

The Jordanian Parliamentary Elections Of The Nineteenth House Of Representatives 2020 And The Low Level Of Popular Participation

Dr. Qasem Althubetat

Petra University- qalthubetat@uop.edu.jo

Abstract

This study explores the reasons behind the low level of popular participation in the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections of the Nineteenth House of Representatives in 2020. For that, the research has adopted the analytical description methodology, by adopting a questionnaire as a study tool. The questionnaire was distributed over a sample of (6626). And the results show that it appears clearly that the reasons for the weak popular participation in the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections of "the Nineteenth House of Representatives in 2020 are due to all the reasons that formed the independent study variables. The results of testing the study hypotheses showed that all the independent variables of the study have a positive impact on the weakness of popular participation in the elections.

Keywords: Legislative Authority, Parliament, Political Parties, Jordan.

1.1 Introduction

The legislative authority is one of the important institutions in building the ruling systems of governments, its role and importance has evolved over a long, cumulative period of time, starting with the Magna Carta Document, which was first issued in 1215, and which obligated the king to accept the limitation of his powers, and not to punish any free man except by law. The development of government systems continued until the principle of separation of powers became a political theory in all countries' constitutions based on the ideas and the theory of Montesquieu (Cameron, 2013).

Elections are the basic rule upon which the legislative authority is based on political systems, it takes different names such as the

Parliament, or the National Assembly, and the legislative authority may consist of two chambers, and there are those who adopt the one-chamber system (Carey, 2007).

The legislative authority is one of the most important sources of the crisis facing the Jordanian political system, as it constitutes one of its main components. The weakness or the weakening of the legislative authority led to its inability to carry out its constitutional functions of legislation, oversight, and accountability, and kept it from embodying the idea of parliamentary governments, and lost their ability to be an expression of the aspirations of the electorate and to represent the segments of society and the political parties (Lucas, 2012).

The reasons for the weakness were explained each time by the quality of the representatives

and the method of their selection by the electoral rules, and this has been promoted again and again, and the reality is that neither this nor the other is considered one of the real causes. The legislative authority has been weakened in three ways: firstly is through the constitutional amendments that have been made to the 1952 Constitution; related to the articles that are related to the authority, balance and separation of powers, as these amendments had weakened this authority and allowed the expansion of the executive authority (Lust-Okar, 2006).

And the second is depriving the legislative authority by the election laws, of relying on political and party pluralism and stable parliamentary blocs that can constitute a basic guarantee for political practices (Lust-Okar, 2009).

And the third: because of controlling the will of the voters and the conduct of the electoral process, and what this situation has resulted in producing many negatives, the most important of which is questioning the legitimacy of the elections, and the voter's delivery to the conviction of the futility of his will because the results are decided from the start (Aljarrah, Elrehail & Aababneh, 2016). Because the legislative authority is an important pillar of the political system in Jordan, and works within the powers defined in its constitution, the stage before it plays its role must be highlighted, which is the mechanism through which its members carry out their roles. The election process, in all its details, is the subject area of this study.

1.2 Importance of the study

This study acquires its great importance from the importance of the elections and the legislative authority in promoting a culture of democracy and the rotation of power in Jordan. Jordan is considered one of the first countries in the region that gave an

opportunity for popular participation and adopted the principle of separation of powers. The Jordanian constitution stipulates that the system of government is representative and hereditary, and the constitution dealt with the status of the three legislative, executive and judicial authorities, and its devoted articles to each one in them, and Jordan has legalized this starting with the Basic Law of 1928, when the first elections were held to select members of the Legislative Council. Passing through the 1947 Constitution, which assigned legislative authority to the National Assembly, which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The 1952 constitution was clearer and enshrined the principle of separation of powers and the responsibility of the government before the elected representatives (Torki Bani Salameh, 2017).

1.3 Problem Statement

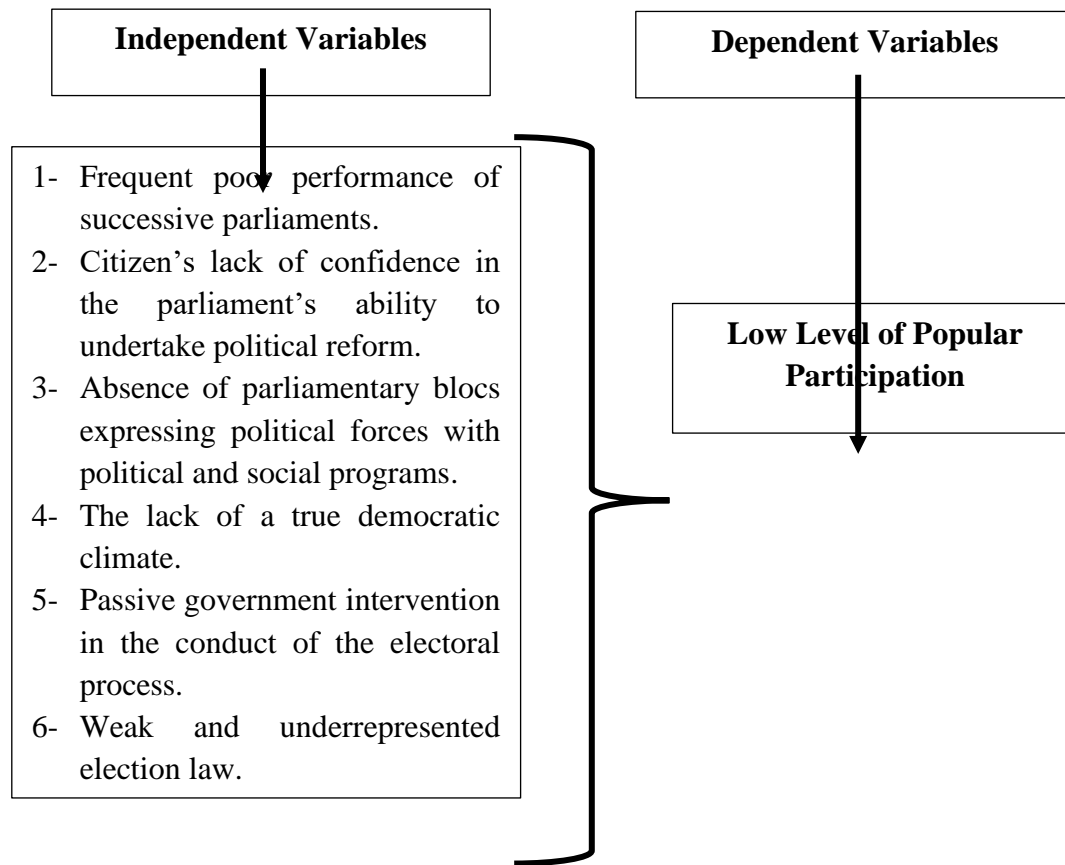
This study attempts to untangle the threads of entanglement in every electoral process, especially in the last elections for the nineteenth parliament for the year 2020, which regularly lead to weak political participation (Al Khawalda, 2020), and take a distant character that does not indicate clear democratic behavior, nor does it help to bring about real democratic reform, starting with formal procedures and ending with the voting and the emergence of the results. The political forces are absent from the scene, the disastrous failure of political parties and the low level of popular participation, as only 29% participated in the parliamentary elections, and the voter turnout reached 29.90%, of which 34.12% for males and 26.11% for females. Number of voters is 1,387,711, of whom 749,630 were males, and 638,081 females. While the total number of eligible voters registered in the voters' lists reached 4,647,835 voters, of whom

2,200,456 were males and 2,447,379 were females (Independent Election Commission, 2020).

The study also tries to find out the real reasons for this weak participation and whether that certain circumstances contributed to the decline in the percentage,

and whether these conditions were economic, social or political, noting that the largest political sectors represented by the Muslim Brotherhood (Rumman & Bondokji, 2020) and all parties in Jordan supported the electoral process and participated effectively in it.

1.4 Study model



1.5 Study Hypotheses

Main hypothesis H0: There are no significant influences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the Jordanian Parliamentary elections of the Nineteenth House of Representatives 2020 on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

1.5.1 Sub-hypotheses:

H01: There is no significant influence of the frequent poor performance of successive parliaments at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

H02: There is no significant influence of the citizen's lack of confidence in the parliament's ability to undertake political reform at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$)

on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

H03: There is no significant influence of the Absence of parliamentary blocs expressing political forces with political and social programs at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

H04: There is no significant influence of the lack of a true democratic climate at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

H05: There is no significant influence of the passive government intervention in the conduct of the electoral process at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

H06: There is no significant influence of the Weak and underrepresented election law at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

1.6 Data Collection Tool

Questionnaire was the data collection tool considered for the study. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaire, which was developed by the researcher by keeping the literature as the reference. The questionnaire was administered online.

1.6.1 3.10.1 Layout of the questionnaire

The questionnaire included two sections. The first section of the questionnaire included the questions relating to the demographic data. The next section included questions in order to collect the data related to the study variables of the study model.

1.6.2 Questionnaire Validity

To ensure the validity of the tool, the questionnaire is reviewed by a number of faculty members in the same field of the research. Therefore, for identifying the suitability of the questionnaire for the goals to be achieved, and by retrieving all suggestions, all the necessary adjustments on the paragraphs of the questionnaires were made, by deleting, adding some paragraphs, and by rephrasing others.

1.6.3 Questionnaire Reliability

To ensure the reliability of the study tool, the researcher used the internal consistency coefficient (α) according to the alpha Cronbach's equation, and the value of (α) 74.9%, which is high when compared with the minimum acceptable of 60%.

Table (1) Results of the alpha Cronbach's Reliability for the dependent and independent variables

Variable	Reliability Coefficient	Rate
Frequent poor performance of successive parliaments	81.4	good
Citizen's lack of confidence in the parliament's ability to undertake political reform	74.5	good
Absence of parliamentary blocs expressing political forces with political and social programs	76.9	good
The lack of a true democratic climate	72.7	good
Passive government intervention in the conduct of the electoral process	75.9	good

Weak and underrepresented election law	71.3	good
Total factors	74.9	good
Low Level of Popular Participation	72.2	good

The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability results for the total factors (Independent variables) is 74.9, and for the (dependent variable) is 72.2; these good numbers, and after excluding the fifteen sample from the sample size, the reliability reflects that the results are close to reality.

1.6.4 The study sample

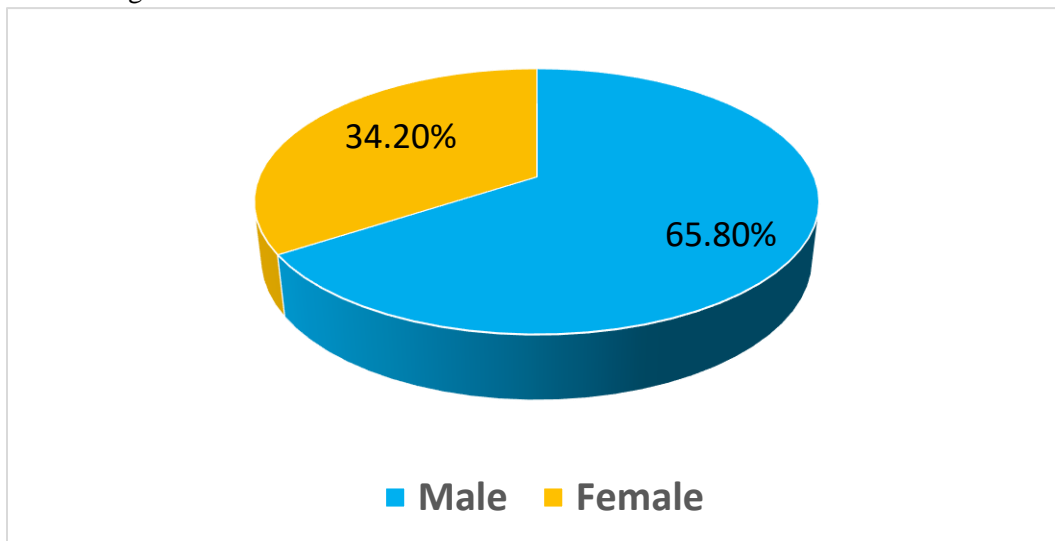
The size of the study sample reached (6626) individuals from the Jordanian people of all levels and geographical locations in the Jordanian governorates.

1.7 Results display

This section presents the results of the characteristics of the study population and the study sample by the demographic characteristics.

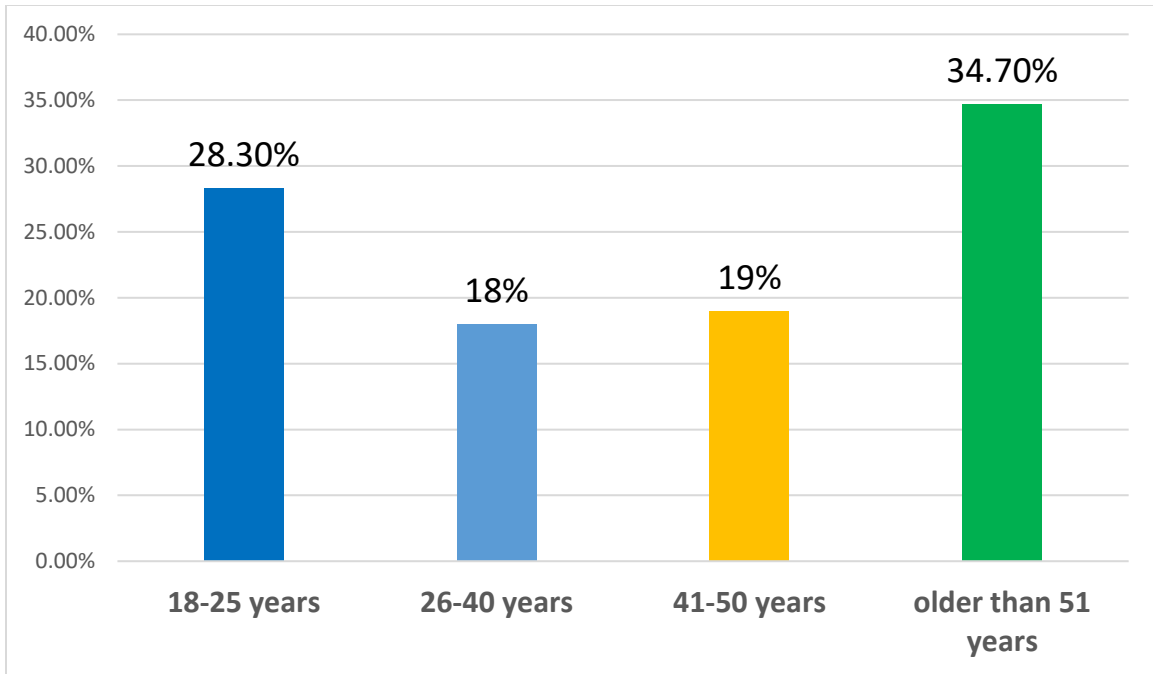
1.7.1 Respondents Demographic Characteristics

1.7.1.1 Gender

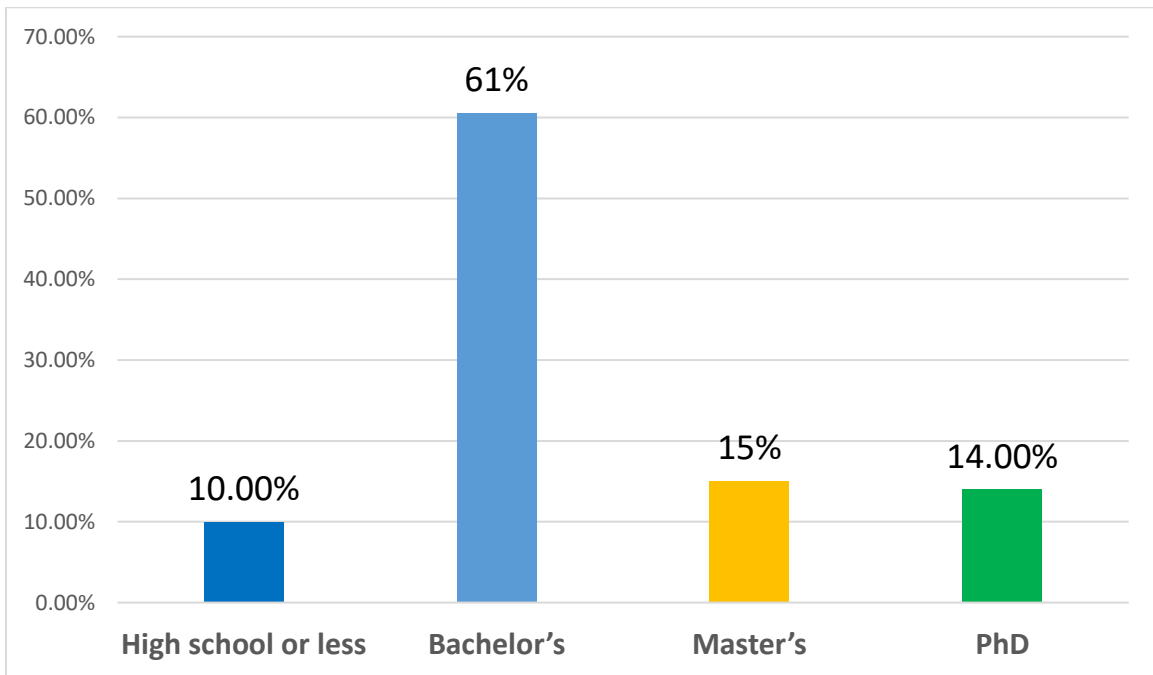


Data in the previous figure show that 65.8% of the study sample are males, and 34.2% are females.

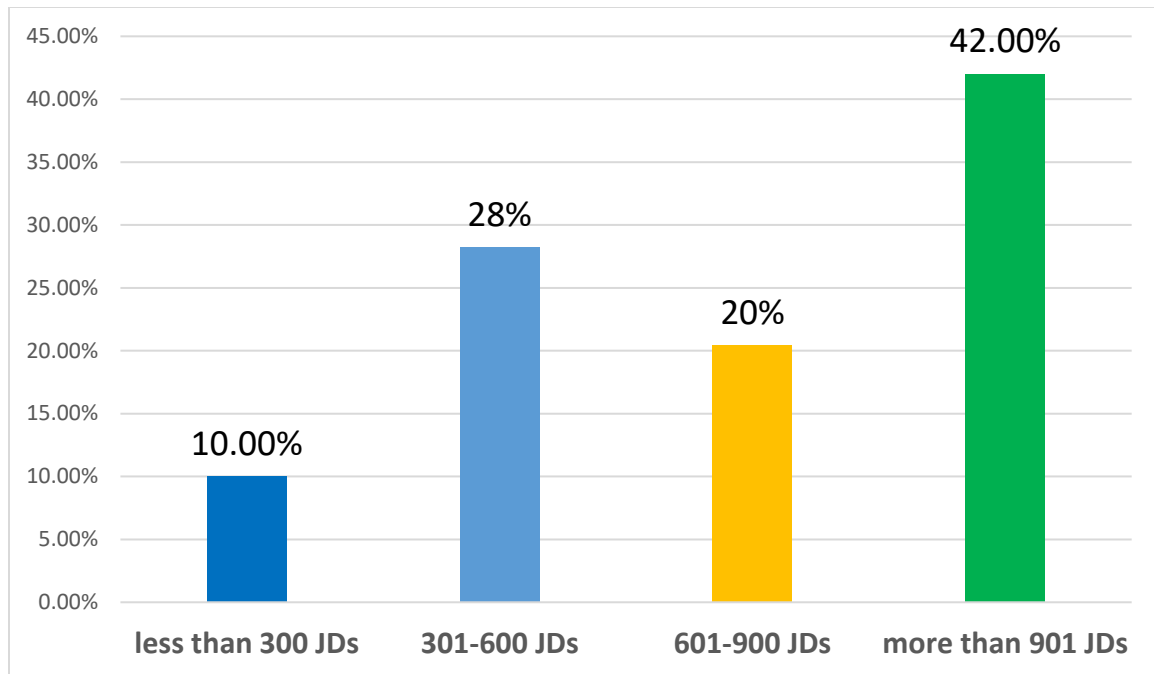
1.7.1.2 Age



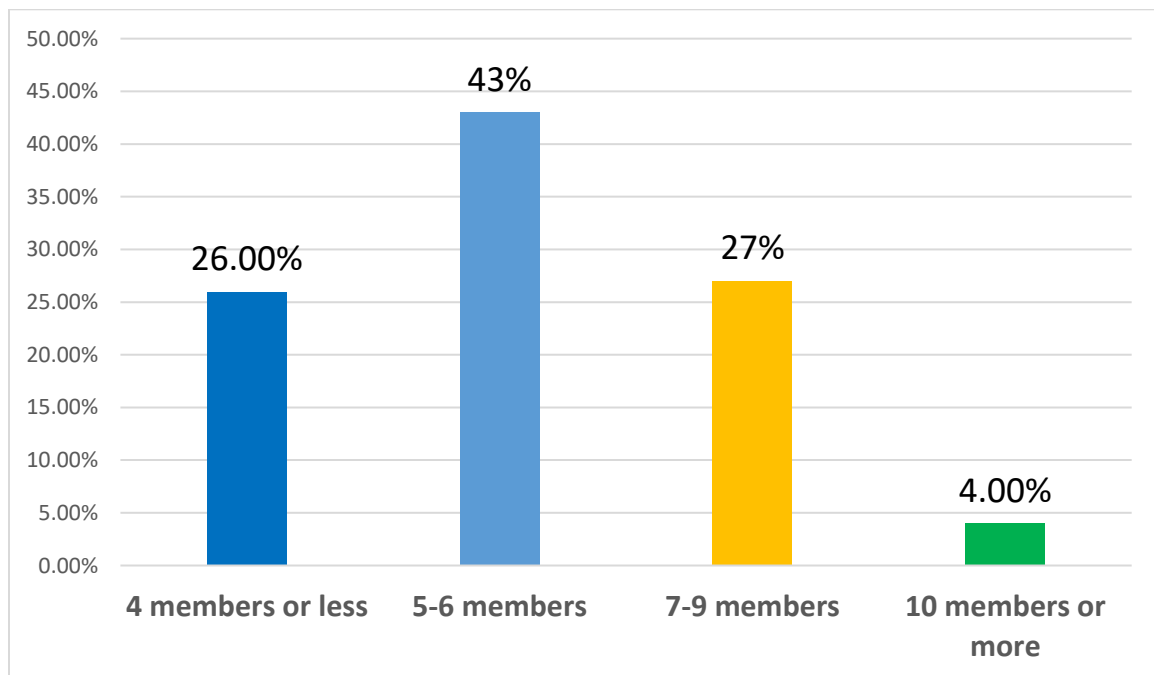
1.7.1.3 Educational level



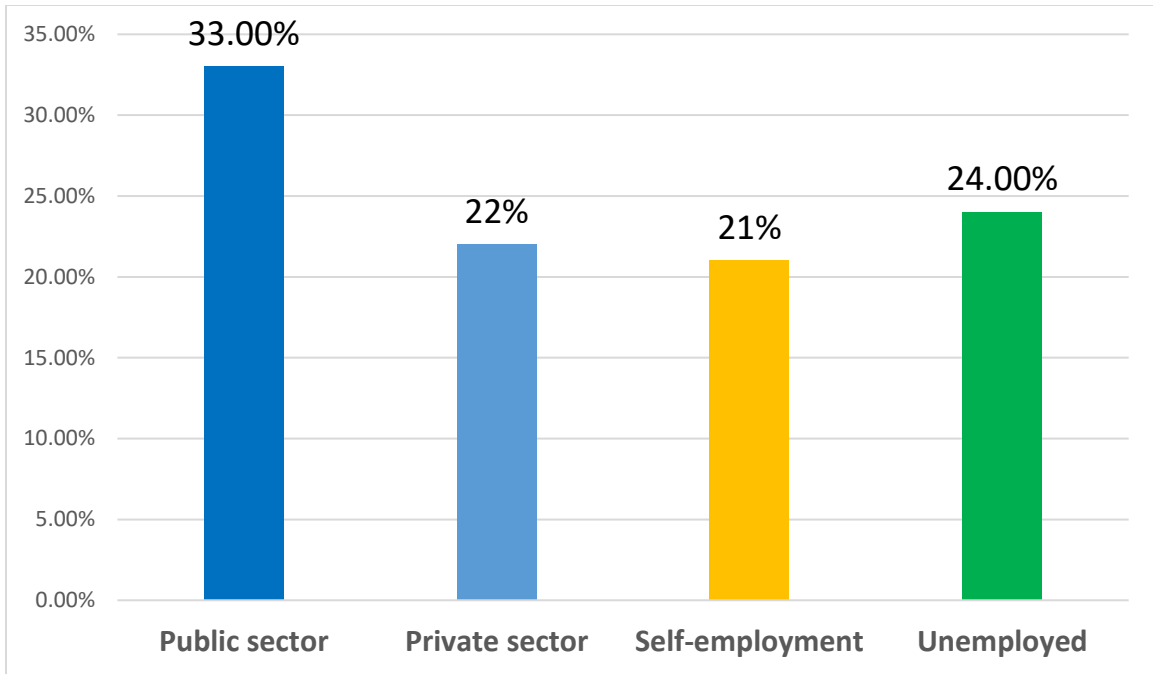
1.7.1.4 Family income



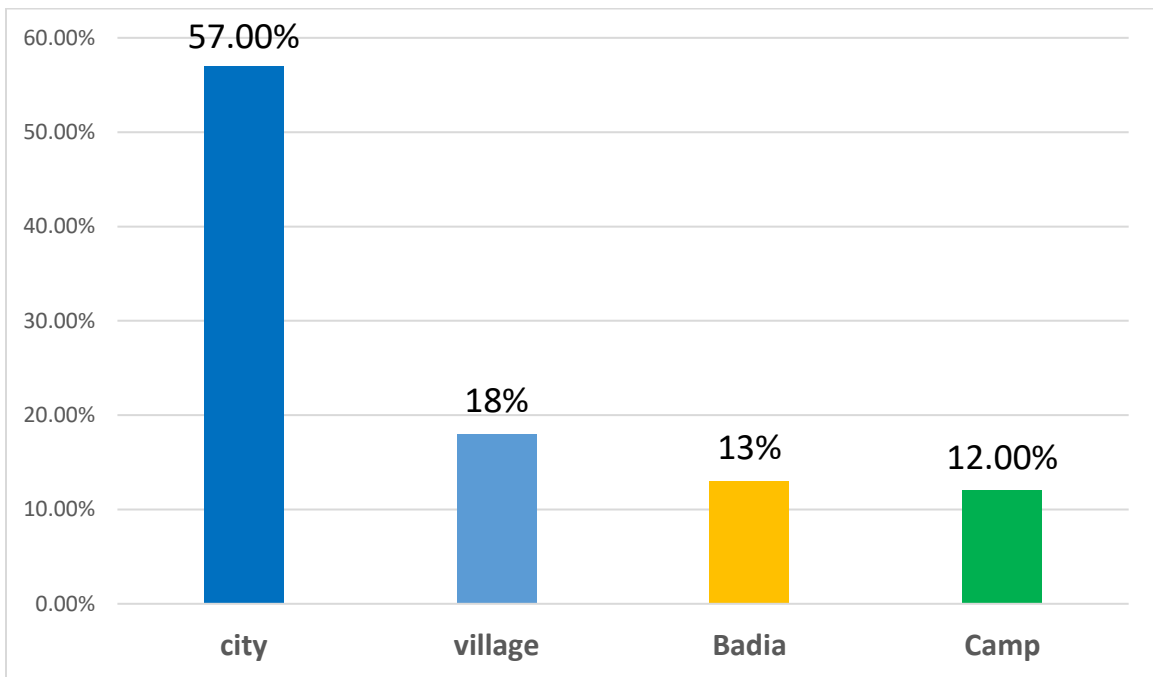
1.7.1.5 Family members



1.7.1.6 Job



1.7.1.7 Place of residence



1.8 Perception towards the study variables

Upon the measurement of the arithmetic means and the standard deviations, the rank and levels of the study sample responses

towards the study variables.

1.8.1 Trends toward the frequent poor performance of successive parliaments

Table (2): Rank and level of the sample responses and attitudes towards frequent poor performance

of successive parliaments

No	Paragraph	Rank	Level
1	I think that the 18th Parliament was not up to the challenges that Jordanian society faced in its various segments	1	High
2	I see that facing the economic, health, educational, agricultural and infrastructure issues needs a strong political presence through strong parliamentary blocs	2	High
3	I think that the Nineteenth Council is not different from the previous one, as it does not have the legislative and oversight capacity due to the lack of political experience in managing major files	3	High
4	I see that the use of political money to obey the will of the voters by some of the candidates has negatively affected the performance of the previous parliament	4	Medium
5	I think that the performance of the current parliament will constitute an opportunity to renew the political elite in the legislative aspect	5	Medium
6	I see that the separation of powers is not available in the relationship between the government and the parliament, and therefore the government will dominate the parliament	6	Medium

Data in table 2 show that the statement “I think that the 18th Parliament was not up to the challenges that Jordanian society faced in its various segment,” has the highest approval rate, followed by the statement “I see that facing the economic, health, educational, agricultural and infrastructure issues needs a strong political presence through strong parliamentary blocs,” and the statement “I

see that the separation of powers is not available in the relationship between the government and the parliament, and therefore the government will dominate the parliament” has the lowest approval rate.

1.8.2 Trends toward Citizen’s lack of confidence in the parliament’s ability to undertake political reform

Table (3): Rank and level of the sample responses and attitudes towards Citizen’s lack of confidence in the parliament’s ability to undertake political reform

No	Paragraph	Rank	Level
7	I would like to elect the representative candidate based on his service background, not the political background	5	Medium
8	I see that the services provided by the representative are the basis for judging his performance in the first place	3	High

9	I think that a percentage of parliamentarians make concessions to the government in order to achieve their personal interests	1	High
10	I see that the presence of businessmen in the House of Representatives is a valid reason for distrust that they will act in their public interest	6	Medium
11	The lack of popular confidence in the House of Representatives as a supervisory and legislative authority weakened the political participation of the public	2	High
12	I see that the personal behavior of the representatives under the dome has weakened confidence in the parliament	4	Medium

Data in table 3 show that the statement “I think that a percentage of parliamentarians make concessions to the government in order to achieve their personal interests” has the highest approval rate, followed by the statement “The lack of popular confidence in the House of Representatives as a supervisory and legislative authority weakened the political participation of the public”, and the statement “I see that the

presence of businessmen in the House of Representatives is a valid reason for distrust that they will act in their public interest” has the lowest approval rate.

1.8.3 Trends toward absence of parliamentary blocs expressing political forces with political and social programs

Table (4): Rank and level of the sample responses and attitudes towards absence of parliamentary blocs expressing political forces with political and social programs

No	Paragraph	Rank	Level
13	I think that the experience of previous parliamentary blocs was not up to the level of the political event, as their composition is not homogeneous	6	High
14	I think that the road to a multi-party parliament from which an elected parliamentary government emerges is still long.	2	High
15	I think that the formation of two or three powerful parties in the country would serve as major channels for political participation	1	High
16	I think that the greater role of the parties in political life would be better if there were channels for effective participation in the elections and a decline in the traditional role of the clan	4	High

17	I believe that a modern election law will develop political and party life and thus increase the political participation of the Jordanian public	3	Medium
18	I find that the concept of parliamentary government is based on the ability of parties to win the parliamentary elections	5	Medium

Data in table 4 show that the statement “I think that the formation of two or three powerful parties in the country would serve as major channels for political participation” has the highest approval rate, followed by the statement “I think that the road to a multi-party parliament from which an elected

parliamentary government emerges is still long,” and the statement “I think that the experience of previous parliamentary blocs was not up to the level of the political event, as their composition is not homogeneous” has the lowest approval rate.

1.8.4 Trends toward the lack of a true democratic climate

Table (5): Rank and level of the sample responses and attitudes towards the lack of a true democratic climate

No	Paragraph	Rank	Level
19	I am assured that the absence of a political party structure in the current parliament will lead to individual conflicts and disagreements with the government	4	Medium
20	I believe that the availability of the appropriate constitutional and legal environment is the basis for enhancing political participation	6	Medium
21	I believe that enhancing trust between the government and civil society institutions contributes to the individual's belief in the government's seriousness in reform and will enhance political participation.	2	High
22	I see that the absence of effective parties has led to an increase in the role of the clan, which has led to weak political participation	3	High
23	I find that participation in the management and conduct of public affairs through the parliamentary elections is one of the main milestones on the road to democratic transformation in Jordan.	5	Medium
24	I believe that the ability of countries to conduct free and fair elections with merit is related to their political system, and the extent	1	High

	to which it is consistent with the rules and standards of good governance will enhance political participation.		
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Data in table 5 show that the statement “I believe that the ability of countries to conduct free and fair elections with merit is related to their political system, and the extent to which it is consistent with the rules and standards of good governance will enhance political participation” has the highest approval rate, followed by the statement “I believe that enhancing trust between the government and civil society institutions contributes to the individual's belief in the government's

seriousness in reform and will enhance political participation”, and the statement “I believe that the availability of the appropriate constitutional and legal environment is the basis for enhancing political participation has the lowest approval rate.

1.8.5 Trends toward passive government intervention in the conduct of the electoral process

Table (6): Rank and level of the sample responses and attitudes towards the passive government intervention in the conduct of the electoral process

No	Paragraph	Rank	Level
25	I see that government interference in the electoral process reduces its credibility	6	Medium
26	I see that government intervention comes in the form of supporting one candidate against another, and thus achieving victory for people who do not have popular bases	1	High
27	I imagine that government intervention in the elections is the right way to overcome the crisis of representative work	2	High
28	I see government intervention in order to prevent people from gaining access to parliament as a valid reason to weaken political participation	3	High
29	I see that the measures taken by the government in the face of political money are weak and help reduce the rate of political participation	5	Medium
30	I think that the delay in drawing up a modern electoral law will stand political participation	4	Medium

Data in table 6 show that the statement “I see that government intervention comes in the form of supporting one candidate against

another, and thus achieving victory for people who do not have popular bases” has the highest approval rate, followed by the

statement “I imagine that government intervention in the elections is the right way to overcome the crisis of representative work,” and the statement “I see that government interference in the electoral

process reduces its credibility” has the lowest approval rate.

1.8.6 Trends toward the weak and underrepresented election law

Table (7): Rank and level of the sample responses and attitudes towards the weak and underrepresented election law

No	Paragraph	Rank	Level
31	I believe that the weakness of party participation in the past three decades is not related to the nature of the electoral system, but rather to the weakness of party life	2	High
32	I think that the current election law is incapable of controlling political money in the electoral process	3	High
33	I think that the current election law does not help political parties achieve a parliamentary majority	5	Medium
34	I believe that developing parliamentary work requires adopting the closed proportional list in the election law to enhance party participation	1	High
35	I think that the political and party elites are not serious about pressuring the government to introduce a modern election law	4	Medium
36	I think that the government does not want a modern law that could make it lose control on parliament	6	Medium

Data in table 7 show that the statement “I believe that developing parliamentary work requires adopting the closed proportional list in the election law to enhance party participation” has the highest approval rate, followed by the statement “I believe that the weakness of party participation in the past three decades is not related to the nature of the electoral system, but rather to the weakness of party life,” and the statement “I think that the government does not want a modern law that could make it lose control on parliament” has the lowest approval rate.

1.9 Testing the study hypothesis

1.9.1 Testing the main hypothesis H0:

There are no significant influences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the Jordanian Parliamentary elections of the Nineteenth House of Representatives 2020 on the low level of popular participation in Jordan. For testing the study hypothesis, the sub-hypotheses must be tested as follows:

For the approval or rejection of the main hypotheses the one-way ANOVA test was conducted, and the results are illustrated in table 8 show that as the significant results are less than 0.05; all the sub-hypotheses will be

rejected and the alternative hypotheses will be accepted.

Table (8): One-way ANOVA for testing the study hypotheses

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
H01	Between Groups	9230.694	21	439.557	218.053	0.000
	Within Groups	780.123	387	2.016		
	Total	10010.817	408			
H02	Between Groups	4903.518	21	233.501	16.326	0.000
	Within Groups	5534.951	387	14.302		
	Total	10438.469	408			
H03	Between Groups	7975.622	21	379.792	139.313	0.000
	Within Groups	1055.029	387	2.726		
	Total	9030.650	408			
H04	Between Groups	6900.372	21	328.589	127.116	0.000
	Within Groups	1000.376	387	2.585		
	Total	7900.748	408			
H05	Between Groups	7168.429	21	341.354	98.409	0.000
	Within Groups	1342.403	387	3.469		
	Total	8510.831	408			
H06	Between Groups	5796.197	21	276.009	73.880	0.000
	Within Groups	1445.794	387	3.736		
	Total	7241.990	408			

Therefore, the results for testing the sub-hypothesis will be as follows:

SUB- HYPOTHESES		SUPPORTED	
		Direction AT $p \leq 0.05$	OUT come
H01	There is no significant influence of the frequent poor performance of successive parliaments at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.	Positive $P \leq 0.05$	Rejected
H02	There is no significant influence of the citizen's lack of confidence in the parliament's ability to undertake political reform at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.	Positive $P \leq 0.05$	Rejected
H03	There is no significant influence of the Absence of parliamentary blocs expressing political forces with political and social programs at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.	Positive $P \leq 0.05$	Rejected
H04	There is no significant influence of the lack of a true democratic climate at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.	Positive $P \leq 0.05$	Rejected
H05	There is no significant influence of the passive government intervention in the conduct of the electoral process at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.	Positive $P \leq 0.05$	Rejected
H06	There is no significant influence of the Weak and underrepresented election law at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.	Positive $P \leq 0.05$	Rejected

Therefore, the main hypothesis (**H0**: There are no significant influences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the Jordanian Parliamentary elections of the Nineteenth House of Representatives 2020 on the low level of popular participation in Jordan) will be rejected and the alternative hypothesis will be accepted as follows: There are significant influences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the Jordanian Parliamentary elections of the Nineteenth House of

Representatives 2020 on the low level of popular participation in Jordan.

1.10 Conclusions

In light of the study results, it appears clearly that the reasons for the weak popular participation in the Jordanian Parliamentary Elections of "the Nineteenth House of Representatives in 2020 are due to all the reasons that formed the independent study variables. The results of testing the study hypotheses showed that all the independent

variables of the study have a positive impact on the weakness of popular participation in the elections.

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