

Jordan's 2007 Legislative Elections in the Arab Press

November 2007



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Executive Summary

Fourteen regional press outlets were monitored from the 14th till the 22nd of November 2007. The legislative elections took place on the 20th of the same month. 53 out of the 127 articles collected had for main subject the legislative elections (41.7%). The remaining articles covered other Jordanian issues: economy, sports, diplomacy, etc.

Due to the heavy coverage of the opposition's prolific accusations of fraud and the counter responses from the Jordanian government, **Fraud in the elections was the most covered elections-related theme**, with a ratio of 17.6%.

16% of the positions taken by the monitored sources were critical and insistent that the elections were in fact spoiled by a large scale fraud phenomenon.

Regarding the electoral results, the victory of pro-government candidates (8.5% of the total) was slightly higher, in terms of coverage, than the defeat of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) (6.7%). The IAF's results were pictured in the Arab press as an important setback in their influence and authority in Jordan. In fact, only 6 of their 22 candidates won the elections, compared to the 17 parliamentary seats won in the previous Parliament (2003). However, on November 22nd, Al Riyadh newspaper (Saudi Arabia) somehow pictured the IAF results as a "*victory*". The terminology used differed from the other articles.

The gender issue was also a key theme (16.5% of the total coverage) in the Arab press coverage. Most of the articles insisted on the Jordanian women's political empowerment. This situation reflected the importance of **the women's visibility in the Arab press coverage** during the elections compared to the usual coverage of the Jordanian women in the press. Female leaders generated 17.2% of the leaders' coverage in the legislative elections, versus a standard 2% for all the other themes. This shows that the elections were a factor of visibility for women in Jordan.

Nevertheless, this visibility was criticized by some leaders. Some observers perceived the quota system as an obstacle to women's empowerment. The critical statements were reported by Al Ayam (Palestine) Al Sharq Al Awssat (Pan Arab) and Al Khaleej (UAE) newspapers.

On another level, **the most covered public figure was the former Minister of Interior, Eid Al Fayez**, with 12.3% of the total public figures' coverage. King Abdullah II ranks closely behind with a ratio of 11.7%¹. With reference to the positions taken from the different sources on Jordanian leaders, King Abdullah and Falak Al Jamaani were each criticized once², whereas positive positions were taken towards Abdel Hadi Al Majali and Tujan Fayssal, with also one occurrence each³.

No judgments were passed on the new Government subject. All the leaders' and the sources' positions were neutral. In fact, the attention of the media and the Jordanian leaders were focused on more polemic matters such as the election's transparency and the gender issue.

Finally, within the 14 regional press outlets of our sample, 6 newspapers had a strong *coverage diversity*⁴. They covered more than 50% of the 16 elections related themes we previously identified. Al Sharq Al Awssat (Pan Arab), Al Khaleej (UAE) and Akhbar Al Khaleej (UAE) made it to the top three.

Three newspapers generated more than 80% of all the critical stances towards the elections: Al Khaleej (41.2%), Al Quds Al Arabi (29.4%) and Al Ayam (11.8%).

¹ These numbers only concerns the legislative elections. If we include the King's coverage in all the other articles related to Jordan he would largely be in the first position.

² The King was criticized by Tujan Fayssal in her article in Al Raya and Falak Al Jamaani was criticized by Al Khaleej newspaper

³ Respectively by Akhbar Al Khaleej and Al Khaleej newspapers

⁴ *Reach* is the extensiveness in which the themes are covered by the newspapers, regardless of the number of articles

Methodology

Sample

Our study was conducted based on a sample of 14 regional press outlets from the 14th till the 22nd of November, covering one week prior and two days following the Jordanian legislative elections. Our selected press is representative of the different opinions and countries in the Arab world (Table1).

Source	Country	Total number of articles concerning Jordan	Ratio
Al Khaleej	UAE	20	15.7%
Al Rai	Kuwait	12	9.4%
Akhbar Al Khaleej	Bahrain	11	8.7%
Al Jazeera	Saudi Arabia	11	8.7%
Al Safir	Lebanon	11	8.7%
Al Seyassa	Kuwait	11	8.7%
Al Sharq Al Awssat	Pan Arab	11	8.7%
Al Quds Al Arabi	Palestine	9	7.1%
Al Watan	Qatar	9	7.1%
Al Raya	Qatar	7	5.5%
Al Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	6	4.7%
Al Ayam	Palestine	4	3.1%
Al Ayam	Bahrain	3	2.4%
Al Gomhouriah	Egypt	2	1.6%
		127	

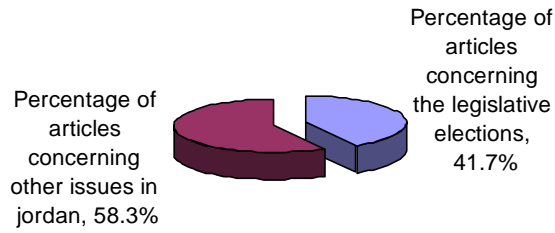
Analysis

Overall share of Jordan in the Arab press

127 articles concerned Jordan, out of which 41.7% had for main subject the legislative elections. Out of all the monitored sources, Al Khaleej (UAE) was the top newspaper in covering Jordan with 20 articles relating to Jordanian issues; 50% of those articles concerned the legislative elections.

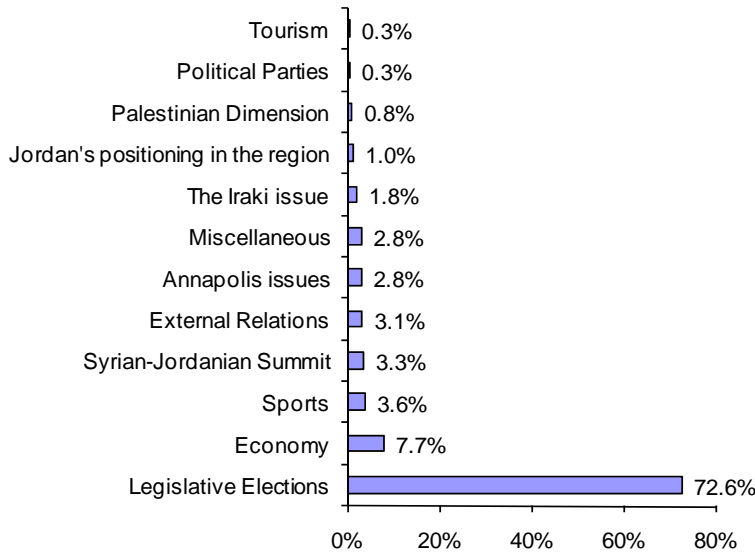
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Al Sharq Al Awssat	Pan Arab	11	8.7%
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Al Watan	Qatar	9	7.1%
Al Raya	Qatar	7	5.5%
Al Riyadh	Saudi Arabia	6	4.7%
Al Ayam	Palestine	4	3.1%
Al Ayam	Bahrain	3	2.4%
Al Gomhouriah	Egypt	2	1.6%
		127	

Table1



Graphic1

The share of the legislative elections theme in the Arab press coverage was 72.6%, regardless of the number of articles with reference to the legislative elections⁵. It was by far the most important subject concerning Jordan. Note that the top two themes (the legislative elections along with the Jordanian economy) consist in 80.3% of all the subjects related to Jordan.



Graphic2

⁵ in this case, the same article could include 5 legislative elections occurrences or 2 economy occurrence

It is relevant to note that the sports issue was slightly more important than the Syrian-Jordanian Summit in terms of coverage. Jordan's results in basketball, handball and taekwondo tournaments were the main sports events related.

Concerning the meeting between King Abdullah and President Bashar al Assad held in Damascus on November 18th, the Arab press focused mainly on the issues discussed between both leaders (the bilateral relations, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Lebanese crisis) and on the repercussions of the summit.

Al Safir (Lebanon) newspaper insisted on the meanings of the Syrian-Jordanian “*get-together*”. It was perceived as a warm-up of the recently *weakening* relations between both parties.

Globally, Jordan's foreign policy (including the Jordanian-Syrian Summit, Jordan's positioning in the region, Annapolis issues and external relations themes) was covered at a ratio of 10.2%, slightly higher than the economical issues (7.7%).

Electoral issues covered

	Legislative elections themes	Ratio	
62%	1	Fraud in elections	17.6%
	2	Women in elections	16.5%
	3	The new Government	10.9%
	4	Participation	8.5%
	5	Election's results: victory of the establishment	8.5%
	6	Islamic Action Front in elections	7.4%
	7	Election's results: defeat of the Islamic Action Front	6.7%
	8	Security and elections	6.0%
	9	Miscellaneous	4.9%
	10	Electoral Slogans	3.9%
	11	Candidate's expenses	2.5%
	12	Palestinian dimension in elections	1.8%
	13	Political Parties	1.4%
	14	Election's results: others	1.4%
	15	Elections monitoring	1.1%
	16	Al-Tahrir Party in elections	1.1%

Table2

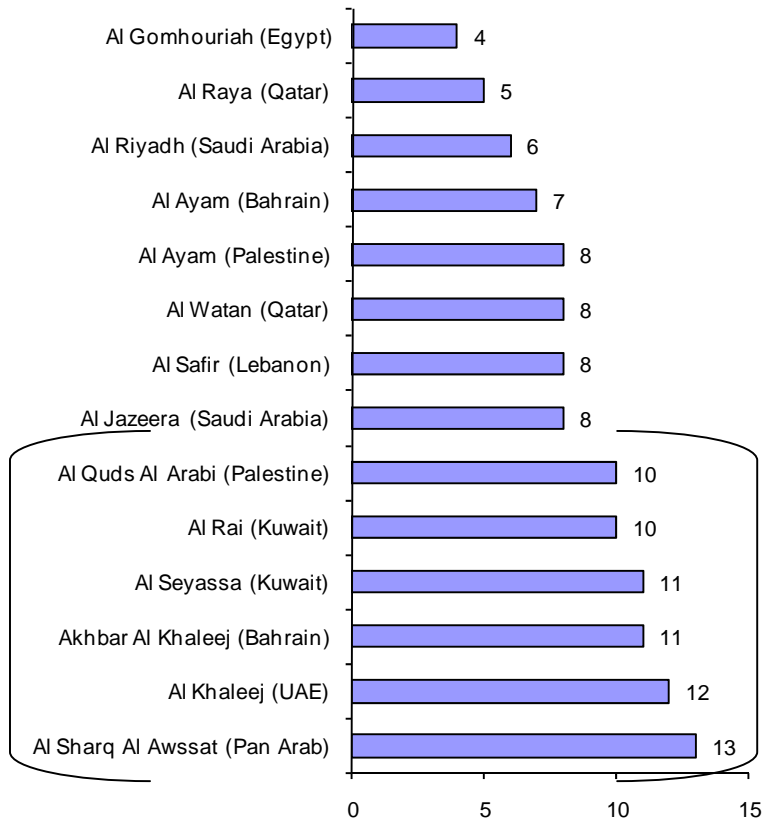
We identified 16 election-related themes distributed as shown in the previous table. *Fraud in the elections* was the most covered theme (17.6%), closely followed by *Women in the elections* (16.5%). Note that the coverage was concentrated with more than 60% of the total grouped with 5 themes.

The *electoral coverage diversity* shows that, of the 14 regional press outlets analyzed, only 6 had a strong *coverage diversity*⁶; covering at least 8 of the 16 elections related themes identified.

Al Sharq al Awssat (Pan Arab) had the most diverse coverage with 13 themes. On the other hand, Al Goumouriah newspaper (Egypt) only covered 4 topics.

⁶ The extent in which the themes are covered. Its measured by the number of themes covered in a newspaper.

Electoral coverage diversity



Graphic3

"Fraud in the elections", a negative impact on the image of Jordan

As expected, *fraud in the elections* was the most covered election-related theme, with a ratio of 17.6%. In fact, "vote buying" and electoral manipulation have been recurrent topics in Jordan during electoral periods ever since the boycott of the Parliamentary elections in 1997 by the Islamic Action Front (IAF).

As a consequence, this ratio was mainly due to the coverage of accusations of fraud by the opposition and the local media on one hand and the counter responses of the Jordanian government on the other hand. In fact, the Opposition's accusations of fraud and the Government's replies on the issue were heavily covered in the Arab press. The four extracts below are an example of both positions.

Al Riyadh, November 22nd

"وقال جميل ابو بكر الناطق الرسمي باسم الحركة الاسلامية لوكالة فرانس برس "ما صاحب عملية الانتخابات من تزوير في دوائر عديدة اثر على النتائج."
واضاف "جرى تزوير واضح في دوائر عديدة لم تكن نتوقع ان ينجح كل مرشحينا لكننا كنا نتوقع ان يفوز 16 إلى 18 مرشحا منهم على الاقل وذلك بناء على دراسات وتقديرات موضوعية ووضح ابو بكر ان "نتائج الزرقاء (التي تضم قاعدة شعبية للاسلاميين) تشير بشكل كبير وواضح إلى وجود عمليات تزوير"

Akhbar Al Khaleej, November 20th

وعكرت اجواء الانتخابات اتهامات بالتزوير وجهها الاسلاميون ووسائل الاعلام التي تحدثت عن حالات شراء اصوات، متهمين الحكومة بعدم التدخل. ونشرت احدى الصحف صورة تظهر احد الناخبين وهو يتلقى المال من مسؤول حملة احد المرشحين مقابل ورقته الانتخابية

Akhbar Al Khaleej, November 21st

"وقال وزير الداخلية عيد الفايز في مؤتمر صحفي ان «موضوع شراء الاصوات قد تم تكبيره اكثر من اللازم". واضاف ان "الشعب الاردني الطيب لا يقبل ان يشتري احد صوته كما اني لا اعتقد ان هناك مرشحا يقبل ان يشتري اصوات الناس، ربما هناك حالات فردية""

Al Safir, November 22nd

من جهته، نفى وزير الداخلية عيد الفايز بشدة مزاعم المعارضة بتلاعب المرشحين الموالين بالانتخابات، مؤكداً أن لا أساس لها من الصحة.

This high coverage and the sensitivity of the subject, made the *Fraud in the Elections* theme the most criticized theme by political leaders; 17 critical occurrences, mainly from the IAF members, considered that the elections were the subject of a massive fraud movement. 12 positive occurrences were transcribed from various Governmental leaders (elections were clean and fraud free).

Positions taken by leaders on themes

Elections Themes	Critical occurrences	Neutral occurrences	Positive occurrences	Total
Fraud in elections	17	11	12	40
The new Government	-	31	-	31
Women in elections	4	26	-	30
Election's results: victory of the pro-government candidates	1	13	-	14
Islamic Action Front in elections	4	7	-	11
Participation	-	8	2	10
Election's results: defeat of the Islamic Action Front	-	8	-	8
Miscellaneous	-	7	1	8
Palestinian dimension in elections	-	1	3	4
Security and elections	-	2	1	3
Elections monitoring	-	3	-	3
Electoral Slogans	-	1	-	1
Candidate's expenses	-	1	-	1
Political Parties	1	-	-	1
Election's results: others	-	1	-	1
Total	27	120	19	166

Table3

On the other hand, the IAF was only criticized 4 times (critics reported in Akhbar Al Khaleej and Al Jazeera newspapers), whereas their leaders generated 3 positive occurrences on the Palestinian dimension in the elections. Those positions were taken during electoral rallies in some of Amman's Palestinian camps and covered in Al Safir (Lebanon) and Al Ayam (Palestine) newspapers.

As for the **opinions expressed by the sources themselves** on the fraud phenomena, 16% supported the idea that the elections were obviously the subject of a massive fraud movement.

This extract of Ghassan Bdarin's article in Al Quds Al Arabi (Palestine) is an example of the press's critical tone towards this topic.

<u>Al Quds Al Arabi, November 22nd</u>

"ومع تصاعد وتيرة التوجه للصناديق في فترات ما بعد الظهر تصاعدت حدة المنافسة علي شراء الأصوات بين متنافسين أعلنوا بوضوح عن انفسهم عبر المال ويعلم الجميع انهم لا يملكون أي مؤهلات انتخابية خارج السياق المالي. وأفاد شهود عيان لـ القدس العربي بأن ظاهرة شراء الأصوات تصاعدت في فترة ما بعد الظهر علي نحو واضح فيما كانت أسعار الصوت الواحد ترتفع مع قرب اغلاق صناديق الاقتراع وتحديدًا في دوائر العاصمة عمان. وفيما شدد الوزير الفايز علي ان جرائم بيع الأصوات وشرائها مبالغ فيها ولا بد ان تخضع للتدقيق بعد شكوي محددة وتحال للتحقيق القضائي معتبرا انه من الصعب اثبات الكثير من وقائع البيع هنا.. فيما حصل ذلك كشفت مؤسسات مدنية مبكرا عن عمليات بيع وشراء للأصوات كانت تجري علنا أمام مقار المدارس التي ضمت مواقع التصويت"

The table below shows the distribution of the different positions taken by the monitored sources on election-related themes.

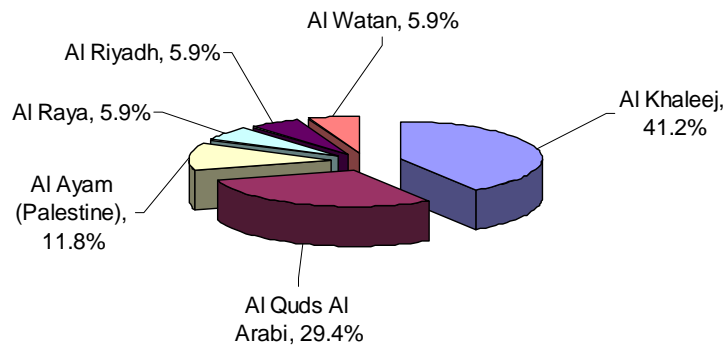
Positions taken by sources on themes

Elections Themes	Critical occurrences	Neutral occurrences	Positive occurrences	Total
Fraud in elections	8	42	-	50
Women in elections	3	44	-	47
The new Government	-	31	-	31
Election's results: victory of the pro-government candidates	1	23	-	24
Participation	-	24	-	24
Islamic Action Front in elections	-	19	2	21
Election's results: defeat of the Islamic Action Front	-	19	-	19
Security and elections	-	17	-	17
Miscellaneous	3	11	-	14
Electoral Slogans	1	10	-	11
Candidate's expenses	-	7	-	7
Palestinian dimension in elections	-	5	-	5
Political Parties	1	3	-	4
Election's results: others	-	4	-	4
Al-Tahrir Party in elections	-	3	-	3
Elections monitoring	-	3	-	3
Total	17	265	2	284

Table4

Interestingly, the only positive opinions were expressed by Al Ayam newspaper (Palestine) on the IAF's participation in the elections. Both opinions were expressed in the same article which described the IAF as the *only effective opposition* in Jordan. The Front, according to the article, was feared by many conservatives to gain a political authority through the elections, just like other Islamic factions did in Egypt, Palestine and Turkey.

In general, Al Khaleej was the most critical newspaper towards the legislative elections theme with a ratio of 41.2% of the overall critical stances.



Graphic4

Three newspapers generated more than 80% of all the critical stances towards the elections: Al Khaleej (41.2%), Al Quds Al Arabi (29.4%) and Al Ayam (11.8%).



Political leaders' coverage

It is apparent that former Minister of Interior Eid Al Fayez was put in the forefront of the legislative elections' media coverage since the Ministry of Interior was "in charge" of countering the accusations of fraud.

Al Khaleej, November 21st

ونفى وزير الداخلية الأردني عيد الفاييز الاتهامات بالتزوير واعتبرها مجرد "إشاعات"، وقال إنه يتم تضخيم مسألة شراء الأصوات، وقال إن الشعب الأردني الطيب لا يقبل أن يشتري أحد بصوته، ولا أعتقد أن هناك مرشحا يقبل أن يشتري أصوات الناس، وربما هناك حالات فردية

Al Rai, November 21st

نفى وزير الداخلية الاردني رئيس اللجنة العليا للانتخابات عيد الفاييز، الاتهامات والاشاعات التي توجهها بعض القوى والجهات حول نزاهة وشفافية الانتخابات. واكد ان "الحكومة ملتزمة بتوجيهات الملك عبدالله الثاني باجراء انتخابات حرة ونزيهة وشفافة، وبالتالي فان كل الاجراءات التي اتخذتها الحكومة ووزارة الداخلية حول العملية الانتخابية كانت ترجمة لتوجيهات جلالتة بان تكون انتخابات حرة ونزيهة".

The Government's reactions to the fraud accusations were spearheaded by Al Fayez. He therefore generated 12.3% of the total coverage of the political leaders, slightly ahead of King Abdullah II.

Top covered leaders (three occurrences and more)

	Personality	Gender	Function	Ratio
1	Al Fayez Eid	Male	Former Minister of Interior	12.3%
2	King Abdullah II	Male	Head of State (King)	11.7%
3	Al Bakhit Maarouf	Male	Former Prime Minister	10.4%
4	Al Dhahabi Nader	Male	Prime Minister	6.7%
5	Al Jamaani Falak	Female	MP	6.1%
6	Al Rawashda Hekmat	Male	President of the High Committee for Elections in the Islamic Action Front	6.1%
7	Abu Bakr Jamil	Male	Islamic Action Front's Spokesman	4.9%
8	Al Mousaymi Hayat	Female	Legislative Candidate	4.3%
9	Jawdeh Nasser	Male	Government's Spokesman	3.1%
10	Al Majali Abdel Hadi	Male	MP	2.5%
11	Al Rawabida Abdel Raouf	Male	MP	1.8%
	Others			30.1%

MP (Member of Parliament) designate a winner and Legislative Candidate designate a loser

Table5

King Abdullah comes in a close 2nd with 11.7% of the total public figures' coverage. However, if we were to include the King's coverage in articles related to other Jordanian issues – such as the *Syrian-Jordanian summit*, the *External relations* and the *Annapolis issues* themes, he would then be in the lead. His electoral coverage was generated by the fact that it is him who will designate the successor of Prime Minister Maarouf Al Bakhit (Nader Al Dhahabi).

Note that Hekmat Al Rawashda was the most covered figure in the Islamic Action Front (6.1% of the total coverage). He is the President of the High Committee for Elections in the Islamic Action Front.

Regarding the positions taken by the monitored sources on Jordanian leaders, King Abdullah II and Falak Al Jamaani were each criticized once (respectively by Al Raya and Al Khaleej), whereas Abdel Hadi Al Majali and Tujan Fayssal were praised, with also one occurrence each (Akhbar al Khaleej and Al Khaleej).

Positions taken on leaders by sources

Personality	Gender	Function	Critical occurrences	Positif occurrences	Total
King Abdullah II	Male	Head of State (King)	1	-	1
Al Jamaani Falak	Female	MP	1	-	1
Al Majali Abdel Hadi	Male	MP	-	1	1
Fayssal Tujan	Female	Legislative Candidate	-	1	1

Table6

Tujan Fayssal criticized the King in her article in Al Raya (Qatar) on November 21st. Al Fayssal, a well-known dissent who was prevented from taking part in the elections, criticized the King's visit to Syria⁷ at a time when crucial elections were taking place in the country.

Al Raya, November 21st

"انا ، غير المعنية بتاتاً بترتيبات مؤتمر أنابوليس والممنوعة ابتداء من خوض الانتخابات الجارية ، بالكاد وجدت الوقت لكتابة مقالتي هذه .. فكيف وجد ملك البلاد الوقت لهذه الزيارة ، بل بالأحرى ما الذي دفعه لإيجاد الوقت؟"

On the other hand, Al Khaleej newspaper praised Tujan Al Fayssal in its November 19th issue portraying her as an eminent opponent and criticized Falak Al Jamaani, pointing out the tribal character of her electoral district.

Al Khaleej, November 19th

"سجل الانتخابات منذ العام 1989 لا يشي الى ان أياً من نساء الأردن تمكنت من الجلوس تحت القبة عبر التنافس الحر، باستثناء واحدة وهي المعارضة البارزة توجان فيصل، صدر بحقها حكم قضائي بتهمة القذح والذم أقصاها عن المناقسة، وشعار "نساء الأردن من الميدان الى البرلمان"، لا يبدو متحققاً في الوقت الراهن خارج نطاق نظام "الكوتا"، وإذا كان الحديث يتركز حالياً حول نظيرة للفيصل المرشحة عن دائرة مادبا جنوب العاصمة، فلك الجمعاتي باحتمالية دخول القبة من خارج الكوتا، فإن دائرتها الانتخابية المتميزة بالطابع العشائري تضغط بقوة للبقاء على المقعد ذكورياً".

⁷ A theme which was covered with a ratio of 3.3% of the total coverage of Jordan in the Arab press



Falak Al Jamaani was the only woman in the top 5 covered leaders (with a ratio of 6.1%). She was the first Jordanian woman to win through free competition (without referring to the quota system).

Women in the elections

The *Fraud in the elections* theme was closely followed by the *gender issue* in the election (16.5% of the total legislative elections press coverage). Most of the articles insisted on the women's political empowerment in the latest legislative elections (participation, candidature, quota, etc.)

Al Ayyam, November 20th

ويتنافس ٥٨٨ مرشحا بينهم ٩٩١ امرأة على مقاعد مجلس النواب وهو رقم لم يسبق له مثيل في تاريخ الانتخابات البرلمانية في البلاد، مع العلم ان هناك ستة مقاعد مخصصة للنساء. وكانت ٤٥ امرأة فقط من مجموع ٥٦٧ مرشحا شاركوا في الانتخابات النيابية السابقة في عام ٢٠٠٢. ويقول محلل سياسي: لقد تم تشجيع النساء على المشاركة بقوة هذه المرة ليس فقط بسبب الكوتا النسائية التي منحت لهن والبالغة ستة مقاعد، لكن ايضا على أمل الحصول على مقعد مستحق

One can note that most of the articles perceived Falak Al Jamaani's victory through free competition as a real success, the general view of Al Jamaani's victory in the Arab press was that **finally a woman was able to win without referring to the quota system**. Al Sharq Al Awssat (Pan Arab) had a different perception of women's participation and results in the electoral process; it stated that **only one woman won through free competition**.

Al Sharq Al Awssat, November 22nd

"كما خسرت المرأة التنافس، إذ لم تفز غير امرأة واحدة عن طريق الانتخاب من مجموع 199. رشحن انفسهن، وتم تعيين 6 اخريات عن طريق حصص مخصصة للنساء"

On the other hand, Al Khaleej criticized the quota system which was described as a hindrance to women empowerment. Assma Khodor's position⁸ only appeared in Al Khaleej newspaper, which reflects, in some way, the newspaper's position.

⁸ الأمانة العامة للجنة الوطنية لشؤون المرأة

Al Khaleej, November 19th

" قالت الأمانة العامة للجنة الوطنية لشؤون المرأة أسمى خضر إن المرشحات أكدن أن الذي يبعدهن عن سدة البرلمان المرأة نفسها حيث إن العديد منهن يحاربن بعضهن بعضاً ولا يدفعن النساء للفوز الحقيقي، وثمة اشكالية بأن مقراتهن الانتخابية لا تحظى بالكثير من الحضور النسوي".

This quota system was also criticized by some of the other leaders. These stances were reported in Al Ayam (Palestine) Al Sharq Al Awssat (Pan Arab) and Al Khaleej (UAE). The quota system was considered as an actual obstacle to women empowerment. It is important to note that no other alternatives were proposed in order to assure women's empowerment within the political system.

Al Khaleej, November 19th

"وتجد المرشحة والنائب السابق ناريمان الروسان التي كسرت الحاجز وظهرت تقود "ديكة شعبية"، أن "الكوتا" أسهمت في تعزيز حالة الاحباط لدى النساء بالاكتماء بما تحقق. وقالت إن برنامجها الانتخابي يحمل مطالب لالغاء هذا النظام، الى جانب الغاء نظام الصوت الواحد في مسعى لتكريس الديمقراطية وتعزيز دور مؤسسات المجتمع المدني من أحزاب ونقابات مهنية"

Al Sharq Al Awssat, November 20th

"وبحسب المحامية احسان بارتو «لسن من يستطعن التأثير في البرلمان عندما يتعلق الأمر بتبني قوانين تتعلق بجرائم الشرف او حق الطلاق بالنسبة للمرأة، انهم الرجال"

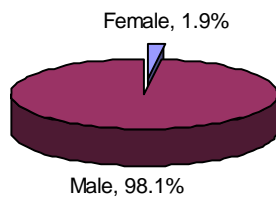
Al Ayyam, November 20th (same as above)

"بحسب المحامية احسان بارتو "لسن النساء من يستطعن التأثير في البرلمان عندما يتعلق الامر 'بتبني قوانين تتعلق بـ "جرائم الشرف" او حق الطلاق بالنسبة للمرأة، انهم الرجال وتضيف "نحن بحاجة الى برلمان يتكون من اعضاء يحملون روحا منفتحة ممن يحترمون حقوق المرأة كأنسان مستقل من اية وصاية ابوية او اخوية او زوجية"

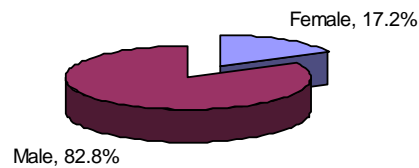
The **importance of the gender issue in the Jordanian legislative elections** was not only mirrored by the magnitude of this theme's coverage, but also by the gender distribution (leaders' overall coverage by gender).

Within the *Legislative Elections* global theme, women generated 17.2% of the total coverage. In all of the eleven other themes related to Jordan (economy, external relations, etc.), the women's coverage barely reached 2%. This difference shows that the electoral process succeeded in feminizing (at least relatively) the Jordanian political life. Nevertheless, the low 2% overall for all the other themes implies that there is still a lot to do in order to mirror the women's participation in the political and economical life.

Gender Distribution (All other themes)



Gender Distribution (Legislative Elections theme)



Graphics 5 & 6

The New Government

After the resignation of the former Prime Minister Marouf Al Bakhit and his cabinet, Nader Al Dahabi was appointed as the new Prime Minister by King Abdullah II on November 22nd. The formation of *the new government* was a key topic in the Arab press coverage with a ratio of 10.9%. The recurrent idea was the fact that **King Abdullah was the one who will designate the successor of Prime Minister Maarouf Al Bakhit. Rightfully, Nader Al Dhahabi was considered to be the top candidate, even before the start of the electoral process.** It is a custom in the Jordanian political system that the Government resigns after the parliamentary elections and the King appoints the new Prime Minister.

No judgments were passed on this theme. All the leaders' and the sources' positions were neutral. In fact, the attention of the media and the Jordanian leaders were focused on more polemic matters such as the election's transparency and the gender issue.

Akhbar Al Khaleej, November 22nd

العاهل الاردني الملك عبدالله الثاني سيعين رئيس وزراء جديدا في الاردن خلال "الايام القليلة القادمة" ليحل محل رئيس الوزراء الحالي معروف البخيت الذي يقود الحكومة منذ شهر نوفمبر 2005.
وتفيد الاوساط السياسية ان الاوفر حظا لتولي منصب رئيس الوزراء هو نادر الذهبي الذي يتراس منذ 2004 منطقة العقبة الاقتصادية الخاصة

Al Riyadh, November 22nd

ذكرت مصادر مسؤولة أن الملك عبدالله الثاني سيعين رئيس وزراء جديداً خلال "الأيام القليلة المقبلة" ليحل محل رئيس الوزراء الحالي معروف البخيت الذي يقود الحكومة منذ تشرين الثاني (نوفمبر) 2005.
وقالت المصادر إن الأوفر حظاً لتولي منصب رئيس الوزراء هو نادر الذهبي

Al Khaleej, November 22nd

ومع توجه الأردن إلى مرحلة جديدة في المشهد السياسي، أفيد أمس أن رئيس الوزراء معروف البخيت وضع استقالة حكومته بين يدي الملك عبد الله الثاني، وذلك ضمن عرف يقضي بآتاحة المجال لتشكيل حكومة جديدة تتقدم بطلب الثقة من البرلمان الجديد. وتردد أن رئيس سلطة العقبة وزير النقل الأسبق نادر الذهبي، شقيق مدير المخابرات العامة محمد الذهبي، سيتولى رئاسة الحكومة، وأنه بدأ يجري مشاورات غير رسمية مع شخصيات ربما تكون في فريقه الوزاري

The results of the election and participation

It is essential to note that, in terms of coverage and with regards to the perception of the electoral results, the victory of the pro-government candidates (8.5% of the total coverage) was slightly more covered than the defeat of the Islamic Action Front (6.7%).

Globally, the IAF's results were viewed in the Arab press as an important setback in their influence and authority in Jordan; their results were often described as a "large defeat". In fact, only 6 of their 22 candidates won the elections, compared to the 17 parliamentary seats won in the previous Parliament (2003). Nevertheless, on November 22nd, Al Riyadh newspaper (Saudi Arabia) somehow pictured the IAF results as a "victory". The terminology used differed from the other articles.

Al Riyadh, November 22nd

ووفقا للنتائج الاولى للانتخابات التي جرت الثلاثاء فقد فاز 27% من مرشحي حزب جبهة العمل الاسلامي، الذراع السياسية للاخوان المسلمين وبرز احزاب المعارضة في البلاد، ما يضمن لهم ستة مقاعد من مجموع مقاعد مجلس النواب الـ 110

Akhbar Al Khaleej, November 22nd

اخفق الاسلاميون في تحقيق النتائج التي كانوا يصبون اليها وحصلوا على ستة مقاعد فقط من مجموع مقاعد البرلمان الـ 110 على الرغم من مشاركتهم بـ 22 مرشحا. وكان الاسلاميون يشغلون 17 مقعدا في مجلس النواب المنحل

The newspaper also criticized the victory of the establishment in the legislative elections and pictured it as a continuous domination of the conservative tribal factions.

Al Riyadh, November 22nd

"اظهرت نتائج الانتخابات الأردنية التي جرت أول من أمس استمرار سيطرة القوى العشائرية المحافظة والمالية للسلطة على مجلس النواب الجديد".

On the other hand, the IAF's participation in the elections had its share of critical positions taken by some of the leaders, such as Maarouf Al Bakhit (former PM), Eid Al Fayeze (former Minister of Interior) and Abdel Hadi Al Majali (former Speaker of Parliament).

Al Majali gave the most critical opinion in a special interview with Akhbar Al Khaleej on November 21st; he attacked the IAF, describing it as a “*resonance phenomena*”. The Front is “*programmed*” on criticizing the Government and the fact that it had no plan of action, he said, it was based on *talking* instead of *acting*. The tone of the interview was very clear; Al Majali did not defend nor praise the Government “*which can be criticized*”, but insisted on the fact that IAF's contesting attitude was its only *raison d'être*.

Akhbar Al-Khaleej, November 21st

“اتهم عبدالهادي المجالي رئيس مجلس النواب الأردني السابق الإخوان المسلمين بأنهم بمثابة ظاهرة صوتية يتكلمون بصوت عال ولا يفعلون شيئاً نظراً لضعفهم ولا اعتمادهم على آليات غير ديمقراطية في اتخاذ القرار، مشدداً على أنهم حركة تحرض دائماً على اقتناص أخطاء الآخرين لكي تعارض من أجل المعارضة فقط وليس للمشاركة في تشكيل خطاب سياسي أردني عاقل.
”الحركة الإسلامية دائماً تقتنص أي أخطاء لمهاجمة ومعارضة الحكومة باستمرار، والحكومة تخطئ ولها أخطاء وأزمات تواجهها ومعرضة للنقد، ولكن الحركة تتمنى أن تكثر هذه الأخطاء ليكون هناك مبرر لعمليات نقد مبرجة من قبلها، وما جرى مؤخراً أن الحركة تكلمت كثيراً ولكنها لم تقدم على أمر عملي على أرض الواقع من خلال القنوات القانونية.”

On another level, the *participation* was also a central theme in the Arab press coverage with a ratio of 8.5%. The monitored sources did not take any position on the theme and kept to a factual coverage of the issue. Estimations of the participation evolved between 55% and 60%.

Al Ayam (Palestine), Al Sharq Al Awssat (Pan Arab) and Al Khaleej (UAE) newspapers brought up the weather issue as a factor in the electoral behavior. In fact, heavy rain was forecasted for the election's day, which was perceived as an obstacle for the participation.



ComtraxSolutions

Finally, the *Electoral slogans* issue was covered with a ratio of 3.9% of the total coverage. The articles that brought up this subject insisted on the fact that this year's electoral slogans were different than the previous electoral campaigns. In fact, candidates focused on the daily life difficulties and the economical crisis rather than on the national and the regional political issues. However, the Palestinian dimension was approached from both angles.

The Palestinian dimension in the elections

The Palestinian issue in the Jordanian parliamentary elections was covered by Al Safir (Lebanon), Al Ayam (Palestine), Al Siyassa (Kuwait) and Al Rai (Kuwait) newspapers with a global ratio of 1.8%. However, the coverage was not limited to the same subjects.

Al Siyassa tackled the relation between the IAF and the Hamas movement (November 14th). In fact, both institutions are closely linked; some analysts even suspect organizational links between the two movements. Al Rai considered that Hamas' coup in Gaza negatively affected the members of the IAF's electorate who sympathized with the Palestinian National Authority (November 22nd). According to the newspaper IAF's electoral hindrance was partly due to this specific factor.

Al Safir and Al Ayam focused on the positions taken by the IAF leaders who raised (and praised) the Palestinian dimension in the elections. The theme was brought up under its national (the Palestinian diaspora in Jordan) and regional (the Palestinian cause) forms.

Al Safir, November 20th

عشية الانتخابات التشريعية الاردنية اليوم، وأمام حشد من الفلسطينيين في مخيم البقعة للاجئين قرب عمان، وقف مرشح جبهة العمل الإسلامي الأردني الفلسطيني محمد عقل يخطب في مهرجان انتخابي أمس، وخلفه ملصقات للمقدسات الإسلامية في القدس، مؤكداً أن إسرائيل محكومة بالفناء
وقال عقل "نطلب من الله أن نكون مجاهدين من حملة السلاح ومحرري فلسطين".
بدوره، قال الناشط الإسلامي الشيخ زيد الكيلاني «سنحافظ على هذه المقاومة مع إخواننا في فلسطين وأفغانستان والباكستان. وسيعلم (الرئيس الأميركي جورج) بوش ووكلاء بوش أنهم المهزومون".

Al Ayyam (Palestine), November 20th

"وقال محمد عقل مرشح جبهة العمل الاسلامي في الانتخابات التي ستجرى اليوم أمام حشد من الانصار المتحمسين في مخيم للاجئين الفلسطينيين : نطلب من الله أن نكون مجاهدين من حملة السلاح ومحري فلسطين (...)
كما يأتي التأييد للاسلاميين بسبب برنامج يدافع عن الحقوق المدنية في بلد يعاني فيه الاردنيون من أصل فلسطيني الاشد فقرا تميزا يوميا في الوظائف والخدمات حتى وان حصلوا على حقوق المواطنة"