these parties have their own political and economic views and positions toward government policies in various domains.

Going back to the financial reports submitted by the political parties through an authorized legal accountant, which are published on the website of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, we find that a significant portion of the budgets of the parties is allocated to administrative expenses. Also, the monthly rent of head offices

consumes a considerable part of the budget. We see that the parties that own their headquarters save these funds and spend them on other items, such as current expenditures, media marketing, and implementation of activities. This applies to many parties, such as the Jordanian Reform Party, Jordanian Al Resalah Party, and the Communist Party.

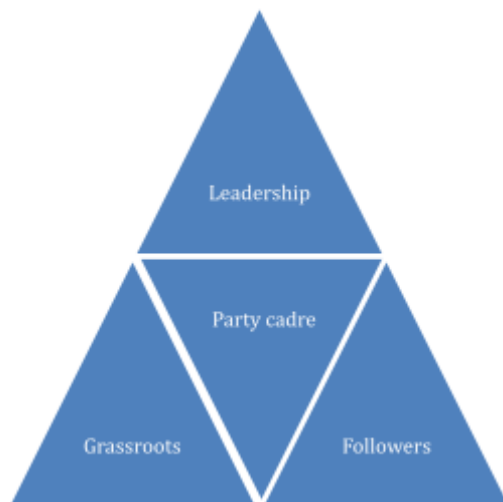
On the other hand, no party posts its financial reports clearly and transparently on its own website with limited exceptions, such as the Islamic Action Front Party and the National Conference "Zamzam," thus providing relevant information to the public.

### **Conclusion:**

Clearly, there is great disparity in the institutional structures, leadership hierarchies, transparency, financial resources, and governance within Jordanian parties. On the level of the institutional structure, there are fixed patterns for all ideological parties that have not changed, which emulate similar institutional structures outside the borders, or agree with their ideological literature. Meanwhile, most of the new center parties formed after the Arab Spring are characterized by simplicity in organizational structures.

The irony is that despite the complexity of the institutional structure in the majority of ideological parties (especially leftist and nationalist ones), this has not reflected on the process of rotation of power and leadership within these parties. On the contrary, they have been characterized by a pattern of maintaining leadership for long periods, unlike Islamic parties; namely, the Islamic Action Front Party and Al Wasat, which have seen a significant rate of rotation of power and commitment to the relevant regulations.

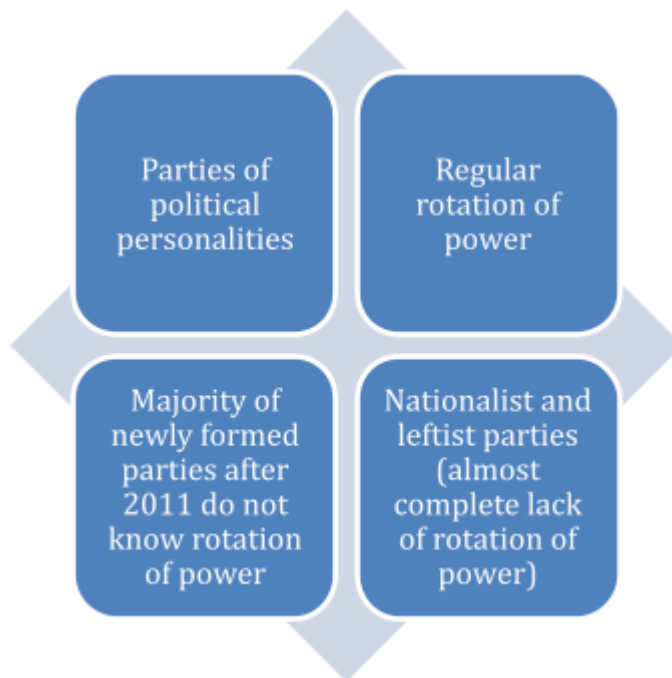
One of the key observations is that the majority of the center parties adopted a top-down approach, which means that they did not build bottom-up. They did not start with cadres and grassroots, but from persons and limited political elites, which later tried to find grassroots or organizational foundations and build party cadres. This is a weak and fragile method of building, which did not help to develop the institutional structures or find clear identities of these parties with the public. Political parties should first be based on strong political cadres, sympathizers, and followers, appeal to grassroots, and then develop the leadership at the top of the pyramid.



As for the center parties, most of them started from the leadership and then formed the party cadre, which is weak, and later the grassroots, which is weakest and in most cases nonexistent.



As for the patterns of leadership and rotation of power in Jordanian political parties, we find that we are before specific patterns:



## Chapter Two

### Between Geographic and Political Reach and Party Activity

The headquarters of political parties do not represent an indicator of the presence of the party or the extent of its strength and reach. Many parties refused to receive field researchers (in this study) on various pretexts. Measuring the geographic reach of the parties, as well as their political presence, is linked to the ability of their members to go beyond the walls of offices and headquarters and be out on the street or turn these headquarters into factories to build the popularity of parties, attract followers, spread their

ideas, and present their platforms. This also depends on the extent of the contribution of youth and women to building political and election campaigns for these parties.

The authors

This chapter discusses the reach of the parties in the governorates and their adoption of field plans to expand this reach through measuring their participation in the local, parliamentary, and union elections, especially the last elections. It also examines whether parties have headquarters and the affiliation of members who represent diverse and multiple geographic and tribal backgrounds. This, in itself, is an indicator of the reach of the party and its field effectiveness as it is not enough to have an office or branch of the party in the governorates without it being active and capable of engaging the people to tackle their concerns, issues, and daily, service, and economic problems in different areas.

For geographic reach to be considerable and meaningful, it is necessary to be combined with the existence of effective elite groups in these governorates that believe in the discourse of the party and its approaches and ideas in political and media propaganda.

University activity is considered a very important "indicator" as it reveals to what extent the party has a wing or effective youth groups that are capable of influencing the younger generation, especially at universities that provide a rich reservoir for this generation, which historically represents the spearhead in social and protest movements, as happened in the sixties in many European countries.

On the level of political reach and presence, the power of parties worldwide is measured by their ability to win electoral battles and get elected to representative positions, whether in parliaments or through forming governments. The same applies to professional associations and labor unions or municipal elections. Such participation reveals, first, the extent of the reach of the party and, second, its ability to compete and the size of its electoral base. Here, it is necessary to make a distinction, from Jordan's perspective, between the parties that participate in the elections—any elections—under the name of the party and its political and platform banners and those whose candidates run in the elections individually or based on tribal or social support and afterward announce joining the party bloc. It is known that this kind of affiliation is weak and fragile and is based on interests; it does not reflect the power of the party or its spread or the size of its grassroots.

The study showed that the vast majority of political parties are concentrated in Amman and that they do not have active branches or offices in the governorates. It is also clear that there are governorates—as we will show in the chapter—that are almost free from any party action or activity. It is necessary to link this result to the official policies and prevailing culture in these governorates, which view political parties negatively, whether in the legacy of the relationship between them and governments or the fear of security consequences. The majority of political parties have not been able so far to break this cultural/community barrier.

On the electoral level, the Islamic Action Front Party is almost the only party that runs in the elections with its slogans, candidates, cadre, and discourse and that achieves results. As for the other parties, they mostly fail to win a seat in parliament, as happened with the nationalist and



leftist party coalitions in the recent elections. Instead, they make arrangements after the elections through the recruitment of winners in the municipalities, decentralized elections, or other methods.

The arena of professional associations remains one of the hottest politically contested arenas between the candidates of ideological parties, especially Islamists on the one hand and nationalists and leftists on the other. The list " Numou" (Growth) in the Engineers Association emerged and managed to achieve breakthroughs in building coalitions and a strong electoral base within the association. There are accusations against the government of intervening in favor of the list. However, the list has become a powerful phenomenon that has presence and that represents diverse shades in competing with the Islamists.

### **Geographic Reach:**

The methods employed by Jordanian parties to spread within society vary, but many of them, according to the field survey conducted by the researchers in this study, agreed on the effectiveness of establishing regional offices for the parties in the cities, depending on the agreement of the local community with the ideology of the party. For example, according to the statistics of the Party Affairs Directorate, the Islamic Action Front Party has 22 headquarters distributed in most governorates of the kingdom. The research team noticed that 50% of these headquarters are in the capital, Amman, and its suburbs, followed by Irbid, with 5 headquarters, and then Karak, Maan, Zarqa, Madaba, Jerash, and Aqaba, each of which with one headquarters. Based on this, we can say that this party covers the three regions of the kingdom in

terms of having headquarters, members, and supporters, besides the plan of the party to include all components of society. However, it is clear that the party is effectively concentrated in Amman and Irbid, and Zarqa as well, judging by election results.

In addition to the main branches in the governorates, the party runs other branches concentrated in different neighborhoods and areas. The party offers a vision for the activation of the branches in the governorates within the party plan 2019-2022, as Engineer Murad Adayleh, secretary general of the party, indicated in a documentary that was prepared about the party achievements.<sup>57</sup> These branches were divided into three categories: beginner branch, expert branch, and distinguished branch. The party provided a package of incentives to the most active branch to motivate these branches to embrace field action and recruit new members.

It is noticeable that the party does not adopt certain foundations to recruit specific social backgrounds because its leaders always use discourse that engages all people. However, it keeps repeating that it targets the members of the middle class, which formed the historical base of the members and leaders of the party.<sup>58</sup> The activity of the branches of the party in the governorates is not confined to the political domain; it extends beyond it to service and social fields. For example, the party launched a national awareness campaign to combat drugs in 2016 under the banner "For Jordan Free From Drugs." The party branches in the governorates took part in the campaign through holding awareness sessions for the public and hosting specialists to talk about

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<sup>57</sup> Short url. at/piJOS

<sup>58</sup> Zaid Eyadat and Muhannad Mubaydin, Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan: Establishment, Development and Destinies-Chapter in the book Islamic Movements in Arab World, Chapter Three-Arab Unity Studies Center 2013.

the hazards of drugs.<sup>59</sup> However, the extent of activity and effectiveness differs between the branches. There are branches that operate in a broader and larger manner in view of several factors, key of which is the activity and power of the person who is in charge of managing action. Thabit Assaf, secretary of the party, underlined this point during the interview that the research team conducted with him. He said: "*It differs from one branch to another. The activity of the branches depends on the power of the persons in charge in these branches. There are branches that have activities more than the other branches.*"<sup>60</sup>

The Executive Bureau of the party has a role in mobilizing the branches and holding political seminars, activities, and symposia. It discusses the vision of the party and presents its objectives in the short and medium terms for the sake of greater communication and the transparency of leadership action in governing decisions within the leadership hierarchy with the grassroots of the party.<sup>61</sup>

The Islamic Al Wasat Party ranks second in terms of geographic reach. It has 12 headquarters distributed as follows: 3 in Irbid and one in each of the governorates of the capital, Balqa, Karak, Zarqa, Mafraq, Tafilah, Jerash, Ajloun, and Aqaba. According to the secretary of the party at the Karak headquarters and the female secretary at the capital headquarters, the party includes all the components of society that live in the cities, specifically members of tribes and holders of academic degrees. The party focuses on members who exhibit good conduct and have good reputation and manners. Kinship plays a pivotal role within the party, besides the fact that some members share academic and

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<sup>59</sup> Short url.at/ gkmsN

<sup>60</sup> Field interview with Thabit Assaf, secretary of the Islamic Action Front Party: Main headquarters of the party in Abdali, Amman, on 14/2/2022

<sup>61</sup> <https://bit.ly/3zrvnf9>

social backgrounds, as well as religious background, which is considered a key condition.

A member of the party indicates that administrative meetings within each branch are held once a month. As for the rest of the branches, they do not have periodic activities, and are held as needed. The party does not adopt a specific strategy for geographic reach or gaining grassroots and recruiting new members. All of this is done according to considerations of personal relations and kinship.<sup>62</sup>

The research team observed that the pages of the party that carry the name of the party plus the name of the region in which the branch is located are not active and not updated. For example, there is a page for the headquarters of Ramtha and Koura district. All these pages are not active, which provides an indicator of the weakness of associated party activities in the governorates.<sup>63</sup>

**In which governorate is the center  
of the party located?**

**90%  
Amman**



<sup>62</sup> Interview at party headquarters with one of the members on 4 March 2022.

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100069225069565>

### **Central Headquarters of Parties in the Capital, Amman:**

The Jordanian National Trend (Al Ittijah Al Watani) Party and the Jordanian United Front Party take Sweileh, west of the University of Jordan, as headquarters and center of the party. Four parties chose Jabal Al Hussein, which is close to the Interior Ministry Circle—officially called Gamal Abdel Nasser Square. The four parties are: Nationalist Movement Party, Democratic People's Party (HASHD), Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party, and Conservative Party. Three parties are concentrated on or near Wasfi Al Tal Street. These are the National Conference Party "Zamzam," Jordanian Al Hayat Party, Jordanian Equality Party, and the Jordanian National Party. The rest of the parties are distributed in areas between northern, southern, western, and eastern Amman, such as Future Party in Abu Nseir, Al Urdun Baytuna in Tabarbour; in southern Amman, such as Freedom and Equality Party and Jordanian Justice and Development Party; and in central Amman, such as the Islamic Action Front Party in Abdali and the Jordanian Social Democratic Party.

We also observe the phenomenon of parties neighboring each other as more than one party could be present in the same building, such as the Jordanian Reform and Renewal Party "Hasad," which neighbors the Jordanian National Current Party and Jordanian Al Hayat Party in the area of Tlaa Ali near the University of Jordan.<sup>64</sup>

The merger between the Islamic Al Wasat Party and Zamzam Party is expected to provide momentum to public activities in the governorates. The party is supposed to rebuild its electronic communication channels

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<sup>64</sup> Interviews and visits of field research team to political parties and interviewing persons in charge of them.

and work to expand its activities as part of the merger plan that the two parties announced during the ceremony to launch the merger.<sup>65</sup>

As for Zamzam Party, Abd Al Mahdi Al Akayleh, member of the Political Bureau, noted, in an interview conducted with him by the research team,<sup>66</sup> that the party takes from its merger with the Islamic Al Wasat Party an expansion strategy to spread in all regions and governorates of the kingdom to reach as much grassroots as possible and attract different social segments, especially youth, based on the standards set by the party for those who wish to join it. Here, it is worth noting that the standards set for recruiting the middle class, especially engineers, teachers, and university professors, agree with the standards set by representatives of the Islamic Al Wasat Party and the Islamic Action Front Party. The research team observed that parties with Islamic trends directly target the middle class in the main cities, such as Amman and Irbid. In addition to the above, the general activities of the party are elitist, meaning that they adopt activities, conversations, and cultural workshops that have a political nature. The speakers in these workshops mostly represent political and cultural elites and speak about political development and the general challenges facing the state and society.<sup>67</sup>

Then, there are three parties, each of which has 7 headquarters. The Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD) has two headquarters in Irbid and two in Zarqa and one headquarters in the capital, Balqa, and Madaba. The party, according to its secretary general, represents the

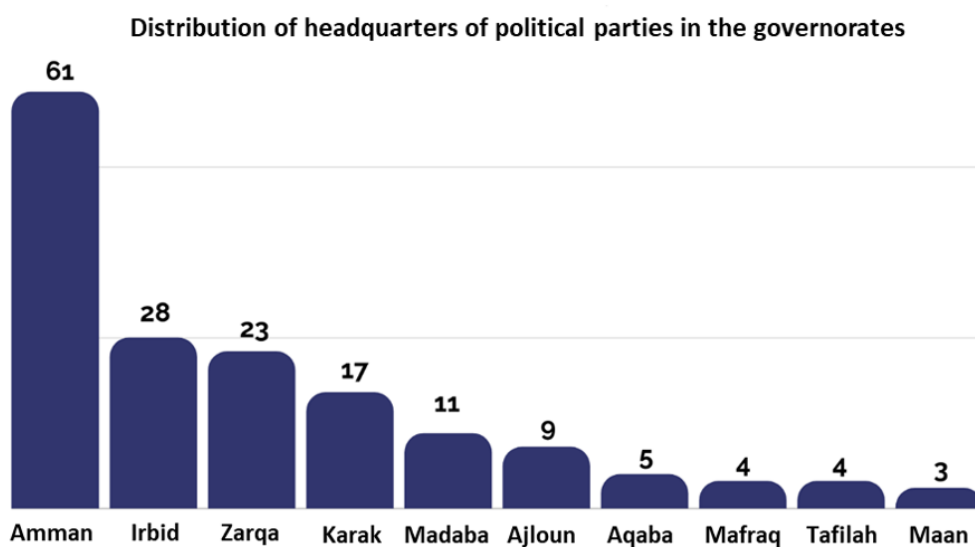
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<sup>65</sup> <https://bit.ly/3ty2GJP>

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Abd Al Mahdi Al Akayleh, member of the Political Bureau, at the party headquarters on 17 February 2022.

<sup>67</sup> <http://zamzamparty.com/Political5.html>

toiling class. It is the party of the working class, poor, and peasants.<sup>68</sup> The party includes some wives of the members, but the majority of female members comes from independent working and intellectual backgrounds.



The research team observed that the party has a field strategy to expand its reach. This strategy does not depend on the party being present in the same place; it depends more on party leaders making field visits to hold awareness sessions on the importance of political and party action and discussion sessions hosted mainly by private associations and civil society organizations.<sup>69</sup> Additionally, the party publishes statements and positions that are in line with its policies and public literature.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Interview with a member of the Political Bureau at the party headquarters in Amman on 17 February 2022.

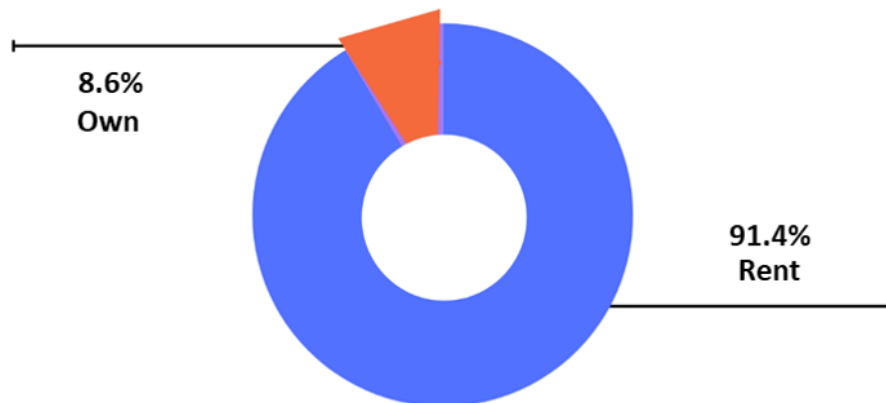
<sup>69</sup> <https://www.alqudscenter.org/print.php?pg=PROGRAMS&id=120>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.hashd-ahali.org/main/weekly/?p=26592>

The Progressive Arab Baath Party has 7 headquarters, with one headquarters in each of the capital, Irbid, Balqa, Karak, Zarqa, Madaba, and Ajloun. The party identifies itself as the party of . It has members from different backgrounds, including doctors, engineers, lawyers, and female teachers and journalists. The party does not require that the member be a holder of an academic degree to join. It "welcomes everybody," as Fuad Dabbur, secretary general of the party, has put it.<sup>71</sup>

The Jordanian Justice and Reform Party has 7 headquarters, with one in the capital, Karak, Zarqa, Tafilah, Madaba, Jerash, and Ajloun. The percentage of relatives within the party is low. The common thing between the members is their agreement on the ideas and trends of the party only.

Percentage of parties that own/rent party headquarters



The rest of the parties depend on recruitment either through social media websites, social relations, or invitations to attend activities that the party conducts. There could also be regional or tribal recruitment or

<sup>71</sup> Field interview at the party headquarters in Amman on 18 February 2022.

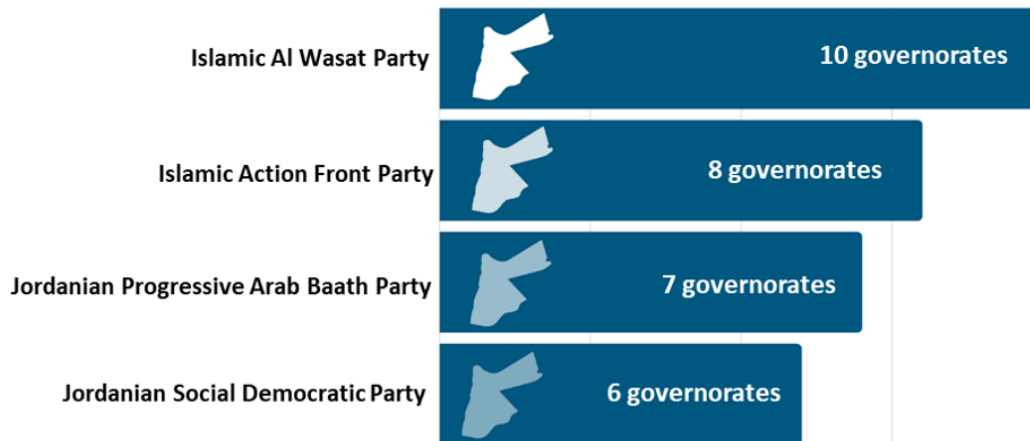


through family extensions. This is why we find that the majority of parties have one headquarters or two or three, and it is mostly in the capital and in nearby cities, such as Irbid and Zarqa, because they are close to active institutions and the rest of the headquarters of the major parties.

The parties that have broad geographic representation have the largest share of public presence in the governorates because they have headquarters in these governorates and coordinators, administrative staff, members, and volunteers who are capable of developing and implementing party plans and programs and recruiting interested persons through specific timeframes, either weekly, monthly, quarterly, or semiannually.

As for the parties that have narrow geographic representation, they face a lot of challenges when it comes to holding activities and events in the governorates, in which they do not have headquarters. This obstructs their access to the target groups. For example, the Jordanian Reform Party does not have any branches, while the Jordanian Equality Party has one branch in Karak governorate, besides the main branch in Amman.

### Political parties with largest reach in Jordanian governorates



The research team observed that there is a factor that significantly contributed to the geographic expansion of parties, namely the date of establishment. The Islamic Action front Party, Islamic Al Wasat Party, Jordanian Democratic People's Party, Jordanian Progressive Arab Baath Party, and Justice and Reform Party were all established in the nineties with the exception of the Justice and Reform Party (established in 2012). The fact that the party has been in existence for decades provided it with organizational leverage, which included geographic expansion and recruiting many target segments. This is in addition to establishing coalitions with tribal assembly centers and taking advantage of tribal spaces, such as tribal gathering places, meetings of tribal chiefs, and tribal events and ceremonies on religious occasions and national holidays.

Moreover, some parties have sufficient financial resources to expand geographically and have access to all places. They also have an ideology that fits the attitudes of society and its religious and tribal authorities. The religious tide is classified as one of the most effective

means of mass communication and influence. Society interacts with religious rhetoric quickly and the members of the target group become likely to change based on the discourse addressed to them. One example of the parties that wield mass influence and that have significant financial resources is the Islamic Action Front Party, which has powerful influence on the local communities, besides its direct contact with Islamic movements. According to Engineer Murad Adayleh, the secretary general, the party considers itself an extension of Islamic reform movements. Thus, the party has many chances to receive financing from more than one entity that agrees with its trends and ideology. As for the governorates that are affected by Arab nationalist intellectual trends, the active parties in them consider tribal expansion as the key means of geographic expansion. Then, they depend on the strength of the party's ideological orientations and the groups that the party focuses on in its activities and interactions with society.

### **Inside Jordanian Public Universities:**

The presence of political parties within the walls of universities indicates the party's interest in political mobilization, especially since universities represent—in spite of the restrictions that are enforced—a political environment that is favorable for party activity and the exercise of elections through student federation councils and the various events and activities that would enhance political party culture and organized political practice for the youth generation in Jordan. In view of this, the research team was keen on devoting an "indicator" in the study and interviews to the presence and engagement of parties within public universities. We will discuss a sample of the activities of the active parties and another of inactive parties.

## First – Active Parties

### 1. Islamic Action Front Party:

The Islamic Action Front Party is considered one of the most organized, active, and widespread Jordanian parties due to historical and social reasons and other political circumstances that were mentioned in this study. However, the party is not involved directly with universities and unions. It does this through committees, members, and lists under independent umbrellas. These lists are managed by young members of the party at universities. Murad Adayleh, secretary general of the party, underlined this in an interview conducted by the research team with him. He said: *"We in the Islamic Action Front are considered an extension of the Islamic movement, which extends all over the Kingdom, including the youth sector at universities. As a matter of fact, when it comes to youth union or university action, we avoid working in the name of the party. We work more broadly, like the Islamic trend at universities or white-lists at unions with independents. We do not interfere in the details of union work. They do not present to us what they do at the federations, and we do not interfere with them."*<sup>72</sup>

Consequently, the strategy of the Islamic Action Front Party for political action at universities is based on the notion of practice of students who belong to the party. Activities related to university elections and rallies that have a national character and that advocate Arab and Islamic issues, such as Jerusalem,<sup>73</sup> provide large space for the members of the party to engage in significant action. However, they do not refer explicitly and clearly to the party. For example, the banners and slogans of the

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with Murad Adayleh, secretary general of the Islamic Action Front Party, at the party headquarters in Amman on 13 February 2022.

<sup>73</sup> [shorturl.at/gvARW](http://shorturl.at/gvARW)

party are not raised on such occasions.<sup>74</sup> Historically, there has been visible and significant presence of the youth of the party, or the Muslim Brotherhood group in general, at various Jordanian universities, especially public universities: University of Jordan, Yarmouk University, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Mutah University, Hashemite University, Tafila Technical University, and Polytechnic (belonging to Balqa Applied University).

## 2. Popular Unity Party:

The key feature of the Popular Unity Party, when it comes to student and university action, is the political legacy of the activity of the party since the nineties and before.<sup>75</sup> This background provided the basis for the current influence of the party at various Jordanian universities, let alone the fact that one of the leaders of the party, Fakher Daas, is the founder of the National Campaign for Student Rights (Thabahtoon), which is concerned with the defense of the rights of students of Jordanian universities and provides an umbrella for them. This is one outlet that increased the momentum of the public political and rights activity of the party at Jordanian universities. However, the campaign does not speak in the name of the party and is organizationally not affiliated with it.<sup>76</sup> Dr. Saeed Dhiab, secretary general of the party, said in an interview conducted with him<sup>77</sup> that the party depends on the friends of the party who study at universities and on the Arab Tajdid [Renewal] Bloc, which is considered a semiofficial wing of the party, besides the

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=680860379828995>

<sup>75</sup> [shorturl.at/vxJ67](https://shorturl.at/vxJ67)

<sup>76</sup> <https://ar-ar.facebook.com/thab7toona/>

<sup>77</sup> Interview with the secretary general of the Popular Unity Party at the party headquarters in Amman on 6 March 2022.

wing of the party youth,<sup>78</sup> which conducts youth activities at Jordanian universities.<sup>79</sup>

Most of these activities have an Arab nationalist character and are service oriented. They advocate student rights, public freedoms, and public political action "without official harassment," as the party members refer to it. By combining the activities of the nationalist Tajdid Bloc and the Thabahtona movement, the party has powerful, effective, and influential "nuclei" at most Jordanian universities and has visible presence in this respect.<sup>80</sup>

### **3. Jordanian Communist Party:**

The establishment of the Jordanian Communist Party in the 1950s laid the foundations of a social narrative around university action of the party. This has created space for the name of the party at many Jordanian universities since then, although this space changes depending on political and social conditions in Jordan.<sup>81</sup> The youth and student office within the party belongs to the General Secretariat and carries out some activities—albeit not significant—at Jordanian universities due to security harassment of the party members, as one of the youth leaders of the party said in an interview with him.<sup>82</sup> In general, the party's university rhetoric addresses pivotal Arab issues, such as the Palestinian issue and normalization. Internally, this rhetoric focuses on freedoms and launching political action without restrictions. It advocates customary

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/wihda.youth>

<sup>79</sup> <https://www.gerasanews.com/print/27135>

<sup>80</sup> [shorturl.at/fkuKL](https://shorturl.at/fkuKL)

<sup>81</sup> Sabrin Al Shubali, Jordanian Community Party: Historical Study, unpublished MA thesis, University of Thi-Qar, Iraq, 2016.

<sup>82</sup> Interview with youth representative in the Communist Party at the party headquarters in Amman, on 17 March 2022.

communist principles that the party adopts in its global literature, such as worker rights, justice, and support for the working class.

It is noticeable that the rhetoric of the party has not been renewed to attract youth. In terms of its social outlook, the party views itself as one of the instruments that take issue with the religious trend. Meanwhile, the security perspective of the Communist Party, which is linked to its historical development, limits its spread at Jordanian universities. In spite of this, the activities of the student wing and the party youth usually have capacity for promotion and diversifying tools and means of mobilization. The party could be the one that uses art in its activities the most, as happened when its youth organized a concert for singer Lara Elayyan (she sang patriotic and revolutionary songs) at Al Shams Theater in Abdali.

#### **4. Jordanian National Youth Party:**

The secretary general of the party said in an interview that it was not easy to work at universities due to security crackdown and fear of political action. Although one of the party members is the head of the Student Federation Council of Jadara University in Irbid,<sup>83</sup> this is a "rare case" and does not reflect university activity as there is no bloc linked to the party and its activities inside Jordanian universities.

The legacy and negative view of party action at universities and places of work have led to a great decline in university party action, which was replaced by traditional social structures and regional loyalties that worked through the spirit of the single vote laws that governed even

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<sup>83</sup> Field interview with the secretary general of the party at its headquarters in Amman on 2 March 2022.

electoral equations within Jordanian universities.<sup>84</sup> Decision-making circles have worked to overcome these challenges through the outcomes of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System and announcing plans to gradually restore momentum to university party action and provide legal and procedural guarantees to allow university students to exercise their constitutional right to party action and organization within universities.

## Second – Inactive Parties

### 1. Islamic Al Wasat Party:

The data of the study indicates that the Islamic Al Wasat Party does not operate directly at Jordanian universities due to the difficulty of party action at universities, from the viewpoint of the party. Azzam Shamayleh, secretary general of the party, referred explicitly to this and said: *"There are currently no lists that are supported by the party. The formula of the presence of partisan students does not exist because of fears of the involvement of youth and the restrictions on them. Therefore, they do not have presence."*<sup>85</sup> But the party has some activities that are related to university action, such as the opinion of students of the increase in tuition fees,<sup>86</sup> or through supporting party candidates in the elections of student federations at universities who usually run in the elections independently. These activities are not within the regular activities of the party.

### 2. Jordanian Reform Party:

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<sup>84</sup> Al Fawaeer, Mohammad Rasul: Trends of Jordanian University Students Toward Political Parties, Field Study, unpublished MA thesis, Al al-Bayt University, 2006.

<sup>85</sup> Interview with Azzam Shamayleh, secretary general of the party, at Karak Branch on 21 March 2022.

<sup>86</sup> [shorturl.at/bhpCT](http://shorturl.at/bhpCT)



According to available data and the pages of the party on electronic media, the party does not carry out any activity within Jordanian universities. This agrees with what the secretary of the Central Council of the party stated. This is despite the fact that the percentage of youth who belong to the party is considered high. The research team observed that despite the high percentage of youth representation in conservative national parties, this is not considered an indicator of the presence of the party at universities.

### **3. Partnership and Salvation Party:**

Although there is an active youth department within the party and youth presence in the activities of the party, this has not reflected on university activity. This applies to the Reform Party as well. Anyone who has been following political developments in Jordan over the past three decades will find that even if political parties wanted to work within universities,<sup>87</sup> this will not take place directly, as concluded by the research team in this study. Regarding the parties that are not active at universities, this is due to two reasons: either because these parties are close to the authorities in the government and therefore want to avoid the historical sensitivity toward university party action or because the youth members of the party are not from the age group of university students.

Overall, the recent changes on the level of decision-making might provide an incentive for some inactive parties to cross the gateway of university action, especially those that have youth wings (Social Democratic Party-SHADA Wing), HASHD Party, Communist Party, and Partnership and Salvation Party. The same goes for the parties that have

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<sup>87</sup> Al Fawaeer, Mohammad Rasul: Trends of Jordanian University Students Toward Political Parties, Field Study, unpublished MA thesis, Al al-Bayt University, 2006

active women's wings, sections, and groups. They can take advantage of openness on party action at universities and develop new activities.

### **Parties and Unions:**

Partisan union action acquires great importance in view of the importance of the affiliates of professional associations and their spread throughout the governorates and the professional and educated middle class that it represents and that is influential in the public sphere. Therefore, party competition in the unions, especially between parties that have an ideological character, is clearer and stronger than in the parliamentary or municipal elections.

For many decades, ideological parties have clung to union action. Over the past two decades, conflict and competition have been mainly between the supporters of the Islamic Action Front on the one hand and nationalist and leftist parties on the other, or what is called the white-list and green-list. Meanwhile, the parties of the center have somewhat kept their distance from partisan university and union activity<sup>88</sup> because they do not have the adequate tools and relations to compete with Islamist and leftist parties, which have gone a long way, historically, in partisan university and union action. We find that the equation has changed and that balances of power have shifted in the union elections in 2022 and before it, especially in the Engineers Association, with the emergence of the "Numou" lists, which represent leftist and nationalist forces and include members of these parties, as well as independents. In the union elections of the Engineers Association in 2022, "Numou" received support—it was no secret—from the institutions of the state, which now

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<sup>88</sup> Yousef Khataybeh, Obstacles to Participation of University Youth in Political Parties: Field Study in Jordan, Jordan Journal of Social Sciences, Volume 2, No. 3, 2009.

believe that this list can compete with Islamists and weaken them in the unions. The unions have been a key stronghold for the Islamists. However, this has not prevented the Islamists from controlling the Bar Association and returning to it in a surprising manner after the elections of the Engineers Association, which the Islamists withdrew from in later rounds on the grounds of intervention by the state in favor of "Numou."

Out of the 57 parties included in the data and analyses of this study, 42 parties said that they participated in the elections of the union councils, while 13 parties said that they did not. Meanwhile, two parties of those that were interviewed said that they were unaware if the party participated or not. However, it is clear that the two main blocs today are the Islamists, on the one hand, and the nationalists and leftists, on the other. Independents stand in the middle in many unions; some of them claim to be supported by the government, as happened in the recent elections of the Bar Association when the circles competing over the position of president against the Islamists promoted the notion that they were the "choice of the state."

Associations differ, depending on the various professions, in the momentum of partisan electoral action. For example, some parties that embrace a national trend, like the Shura Party and Equality Party, indicated that they were running in the elections of the Engineers Association, Pharmacists Association, and Bar Association. This is in line with what was noted by the representatives of Islamic parties, such as Zamzam Party, Islamic Action Front Party, and Islamic Al Wasat Party; namely, that Islamic parties have dominated the management of the Engineers Association for two decades, and this explains the interest of the party and its presence in this association. As for national parties, the reason why they are in these associations is the educational and

social nature of its members, like the Shura Council, which includes among its members social segments from the middle class.

None of the interviewees during the field work of this study, including the leaders and members of the parties, indicated that Jordanian laws and legislation prevent the political action of the party within the unions.<sup>89</sup> However, Jordanian partisan and political action shifted to the unions as spaces for this activity because of the ban on political parties in Jordan when martial law was declared in 1956,<sup>90</sup> thus intensifying political union action, which marked every election term in the unions, especially professional associations.

A member of the Islamic Al Wasat Party, who was interviewed, said that the party allies with union lists, such as "Numou." He said: "Yes, we participated with the Numou list through three members of the Engineers Association, but those members are not young. They are old. The party was unable to give young members access to important positions in the unions."

The Engineers Association remained a stronghold for Islamists for almost quarter of a century until the 2018 elections, in which the nationalist leftist trend won<sup>91</sup> and took control over the management of the association council. This was a strong shock to the Islamists. Many experts linked these results to the setback suffered by the Islamists on the level of the region and its repercussions on Jordan.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/422878>

<sup>90</sup> Bashar Al Tarawneh: Jordanian Environment and Potential for Parliamentary Government: Study of Structure of Society and Election and Political Parties Law, Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences, Volume 45, No. 2, 2018, Amman, Jordan.

<sup>91</sup> [shorturl.at/owJK3](http://shorturl.at/owJK3)

<sup>92</sup> Interview with the secretary general of the party at the party headquarters on 17 February 2022.

As for conservative parties, which call themselves center parties, such as the Justice and Reform, National Trend, and Freedom and Equality, they adopt a viewpoint that is close to the official and legal view when it comes to partisan practice within the unions. This explains the quarrels between them and the Islamist current, which has played a key role in party action in the unions. For example, in 2019, the parties of the center condemned the Teachers Association and the Islamist current behind it against the backdrop of the escalation between the association and the Ministry of Education in what was known as the "teachers' case."<sup>93</sup> They adopted a position in support of state agencies, represented by the Ministry of Education. The general coordinator of the National Union Party stated explicitly that the party does not interfere with the work of the unions directly or even indirectly.<sup>94</sup>

If we look at the overall party action in the unions, we will find that Islamic parties are most engaged and actively seeking to stay within the circle of the unions as a main source that feeds the spread of Islamic parties in the community horizontally and vertically. Meanwhile, conservative parties of the center adopted a neutral stand by not running in the union elections, not even within independent lists and trends, while leftist parties made a strong comeback in 2018. This indicates that they will compete with Islamic parties in any future elections. We should note here that the Social Democratic Party, which is considered leftist, stated that it did not nominate anyone on behalf of the party to run in the union elections in 2022.

## Participation in Parliamentary and Local Elections:

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/485976>

<sup>94</sup> Interview with the general coordinator of the National Union Party in Amman on 3 March 2022.

During the parliamentary elections in 2016, a new electoral system was adopted after suspending the single vote system, which had governed the electoral process since 1989. This step came after intensive sociopolitical action in which representatives of civil society and political parties demanded amending election-related laws. The proportional system was adopted as an electoral system. Thus, it was one of the steps that contributed to enhancing representational justice pertaining to election districts. One feature of the law is that it gave the voter the right to vote for more than one candidate within the electoral list that he chooses. This will help reduce the sub-identities produced by the single vote system. However, in the same context, the law is flawed because it canceled the national list stipulated in the 2013 law under the title "general constituency." Yet, turnout in the parliamentary elections in 2020 was close to 30%. This was considered an indicator of the weak belief of the public in the Lower House of Parliament.<sup>95</sup>

Despite the official calls for active youth participation and choosing candidates based on competence, traditional loyalties were strongly present, especially in the governorates. This prevented political parties from reaching parliament and pushed voters to choose their representatives based on traditional tribal and local ties. The elections saw large-scale participation by the parties, during which 47 out of 48 parties were involved in the competition, led by the Islamic Action Front Party in terms of the number of candidates, totaling 41 out of 80 party candidates, accounting for more than half.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> <https://www.ammonnews.net/article/624728>

<sup>96</sup> Website of the Independent Commission for Election Monitoring.

The regulation on party funding helped in encouraging parties to take part in the parliamentary elections in 2020 as the number of party candidates totaled 389. Only 13 candidates were elected to the Lower House of Parliament, accounting for 10% of the 130 members of the Lower House of Parliament. This provides a strong indication of the weak access of political parties to parliament due to the obstacles and challenges that have already been mentioned.<sup>97</sup>

The seats won by the parties in the parliamentary elections in 2020 were taken by five parties: 10 seats for the Islamic Action Front, which ran in the elections under the umbrella of the "National Reform Coalition" (two deputies withdrew from the party bloc with the start of the work of the parliament); 5 seats for the Islamic Al Wasat Party; and one seat for the Jordanian United Front and another for Al Wafa Party. The representation of Jordanian parties in the 2016 parliament totaled 34 deputies from 11 parties.<sup>98</sup>

On the level of local elections, including municipalities and decentralization, for 2022, the number of party candidates totaled 74 out of 4,646. This is an indicator of the weak party participation in the elections. This does not exceed 2% of the total number of candidates.<sup>99</sup> The Independent Election Commission said that the number of eligible voters is 4,600,135, while the number of candidates totaled 4,646 competing for the mayorship of 100 municipalities and 1,018 seats for municipal councils and 289 seats for governorate councils.

<sup>97</sup> State of the Country Report 2021 – Economic and Social Council, official website.

<sup>98</sup> [shorturl.at/fhwzZ](http://shorturl.at/fhwzZ)

<sup>99</sup> Website of the Independent Election Commission 2022.

The "Rased Election Monitoring" program conducted a study on the inclinations of Jordanian parties toward the next municipal elections and governorate councils. The study targeted all political parties, which numbered 55 licensed and registered parties with the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs at the time when the municipal elections were held. The results of the study showed that the number of parties that nominated a number of their members to the elections, held in March 2022, totaled 24 out of 55, which means that 57% of the political parties did not have any male or female candidates. The number of party candidates totaled 74. The study also noted that the position of mayor was contested by 19 party members in 8 governorates. Also, the number of candidates for membership of municipal councils was 24 within 17 municipal councils. Meanwhile, there was one candidate for the membership of the Greater Amman Municipality Council. A total of 30 party candidates ran for the membership of the governorate councils in 8 governorates.<sup>100</sup>

According to the Independent Election Commission, 39 party members won out of 128 who declared their candidacy on behalf of parties in the applications submitted to the commission. The seats were as follows: 10 seats for mayorship, 14 for membership of municipal councils, 11 for governorate councils, and 4 in the Amman Municipality Council. Thus, the number of parties that won totaled 25 out of 55 licensed parties.<sup>101</sup> As for party members who won membership in the Amman Municipality Council, they totaled 4 out of 28 excluding appointment (22 seats for

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<sup>100</sup> Inclinations of Jordanian Parties Toward Municipal Elections, study, Al Hayat Center for Civil Society Development (Rased) 2022.

<sup>101</sup> Website of the Independent Election Commission.



competition and 6 seats for the quota) accounting for 14% without counting the 14 seats for appointment as part of the total of 42 seats.

Regarding those who won the mayor post, the commission indicated that 10 party candidates won as mayor by 10%. This is considered a low percentage compared with the number of municipalities throughout the Kingdom.

It should be noted that the National Coalition Party announced its own candidate lists and winners at a news conference as winners on behalf of the coalition. They included Dr. Nabil Al Kofahi, mayor of the Greater Irbid Municipality, who ran without disclosing his party affiliation.

On the party members who won in the municipal councils, the Independent Election Commission said that 14 of them—accounting for 1.5%—won the seats allocated for membership of municipal councils, which total 918 (718 competition and 200 quota). Only two winners were under 35 years old.<sup>102</sup>

The parties that announced one candidate each were: Islamic Al Wasat, Shura, Justice and Reform, National Trend, Jordanian Future Party, Al Ansar, Nationalist Movement, Freedom and Equality, Al Shu'lah, Nature, Al Muwatanah, National Unity, National Conference "Zamzam," Equality, Nabd Al Watan, National Charter, Arab Socialist Baath, Al Hayat, Social Democratic, Al Urdun Baytuna, Al Nida, Al Nahj Al Jadid (New Approach), Jordanian National Party, and Progressive Baath Party.<sup>103</sup>

The 128 candidates were divided as follows: Al Wasat Party, 84 candidates; followed by National Charter, 5 candidates; followed by Al

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

Shura and Al Ansar, 4 candidates each; Social Democratic Party, 3 candidates; and then 8 parties that fielded two candidates only, which are: Justice and Reform, National Union, National Unity, Zamzam, Arab Socialist Baath, Al Hayat, National Trend, and Nabd Al Watan.

On the level of the decentralization elections, 17 parties disclosed the nomination of 42 party members to the membership of the governorate councils, led by the Islamic Al Wasat, with 21 declared candidates, and then Al Shura, 3 candidates. Three parties, which are Justice, Reform, and National Union fielded two candidates each, while 12 parties fielded one candidate only. These are: Future Party, Al Ansar, Nationalist Movement, Freedom and Equality, Al Shu'lah, Democratic Nature Party, Al Muwatanah, National Unity, National Conference "Zamzam," Equality, National Charter, and Arab Socialist Baath Party.

### **Conclusions:**

It is clear that ideological parties have greater capacity to spread geographically, engage others, and maintain political presence in the governorates and unions. The Islamic Al Wasat Party is visible in terms of competition over geographic presence as it is the party that has the greatest reach in terms of the number of governorates, while the Islamic Action Front represents the party that has the largest number of party headquarters, even though it is different in its concentration and geographic interest, depending on its grassroots, which is present more in Amman, Irbid and Zarqa.

There are no clear indicators of the extent of engagement by the party branches, offices, and wings in the governorates with the developmental and service needs of the local community and their ability to serve as a bridge between the capital and decision-makers on the one hand and

the governorates and outskirts on the other. However, it is clear that there is significant and noticeable weakness in this activity and in the geographic and political presence.

As far as universities and associations are concerned, ideological parties are still stronger and more active than center and conservative parties. The irony is that the regulations and instructions that restrict party action have not prevented opposition parties from engaging in action, but they were a reason used by the center parties that are close to the state not to engage in student and university activity. It is a pretext because it is obvious that these parties do not have persuasive discourse or platforms, whether at the unions or universities, to appeal to grassroots and voters.

In the parliamentary elections, nationalist and leftist parties have noticeably retreated. In the 2020 elections, they could not secure the win of any candidate despite their attempts to develop their political and media propaganda and unite in lists on the level of the governorates. It is worth noting that the new leftist party, Social Democratic Party, participated with a candidate list that included young people under 35 years old although they did not win in the parliamentary elections. In the 2022 local elections and before, the party did manage to have young candidates win, although the number was small. There were young women among the winners in the local elections nationwide in Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid.

The Islamic Al Wasat Party managed to form a large parliamentary bloc that included 17 deputies, which it called Al Masirah Bloc. However, the bloc did not have a governing intellectual foundation and clear political and media discourse. It appears to be similar to other "soft and jellylike" parliamentary blocs that were put together after the elections

without having political or organizational coherence among their members. Meanwhile, the Islamic Action Front Party failed to form a parliamentary bloc in the wake of the elections after the withdrawal of two of its members.

As for the presence of the Al Wasat Party in the local (municipal and decentralized) elections for 2022, it was more palpable. The party announced the list of winners in the elections, which included 34 winners in several governorates (Irbid, Madaba, Balqa, Amman, Maan, Karak, Ajloun, Jerash). But the party had no discourse, electoral platform, or even clear lists based on which it participated in the local elections. The research team met with some of the winners, who denied being committed to the Al Wasat Party. This raises questions about the credibility and significance of these numbers.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Gender and Age Structure and Party Effectiveness**

*Interest in youth and women was a key pillar of the outcomes of the Royal Committee To Modernize the Political System, which largely reflected on the*

*Election Law and Parties' Law. This will influence the representation of these two main segments on the party scene and in the political process in view of the significant role that they play in advancing party action in the future.*

*The authors*

This chapter discusses the age structure of political parties in Jordan and the rates of political representation of youth and women within the structure of parties and at the level of leadership and decision-making positions within them. It provides a reading and indicators of the ability of parties to reach and engage different components in society, on the one hand, and their ability to adapt and keep up with the stage of political modernization and the decisions and legislation resulting from it, on the other. According to these decisions and legislation, youth between 18 and 35 years of age must not be less than 20% of the members, and women must not be less than 20% of the members.

### **First: Representation of Women in Political Parties**

Political parties are always referred to as being responsible for the weak representation of women in view of their role as main "gatekeepers" of electoral events in authority and decision-making on all levels in most countries. The reason for this is that democracy within the party has a great influence on the chances available for women and their ability to get to positions within the parties, alongside all electoral positions on the level of the national or local government.

The male domination model of the exercise of authority in political life and within the parties is based on the conventional positions that marginalize women. This type prevents "obstacles" on various levels, thus preventing women from having access to the political sphere and participating in public decision-making in any shape or form.<sup>104</sup>

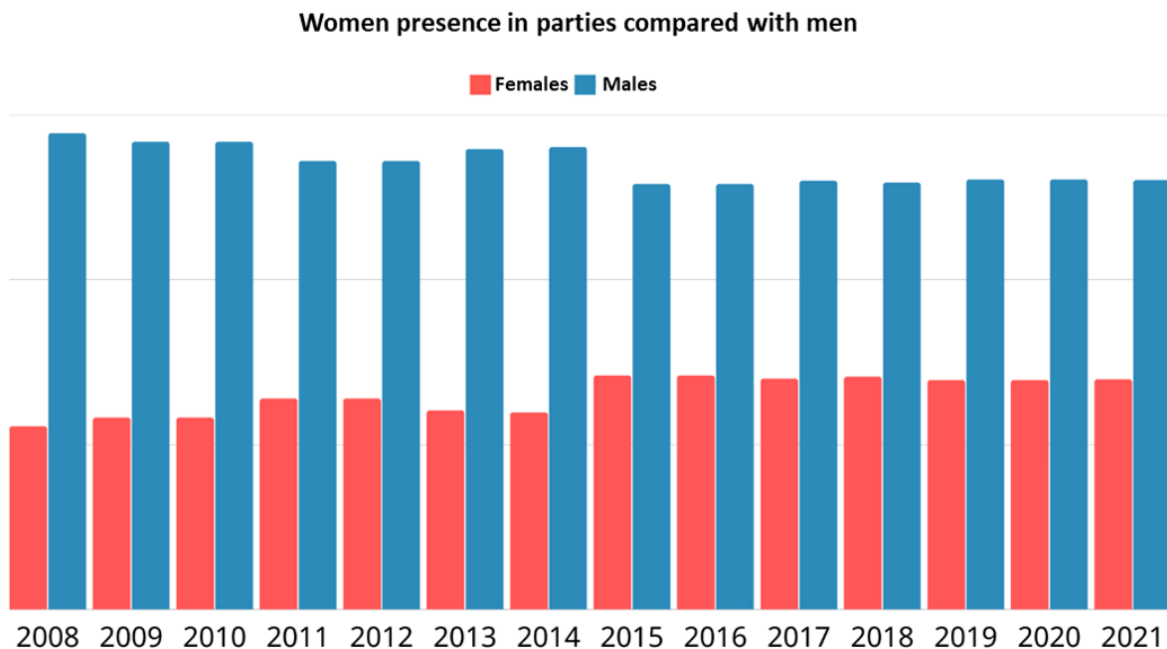
Since the early stages of foundation of the Jordanian state, Jordanian women have assumed important roles in the state and in the sectors of production, education, and public work, besides political, social, and economic development, throughout the past 100 years. Jordanian constitutions also guaranteed the rights of women. This has been established in laws and instructions that guarantee and preserve these rights. Although Jordanian women faced cultural legacies, they have kept up the struggle to win all their rights and achieve equality with men. This was very clear in the 1952 Constitution, which gave men and women equal rights. National laws, including the Election Law, Municipalities Law, and Political Parties Law, gave women the right to vote and run in the elections, like men. Yet, the largest share of political action, political and government positions, and the administration of the state remained in the hands of males. Jordanian women have not been able to achieve qualitative breakthroughs in this domain. It required the designation of a quota to get women to parliament. Women managed to win without the quota only in rare cases. The same applies to political parties. Only three women have assumed the leadership of political parties thus far. A look at the names of the members of executive

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<sup>104</sup> The Role of Political Parties on Women's Participation and Representation, research paper by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance:  
<https://www.idea.int/publications/catalogue/political-parties-womens-participation-and-representation?lang=ar>

bureaus and persons holding leadership positions in most Jordanian parties will strengthen the notion of "male domination."

The chart below shows the decline in women presence in political parties during the "Arab Spring" between 2011 and 2013. Afterward, the role of women began to see a rise in 2014, and then there was a slight decline of women within the structures of parties until 2021.<sup>105</sup>



### 1- Women Wings Within Parties:

The study shows, through field interviews with party leaders, that many political parties became keen on providing a wing for women within their structures in view of the important and significant political role played by women in the party function, especially in relation to the educational role and expansion in society. This is also in line with the legal requirements of the political modernization stage experienced by Jordan.

<sup>105</sup> The numbers included in the chart were collected, first, from: Kamal Sidqi Salih, the book, [Numbers and Indicators: Jordan in 100 Years](#), p (239), publications of Jordanian state centennial 2021, and second: The figures of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs.

It can be observed that the parties that identify themselves as center parties mostly do not have political wings for women within their internal structure. The irony here is that the parties that have an Islamic and leftist identity strongly stick to having a political wing for women and seek to develop it and involve it in leadership. Perhaps, this is because the partisan and electoral experience of the nationalist, Islamist, and leftist parties proved the effective role of women in having access to society, compared with males, in terms of greater academic attainment and greater presence in educational institutions, whether at the stage of university education or through attending the different stages of school education.

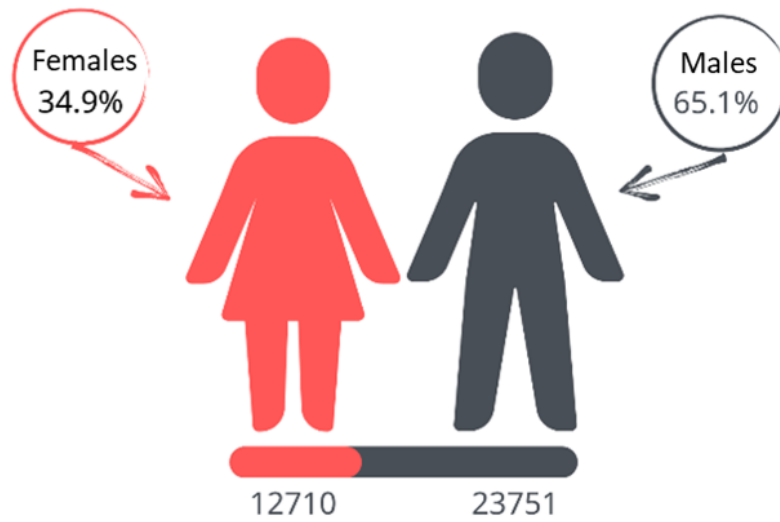
*When asked whether there is a formal wing within the structure of the party, the answers were as follows:*

Is there a formal wing for women within the structure of the party?	Number of parties
Yes	<b>25</b>
No	<b>10</b>
Total parties that answered	<b>35</b>

The reasons why there was no political wing for women within the political parties varied. Some parties attributed this to the principle of "equality," while others did not think having a wing was necessary for their work. The interesting thing is that in the parties led by a woman (Stronger Jordan Party), there was no political wing for women. It is also odd that some parties whose identity is based on "equality and justice" do not have wings for women within their structure.



Percentage of males vs females in Jordanian political parties

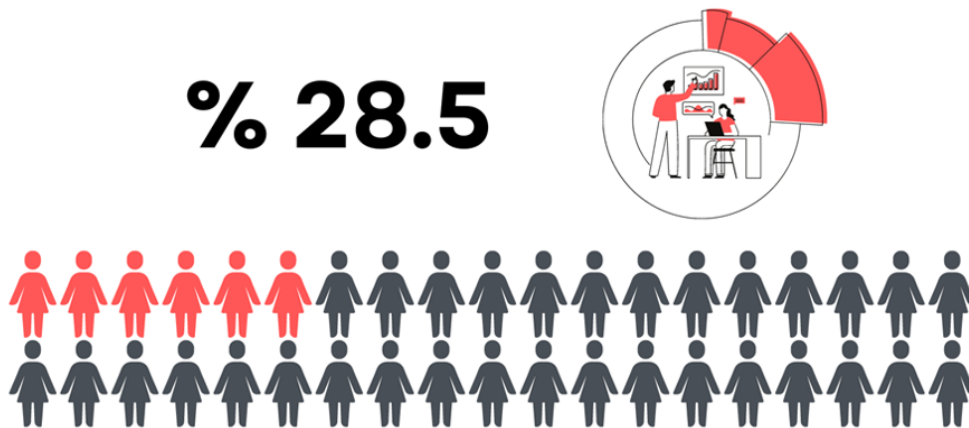


As for women participation in party action, it was clear through field work and data collection that the percentage of women's representation in the general assemblies (total number of members) was less in parties that have an Islamist trend—Islamic Action Front and Al Wasat—by 20-30%. It was around one third in leftist and totalitarian parties, such as Al Shahamah Party, the Jordanian People's Party-HASHD, Nationalist Movement, and Jordanian Communist Party. Meanwhile, some center parties declare large numbers, such as the Conservative Party. According to its leadership, women in its general assembly total 70%. The same percentage exists in the general assembly of the Jordanian National Trend Party.

The reasons have to do with the nature of the role and kinship and tribal relations in the recruitment of women and the fact that some of these parties adopt developmental discourse on the economic level of women. Thus, these slogans resonate with women activists in the public

domain who represent a tribal and social extension that is aligned with the trends of parties of the center. Besides, these newly established parties merged under political circumstances that officially promote political and partisan action, and this helped recruit new female members for them.

Is there a formal wing for women within the structure of the party?



On the flip side of women representation, the parties that have an Islamic identity adopt a conservative Islamic discourse when it comes to women issues. This discourse calls for empowering women based on Islamic sharia and the Prophet's teachings and adopts a firm stance toward Western literature related to women's issues, such as women's theories and "gender," considering it a Western term that does not fit the contexts of Muslim societies, according to the viewpoint of these parties. These parties also maintain a position toward the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as they view it as a convention directed against Muslim peoples and communities. In spite of this, the political women's sector of these parties

is active within these parties, such as the Islamic Action Front Party. It is active, and even represented in parliament. This stems from the role of the party related to social care for the poor, especially in urban areas whereby the party replaces the tribal aspect and provides means of livelihood for many households through women. This gives the party geographic extension within the space of the city. Add to this the party's preaching and religious activity among women's groups as female preachers carry out a recruitment role within these groups on different social occasions.

## **2- Examples of Political Wings of Women in Parties:**

### **A- RAND – League of Jordanian Democratic Women:**

It is considered one of the oldest women's leagues that are affiliated with a political party. Formed during the period of martial law, specifically in 1982, the league identifies itself as a social, democratic national women's organization. It is the women's department of the Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD). It is based in the capital, Amman, and is active in the Jordanian governorates. The league promotes among its members a spirit of solidarity and joint action toward Arab and international issues of women on the basis of achieving the goals of equality, social justice and progress, and political liberation.

### **B- NADA – Women's Forum of Jordanian Social Democratic Party:**

The "Social Democratic Women" forum was launched in 2018, almost two years after the establishment of the party. This coincided with the establishment of the youth wing of the party "SHADA – Social Democratic Youth." The forum seeks to translate the party's position and platform toward women's issues.

The wing embraces the slogan "full and fair partnership for women and ending all forms of discrimination and injustice." It adopts the approach of members and supporters in political recruitment through merging the party members who represent the majority with the non-members of the forum "party women friends." The forum works through coordination and other committees in the governorates, which are active through the spaces of civil society organizations. It conducts training, capacity building, and skill development workshops, such as democratic and electoral political education, qualifying women for leadership roles to run in the elections on all levels, and leading advocacy campaigns.

## **Second: Representation of Jordanian Youth in Political Parties**

The democratic rejuvenation that political modernization aims to achieve has been coupled with a study of the political generation as the element and target of change, as well as the importance of the generational approach in analyzing the institutional structures of political action, especially in relation to parties, which are political institutions. This is in addition to measuring the political awareness of the new leaders and their ability to lead and the future political merit of the parties. Democratic rejuvenation is linked to the nature of values, trends, and ideas that new generations acquire and that contribute to the launch of the process of democratic change and its continuation until it reaches the stage of strength and stability.

Contrary to this, the main reason for the failure of the process of democratic change could be the inability of different political generations to comprehend the meanings, values, and trends that are associated with this process and strengthening it or treating the generation as a tool for change, and not a key partner in it.

This reveals the difficulty of the democratic transition. The process might first be triggered by certain opportunities or changes in the political environment, but the system of values, ideas, and trends that are against democratic change, which is inherited by political generations, will be so powerful and deep and will dominate the conduct and performance of new generations in the transitional context. Eventually, this will lead to a setback and relapse of democratic change to the previous state of despotism, whether on the level of the political system or the level of political movements and parties.

Jordan is getting ready to further strengthen the course of democratic change in the stage that follows the conclusion of the work of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System. The proposals of the committee, including proposed legislation, suggest that the new course focuses on party shift toward platform-based political participation and that decision-making and executive power will be through a party platform. The youth generation will constitute the pillar and backbone of the democratic foundation and will be the crucial factor in the success or failure of modernization efforts and Jordan's political future.

### **1- Youth Wings Within Parties:**

The study shows, based on field interviews with party leaders and youth groups, that youth wings are not available within all political parties in Jordan. For example, we find that the Jordanian Equality Party does not attach importance to having a youth wing within the party. Nor does it find a justification for having such a wing. During an interview with one of the leaders of the party, and when asked about having a permanent youth wing within the party, he said: "*There is no need for it. Positive*

*discrimination in favor of youth or women is wrong. They must be like any other member of the party.*" The same applies to the Jordanian Al Hayat Party, which does not have a youth wing within its organizational structure. This also applies to the Jordanian National Party, Jordanian Social Justice Party, Jordanian Justice and Development Party, Stronger Jordan Party, and Jordanian Future Party. This indicates that there is an issue with the understanding of the organizational roles of youth in party action. On the other hand, this shows that there is a "patriarchal party identity" that refers to conventional policies in totalitarian party work and that resists rejuvenation within the structure of parties. This might also refer to the conventional issue of "the parties of persons and symbols" that are far removed from platform-based political action.

*When asked about the availability of a permanent and stable youth wing within the party that is concerned with youth activities and action, the answers were as follows:*

Is there a formal youth wing within the structure of the party?	Number of parties
Yes	<b>26</b>
No	<b>9</b>
Total parties that answered	<b>35</b>

On the other hand, the rest of the parties are keen, to varying degrees, on designating wings for youth and women. This was evident in the interviews of the study. For example, the Jordanian National Trend Party designated a wing for youth whose job is to hold activities. The Islamic Action Front Party and the Islamic Al Wasat Party designate a wing or "youth sector," which is semi-independent. This sector takes part in

political meetings and in decision-making, especially on matters and issues related to youth, society, and political communication. The same applies to the Jordanian Progressive Arab Baath Party, which designates a wing for youth and names it "Youth and Student Bureau." This perfectly applies to the Arab Socialist Baath Party. It is common knowledge that Baath parties take interest historically in youth through what it terms "tala'i" (vanguards), which are always viewed with interest based on the notion of the renewal and continuity of the Baath. The same goes for the Communist Party, which has so-called shabiba (youth) of the Communist Party. They are similar to a youth wing that conducts numerous activities. We see noticeable activity by them on social media websites (as we will mention in later chapters).

## **2- Examples of Youth Political Wings Within Parties:**

### **A- SHADA – Jordanian Social Democratic Party:**

Upon examining parties that are keen on designating a political wing for youth and women based on a clearer political and organizational methodology, we find that the Social Democratic Party is a special case here as it designated a wing for youth, which is closer to the model of a political institution. It calls it SHADA, which is an Arabic acronym for "Social Democratic Youth." Through this wing, the party carries out political education programs for youth in the community. It enables youth to become members of this wing without having to be members of the party. This is an additional feature to break the barriers of fear of party action and political integration, especially among youth and university students.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> For more information about the experience of the Social Democratic Party with youth wings, you can visit the website of the party: <https://www.josdp.com>, accessed on 27/6/2022

The members of SHADA meet at their own periodic conference and elect a coordination committee and form coordination groups for each pillar of action. Since its creation in 2018, the wing has played a pivotal role in political recruitment among youth and in spreading the ideas and programs of the party, besides creating a common space for action between youth and older party leaders. We notice that the establishment of the wing took place two years after the party was formed. The role of SHADA appears clearly in the growing membership of the party.

### **B- Youth Sector – Islamic Action Front Party:**

Quite often, the youth wing within parties is viewed from the perspective of the representation "quota." Many parties treat the youth entity as one executing the activities of the party and expressing its position. On the other hand, there are parties that view youth as a key component for the continuation of the party and ensuring its vitality and flexibility. This is clear in the parties that care about producing youth leaders and involving them in the highest levels of governance within them. These parties include the Islamic Action Front Party, which recently involved a group of youth in the highest governing bodies, such as the Political Bureau and Shura Council. The election of the head of the youth sector is conducted internally and he is given a seat in the Political Bureau. Besides, the secretary and press spokesman of the party belong to the youth segment. It should be noted that these changes were initiated years before the formation of the Royal Committee and its outcomes.<sup>107</sup> After the passing of new legislation regulating party action—despite the reservation of the party over a large

<sup>107</sup> Telephone interview conducted by the research team with the head of the youth sector in the Islamic Action Front Party on 27/6/2022.



part of it—party circles were busy with a major workshop to determine the future of the party. The first result of the workshop was the launch of an economic program on Independence Day (25 May), and consequently adapting to political modernization. The second result involved the ability of the party to develop a political-economic program of action and move toward "political platforms." The party also held new elections for the leadership, in which youth and women were involved in leadership positions again.

The youth sector in the Islamic Action Front Party differs from other parties in terms of its adherence to pragmatic political action. It is careful to employ the "political elite" through climbing up the ladder of leadership gradually. The youth sector has been active recently in more than one program for political education. It managed programs that reflect its future aspirations for the generation of youth. One of the noteworthy programs is the parliamentary fellowship program whereby the party, through peer learning, takes advantage of its deputies in parliament to give its youth access to parliament to help the deputies in their work to be close to the work of the parliament and to act as advisers to the party deputies. The Islamic Action Front Party sought recently to adapt to the stage of modernization and to involve groups of young people in centralized and decentralized leadership positions in the party while focusing on giving prominence to youth and women leaders in the governorates.

### **C- Youth and Student Committee – Jordanian United Front Party**

According to official statistics and the answers of its leaders, the Jordanian United Front Party is considered among the political parties

that have the most youth. The statistics of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs put the number of party members from the youth category by the beginning of 2022 at 749 males and females. It is worth mentioning that the party came fourth in winning votes in the parliamentary elections. Its candidates won 22,116 votes throughout the Kingdom. The party also includes tribal leaders from various regions in Jordan, in addition to former political and military officials who occupied senior positions in the state.

Going back to the youth wing in the Jordanian United Front Party, it is divided into a youth committee in general and a committee concerned with students of public and private universities. The committees have the main task of political recruitment, spreading the party's ideas, and leading and organizing activities related to the party. Despite the significant quantitative presence of youth within the party, its qualitative presence is weak.

### **Third: Representation of Youth and Women in Parties and Leadership Positions**

#### **1. Islamic Action Front Party:**

According to official figures of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs,<sup>108</sup> the members of the party total 1,207. The number of women is 92. The number of young people between 18 and 40 is around 139. Party data shows, through the interviews, that there is a difference between the figures of the ministry and the percentages that the party speaks about. There is a branch for youth in the general

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<sup>108</sup> The research team obtained statistics and data of parties from the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs. The statistics were updated at the beginning of 2022 while conducting the study.

secretariat and it has a representation percentage in it. The percentage of youth differs between one branch and another in the governorates. The segment of youth exists in all the branches, but with relative variation. In some branches, youth account for 40%, while in others they account for 10%. In general youth make up around 20% or a little more.

It should be noted that the definition of youth within the Islamic Action Front Party is different from that of the ministry. The ministry defines it, based on its age group statistics, as under 40 years old. The party, on the other hand, defines it within the age group under 35 years old. It is noticeable that the Islamic Action Front Party does not make a distinction between males and females. In other words, it does not have males and females in separate wings, as is the case in center and leftist parties. It treats them as one youth group or bloc. On the numbers of youth among the party members and in leadership positions, it does not have numbers, citing the excuse that the party is conducting a new census in line with the current stage of political modernization. When asked about the number of young people according to older statistics, the party expressed reservations and only provided approximate figures. This shows that the party is keen on hiding its numbers, especially when it comes to youth. Indeed, it could be the case that the party does not have a real answer about the numbers.

## **2. Islamic Al Wasat Party:**

The statistics pertaining to Al Wasat Party predate the announcement of its intention to merge with the National Conference Party "Zamzam." Official figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs put the number of members of Al Wasat Party at 1,816, of whom 418 are

females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 382. Party figures show, through the interviews, that the number of members of the general assembly of the party is greater than that and totals 2,175 members, of whom women account for 30%. With regard to women's representation in leadership positions, the party did not have an answer. It acknowledges that youth under 35 years old do not exceed 11%. Also, the representation of youth in leadership bodies does not exceed 5%.

### **3. Zamzam Party:**

Official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs confirm that the party members total 915, of whom 92 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 139. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that women account for 18% in the general assembly, while women occupy 30% of leadership positions in the party. Youth under 35 years old account for 35% in the general assembly. As for senior leadership positions, youth account for 15%.

### **4. Social Democratic Party:**

Official figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs document the number of party members as 269, of whom 117 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 is around 180. On the other hand, party figures show, through the interviews, that the number of members of the general assembly of the party totals 342. Women account for 42%. As for women's representation in leadership positions, it accounts for 15%, while youth under 35 years old account for 47%.

### **5. Jordanian Communist Party:**

Official figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of party members stands at 723, of whom 190 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 159. On the other hand, party figures show, through the interviews, that the number of members of the general assembly of the party totals 542; women account for 25%. As for women representation in leadership positions, it accounts for 20% in the Central Committee, while the party does not have information on the percentage of youth under 35 years old. Youth representation in leadership bodies stands at around 30%.

#### **6. Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD)**

Official figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the party members total 856 of whom females total 359. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 194. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that there are members whose names were not forwarded to the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs for personal reasons. The number of members, according to party estimates, totals 3,000 to 4,000 while women's representation does not exceed 20%. Several women successively led the party and occupied the position of "secretary." As for youth, they do not account for more than 20% and 10% in leadership positions.

#### **7. Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (Al Wahdah):**

According to official figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, the number of party members totals 578, of whom 159 are females. The number of young people between 18 and

40 years old is around 173. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that the number of members of the general assembly of the party is 500. There are no statistics about the percentage of women in the general assembly. As for women representation in leadership positions, there are four women in the Central Committee. Youth under 35 years old account for 50%, according to party estimates. There are 2 out of 10 in the Political Bureau.

#### **8. Partnership and Salvation Party:**

Official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs confirm that the number of party members is 304, of whom 42 are women. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 65. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that there are 455 members in the general assembly and that women account for 7.96% of the general assembly. Women in leadership positions of the party do not exceed 11%. Youth under 35 years old in the general assembly account for 17.5%, with around 80 people. As for senior leadership positions, youth account for 22%.

#### **9. Jordanian Socialist Baath Party:**

Official records and numbers at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of party members totals 769, of whom 87 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 132. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that there are 609 members in the general

assembly and that women account for 10% of them. Women are absent from leadership positions. As for the percentage of youth out of the total number of members and their representation in leadership positions, the party declined to provide any information.

#### **10. Jordanian Progressive Arab Baath Party:**

Official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs confirm that the number of members of the party totals 840, of whom females are 242. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 368. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that the general assembly includes 650 people, of whom women account for 28%, while women in leadership positions do not exceed 5%. Youth under 35 years old in the general assembly account for 33%. As for senior leadership positions, there are no official statistics, but the party estimates this at 25%.

#### **11. Reform and Renewal Party (Hasad):**

According to the official statistics and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, the number of members of the party totals 544, of whom 226 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 273. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that the number of members of the general assembly is 561 and that women represent 206 out of 608, at 33.88%. Concerning women's representation in leadership positions at the party, they are as follows: 23% in the Executive Bureau, and 36.8% in the Central Council. Youth under 35 years old in the general assembly account for 35%. They are as follows: 99 young persons out of 608,

accounting for 16.28%. As for youth occupying senior leadership positions in the party, the party declined to provide any information.

## **12. Stronger Jordan Party:**

Official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of party members totals 496, of whom 156 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old totals around 220. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that the general assembly includes 750 people, of whom women account for 46%. Women occupy three leadership positions in the Political Bureau of the party. It is worth mentioning that the party is led by a woman. However, there are no statistics and percentages related to youth inside the party. There are also no leadership positions for youth.

## **13. Shura Party:**

Official data and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of members of the party totals 836, of whom 261 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old totals around 332. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that the party includes 1,370 people within the general assembly. Women account for 40% of them. There is no clear percentage of women occupying leadership positions in the party. Youth under 35 years old in the general assembly account for 40%. As for senior leadership positions, they account for 22%.

## **14. National Union Party:**



Official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of members of the party totals around 1,142, of whom 436 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old totals 355. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that the general assembly includes 5,646 people, of whom women account for 20%. Women occupying leadership positions account for 30%. Youth under 35 years old in the general assembly account for 20-30%. As for their percentage in senior leadership positions, it is less than 20%.

#### **15. Jordanian United Front Party:**

Official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of members of the party totals 2,631, of whom females are between 18 and 22%. Women account for 20% in leadership positions in the party. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old totals around 749. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that the general assembly includes 4,860 people, of whom women account for 20%. Women occupy around 30% of leadership positions. As for youth representation within the party, there are no clear or ready statistics despite the great momentum represented by youth within the party, compared with the rest of the parties. One of the party leaders replied to a question during the interview with him as follows: "*The party came from society. It is only natural that there should be a significant percentage of youth within the party, since they are part of society. This law is bad and offends the parties because it aims at making parties rather than making party action.*"

## 16. Jordanian National Trend Party:

According to official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, the number of members of this party is around 566, of whom 329 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 364. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews, that there are 1,200 people in the general assembly, of whom women account for 70%. Women occupy around 50% of leadership positions. Young people under 35 years old in the general assembly account for 50%, but youth presence in senior leadership positions is limited. There are no specific statistics about this.

## 17. Al Resalah Party:

Official records at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of members of this party totals 1,172, of whom 299 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 460. On the other hand, party data shows, through the interviews that the general assembly of the party includes 1,840 people. Women account for 45% in the general assembly. Women occupy 33% of leadership positions in the party. Young people under 35 years old account for 35% of the general assembly of the party. As for political representation of youth in leadership positions of the party, there are no statistics. One of the party leaders commented on this as follows: *"There is no percentage because young people cannot assume leadership positions; it is a responsibility that requires long experience. However, we encourage and support them in municipal and other elections."*

## **18. National Current Party:**

The official records and figures of the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of members of this party totals 1,631, of whom 223 are females. Young people between 18 and 40 years old total around 226. Party data shows, through the interviews, that there are around 1,500 people in the general assembly. There are no clear figures and statistics related to women's representation. Upon interviewing two people from the party leadership, we were given completely different figures. The same goes for youth representation.

## **19. Justice and Reform Party:**

Official records at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of members of the party totals 1,768, of whom 701 are females. The number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 697. Party data shows, through the interviews, that the general assembly of the party includes 2,500 people. Women account for 33% of the general assembly. Women occupy 22% of leadership positions in the party. Young people under 35 years old account for 25% of the general assembly. Eight out of 40 are in the central body of the party.

## **20. Jordanian National Youth Party:**

It is almost the only party that adopts an identity of action that belongs to the category of youth. Official records and figures at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs show that the number of the members of this party totals 599, of whom 144 are females. The

number of young people between 18 and 40 years old is around 306. Party data shows, through the interviews, that the general assembly includes 750 members. Women account for 30% of the general assembly. Women are not present in leadership positions. As for the percentage of youth out of the total number of members, they represent 50%. In terms of senior positions in decision-making, youth occupy 20% of the Executive Council and 40% of what the party terms "National Council." It can be observed that the political performance of the party is weak based on the results of its participation in the general elections, including parliamentary, municipal, and governorate council elections, and even in universities and unions.

### **Concluding Observation:**

The field study and interviews with the leaders and cadres of the parties show that there is disparity between the number of members declared by the parties during the interviews and the official figures registered with the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs. We assess that this is due to weak data update and synchronization at the ministry. On the other hand, the parties are slow to update their data and send it periodically to the ministry. Some parties mentioned a third reason more than once during the study; namely, that they conceal the data on youth out of fear of security crackdowns and having to submit resignations from the party. This affects youth presence within these parties.

Compared with other parties of the nineties, the Islamic Action Front Party has gone beyond traditional frameworks of party action by relying on the rule that "every member of the party belongs to it, but not everyone who belongs to the party is a member of it." This means that it

creates parallelism between the members and supporters of the party. This makes the party a "latent force" that is difficult to measure except through the political context and events. On the other hand, this gives the party greater room to act within society in light of the policies of harassment and traditional security crackdowns against the members of the party. Besides, this division enables it to maintain the hierarchy of the party authority and have top-down influence on decision-making; in other words, from the leadership to the base.

The vision of the party has reflected on its internal composition, specifically the youth and women's wings. The party keeps within its youth and women's wings several groups that are considered leaders in society. Moreover, it is not easy to join the party and obtain its membership compared with a large number of parties. The party follows a "pragmatic approach" that starts with the application to join and then holding personal interviews and probation periods. This means that there is a gradual process to join the party. A new member can choose between affiliation as a member or simply belonging to the party without holding membership, especially among youth groups, out of fear of security crackdowns and facing difficulties when seeking employment in the public sector.

Maintaining a large number of young people is not a measurement or reflection of the party's strength and vitality in society and its ability to have access to the community of voters. There is quantitative (formal) presence versus qualitative (influential) presence in the generation of youth and political peers. Naturally, this applies to the category of women within the party as the true strength of the party does not lie in competing to increase numbers within it, but to have access and the ability to

change that the party wants as part of its political agenda and electoral platform.

On the other hand, we see that there is a group of new political parties, which were established in the wake of the Arab Spring, and which take noticeable interest in youth. Some of them are even led by young personalities, as is the case, for example, with the New Approach Party, which is led by Dr. Fuzan Al Buqur. There are parties that contain the word "youth" in their names, such as the Jordanian National Youth Party. However, this does not necessarily reflect having profound and well-thought-out content related to youth or youth leaders that wield power in these parties.

## Chapter Four

# Parties and the Gap in Political Communication

*It is curious that in the Arab world, governments still have security and military guards stationed at the doors of official media establishments, such as the Radio and TV Corporation. Military coups were linked to the opposition taking control of the official*

***building and broadcasting the first communique of the military coup or revolution. However, these establishments have lost their value today with the public and no longer mean anything. The first communique now is the hashtag that trends on social media or peaceful demonstrators occupying public squares. However, the presence of security and military forces at the doors of these official establishments represents a key and important reflection of the deep gap between governments and traditional political establishments in general and huge and significant developments. Societies and peoples today no longer wait for official news and are not concerned with it. They do not even wait for an article by a prominent writer on the next day to read between the lines. The equation has changed completely. Information is now flowing freely, and secrets are posted on social media. Protests depend on hashtags and news and pictures that are most probably sent by little-known people or activists using aliases and hiding behind names, such as the joker, freelance journalist, or "general inspector."***

***The authors***

The media is one of the key sources of power in the world of politics today. It is the main channel of political communication, and it is through it that messages are conveyed and exchanged between sender and receiver. Its importance has greatly increased over the past decades, given the huge media revolution and the stages it went through since the radio and then television and then the age of satellite channels, and

afterward the age of virtual world and cyberspace. This has turned the equations of media and political communication upside down and led to the emergence of new theories. This has also had a significant impact on influential political phenomena in today's world, extending from so-called "virtual wars" to cyberspace. The Arab popular uprisings in 2011 saw an explosion in people's usage of the media, especially among the generation of youth. This has reversed the equations of security, politics, propaganda, and advertisement, and removed the traditional control of governments over the flow of information, thus resulting in radical change in the equations of governance, communication, and the relationship between state, society and the various political forces.

As a result of these developments, new concepts and movements have emerged, alongside changes in the structure of political action in the whole world. So-called "new social movements" have emerged, and patterns of political and popular protest and action have changed to assume a networking character rather than a hierarchy. A clearer role of the younger generation in political and popular action has become visible, and means of mobilization, propaganda, and recruitment developed to become more influential and impactful across the virtual world. The expressions of political influence have changed; pictures and hashtags have replaced traditional discourse and official news, and the theories of media priorities (traditional control of sources of information and their importance) have declined. Now, "influencers" are more important than traditional political leaders. Perhaps, one of the new phenomena that emerged with the Arab Spring is that of "movements without heads". Traditional social movements are no longer alone or of decisive impact; they have been replaced by the notion of youth currents and new networking movements.



In Jordan, political parties have been dissimilar in handling these huge developments in the domain of media and in realizing the importance of "new media." They were different on more than one level:

Firstly, on the level of mainstream media, there are parties that owned newspapers and satellite channels, while others did not have any mainstream media outlets.

Secondly, on the level of social media websites, a large percentage of Jordanian parties entered this world and set up pages on Facebook, with a lesser percentage creating accounts on Twitter and even a much lesser percentage on Telegram. However, as it will be shown in this chapter, few parties have created active accounts and pages in terms of followers, interested people, and others interacting with what these parties post.

Third, the new virtual media is not only a passive means of communication or technology; it is linked to a certain language that is more capable, competent, and skillful in handling the street. There are parties that entered this field, but they did not have the language that is capable of speaking to broad social sectors. Other parties entered this field, but within their traditional ideological rhetoric, and some used these accounts to promote their individual leaders, and so on.

Fourth, political parties differed in their use of social media in election campaigns, especially in parliamentary and decentralized elections in 2022. Some of them managed to develop their discourse and media and political propaganda across this world, while others used conventional methods to a larger degree.

### **Parties and Mainstream Media:**

No political party directly owns satellite channels, but Yarmouk TV represents the political and party line of the Islamic Action Front Party.

Meanwhile, Josat TV represented the line of Stronger Jordan Party. The show hosted by Dr. Rula Al Hroub, secretary general of the party, was one of the famous and influential talk shows on the channel before it was closed. As for the National Union Party, A-One TV was close to it. The satellite channel is still available, but its contribution to spreading the ideas and rhetoric of the party and interest in this field is now limited.

As for the press, the Islamic Action Front Party owns Al Sabeel newspaper. It was a daily newspaper, and then turned into an electronic newspaper. Its website is constantly updated throughout the day and has a variety of topics and news reports and articles. The website follows the news, especially videos.<sup>109</sup> The page of the newspaper on social media has many followers. On Facebook, it has 2,843 followers and 2,714 likes. On Twitter, the account of the newspaper has 17.7 thousand followers.<sup>110</sup>

The Jordanian Communist Party used to publish a weekly newspaper known as Al Jamahir. However, it was closed. It has maintained a website since 2020.<sup>111</sup> As for the Democratic People's Party (HASHD), it has the weekly newspaper Al Ahali, which later printed around 3,000 copies every two weeks, mostly distributed as subscriptions. It has an active website, which is constantly updated. It is technologically friendly and easy to browse. It also has a page on Facebook, which has around 1,800 likes. The newspaper coverage combines international and local news related to the affairs of workers and their demands and interests, besides developments related to the Palestinian cause.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>109</sup> <https://cutt.us/NTwvT>

<sup>110</sup> The pages and accounts were accessed on 19/6/2022.

<sup>111</sup> See the website of the newspaper on the following link: <https://cutt.us/4wztW>

<sup>112</sup> See the website of Al Ahali on the following link: <https://cutt.us/3GGFM> and telephone interview with Abla Abu Elbeh, secretary general of the party, on 20/6/2022.

The monthly newspaper Nida Al Watan is published by the Popular Unity Party. It used to print several thousand copies for distribution, but after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, it became content with its electronic version. The website of the newspaper is active and easy to browse. It has a variety of topics, covering international, regional, and local news. Local reports focus on political and economic issues that reflect the party's positions and political discourse, in addition to highlighting party news.<sup>113</sup>

The newspaper Al Anbat is owned by the family of Dr. Rula Al Hroub, secretary general of Stronger Jordan Party. However, the newspaper does not reflect the positions of the party and does not approach its discourse. There is no direct relationship between the political editorial line and the party.

Based on the above, it can be noted that the Islamic Action Front Party was remarkably distinguished on the level of mainstream media, whether satellite channels or electronic daily press. However, we see that Stronger Jordan Party has media power that is currently not activated. Mainstream media of the Popular Unity Party, HASHD, and Communist Party is characterized by being party media rather than general media.

### **Virtual Media: Reach, Propaganda and Effectiveness**

Data shows that the website most used by Jordanian political parties in terms of virtual media is Facebook, followed by Twitter and then Instagram. Facebook usage by political parties is divided between open and closed pages and groups. Of course, there is WhatsApp, but there is no reliable and sufficient information or data about it.

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<sup>113</sup> See the website of the newspaper on the following link: <https://cutt.us/Msy6H> and telephone interview with Fakher Daas, one of the leaders of the Popular Unity Party on 20/6/2022.

With regard to Facebook, we see that there is a clear variation between the political parties in terms of reach, effectiveness, and available content. The same applies to the number of pages related to the party and its branches or affiliates. In this context, we see that the parties that are most active are the Islamic Action Front, Popular Unity Party, Partnership and Salvation Party, and the youth and student wing of the Communist Party. However, the page that has huge following totaling 87,000 followers is that of the Jordanian Socialist Baath.

**First – Islamic Action Front Party:** The homepage of the party on Facebook has 45,000 followers. The average engagement rate involves dozens of people. The page posts news of the party in general and its positions and statements. It contains the "live" feature. The average publishing is daily and regular. There are more than 20 pages that bear the names of the party branches, such as Zarqa, North Zarqa, Karak, Balqa, Yasmin, Nazzal, Nuzha, and Aqaba. There are other pages, such as Freedoms Committee and Anti-Normalization Committee. However, these pages vary in terms of the number of followers, reach, and daily activity. Most of them publish continuously (with few exceptions, such as Karak and the women section and Zarqa, as posting and following are limited). Some pages have a large number of followers, such as Hay Nazzal, which has close to 10,000 followers; Nuzha, around 1,300 followers; Hashmi, more than 7,000 followers; Mafraq, close to 1,000 followers; Irbid. more than 4,000 followers; and Rusaifah, more than 3,000 likes. There are also Facebook pages that are registered in the names of persons and not an organization. These contain pages for the various branches and have different levels of followers.

An important and interesting phenomenon in the groups on Facebook for the party and its members is that we see great demand on membership. For example, the number of members of Rusaifah page is

more than 7,200, and the youth sector around 2,300 members. The Islamic Movement group (Islamic Action Front – Mighty Fortress in Front of Zionist Hegemony) exceeds 4,200 members, and the Central Committee of the Youth of the Front around 150 members.

The activity of the party on Twitter does not match its activity on Facebook. The party has an account followed by 465 people, while the account of the youth of the party has 470 followers, besides the ongoing and significant posting and engagement. As for Instagram, there are 340 followers of the Islamic Action Front page in southern Amman. It is clear that the page was inaugurated on a specific occasion related to Jerusalem Week in 2021, but it has stopped since then.

**Second – Islamic Al Wasat Party:** Its homepage on Facebook is followed by 3,000 people, at an average of intermittent posting and seasonal engagement. There are other pages, such as the Irbid branch, which has 211 likes and 212 followers, with an average of weak publishing every several months. As for Rusaifah page, it has 876 likes and 900 followers, at a periodic monthly rate. The page mostly covers religious and social occasions (it indicates that the branch was established in 2013). The page of the Islamic Al Wasat Party in Ramtha has 316 followers, but the publishing rate is limited, and engagement is almost nonexistent. Koura has 154 followers. The party is also available on Facebook groups. There are 5,250 members in the group of Al Wasat Party in Rusaifah, and 70 members in Al Wasat Party group from Jerash to Amman and Salt. It is observed here that the most active in the party virtually is the Rusaifah page. A group was created for the National Coalition Party, which includes around 2,500 members. The page of the party on Twitter is weak and limited and there is no engagement; it has 28 followers. The party does not have a channel on Instagram.

**Third – Zamzam Party:** It has a page on Facebook followed by 10,000 people. The last post on it was in March 2022. There is no great engagement on this page. As for Twitter, there are 61 followers. The last post was in March 2019.

**Fourth – Social Democratic Party:** It has a page on Facebook with around 2,000 followers. As for average publishing, it is ongoing and has engagement from dozens of people, but there are no other groups or pages. We could not find an account on Twitter or Instagram.

**Fifth – Jordanian Communist Party:** There is a page on Facebook for the youth and student wing of the party followed by more than 1,000 people. The page is active in publishing and dozens of participants engage with it. There is a page for the Communist Party-Madaba branch, which has around 1,300 followers; a page for the group of friends of the Jordanian Communist Party, with 1,600 members; a group of the Communist Party and its friends, with around 1,500 members; a group of friends of the Jordanian Communist Party, with 1,100 members; and the page of the Union of Jordanian Communists, with 4,453 followers. On Twitter, the party has a page with 1,867 followers. The page has limited engagement, and it publishes continuously. There are 488 followers on the Instagram channel, which has 150 posts.

**Sixth – Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD):** The party has a page on Facebook with 2,700 followers. It can be observed that publishing is done weekly. Following the page and engaging with it ranges between dozens and hundreds of people. There is a Facebook group for the HASHD Party-Balqa branch. The members of the group total 2,500. There is also the Jordanian Youth League "RASHAD", which represents the youth wing of the party. It has a page on Facebook in the name of "RASHAD." It is followed by around 1,400 people, and it has more than 1,200 likes. There is the Jordanian Women League (RAND),

which represents the women wing of the party. It has a page on Facebook and is followed by 1,500 people. It has around 1,500 likes.

**Seventh – Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (Al Wahdah):**

We see that the page of the youth of the Popular Unity Party on Facebook has 5,000 followers. It posts on a daily basis. It is clear that they have an active media department. The party has a new page, which has 821 followers. It posts regularly (there was a page that stopped in 2014. Its followers totaled around 2,100). There is an unofficial page, but it is for the supporters of the party. It has 1,600 followers. There is also a group for the friends of the party, with 1,500 members.

The party has significant university activity through its relationship with the Arab Tajdid Student Bloc—a bloc that includes the Popular Unity and other forces. It identifies itself as a student movement that represents a pan-Arab, leftist trend and adopts the issues of students, along with political issues, especially the Palestinian arena and Jordan. The bloc is very active on social media websites and has presence in most universities. Its pages are characterized by being active and interactive. It has followers and likes in the hundreds and thousands. The page of the bloc at the University of Science and Technology has 821 followers and likes. At the Al al-Bayt University, there are more than 9,000 likes and 9,400 followers. At the Hashemite University, there are 1,100 likes. As for the rest of the universities, there are hundreds of likes and followers for each page. There are around 1,000 likes for the Middle East University, 849 likes for Zarqa University, and around 568 likes for Al-Zaytoonah University.

In addition to the above, the youth arm of the Popular Unity Party stands behind the "Thabahtoona" movement. Dentist Fakher Daas, one of the influential leaders of the party, is the coordinator of the movement, which exists at all Jordanian universities. The movement cares about

student issues in general, especially university tuition fees, public freedoms, and others. The movement has a page on social media websites, which has around 4,000 followers.

On Twitter, they have a page, with 667 followers, and a page for the youth of Popular Unity, with 592 followers. The page of the Arab Tajdid Bloc has 148 followers. It has weak presence at universities. There are 123 followers for the Hashemite University. On Instagram, there is a page for the youth, which has around 1,000 followers and 318 posts, and an account for the party with 419 followers and 94 posts.

**Eighth – Partnership and Salvation Party:** It has a page on Facebook, with around 11,500 likes and 13,600 followers. The page is very active and highlights the activities of the party. It also has the feature of television broadcasting. It is especially interested in internal political and economic issues. Posting is done continuously and almost daily. Engagement with posts varies, but it averages dozens at a minimum. They have a Facebook group, which has 360 members, and they have an active Twitter page that has 1,013 followers. The party has an Instagram account, which has 58 followers and 419 posts. There is an account for the Jerash and Ajloun branch of the party, which has 18 followers and one post.

**Ninth – Jordanian (Iraq) Socialist Baath Party:** Its page on Facebook is the largest in terms of the number of followers as they total around 87,000. As for posting, it is continuous, and dozens engage with the page. There is a page titled Baath Party in Jordan. It is clearly affiliated with the party. It has 274 followers, but the last post was in 2020. We could not find an account for the party on Twitter or Instagram.

**Tenth – Jordanian Progressive Arab Baath Party:** The youth bureau has a page, with around 1,100 likes, and the same number of followers. It posts a variety of Arab news, with special focus on the Palestinian



cause and news of the party. It posts intermittently, with limited engagement. There is an extremist page using the name "Jordanian Baath Party," with around 150 followers, but it has not published since 2014. The page contains a scathing and radical attack on the Royal Family. The party has a group on Facebook for the Amman branch, which has only 49 members. We could not find an account on Twitter or Instagram.

**Eleventh – Jordanian Al Muwatanah (Citizenship) Party (party was declared in February 2022):** It has 170 followers on its page on Facebook, focusing on news of the secretary general. The party has a group on Facebook, which includes around 700 members. There is no account on Twitter or Instagram.

**Twelfth – Reform and Renewal Party (Hasad):** It has a group on Facebook, which includes 1,400 members. It has a page on Facebook, the last post of which dates back to 2012. It has 385 followers. There is another page for the Zarqa branch, with 663 followers. It is noticed that publishing is intermittent and seasonal. The posted material varies and includes social positions and occasions and others. The media department in the party has a page, with around 1,100 followers. The page is not updated regularly. The last update was in September 2021 (by the time the chapter was written). There is an account on Twitter with only 13 followers. The last post was in April 2019.

**Thirteenth – Stronger Jordan Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with 7,200 followers. Its posting frequency is weekly. It includes videos of the secretary general of the party. As for engagement with the page, it is generally limited. The party has an account on Twitter, with 61 followers, with weak engagement. Posting has stopped since the beginning of 2022.

**Fourteenth – Shura Party:** It has a page on Facebook, with 800 likes and around 950 followers. It posts regularly on almost a weekly basis. There is also a group on Facebook, with 360 members. It has an account on Twitter, with only one post dating back to 2013. The post talks about "the party under construction."

**Fifteenth – New Approach Party:** It has a page on Facebook with around 5,600 followers and around 5,800 likes. It is noticeable that there is significant engagement with the page, compared with the majority of other parties. Posting frequency is almost daily. They have a group on Facebook, with around 250 members, but there is no posting on it. The party has a Twitter account, with 51 followers. The account posts regularly and dozens usually engage. There is a channel on Instagram, followed by 63 people and with 13 posts.

**Sixteenth – National Union Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with more than 500 likes. There is a page for the youth of the party, with 170 likes and a similar number of followers. The last time the page posted was in 2013. There is an account on Twitter, the last post on which was in 2013. The page has 200 followers. The party does not have a channel on Instagram.

**Seventeenth – Jordanian United Front Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with around 5,700 followers and 5,600 likes. It posts heavily, but engagement is weak. There is also a general group, which has 116 people. The last time it posted was in 2014. There is a Facebook group for Tafilah governorate, with over 100 people, but the last share was in 2018. They have a Twitter account, with around six followers, but there have been no posts since 2013.

**Eighteenth – Jordanian Future Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with 2,800 followers, with little engagement and very small posting average. The party has an account on Twitter, with 34 followers,

and very low engagement and posting. This does not agree with the statements of party representatives during the field survey as they spoke about intensive activity on Twitter.

**Nineteenth – Al Resalah Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with 936 followers and weak engagement. The page has not posted since 2020. It has 123 followers on Twitter, with no engagement. Posting has stopped since 2011.

**Twentieth – Jordanian National Al Wafa Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with 1,000 followers and no engagement. Its posting frequency is monthly. The party does not have a Twitter account.

**Twenty-First – National Constitutional Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with 292 followers and little engagement, compared with the number of followers. Posting is active and almost daily. The party does not have an account on Twitter.

**Twenty-Second – National Current Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with 2,300 followers. It has acceptable engagement and monthly posting frequency. The party does not have an account on Twitter.

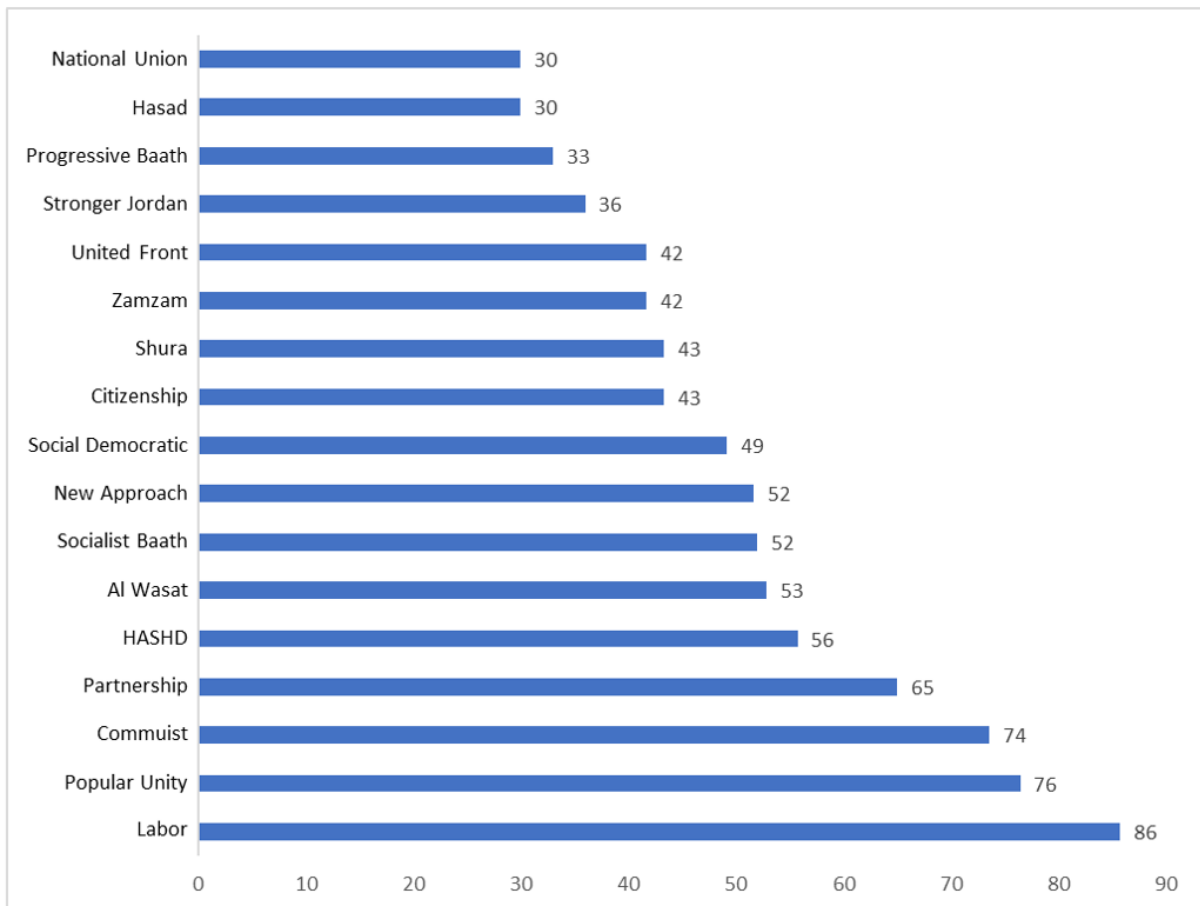
**Twenty-third – Justice and Reform Party:** The party has a page on Facebook, with 361 followers. It has acceptable engagement, compared with the number of followers and it posts monthly. We could not find a Twitter account for the party.

### **Numerical Analysis of Strength of Jordanian Parties:**

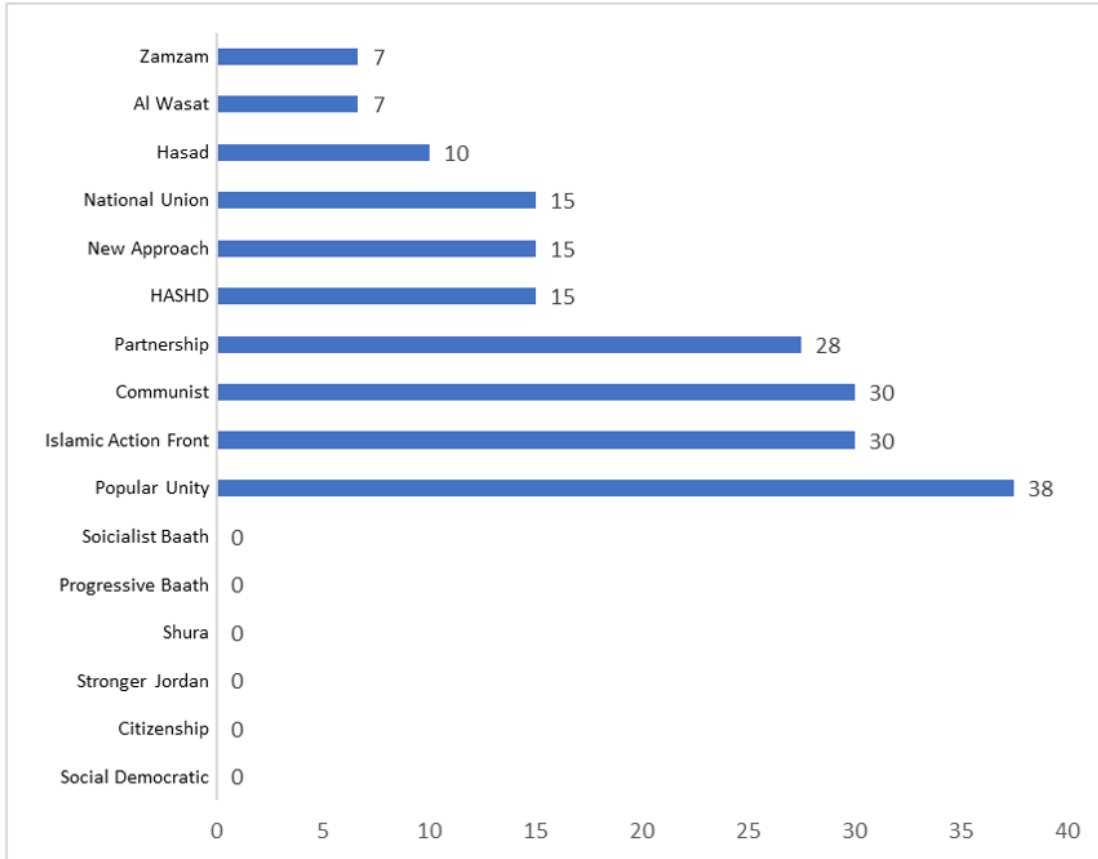
Based on checking and analyzing the three social media websites (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram), we conducted a quantitative analysis linked to several variables, including the number of followers or likes, posting frequency, engagement or sharing (like, share, comments), and the number of pages available for the party on each one of the above websites. The strength of the parties in the domain of virtual media was assessed accordingly. We confined this exercise to 17

political parties, which have the largest presence and influence in this media domain. The results were as follows:

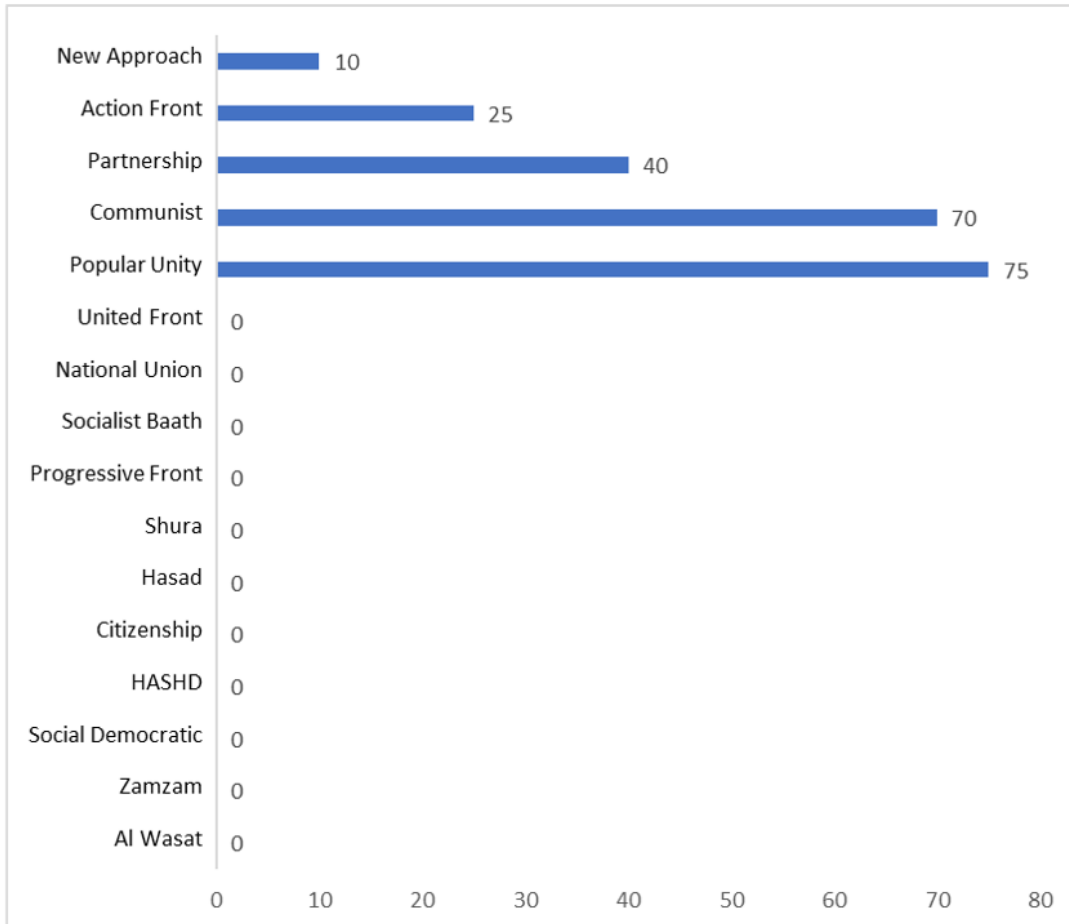
## 1. On Facebook:



## 2. On Twitter:



### 3. On Instagram:



## Numerical Analysis of Party Activity on Facebook:

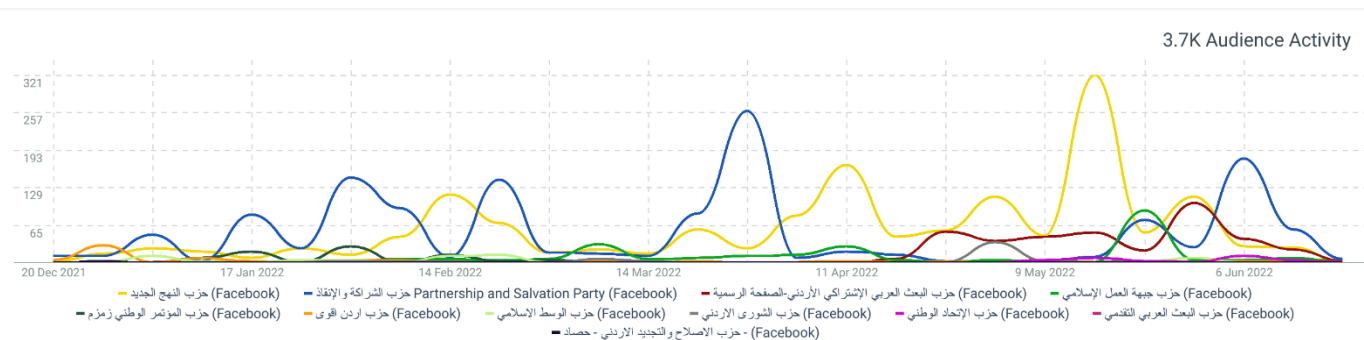
Reports specialized in digital media and national polls indicate that users of social media networks in Jordan now account for 67% of the population of the Kingdom, which is over 10 million. For many years, Facebook has captured the interest of Jordanians. Active Facebook users in Jordan are estimated at more than 5 million as of the beginning of this year. Political parties, as we have noted before, rely on Facebook

more than other social media in promoting party ideas and having access to society.<sup>114</sup>

Therefore, we have undertaken a more detailed numerical analysis, leveraging digital applications that are specialized in social media analytics, such as "Fanpage Karma" and "Talkwalker" platforms. These are tools that help in monitoring and analyzing social media content and influence of pages, such as Facebook, and assessing their performance. We tried to answer the following questions: Which parties are followed the most and have the greatest engagement by Jordanians on Facebook? What is the nature of the content provided by the most followed parties? Which parties use marketing plans to address their audience?

We notice through following audience engagement with the content of party pages on Facebook that engagement increases when the content has to do with the issues of the party itself, such as issuing a program or official statement or the party objecting to issues that involve public opinion and taking positions and expressing them through digital content. Also, using hashtags, as the New Approach Party and Partnership and Salvation Party are doing, has relatively increased engagement with posts and contributed to their spread and getting to larger groups and places in society.

#### AUDIENCE ACTIVITY

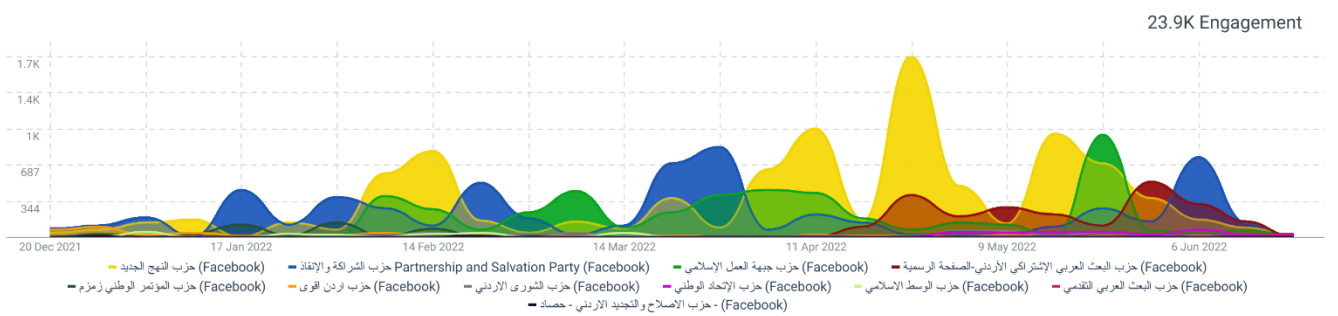


Ghad newspaper. The latest report can be accessed by visiting the page of the Jordanian newspaper Al Ghad and checking the report by Ibrahim Al Mubaydin published on 16/2/2022 under the title "[7 Million Users of Social Media in Jordan](#)".

When comparing posting frequency and timings, we find that the parties that use sponsored posts generate greater engagement. According to Facebook policy, the options of sponsorship are available to customize engagement with posts through sharing, following links, and opening discussions. We see that the parties that have sponsored posts mostly aim at engagement to get the largest number of likes, using Facebook language, and supporters, using party language.

What are the types of posts by parties on their official pages on

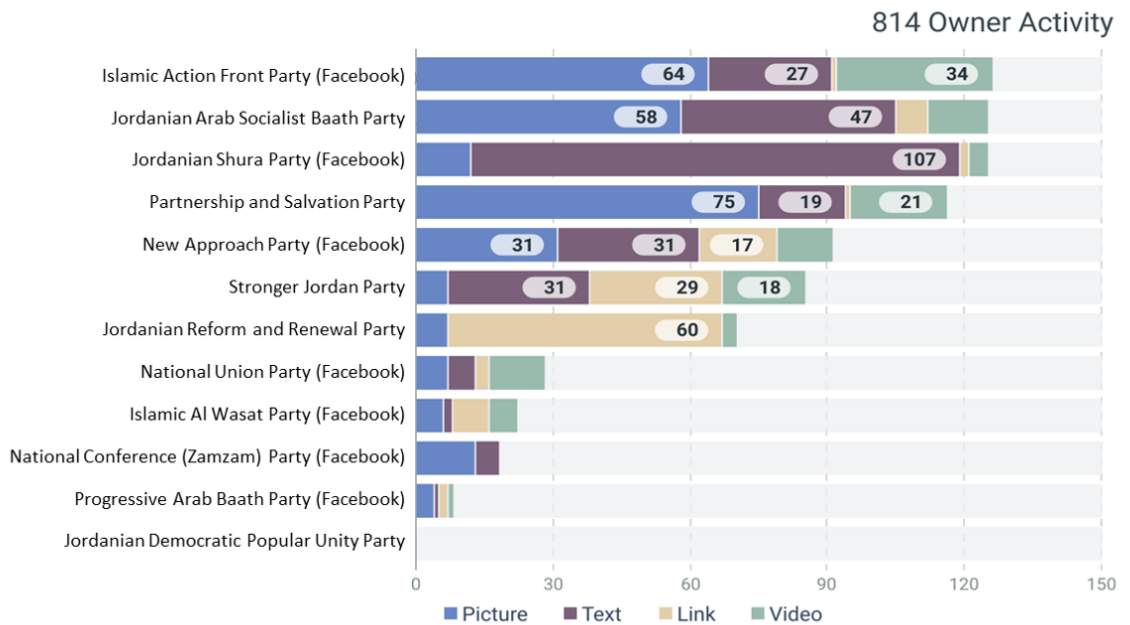
#### ENGAGEMENT OVER TIME



Facebook?



### POST TYPES DISTRIBUTION



We notice from the above chart that parties use pictures more in content, followed by texts, and then external links, such as the website or articles. We also see that there is significant weakness in the use of video, compared with other types of content, despite the importance of videos in access to the public, and then access to them via other applications, such as WhatsApp.

### Which Parties Allocate Budget for Promotion on Facebook? What is the Value of Funding Related to Promotion?

Despite the importance of paid advertisements for political parties, whether to maintain vital political contact with followers or accessing regions and targeting new segments through the features offered by Facebook, the number of parties that use paid advertisements is relatively small. By following the marketing of parties of their posts in June 2022, for example, we find the following:

#	Name of party	Average of June/dollar
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1	Partnership and Salvation Party	375
2	New Approach Party	175
3	Jordanian Social Democratic Party	76
4	Islamic Action Front	49

It should be noted that we chose June randomly since it is in the middle of the year. It can be explained that the parties might have varying events and activities. Besides, some of them, including the Islamic Action front Party, have a large number of "decentralized" pages, some of which have funding for their posts, such as the party page in Irbid and Ajloun. On the other hand, the party largely depends on its parliament page "Reform Bloc," which is followed more than any other page of the party.

As for the New Approach Party, it is a recently formed party. We have observed previously that the party had more engagements because it largely employs digital marketing. There is a person in the party who is specialized in this field. This is evident through the diversity and balance of posts and their types, including videos, pictures, texts, and external links. This is in addition to organizing posting frequency and, naturally, using hashtags that fit the idea of the posts, thus facilitating access and spread.

## Conclusions

The virtual world is no longer a secondary issue or a space that one can do without. It now completely parallels—and might even exceed—the real world in its importance and influence. Social media websites have become a vital actor in the political sphere, and they wield great influence. The virtual world is now involved in restructuring and redesigning the political, economic, social, and cultural domains of life. Therefore, it is not possible for parties to have presence, strength, and influence on the street and in the elections without maintaining strong presence in this world and perfecting the use of technologies and developing political rhetoric, propaganda, and marketing, to enable them to actively influence the political sphere.

It might look easy for all political parties to enter the virtual world as any person can today create a page or account on social media websites. However, what is required is to go beyond this method. Knowledge, skills, and sciences related to the world of politics have developed in the domain of social media. The game of algorithms and digital influence, along with "artificial intelligence" and "big data," has developed into one of the key sources of strength. Obviously, the importance of the cyberworld for political parties is growing at a fast pace.

On the Jordanian scene, many parties have tried to move to the virtual world and some of them succeeded in optimizing communication with the public; however, all these parties are still primitively treating the new world and its potentials, capacities, and threats. It is clear that the issue does not go beyond initial presence for these parties, that is, setting foot

in the virtual world without seeking to build experiences and envision how to develop their capacities, potentials, and rhetoric to deal with it and expand the extent of influence and its importance and space. This requires experts and specialists in this field and restructuring and developing capacities, ideas, and rhetoric to keep up with the changes.

As for the current situation, the Islamic Action Front is ahead of others on Facebook and has visible presence and diverse activities, besides its presence in mainstream media. On the other hand, leftist parties have shown significant development here, especially the Popular Unity Party, which comes after the Islamic Action Front on Facebook in terms of strength, followed by the Communist Party, Partnership and Salvation Party, HASHD, Al Wasat, Socialist Baath, and New Approach.

On Twitter, the Popular Unity Party is ahead of the pack, followed by the Islamic Action Front, Communist Party, Partnership and Salvation, HASHD, and finally New Approach.

On Instagram, the Popular Unity Party comes first, followed by the Communist Party in second place, and the Partnership and Salvation Party in third place. The Islamic Action Front comes fourth and finally the New Approach.

It is perfectly clear that there are prominent and distinguished parties in the virtual world, which are the Islamic Action Front, Popular Unity Party, Communist Party, Partnership and Salvation, HASHD, and New Approach. A further examination shows that the strength of the Islamic Action Front lies in its reach and numerous branches, which are active on social media websites. Meanwhile, the strength of the Popular Unity Party appears to be in its youth and student wing. The party has succeeded in achieving visible and significant breakthroughs in this domain. This applies to a lesser degree to HASHD, which has active youth and women wings. The Partnership and Salvation Party is

characterized by effectiveness and engagement with daily issues and fiery opposition rhetoric. As for the New Approach Party, it is relatively new and is inclined toward moderation. It has an active youth group, which provided it with good space on social media websites, compared with the others.

In terms of the political and ideological shades, leftist parties (Popular Unity, HASHD, and Communist Party) appear to have greater presence than the others. If we add the Islamic Action Front and the Partnership and Salvation Party, it is clear that the opposition parties have great strength in this domain versus the great weakness and clearly limited impact of the center parties or those known to toe the line. The only party among them that appears to be more serious in terms of presence and reach is the New Approach.

Although many political parties have media departments and some of them are noticeably active and effective, there is nothing to indicate or confirm that there are strategic plans on the part of the majority of political parties to develop their media rhetoric and communication capabilities. There are no measurement instruments to read and analyze the image of a given party, for example, with public opinion and its reach to new realms of influence. More importantly, there are no scientific studies that point that party to the target audience and its priorities and how to handle and address it, or even to gauge feedback on its activities and events. Media activity is mostly characterized by improvisation and immediate judgment calls without being based on well-thought-out future scientific plans that are agreed on by political parties.

On the other hand, many parties, according to statements by their leaders during the field interviews, are expected to move to the virtual world and develop their presence in it. However, the issue goes beyond simply creating pages or websites and accounts. As we said before, this

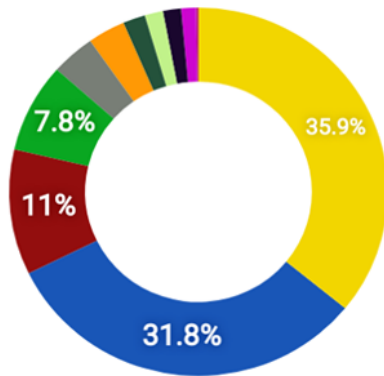
requires building experiences and developing rhetoric and media message and content. This is also linked to improving the presence of the youth and women generation, developing platforms, and addressing the daily life of citizens.

As far as movements and currents are concerned, there is noticeable effectiveness and presence, and they have activities in the virtual sphere exceeding traditional political parties. One example of this is the Popular Movement for Change, which expresses popular action and political opposition with the highest ceiling of criticism. It publishes regularly and has over 14,000 followers. There are other movements and groups on Facebook pages, which have several thousand followers. Some of them announced that they are a political party under construction.

### **Appendices of the Chapter**

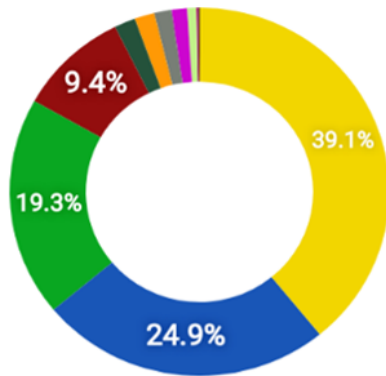


## SHARE OF RESULTS



- ↖ 742% ● New Approach Party (Facebook)
- ↖ 2607% ● Partnership and Salvation Party (Facebook)
- Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party-official page (Facebook)
- Islamic Action Front Party (Facebook)
- Jordanian Shura Party (Facebook)
- ↖ 200% ● Stronger Jordan Party (Facebook)
- ↖ 84% ● National Conference Party-Zamzam (Facebook)
- ↖ 79% ● Islamic Al Wasat Party (Facebook)
- ↖ 73% ● Jordanian Reform and Renewal Party-Hasad (Facebook)
- National Union Party (Facebook)
- Progressive Arab Baath Party (Facebook)

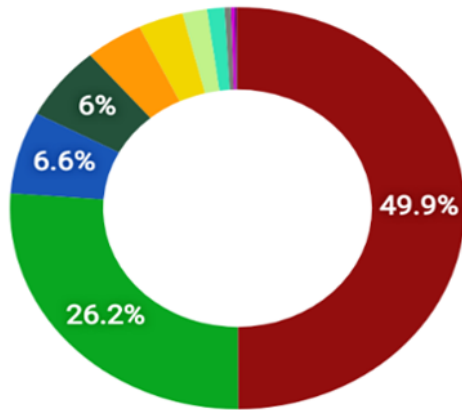
## SHARE OF ENGAGEMENT



- ↖ **471%** ● New Approach Party (Facebook)
- ↖ **1122%** ● Partnership and Salvation Party (Facebook)
- Islamic Action Front Party (Facebook)
- Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party-official page (Facebook)
- ↖ **78%** ● National Conference Party-Zamzam (Facebook)
- ↖ **185%** ● Stronger Jordan Party (Facebook)
- Jordanian Shura Party (Facebook)
- National Union Party (Facebook)
- ↖ **83%** ● Islamic Al Wasat Party (Facebook)
- Progressive Arab Baath Party (Facebook)
- ↖ **1250%** ● Jordanian Reform and Renewal Party-Hasad (Facebook)

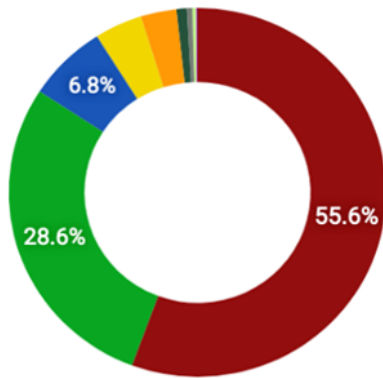


## SHARE OF FOLLOWERS



- Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party-official page (Facebook)
- Islamic Action Front Party (Facebook)
- Partnership and Salvation Party (Facebook)
- National Conference Party-Zamzam (Facebook)
- Stronger Jordan Party (Facebook)
- New Approach Party (Facebook)
- Islamic Al Wasat Party (Facebook)
- Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (Facebook)
- Jordanian Shura Party (Facebook)
- National Union Party (Facebook)
- Jordanian Reform and Renewal Party-Hasad (Facebook)
- Progressive Arab Baath Party (Facebook)

## SHARE OF POTENTIAL REACH



- Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party-official page (Facebook)
- Islamic Action Front Party (Facebook)
- 1289% ● Partnership and Salvation Party (Facebook)
- 260% ● New Approach Party (Facebook)
- 125% ● Stronger Jordan Party (Facebook)
- 25% ● National Conference Party-Zamzam (Facebook)
- Jordanian Shura Party (Facebook)
- 66% ● Islamic Al Wasat Party (Facebook)
- National Union Party (Facebook)
- 71% ● Jordanian Reform and Renewal Party-Hasad (Facebook)
- Progressive Arab Baath Party (Facebook)

## Chapter Five

# Party Action and the Next Stage

*There are still some fundamental and significant challenges to the aspired party leap. The gap between party action in general and popular culture still exists. The political environment still requires many arrangements and measures to enhance the role of political parties.*

*The authors*

Although there is a large number of political parties (they exceed 50), field research suggests that the vast majority of these parties do not have a popular base or institutional cadres. Nor do they have the ability to compete in the elections, whether parliamentary, local, union, or even university elections. The number of active parties that have political projects and a mass base—even if it is small—as the study shows, is rather limited and is not more than the number of fingers of both hands.

On the other hand, current party action confirms that the scene will not be the same in the next stage. The constitutional and legal amendments that were approved (especially the Parties Law and Election Law) will reshape the party landscape and lead to structural changes and

transformations in the next stage. The majority of the current parties will disappear either through merger or failure to regularize; strong and active parties will emerge and attract larger grassroots. There will also be a change in the internal structure of parties in line with the legislative changes that have occurred.

This does not mean, however, that the way is paved for political parties to rectify their conditions or engage actively in the elections. There are still fundamental and significant challenges to the aspired party leap. The gap between party action in general and popular culture still exists. The political environment still requires many arrangements and measures to enhance the role of political parties.

In the final chapter of the book, we will discuss a number of key questions pertaining to the current party action as follows:

First – What are the features of the current party landscape?

Second – How will new legislation and policies change party life?

Third – What are the challenges facing political parties in the transition process?

Fourth – What are the requirements, conditions, and levers of the shift toward party- and platform-based governments in the next period?

### **1. Features of Current Party Landscape:**

We have seen in the previous chapters that there is fragility on the party scene and structural weakness besetting the majority of political parties. If we go back to the key indicators—institutional structure and organizational hierarchy, geographic reach, party action, political participation, gender representation, youth representation, human and financial resources, and communication and media capacities—the above generalization will only spare a small number of parties.

In general, ideological parties have the greatest presence and power on the party scene: Islamic Action Front Party, Communist Party, Popular Unity Party, HASHD Party, Socialist Baath Party, and Progressive Baath Party. However, there is a clear distinction between these parties, which were registered in the nineties and represented transnational political forces. The Islamic Action Front, based on all the previous indicators, is the strongest, followed by the Popular Unity Party, and then HASHD and the Communist Party. Meanwhile, the Socialist Baath Party and Progressive Baath Party have strength in some indicators and weakness in others. The Socialist Baath (linked to the Iraqi Baath) is stronger in many respects. The Nationalist Movement Party (despite being linked to the ideas of Colonel Qaddafi) still exists. In an approximate reading of the scene of ideological parties, it can be rearranged as follows: Islamic Action Front, Popular Unity Party, HASHD Party, Communist Party, Socialist Baath, and Progressive Baath.

National parties, which emerged from within the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Action Front, represent the other strong current. These include the Islamic Al Wasat Party, National Conference Party (Zamzam), and Partnership and Salvation Party. Despite the heavy presence of former Muslim Brotherhood leaders within them, these parties differ in their current action and organizational structure. The Islamic Al Wasat Party (the oldest among them, spanning almost two decades) recruited members from outside the traditional circles of the Islamic current. It is the largest in terms of geographic reach (it has headquarters in all the governorates). Besides, it has representatives in the Lower House of Parliament. Its internal structure includes former leaders from the Muslim Brotherhood, especially Muslim sharia scholars, and a large percentage of newcomers from different governorates who

do not have a political or party background. As for the National Conference Party (Zamzam), its organizational structure (prior to the stage of announcing its merger with the Islamic Al Wasat Party) was mostly dominated by former members of the Muslim Brotherhood group and Islamic Action Front Party. Even though it appears to have smaller reach and presence in the elections and governorates, it has a good percentage of organized young people and leaders with great experience in action through their former presence with the Muslim Brotherhood group and Islamic Action Front.

On the other hand, the Partnership and Salvation Party emerges also in different spheres as an active party, but it has adopted an opposition line, compared with Zamzam and Al Wasat. In recent years, it has included two main groups (besides the group that exited the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Action Front). The first is military retirees who have a high political ceiling of opposition and criticism, while the second is a group of activists, along with a group of disgruntled political figures. Some state officials believe that the party represents the organized partisan instrument of the Popular Movement for Change and the radical popular *Hirak*.<sup>115</sup>

Over the past years, tension between the Partnership and Salvation Party and the state has been keenly felt. This prompted the Ministry of Political Affairs and the Parties Committee to announce dissolving the party and suspending its activities in March 2021. However, the Amman Court of Appeal issued an irrevocable ruling, overturning the decision of the ministry and allowing the party to resume its activities.<sup>116</sup> According

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with government official at his office in Amman on 20/6/2022.

<sup>116</sup> Anwar Ziadat, Jordanian Court Rejects Government Request To Dissolve Partnership and Salvation Party, Al Arabi Al Jadid newspaper, 4/5/2021, on the following link: <https://cutt.us/g4hic>

to official sources, the main reason behind the extreme tension is that the party has turned into an organizational and action framework through which the movement is conducting its activities, besides official claims that the party has nontraditional activities in party life, as happened when it provided meals to unemployed persons near the Royal Court. This is in addition to the party's high ceiling of demands and strong political rhetoric. Consequently, the party was not invited to the meetings of the Royal Committee To Modernize the Political System.

In contrast, the Social Democratic Party represents a different model of ideological parties despite the fact that it was the brainchild of leadership figures who traditionally belonged to leftist parties. The party does have the ability to integrate other groups of youth who do not have previous party backgrounds. Despite the leftist shade of the party, it is closer to the "left-of-center" than to the traditional "ideological left." Its secretary general, Jamil Al Nimri, was appointed to the Senate. The party has tangible activities in the field of youth and women compared with the other parties.

The other parties that are characterized by a center shade vary in terms of the abovementioned indicators. We see that there are limited parties that have some serious scattered activities and attempts, including the United Front Party, New Approach Party, Justice and Reform Party, Future Party, National Union Party, Stronger Jordan Party, National Democratic Assembly Party (Tawad), Jordanian National Youth Party, Conservative Party, and Al Urdun Baytuna Party.

As for the United Front Party (established in 2007), it was known at the outset of its political activities for its opposition right leaning. Some people even dubbed it "Jordanian Bureaucracy Party." It was in a state of competition with the National Current Party (2009), which represented

a conservative political trend and had a large parliamentary base. At the time, this base represented the majority of the Lower House of Parliament when Abd Al Hadi Al Majali was secretary general of the party. However, the political momentum of both parties did not last for various reasons, and they faded on the political scene in recent years. The United Front Party owns the Jordanian House of Studies. Theoretically—based on official records—the party has the largest youth base (around 749 young males and females), according to the figures of the Ministry of Political Affairs, let alone the fact that the party has a youth sector and student committee at many public and private universities.

The New Approach Party (established in 2021) is still in its early beginnings. It is led by a young man, who is Dr. Fuzan Al Buqur. Despite not having clear grassroots, it is active among youth. It has shown engagement on social media, with noticeable presence.

The National Union Party is older (established in 2011). It was more active in its beginnings and had better economic resources because it was linked to its founder, Mohammad Al Khoshman, a well-known businessman who owns a satellite channel. The party witnessed rotation of power, but it did not develop its political rhetoric and its media capacities. Its social media pages show that there has been a decline in electronic activity, along with a decline in political activity.

The Al Resalah Party represents a liberal shade that is close to the authorities. The personality of the secretary general, Hazem Qashou, who has not been changed since the establishment of the party (in 2002), dominates the party's positions and attitudes. Meanwhile, Future Party (established in 2016) represents a relatively different model from



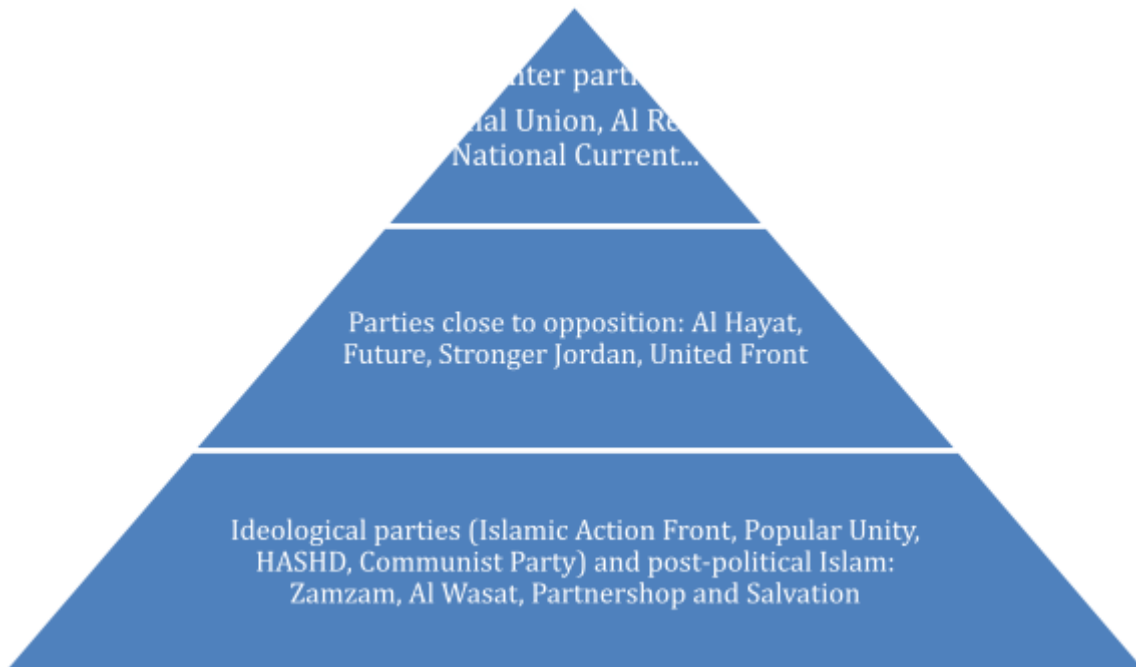
the other political parties of the center. The party has embraced a critical and opposition political discourse and issued statements recently.

On the other hand, the so-called "Coalition of Coordination Committee of Center Parties" was declared. It is currently led by Nadheer Arabiyat, secretary general of the Justice and Reform Party. It includes six political parties (Justice and Reform, Justice and Development, Du'aa, Jordanian Arab Party, Freedom and Equality, and Welfare Party). The Islamic Shura Party is one of the center parties and has multiple activities and is close to some local assemblies in the region.

There are other parties, such as the Jordanian National Youth Party, Tawad Party, Al Urdun Baytuna Party, Al Rayah Party, Conservative Party, and others. These have limited presence and numbered activities. They do not have clear grassroots and active youth cadres.

Although Future Party and Al Resalah Party are traditionally deemed within the circle of center parties, they lean more toward opposition in their political positions. This has been the case in recent years as the two parties became close to a group of political parties that embrace an opposition approach. They signed a political statement that criticized the outcomes of the Royal Committee, alongside the Partnership and Salvation Party, Stronger Jordan, Popular Movement for Change, United Front, and Democratic Progressive Current.

If we draw a map for political parties from left to right, depending on rhetoric, presence, and strength, we will have something that resembles the following figure:



## 2. Outcomes of Royal Committee and Current Party Action:

Before the announcement of the outcomes of the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System, many political parties were preparing for a new stage. Meanwhile, other political figures began to establish new political parties in response to the requirements of the new stage, given the fundamental changes that were introduced to the Parties Law and Election Law.

As far as Parties Law 2022 is concerned, there are many articles that push for party action, which will reshape the entire political scene within a year after publishing the law in the Official Gazette (May 2023), as per the provisions of the new law. The law stipulates that each party must at least have 1,000 members and that women should account for 20% and youth 20%. The secretary general must also not serve more than two electoral terms. Funding extended to the party will be linked to its

participation in the local and parliamentary elections and women and youth participation as part of candidate lists.

As for the Election Law, it stipulates that the closed proportional national party list, with 41 seats, shall be allocated for parties and party coalitions out of 138 seats. This is considered a significant shift in the composition of the Lower House of Parliament. The law also stipulates increasing the national list in the next elections (21<sup>st</sup> Lower House of Parliament) to 50% and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Lower House of Parliament to 65%. This means that the general political trend in the country in the next stage is to gradually establish strong parties that can form governments, create parliamentary opposition, and offer executive platforms that are fit for governance.

Along with these laws, which emerged from the Committee to Modernize the Political System, a unit was formed at the Royal Court to follow up on implementation. The Ministry of Political Affairs provided a program of action to shift the work of ministries and governments toward this direction. There is intensive work at the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education to introduce new curricula to strengthen student acceptance of democracy and parties and tear down the cultural and psychological barriers that stand between them and party action, which have remained untouchable "taboo" for many for a long period. Moreover, there are articles in the Election Law that clearly stipulate party action within universities. The Independent Election Commission held intensive workshops, with the participation of civil society organizations, for university students and deans of student affairs to urge

them to take part in party and political action and to remove the historical misgivings between them and political parties.<sup>117</sup>

Given such legislation, policies, and procedures, political parties began to reconsider their situations and examine their grassroots and bylaws. Political figures also began to engage in new party experiences that respond to the trend to have platform-based parties, which are capable of attracting broad grassroots that has steered clear of party action for many decades.

### **First – On the Level of Existing Political Parties:**

Obviously, there are significant differences in the capabilities and resources of the existing political parties. Upon holding brainstorming sessions with several secretaries general of political parties, it was evident that there were parties that were fully confident of their ability to rectify their conditions and carry on based on their organizations, slogans, and current key ideas. There are others that are trying to regularize, and they doubt that they will be able to do this. Definitely, there are parties that will face great difficulties to correct their conditions. The best option they have is apparently to merge with other parties. There are parties that might not be able to regularize or merge with others. According to the law, once the deadline for regularization expires, these parties will cease to exist, and their political licenses will be revoked.

#### **A. Strong Parties Capable of Regularizing (Ideological Parties):**

The Islamic Action Front Party has almost regularized and fulfilled the required conditions. The same goes for the National Coalition

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<sup>117</sup> Aman Al Sa'eh, Activating Party Action at Universities, Ad Dustur newspaper, 8/6/2022. Also see: Committee Formed To Prepare New Content To Be Added To National Education Taught at Universities, Al Mamlaka TV website, 5/7/2022, on the following link: <https://cutt.us/900eE>. Also see: Uways: New Curricula for Schoolchildren, Al Ghad daily newspaper, 27/6/2022.

Party (Zamzam and Al Wasat previously). The Popular Unity Party and HASHD appear to be close to achieving this. They will not find it difficult to regularize and carry on as they are. To a lesser degree, there is the Communist Party, which has a good youth base. There are doubts about the Socialist Baath Party, Progressive Baath Party, and Nationalist Movement. The Socialist Baath historically has a large cadre, and most probably will not find it difficult to rectify its conditions. The Social Democratic Party will not find great difficulties in rectifying its conditions. One of the new parties that finalized their paperwork based on the new law is the New Approach party, which managed to recruit hundreds of Jordanian youths over the past months.

- B. Parties Trying To Regularize, But There Are Doubts About This:** These include the Partnership and Salvation Party, which has clear potential to recruit new members, especially from the opposition. It will not face great difficulty to regularize. However, what is currently preventing this is the great tension with the state, which creates fears and prevents the recruitment of new members. It is possible for the party to use the network of its relations with the opposition and popular *Hirak*. This will be greatly opposed by a current within the party that is trying to push it toward political moderation. There are other parties, such as Stronger Jordan, Al Hayat, and Future, all of which are inclined toward political opposition and critical attitude. They maintain good relations with the Partnership and Salvation Party and Islamic Action Front. It is possible to see merger between the above parties (of course with the exception of the Islamic Action Front) if they find that they are incapable of regularizing by the deadline. Should they regularize in

time, it is also possible for them to establish alliances for the elections.

Other parties that are capable of regularizing, but might face difficulties, include the United Front, National Union, and Al Resalah. Apparently, they are capable of rectifying their conditions, and are currently working on this.

**C. Parties That Find Great Difficulties and Are Inclined Toward Merger:** The majority of the remaining political parties have great difficulties in regularizing. Encouraged by official policies, most of them will merge with other parties, whether old or new. Here, we are talking—as we saw during the workshop held by the Politics and Society Institute—about a trend on the part of the majority of center parties in this respect. These include Al Urdun Baytuna, Conservative Party, Al Rayah, Al Shura, Al Fursan, Nature, Reform Party, Reform and Justice, Justice and Freedom, Justice and Development, Jordanian Democratic National Assembly, Equality and Freedom, Equality, and many other parties that have one of two options: Either to merge within old or new parties or with each other or disappear from the political and party scene. It should be noted here that there is another important factor that dictates that these parties merge with strong parties that have grassroots; namely, the material factor. According to the new law, financial support is linked to the number of seats won at the Lower House of Parliament and the presence of youth and women leaders in these parties. This means total restructuring of the current party landscape.



## Second – On the Level of New Political Parties and Future Trends:

There are successive and ongoing attempts and efforts by many political figures, especially former and current ministers and deputies, to form new political parties. It is difficult to predict the result of these experiences, especially since they are still seeing internal action, recruitment, exclusion, and early splits. However, it is observed that there are parties that are developing within the space of the conservative current (Al Mithaq Party under construction), which has a large base of current and former deputies, former ministers, military retirees, and active youth.

Other experiences are still in the process of making and are attracting new youth. These include the Eradah Party (licensing recently approved), a group that was associated with the parliamentary bloc of Al Mubadarah, groups that were associated with the Civil Alliance Party,

which is practically over, and groups of youth who are trying to cultivate new party experiences, etc.

Without predicting how the experience will end up, it can be said that there are key features of the Jordanian party scene, which will become clearer during the regularization phase and preparations for parliamentary elections as follows:

- **Ideological Parties:** As we have said before, there are parties, such as the Islamic Action Front, Popular Unity Party, HASHD Party, and the Communist Party, which will most probably constitute the traditional opposition parties, with clear distinction in the ability of the Islamic Action Front Party to occupy the main seat of opposition and the competitor in parliamentary and local elections. Past elections have demonstrated the failure of other ideological parties to win any seats in the elections. Most probably, even if they get together, as happened in the previous elections, they will find it difficult to get past the threshold in the next parliamentary elections unless there is a change in the grassroots in the major cities and they participate in the parliamentary elections. The majority of the grassroots has so far declined to participate.

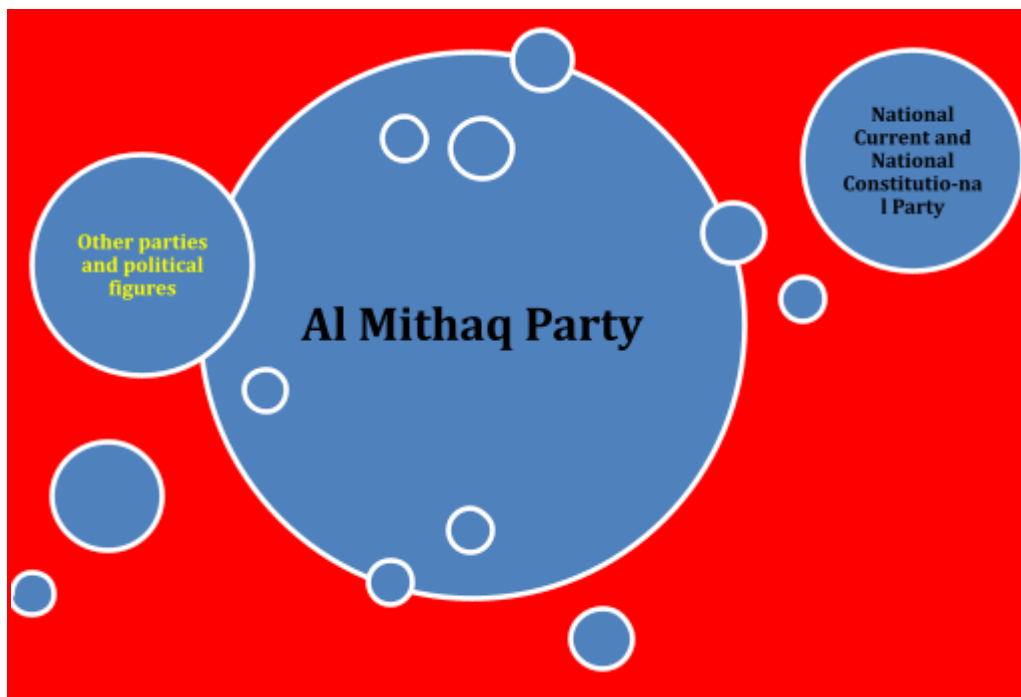
- **The National Coalition Party** (which represents so-called post-political Islam parties and has the ability to combine the religiously conservative aspect with the politically reformist aspect) is expected to compete with the Islamic Action Front in the local and parliamentary elections. If the party manages to overcome the challenges of the establishment phase and take larger space from governments and manages to present persuasive rhetoric, it will take a share from the "religiously conservative grassroots."

- If **Al Mithaq Party** manages to finalize its papers and overcome internal and surrounding challenges, develops rational and cohesive



conservative rhetoric, and includes some other politically conservative parties, such as the National Current Party, National Constitutional Party, and other political parties and forces and figures, then it is expected to have noticeable presence in the next elections.

### ***Conservative Current in Next Stage***



**D. Left-of-Center:** There is still distraction in this direction and negative repercussions of the experience of the Civil Alliance, which tried to attract moderate secular, liberal, and leftist elite groups. There are attempts to control this space by more than one political party and current. We have several possibilities and tracks in this respect:

First – For the forces and groups associated with this trend to unite in one or two parties, including the Social Democratic Party, which had—up until the outcomes of the Royal Committee were announced—represented the left-of-center space.

Second – For these attempts to fail and for the Social Democratic Party to continue to represent this line. There could be another party by it adopting the same rhetoric, but the relationship will remain separate between them.

Third – A party alliance might be established between the Social Democratic Party and other parties or the other new party that emerges from the current party efforts and activities.

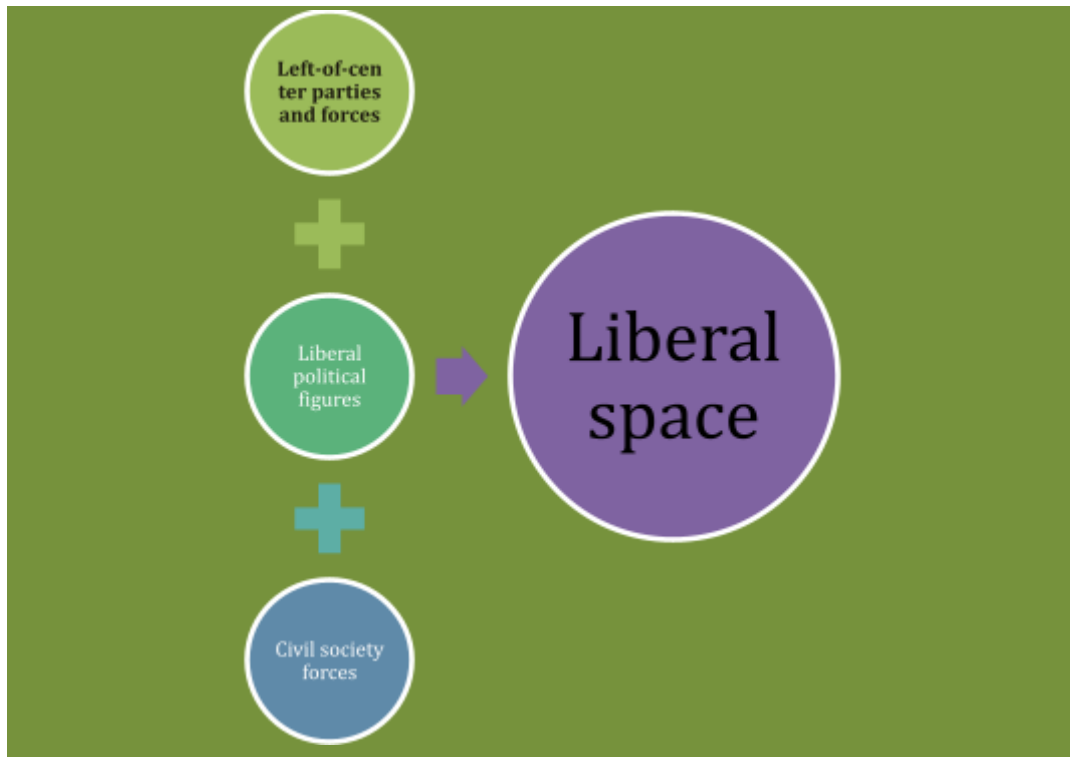
Fourth – For the efforts of groups of political figures to result in quitting political and party action altogether or engaging in individual action or joining the Social Democratic Party or any new party that stands by it.

However, the factors of political success require, necessarily, having unity or a strong alliance in the left-of-center space, developing political rhetoric, and increasing the grassroots that the party appeals to. Otherwise, the currents that exist in the left-of-center space will not be able to genuinely and effectively compete with the Islamic or conservative parties.

**E. "Liberal Vacuum" on Party Scene:** In the wake of the decline of the Civil Alliance Party, which had marked the beginnings of a liberal party with a discourse leaning toward the left in the economic program, no parties could fill this vacuum. Some small existing center parties do adopt a liberal political and economic discourse.

Obviously, the existing or new parties are inclined to identify themselves within the left-of-center space to be distinguishable from the new liberal line and approach economically moderate liberalism. Therefore, there is some overlap between this "liberal" space and the left-of-center space.

## Liberal Space in Party Action



### Third – Significant Opportunities and Challenges:

Despite the current action, which heralds structural changes in the entire party landscape, the new laws, such as the Political Parties Law and Election Law, and the new and amended official policies and regulations that seek to pave the way for party action in Jordan on a much larger scale, there are real challenges that stand in the way of developing the scene and the emergence of a number of strong parties that will compete between government and opposition spaces in the next decade, as outlined in the roadmap prepared by the Royal Committee to Modernize the Political System and explicitly approved by the Election Law,

**A. Challenge of Building Grassroots of Political Parties:** The question here is the following: How can voters be persuaded to shift from social allegiances and regional and service considerations to casting ballots based on a political or policy-platform criterion? How can the parties indeed get past the threshold in the next elections and compete with the Islamic Action Front and achieve presence not as an assembly of political or tribal figures, but as political parties that submit political platforms, have persuasive political rhetoric, and express the interests of different social classes and strata?

Through reviewing election turnout and the participation of political parties in the previous elections, we see that more than two thirds of the voters have declined participation in the elections. Most importantly, the vast majority of this segment is in the major cities, especially Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid. The tribal and social factor appears to be key in voting and selection in the other governorates. Thus, what is needed is to appeal to the passive two-thirds and the population of large cities and assemblies to participate. Also, voters in the governorates should be motivated to vote on a party basis, especially when it comes to the closed national list, which will reflect tangibly on the party scene.

**B. Challenge of Developing Party Discourse and Approaching Citizens and Grassroots:** There are still high walls between the citizens and party rhetoric and language in general, especially when we skip religious, nationalist, and symbolic issues and start discussing domestic policies, programs, and affairs. Despite the attempts of the parties to access grassroots through social media websites and popular meetings, they still do not have the rhetoric that can appeal to the hearts and minds and emotions of the street

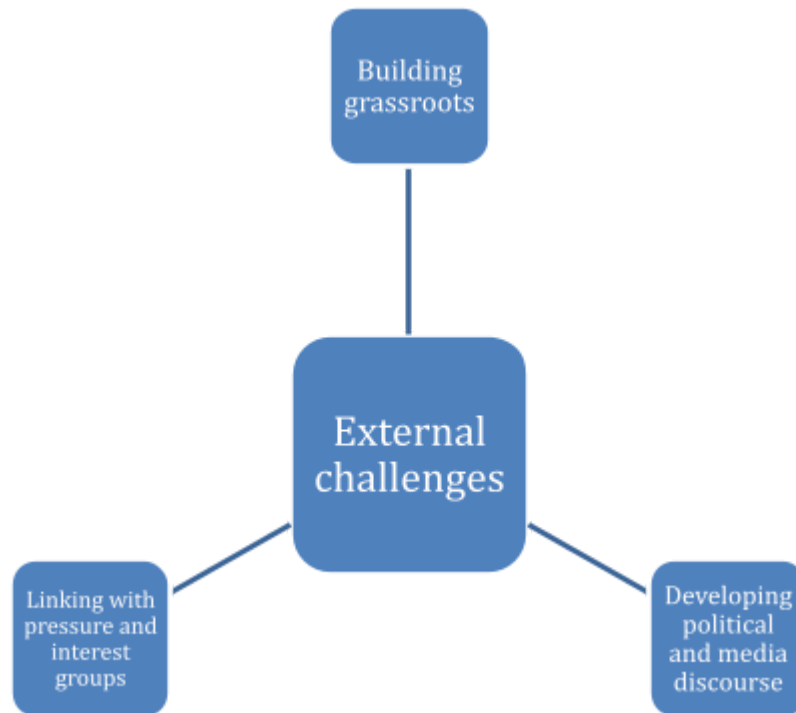
in general. This requires developing the capacities of the parties in the domain of mass media and communication, marketing, and public relations. They need to take advantage of the potentials made available by social media to have access to the majority of Jordanians by using advanced language, tools, and techniques rather than traditional means.

- C. Challenge of Internal Cohesion and Overcoming Splits and Personal Considerations:** The scenario of merger or establishment of new parties will face a great challenge. Some of the early signs of this challenge have started to surface; namely, individual and collective splits due to giving precedence to personal and individual dimensions over collective and party action. The stronger the common principles, values and ideas, the greater the motive for cohesion. The opposite holds true. Such a challenge will be felt more concretely with the approach of the next parliamentary elections, especially in the arrangement on national lists. A key part of the tasks of smart political minds in political parties will be to build lists and distribute candidates between national and local lists and make sure not to fall into the trap of internal splits and differences.
- D. Challenge of Funding:** It is a challenge that faces most political parties in light of the lack of party traditions that link party action to the role of parties in the political system and the work of parties and that of pressure and interest groups, such as banking associations, professional associations, businessmen, workers, and other strata that still do not link themselves to the agendas and platforms of political parties. This is only normal in light of the absence of any effective role to date for political parties in governance, and not even in real influence on legislation and

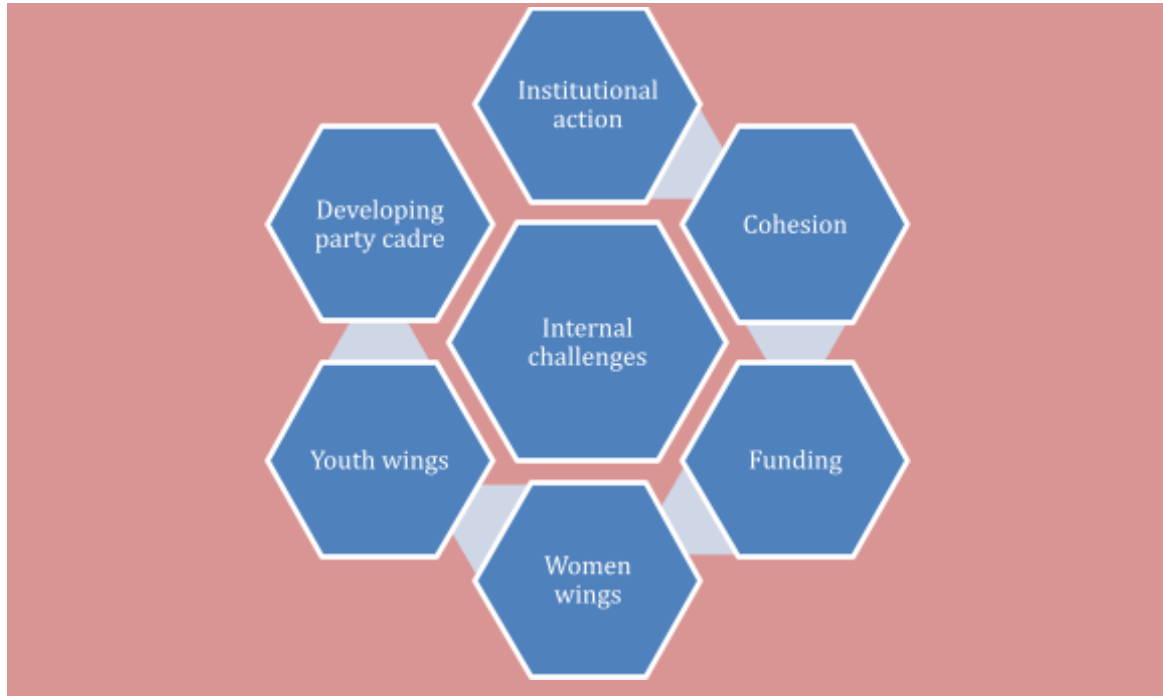
policies. Thus, this connection between political and economic interests is expected to appear in the next period. However, until this happens, political parties are required to build their capacities in the connection process and in convincing different social segments to represent their interests within the political system.

**E. Challenge of Internal Party Building:** The majority of political parties are still subject to primitive standards of organization and action or represent political personalities. To be able to persist and rise in the coming stage, they should shift toward real institutional action, build institutional structures and capacities, organize members, address the street, and become political establishments with high standards.

**1. Parties and External Challenge: Grassroots, mass communication, and the ability to attract stakeholders and pressure groups.**



**2. Parties and Internal Challenges: Shifting from individual mentality to collective mentality, institutional action, building party capacities, promoting youth and women's wings, propaganda action, and giving prominence to new leaders.**

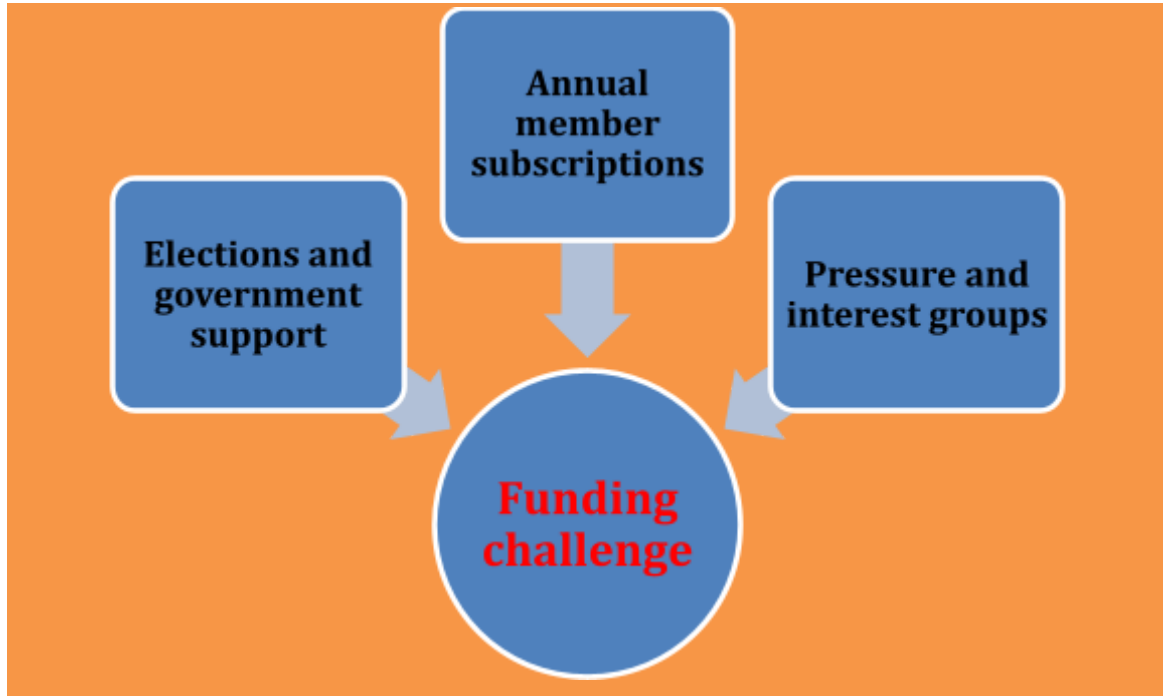


**3. Grassroots Challenge: Developing party and political discourse, activating the passive broad base, and mass communication in major cities.**



**4. Funding Challenge for Political Parties: Access to the Lower House of Parliament, receiving government support, annual subscriptions, access to stakeholders, and linking pressure groups and action of political parties.**





## Appendices

### 1-Appendix No. (1)

Table of official party information at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs

#	Party	Date of establishment	Number of party members	Amount of financial support between 2009 and 2021
1	Islamic Action Front Party	7/12/1992	1207	620.600

2	Jordanian Arab Socialist Baath Party		17/1/1993	769	565.000
3	Jordanian Communist Party		17/1/1993	723	565.000
4	Jordanian Democratic People's Party (HASHD)		17/1/1993	856	540.000
5	Jordanian Democratic Popular Unity Party (Al Wahdah)		9/2/1993	578	525.000
6	Progressive Arab Baath Party		13/4/1993	840	574.600
7	National Constitutional Party		7/5/1997	614	531.755
8	Nationalist Movement Party		10/7/1997	695	563.800
9	Islamic Al Wasat Party	1	19/12/200	1816	610.600
10	Al Resalah Party	2	31/12/200	1172	554.985
11	Jordanian National Party		14/3/2007	831	540.000
12	Jordanian United Front Party		30/9/2007	2631	595.000
13	Jordanian Al Hayat Party		19/2/2008	861	400.000
14	National Current Party		31/8/2009	1631	580.000
15	Justice and Development Party		6/9/2009	828	566.902
16	Freedom and Equality Party		6/11/2009	974	488.476
17	Jordanian National Union Party	1	12/10/201	1142	364.892
18	Jordanian National Youth Party	1	30/11/201	599	300.000
19	Justice and Reform Party		4/1/2012	1768	474.088
20	Reform Party		23/2/2012	852	341.676

21	Reform and Renewal Party (Hasad)	2	19/12/201	544	315.000
22	Jordanian Democratic National Assembly Party (Tawad)		24/6/2013	671	295.972
23	Al Fursan Party		4/8/2013	649	158.363
24	Jordanian Equality Party	3	10/10/201	641	251.008
25	Jordanian Al Shahamah Party	3	10/10/201	496	311.007
26	Stronger Jordan Party		6/11/2013	496	194.181
27	Social Justice Party		2/1/2014	625	154.514
28	Shura Party		5/5/2014	836	247.778
29	Al Balad Al Amin Party		9/6/2014	895	200.000
30	Jordanian Al Ansar Party		1/7/2014	603	226.715
31	Al Wafa Al Watani Party		18/1/2015	660	231.100
32	National Unity Party		23/5/2015	531	194.494
33	Jordanian Al Awn Al Watani Party		13/7/2015	520	151.068
34	Jordanian Social Democratic Party		8/2/2016	269	198.305
35	Jordanian Democratic Nature Party		8/2/2016	302	178.833
36	Jordanian Future Party		21/3/2016	585	105.000
37	Ahrar Al Urdun Party		21/3/2016	488	192.758
38	Jordanian National Trend Party		21/3/2016	566	189.444

39	National Renaissance Front Party	27/4/2016	508	168.977
40	Conservative Party	18/5/2016	151	6000
41	Jordanian Al Shu'lah Party	31/5/2016	496	134.191
42	Al Nida Party	13/7/2016	491	100.000
43	Al Rayah Al Urduniah Party	13/7/2016	490	138.359
44	National Conference Party (Zamzam)	11/8/2016	837	178.148
45	Modernity and Change Party	17/4/2017	771	85.274
46	Partnership and Salvation Party	27/12/201	304	Did not obtain financial support because of not meeting all legal conditions
47	Civil Alliance Party	26/12/201	307	Did not obtain financial support because of not meeting all legal conditions
48	Al Urdun Baytuna Party	1/5/2019	183	13.000
49	New Approach Party	15/12/202	159	New party
<b>Total</b>		<b>36461</b>		<b>14.921.863</b>

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