

Local Democracy in Jordan

General summary of the results
of the national report

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Al Urdun Al Jadid Research Center (UJRC)

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UJRC pursues its objectives on issues of democratic development, reforming public policies and legislations, through holding workshops, brainstorming sessions, conferences, and seminars. The Center also publishes the proceedings of these activities, including research papers sponsored or prepared by the Center, in a wide range series of publications.

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The electoral studies program at UJRC is involved in parliamentary and municipality's elections, and all other electoral practices. Since 1993 up-to-date the program has published 20 publications related to elections and the parliament, the center also conducted around 30 conferences, seminars, and workshops, in addition to participating in work papers of tens of elections' conferences inside and outside Jordan.

Of the most distinguished publications of UJRC related to the elections:

Assessment of the electoral framework in Jordan, 2007.

Studies in Jordan's parliamentary elections 1997, 2002.

Jordan National Assembly guide, years: 1993 – 1997, 2003 – 2007, and 2007 – 2011.

The Jordanian women and elections of 1997 and 1999.

Parliamentary action: reality and aspirations, 1996.

Modern electoral regulations, 1995.

Towards a suitable democratic election law, 1998.

The Jordanian women and the election's law, 1997.

Election's legislations: corner stone in the democratic system, 1995.

Public parliamentary elections in Jordan: introductions, results, and prospects, 1994.

UJRC is the founder and general coordinator of the Arabic Civil Network for democratic reform, and an establishing member of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the Universal Democratic Movement, and Arabic Social Studies Research Network (ASSR).

In addition, the center is connected cooperation protocols of many non-governmental organizations and associations in the Middle East, Arab Gulf, and North Africa. On the Jordanian level, UJRC is a member of many committees, projects, governmental and non-governmental initiatives.

Chapter one: General framework of the city

- 1.1 Geography and its components
- 1.2 demographic composition and social relations
- 1.3 Socio/economic –financial base of municipalities
- 1.4 Human development indicators

Chapter two: representative democracy

Section 1

- 2.1 National and legal framework
- 2.2 The electoral system and its performance
- 2.3 The political party system
- 2.4 Evaluation of elected officials

Section 2

- 2.5 Administration of elections
- 2.6 Voter participation

Chapter three: interactive democracy

First Section: Institutions

- 3-1 Local Authorities and Interactive Democracy
- 3-2 Civil society, private sector, international groups and media

Second section: Operations

- 3-3 forms and means of communication with the public
- 3-4 communication with citizens
- 3-5 referendum and public initiatives

Chapter Four: From Evaluation to Recommendation

Conclusions

General Framework of Jordanian Cities
Recommendations;

Local Democracy in Jordan

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- Jordanian cities were formed by rapid urbanization. Jordan is one of the fastest third world countries in urbanization and city dwellers form 83% of the population. This was the result of several major factors: regional wars, internal and external migration to the major cities in addition to the inflation of the state apparatus and the integration of Jordan's economy in the world economy.
- The municipalities failed to develop into centers of local policies, they still play a service oriented role, and to a lesser degree a developmental and cultural role. The burden of responsibility still lies in the hands of governors who report to the Ministry of Interior. This points out to the dominance of centralization on governmental structures.
- The law and regulations of municipality elections constitute a significant obstacle in the face of the development of local democracy because it deprives the inhabitants of the Capital Amman from electing the mayor and half of the councilors, in addition to imposing certain councils on Aqaba Special Economic Zone and the Petra region.

Furthermore, municipality elections are conducted under total control of the government without allowing any independent observation. It also lacks the necessary guarantees for the freedom and integrity of the elections.

- Since the early nineties, Jordan has witnessed an increase in the number of Civil Society Organizations and an improvement in their geographical distribution, but the role of civil society in general is still concentrated in the capital and some of the large cities, and limited in remote cities. Hence, the relationship between municipalities and CSOs is still fragile and there is still a general lack of awareness of the importance cooperation and partnership between them.
- This observation also applies to the relationship of the public sector with the municipalities; as business organizations like chambers of commerce

and industry they only play a limited role within municipalities outside of the capital and large cities. Furthermore, most of Jordanian companies operating in cities and governorates outside the capital lack social corporate policies and carry out their social responsibilities toward local societies on a seasonal and unorganized manner.

- In spite of the presence of common characteristics between the four cities that were conducted to the study (Ma'an, Mafraq, Jerash and Rusaifa) and the rest of Jordanian cities, yet, these four cities are characterized by the modesty of their quality of life indicators, as they have a higher rate of dependency with a lower income rate, not to mention the high rate of poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy compared to the national average, in addition to a lower life expectancy average.
- It has also been noticed that the ties between these four cities and the capital are generally stronger than with their rural surroundings, due to the fact that the development projects which were implemented in these governorates had no expansionist effect on their surroundings, and did not increase the social productivity of the workforce.
- The four cities that were submitted to the study manifest a weak and limited field of activity due to the lack of facilities or infrastructure that allow for social activity (such as public halls, libraries, public parks and courtyards), in addition to legislations that limit the right of assembly as holding an assembly requires obtaining prior consent from the governor. Furthermore, the meager financial resources and debts form an additional factor that restrains municipalities from supporting and sponsoring social and cultural activities.

The study came up with a set of recommendations:

- **Immediately:** The study called on municipalities to adopt mechanisms for self evaluation and review and to get help from experts and local universities, in order to develop the quality of good urban governance, also the rehabilitation of infrastructure for public activity, in addition to consolidation and updating of municipality websites.

- **At the medium range:** The study called for the development of legislations and regulations for municipality elections in accordance with international standards for the transparency and integrity of elections and the adoption of the principle of direct elections for mayors and council members, to include Amman, Aqaba Economic Special Zone, and Petra; provided that they are held under the auspices of an independent election body.

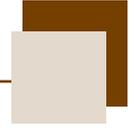
The study also called for the revision of the obligatory merger of municipalities and opening the door for the formation of councils according to objective and democratic basis. Furthermore, it called for the enhancement of the development role of municipalities and the enhancement of human resources through the establishment of mutual and complementary relations with universities and houses of experience to rehabilitate councilors and staff members.

Additionally, the study called for improving of ties between cities and their rural surroundings and to enhance integration between them, developing of local information systems and data bases on cities and developing of a strategic vision and long term planning for cities, in order to attract investment projects and granting them the necessary incentives according to the extent of their compliance with the economic, social, and development goals laid down in these plans.

- **At the long-range:** The study called for taking advantage of the new political climate which is supportive of decentralization in order to promote policies that enhance municipality independence, thus they can play their developmental role in their capacity as centers of local politics.

It also called for the improvement of sustained local development policies and the establishment of good urban governance based on administrative decentralization, local democracy, transparency, accountability, quality of performance, and gender equality.

The study urged for the establishment of social partnership principles with private sector institutions and civil society, and the development of a distinct cultural profile for each city derived from its social characteristics and special history.



1.1 Geography and its components

1.1.1 (a) The effects of the geographical and organizational state of affairs of the city on its particular identity

The historical and natural composition of modern Jordanian cities and towns points to the role played by geographical components, especially its location and resources, in addition to the social history and political, administrative and security factors. There are currently 12 major cities whose geographical and social identity was formed by several factors, the most important of which is that they are the administrative centers for the governorates. There are also 93 medium cities and towns which are centers of municipalities; these are divided into three geographical patterns which witnessed modern urban colonization, they are: mountains, plains and deserts. Four cities were chosen for this study on evaluation of local democracy in Jordan: Mafraq, Jerash, Rusaifa and Ma'an. They represent patterns of cities on the national level from the aspects of geographical location, natural composition, and demographic constitution.

The city of Mafraq is located 72 kilometers north of Amman and is considered the center of the Jordanian north eastern desert. It is situated on a junction of international roads which connect the kingdom with Iraq, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. This location influenced its role in contemporary political and social events and gave the city its particular identity.

In the middle of the desert and on the same longitude lies the city Ma'an, 220 kilometers south of Amman. In accordance with its geographical location, Ma'an is considered the center of the Jordanian southern desert. It also lies on a junction of international roads that connect the kingdom with Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The city of Rusaifa, in terms of its location and composition represents one the cities that was established recently. It lays 20 kilometers south east of Amman and is distinguished buy its central location between Jordanian cities on a network of local roads that connect Amman with Zarqa.

The city of Jerash, in terms of its location and resources represents an example of Jordanian rural cities. It is characterized by mountains and rich soil that is ideal for agriculture which leads to the growth of a primarily agrarian society.

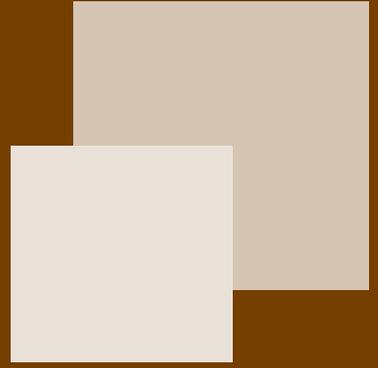
(b) The effects of the geographical reality and the type of human colonization on daily life and social relations

The geographical characteristics and the pattern of colonization have left their mark on the daily life and social relations in contemporary Jordanian cities. This is evident in the effect of the location on determining the pattern and development of production and consequently on the type of social relations and daily life. The pattern of colonization in desert cities and towns was affected by roads and Bedouin settlement projects. The pattern of colonization linked to resources or cities that were established due to their proximity to major cities and receiving of waves of migrations and refugees.

We find these four patterns represented and sometimes overlapping in the type of cities that were subjected to this study. The economy of Mafraq at the outset of the last century was characterized by the traditional farming – livestock rearing pattern, which is also the same type of economy practiced by groups residing in north Al-Badia settlements. These groups practiced and still practice daily trade with markets in the city of Mafraq, and around these markets grew some residential quarters inhabited by Moroccan families, Syrian merchants and shops trading in grain and animal products coming from “Bani Hasan” villages.

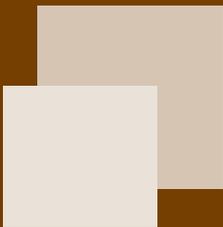
In Ma’an, we find that the city is divided into two historical quarters: the “Hijazi” quarter and the “Shami” quarter, and then a third quarter was added called the “middle” quarter. These divisions represent the tribal alliances that not only governed local policies but also represented the daily life of individuals. Additionally, the city of Ma’an has witnessed in the last three decades a new pattern of settlement typified by employee housing projects created by the government and some corporations and institutions.

The patterns of settlement in Rusaifa affected the daily life and social relations in a different way. Here we find two basic patterns: the first is the earlier random habitation where some areas are crowded and lack any type of organization, such as the camps that were built to house Palestinian refugees in the aftermath of the 1948 and 1967 wars, in addition to the return of expatriates due to the gulf war in 1991. The second and more recent pattern is that of housing projects and urban development areas, where we see some kind of



Chapter One

General setting and framework of the city



organization and planning which changed the pattern of habitation based on kinship.

The location of Jerash played a role in the local and external habitation movement and hence on the pattern of settlement in the city and on social relations and daily life. This contributed in making it an important center for movement to other surrounding governorates and at the same a destination for many of many people living in the surrounding areas, as many people who were looking for work or trade settled there in addition to employees from other parts of the country. Jerash still depends in its daily activities on people coming from surrounding villages. Moreover, the historical and tourist sights in Jerash helped make it a tourist destination and lead to the interaction of large sectors of citizens with tourists, in addition to the pattern of interaction created by the cultural festival organized in the city annually since the early eighties.

(c) The effect of the pattern of settlement on local democracy

The effects of local settlement patterns and social relations that accumulated throughout history on the practice of local democracy in Jordanian cities are varied and the government institutions played a role in intensifying these effects through their tendency sometimes to create a balance between sectors in the same city.

In Mafraq, we find that the pattern of settlement fortifies the collaboration of local groups according to their social identity in the practice of local democracy. The layout of the city is uniform and is the result of the historical development and economic activity in the city. The patterns of settlement manifest themselves in social occasions, public activities, and local society demands for services directly. It is also apparent during the organization of both parliamentary and municipal elections.

As for Ma'an, we find that the historical divisions of the city still have a clear impact on tribal alliances and the manner of expressing their demands for services in addition to the relations with public institutions. Therefore, in the cases of both Mafraq and Ma'an, the patterns of settlement reflect generally the same type of tribal composition and alliances and interests.

The effect of settlement patterns on local democracy tends to decline in the city of Rusaifa for reasons relating to its composition, as we find that the overcrowding, financial burden, the long work hours, and the perpetual search for an opportunity to improve their income have led to a decline in the size of political and public participation and a decline in the collective tendency to aggressively pursue their local demand.

As for Jerash, we find the patterns of natural settlement and the composition of districts which were planned have created a healthy and positive diverseness that was reflected on the patterns of competitiveness in the practice of local democracy.

1.1.2 The general scope of activity in Jordanian cities

(a) Most of Jordanian cities lack an institutionalized place for public activities such as a city hall while they might have various facilities and halls for public meetings that are mostly not organized.

In Mafrq there are two parks, a public library and a large hall that fits for 500 people, in addition to 7 wedding halls that can be rented for various occasions. In Ma'an there are three types of public facilities, the first type is the official facilities such as the governorates hall which seats 100 people and the halls of King Hussein University which are usually requested for official and semi official events. The second type are the semi official facilities that belong to the municipality and civic organizations which include parks, municipality hall which seats 240 people, municipality library and three small halls that belong to societies and clubs. The third type is the tribal councils which play an important role in public life in the city.

The municipality of Rusaifa contains five parks in addition to a relatively large public library, a hall that hosts some events plus dozens of private facilities such as marriage halls that can be used for other purposes but there is no city hall.

Jerash has a "municipality hall" which is a public hall that is run by the municipality, but is usually reserved for official meetings. There is also a public park which represents a breathing space for citizens but lacks many

of the fundamental services, while ancient theatres are some times used for public meetings. As for public gatherings, they are held at tribal councils.

(b) Legislative and political frameworks regulating public activity

The law of public assembly number (7) for the year (2004) is applied to all public activities in Jordan such as public gatherings, protests or demonstrations. Any entity or person wishing to organize a public meeting must notify the governor three days in advance and must state the objective, location, time, participants and duration of the meeting. The governor's approval is a prerequisite. Whereas meetings pertaining to candidates or election propaganda are regulated by the election law and are usually held on a personal or family basis and treated with tolerance unless there are disputes or encroachment on public property.

The tribal councils in the city of Ma'an played an important political role in the city and provided an alternate location for public meetings, particularly during political protests that were witnessed by the city, as people there are not used to obtaining any official consent for public gatherings.

1.2 demographic composition and social relations

1.2.1 The population of Jordan reached 5.723.000 in 2007. 2.950.00 (51.5%) male and 2.773.000 (48.5%) female. The following table depicts the distribution of population according to governorate and gender (in thousands).

Table no. (1-1)

Estimated number of inhabitants according to governorate and gender in 2007 (in thousands)

Governorate	males		Total	%of the kingdom
The capital	1.139.4	1.076.6	2.216.0	38.7
Balqa'a	199.1	184.3	383.4	6.7
Zarqa	441.2	411.5	852.7	14.9
Madaba	73.7	69.4	143.1	2.5
Irbid	521.7	497.0	1.018.7	17.8
Mafraq	139.4	129.6	269.0	4.7
Jerash	88.3	83.4	171.1	3.0
Ajloun	67.0	64.6	131.6	2.3
Karak	113.0	110.2	223.2	3.9
Tafila	40.8	39.3	80.1	1.4
Ma'an	57.0	51.8	108.8	1.9
Aqaba	69.4	55.3	124.7	2.2
Kingdom	2.950.0	2.773.0	5.723.0	100.0

Source: Jordan in numbers, General statistics department, May 2008

The population of the city of Mafraq in 2004 reached 48 thousand or about 20% of the inhabitants of the governorate of Mafraq which was around 250 thousand at that time, divide into 51.8% males and 48.2% females.

The population of Ma'an is estimated around 30,100 people or 32% of the inhabitants of the governorate which is 108 thousand people. But the municipality of Ma'an estimates the population of the city at 45 thousand divided into 53.2% males and 46.8% females.

The population of the city of Jerash is 68,500 or 40% of the total population of the governorate which is 171,700 divided into 51.4% males and 48.6 females.

Finally, the population of Rusaifa is 224,564 divided into 51% males and 49% females. They constitute 27% of the total population of governorate of Zarqa which have reached 852,700 people.

It should be noted that the area of the governorate of Ma'an constitutes 37% of the total area of Jordan, followed by Mafraq which constitutes 30% of the total area of Jordan. The average population density in Jordan is 64.5 per squared kilometer, while at the governorates level, Jerash claims second place after Irbid and has a density of 419 persons per km².

Figure (1-3) shows demographic indicators in the kingdom as a whole and in the four governorates under study. It shows that the inhabitants of the governorate of Zarqa form 15% of the total population of Jordan and the city of Zarqa is the third most populated city after the capital and Irbid, in spite of its relatively small area which is only 4761 km². It also indicates the rural nature of Mafraq as we see that 61% of its inhabitants live in rural areas, while the governorates of Jerash and Ma'an take a more urban nature as we find that 63% and 55% of the inhabitants of those two governorates consecutively live in urban areas.

On the other hand, we notice the high rate of mortality in Ma'an compared with the national average as it reaches 4.8 compared to 3.6 in every thousand at the national level which points to the low level of health services in the governorate.

Table no. (1-3)

Demographic indicators in Jordan and the four governorates subjected to the study for the year 2006

Indicators	Jordan	Mafraq	Ma'an	Jerash	Zarqa
% of Urban dwellers	82.6	39.2	54.9	62.7	94.5
% of Rural dwellers	17.4	60.8	45.1	37.3	5.5
% of inhabitants to total population	100.0	4.7	1.9	3.0	14.9
% of males	51.5	51.8	52.4	51.4	51.7
% of females	48.5	48.2	47.6	48.6	48.3
% of individuals under 15	37.3	40.9	39.0	40.8	38.9
% of individuals 15-64	49.5	56.3	58.1	56.3	58.1
% of individuals over 65	3.2	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0
Area (km ²)	88778	26541	32832	410	4761
Population density (per km ²)	64.5	9.9	3.2	709.8	175.3
Rate of dependency	68.2	77.6	72.1	77.6	68.6

Source: General statistics department, governorate indicators (2003-2006), Dec. 2007.

1.2.2 Age distribution of population

The composition of the population in Jordan is a youthful one due to the fact that those who are under 15 years of age constitute 37.3% of the total population, while those who fall between 15 and 64 compose 59.5%, and those over 65 years of age only 3.2% of the total population.

1.2.3 Main social, ethnic and religious groups

Jordanian society is often described as rich in social cultural and religious diversity due to several historical and geographical factors. This is in spite of the fact that the overwhelming majority of the population is Arabs and Muslims with a small percentage of Jordanian Christians that range from 3% to 8%. They do not regard themselves as a minority but as an extension of the ancient Christian east. In addition to the Christians there are ethnic minorities that settled in Jordan at different times such as Chechens and Circassians who immigrated from Caucasian and were settled by the Ottoman Empire in east Jordan, north Syria, and Palestine. There are also other smaller ethnic and religious minorities such as the Kurds, Armenians, and Bahais.

The official language in Jordan is Arabic and it is the language of daily and official use by citizens and government departments. All minorities are proficient in Arabic and use it in their daily life and in business without difficulty. But ethnic groups like the Chechens and Armenians reserve the right to use their own language during family and special occasions and on the whole there are no legal restrictions on minorities in using their original languages in Jordan.

It should be noted that the official policy adopted in relation to the language is derived from article 2 of the Jordanian constitution for the year 1952 which states that Arabic is the official language of the state and will be used in official and general transactions. But there has never been any issues raised concerning minorities using their original languages in the framework of their personal, family, or special social interactions.

1.2.4 The population fabric in Jordan

Various groups took refuge in Jordan since the dawn of the last century including Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Hijaz. The revolt against French mandate in the twenties led to the immigration of many Syrians to Jordan like the Druz who accompanied Sultan Pasha Al Atrash and settled in Azraq and the governorate of Mafraq.

Additionally, many Syrian, Lebanese and Hijazi families migrated to Jordan since the early twenties of the last century, where many of the personalities who had been members of the great Arab revolution or King Faisal's government in Damascus, assisted in the establishment of the administration and armed forces of Jordan. The young state also attracted teachers, intellectuals and experts from surrounding countries especially from Palestine, Syria and Lebanon during the first half of the last century. Furthermore the young state attracted merchants, craftsmen and farmers to work in Jordan; consequently the modern economy of Jordan was founded on their shoulders.

It should be noted that Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origins, especially those who immigrated to Jordan following the 1948 war and the annexation of the west bank to the Hashemite kingdom of Jordan, compose approximately half of the population of current Jordan.

As a whole, Jordanians of Palestinian origins complain of being prejudiced against in their political rights and by the policy of "Jordanization" that has been applied since the early seventies and led to their exclusion from joining the armed or security forces and from sensitive civilian positions. On the other hand, the Jordanian authorities and many political activists of Jordanian origins express their reservation to the calls for equality on the basis of population before reaching a comprehensive settlement to the Palestinian problem, for fear of transforming Jordan into a "substitute state" for Palestinians and consequently invalidating the right of Palestinian refugees in returning to their homes within the framework of a future settlement.

On the other hand, Jordanian population fabric is currently being affected by two important factors: first, the increasing number of expatriates from Arab and Asian countries and secondly, the presence of a large Iraqi community which was forced to resort to Jordan in the aftermath of the second gulf war (1991) and the American occupation of Iraq in 2003.

The number of expatriate workers in Jordan increased from 111 thousand in 2000 to 303 thousand in 2008, an increase of 175% or 22% annually. Most of expatriate workers are males, while females constituted only 8% in 2000 but their numbers increased to 17% in 2008.

1.2.5 Social fabric and state of minorities in the four cities

The city of Mafrq is composed of a local and regional social fabric. Most of its inhabitants are from Jordanian Bedouin tribes and those arriving from other parts of Jordan in the shape of internal migrations, in addition to Syrian traders and Palestinians coming from Palestinian cities due to forced migration. While the city has no ethnic minorities, there is a community of Christian families who live there, and their numbers are estimated at five thousand or 8% of the city's inhabitants.

As for Ma'an, we find that all inhabitants are Jordanian Arabs and they are all Sunni Muslims. There are no other religious groups in the city. As for historical and ethnic characteristics we find that its special geographic location made it open before groups of various origins, some of whom go back to Syrian origins. There are also some families of Armenian origins, but there are no groups that are treated as minorities either by the authorities or citizens.

There are no ethnic, cultural, or religious groups in Rusaifa with the exception of some Circassians and Chechens who do not exceed 1%, in addition to a small Christian minority that also does not exceed 1% of the total population of the city.

Finally, most of the population of Jerash is Arab Muslims, some of whom go back to Syrian origins, in addition to a small minority of Circassians and Caucasian immigrants whom does not exceed 3%.

On the whole, Jordanians of all backgrounds, cultural or religious are treated equally concerning the rights and obligations of citizenship. In fact, on the level of legislations that regulate public life and democratic representation there are quotas for Christians, Circassians and Chechens in parliament but not in municipal elections. It should be noted that during the last two decades, no conflicts pertaining to religious or ethnic minorities have been witnessed.

1.3 Socio/economic –financial base of municipalities

1.3.1 (a) Economic and industrial sectors

Jordanian cities and towns depended during the last few decades on a local production and service oriented economy, while modern industry and express capital turnover were limited to the capital Amman and to a lesser degree to Zarqa. But we notice a more diverse economy in these towns since the mid nineties as new development policies have appeared to widen the productivity base, such as establishing special industrial and development zones in Mafraq and Ma'an.

The economy of Mafraq is built on a commercial, agricultural, industrial, and service oriented basis. The commercial sector is the most important in the city as there are over three thousand small and medium stores. Agriculture has also flourished in the last two decades in the surrounding areas of Mafraq, where there are 80 squared kilometers of irrigated farming, 108.7 km² of orchards, in addition to 450 poultry and animal farms. The industrial sector comes in third place as there are 80 factories.

The city of Ma'an is one of the oldest cities dependent on trade due to its location on international roads in the middle of the southern desert. It has more than 942 small and medium size business establishments. On the other hand, the city's economy also depends on the wide service sector attending to 43% population concentrations surrounding the city, in addition to the heavy mining industry near the city such as the phosphate mines, chemical fertilizer plants, and quarry industry.

The economic base in Rusaifa depends on vocational handicraft sector such as metalwork, carpentry and, mechanics. Secondly, the city contains dozens of clothes, textile, and food processing factories. Thirdly, there is the business sector, as the city has 4000 small and medium size registered business establishments.

As for Jerash, agriculture is considered the most important economic sector. It forms a source of income for most of the inhabitants and the cultivated area reaches 20 km². In second place come the tourism sector and the vocations related to it, and thirdly comes the business and services sector.

(b) Effects of economic activity on the composition of the local society

The social system and interaction is directly affected by economic change which is evident on the pattern of settlement and the creation of population quarters. Economic change, in the last decade has affected the essence of local relations and way of living which tended quickly, as in Mafraq to lean towards consumerism and the spread of new shopping patterns. This is also more evident in the city of Rusaifa which witnessed a dramatic increase in population and a decline in traditional economic sectors such as the phosphates. We also notice the effects of the unstable economic patterns in agriculture and tourism on the structure, function, and interaction of society in Jerash.

Additionally, Jordanian cities have witnessed a clear response to the new economic patterns that have resulted due to the integration of the Jordanian economy with world economy which is more manifested in northern cities in comparison with Ma'an. This is evident in the increase and diversity of trade and goods, the increase of markets, malls and banks, in addition to the spread of electronic trade and dealing with international stock markets.

1.3.2 Economic and social relations of the city with surrounding rural areas

The city of Mafraq is linked by economic and social relations with the surrounding rural and Bedouin areas because it is the administrative and commercial center of the governorate. The city also contains three bus stations that serve the eastern badia and the cities to the north and west of Mafraq.

Ma'an has depended historically on wide mutual relations with its surrounding rural and Bedouin surroundings. From the economic aspect, there is a significant exchange of goods till today, where the citizens from rural areas market their products in the city, and the citizens of badia market their stock and dairy products in return for buying food supplies, clothes, and other goods.

This is also true for Jerash, where agricultural products are marketed in the city in exchange for basic goods needed by farmers. The farmers depend on borrowing or buying on credit from dealers in wait for the harvest season

which created a type of economic inter-dependence between the city and rural areas. However, we find an absence of such relation with Rusaifa as there are no adjacent rural areas, but it has strong ties with Amman and Zarqa.

1.3.3 Land issues and disputes and the role of municipalities in solving them

The number of registered cases of land disputes during the last three years in Ma'raq was 261 in 2006 or (4.5 cases for each thousand people), 162 cases in 2007 or (3.4 cases for each thousand people) and 87 cases in 2008 or (1.8 cases for each thousand people). As for Ma'an the number of registered case in 2007 were 139 cases or (4.3 per each thousand citizens), and in Jerash the number of cases were 47 in the year 2007 or (0.7 cases per each thousand citizens) and 56 cases in 2008 (0.8 cases per each thousand citizens). On the other hand, the number of land dispute cases in Rusaifa is very little.

Land disputes in the different governorates and cities are usually settled by the local governors, the survey, and land department whose mission is to draw up land blueprints, assign boundaries, and ownership. Furthermore, municipality councils are currently engaged in drawing up of blue print plans for areas belonging to them. In the mean time, registration, transfer of ownership, and settlement of disputes is conducted by the department of lands.

1.3.4 Poverty, unemployment and the level of income

The latest study on poverty in Jordan goes back to the year 2003 and shows that poverty is up to 14.2% at the national level. The study also shows that according to gender 15.2% of families' supported by a man are under the poverty line while 14.1% of families supported by a woman are under the poverty line.

As for the four cities subject to the study, we find that the poverty in the governorates which include these cities is higher than the national average, where we find that the level of poverty in Ma'raq is at 25.4%, Ma'an 24.1%, Jerash 18.4% and Zarqa (where Rusaifa is located) 22.3%.

The average refined economic activity of the population in Jordan was 39.8%

in the year 2007, where it was 64.4% for males and 14.7% for females. The low economic average is due to the low participation of women and the large section of population under 15 years of age who naturally do not work.

The average unemployment for the same year (2007) was 13.1% (10.3% for males and 25.6% for females). The percentage of those who were unemployed for one year or over stood at 50.1% of the total unemployed persons. More than half of the unemployed fall between the ages of 15 and 24 years of age.

As for the four cities being studied, the average refined economic activity for the year 2006 was 35% in Mafraq, 37.2% Ma'an, 34.9% in Jerash and 37.8% in the governorate of Zarqa (Rusaifa). The average of unemployment for the four cities was 16.9% in Mafraq, 17.5% in Ma'an, 15.5% in Jerash and 12.3% in Rusaifa.

The statistical indicators show that the youth in general are the main victims of unemployment, and that the unemployed females exceed the males by one and a half times, bearing in mind that the rate of unemployed females is based on economically active women who form the workforce or are looking for work.

As for the rate of dependency (number of persons depending on their livelihood on the income of one person) when compared to the national rate (1:4), the rate of dependency in Mafraq is (1:5), Ma'an (1:5.3), Rusaifa (1:4.2) and Jerash (1:4.3).

The capital income in Jordan in 2006 was 1083 dinars, while in Mafraq it was 904 dinars, Ma'an 78 dinars, Jerash 802 dinars and Rusaifa 950 dinars. On the whole we notice a higher rate of unemployment in the four cities and a lower standard of living and a lower poverty line.

1.3.5 Crimes and cases of violence

The number of crimes in Jordan registered a noticeable increase between 2006 and 2007 with an annual rise of 49%. As for the subject four cities, Ma'an registered the highest increase with a rise of 78.5%, followed by Zarqa 53.5%, Mafraq 31.6% and Jerash 25%. The average crime per each one thousand

citizens during 2006 for the four cities was as follows: Mafraq 6.4, Ma'an .4.2, Rusaifa 4.4, and Jerash 3.6.

The available data on the four cities during last year did not contain enough information on human rights abuses; furthermore, there were no specific reference to the four cities in the reports of international organizations in relation to this issue because these reports deal with facts at the national level. But the latest reports indicate that there was one case of political detention in Rusaifa.

On the other hand, no significant cases of political violence have been registered during the last three years in the four cities under study, with the exception of some limited skirmishes witnessed by Ma'an in the aftermath of the events of 2002, which was the last wave of violence witnessed by the city during the last two decades.

1.3.6 The financial status of municipalities

Most of Jordanian municipalities suffer from a chronic deficit and an accumulation of debts. This was used as the justification by the government to integrate more than 300 municipalities into 93, but this integration process which took place in 2001 lead to depriving municipalities from much of the revenues that were accrued directly by the municipalities and instead went to the treasury.

The municipalities' debt reached 60-65 million dinars in 2007, but succeeded in 2008 in lowering it to 50 million dinars as a result of changing the municipalities' law for the year 2007 to state that 6% of fuel revenues produced by the petrol refinery should go to municipalities in addition to 1.6 million dinars as support by the government.

It should be noted that the running expenses of municipalities especially employee salaries consume a large portion of the total revenue. The salaries consume about 35% of the revenues which consequently forced the ministry to put a freeze on new assignments with the exception of street cleaners and garbage collectors. As for the four cities, the total budget for the year 2008 was 4.5 million dinars for Mafraq, 2.4 million dinars for Ma'an, 9 million dinars for Rusaifa and 4.5 million dinars for Jerash.

The source of revenues for the four cities depends mainly on local taxes, in addition to the 6% of fuel revenues which are transferred from the treasury and traffic violations. Municipality income from local taxes was 55% in Mafraq, 64% in Ma'an, and 80% in Rusaifa.

1.3.7 Financial cases

There are no official reports showing the amount of tax evasion in municipalities, but sources from Mafraq and Ma'an indicate that there are significant cases of tax evasion. In spite of that, there are still no procedures for tracking and following up of tax evasion.

As for cases of corruption, we find that one case of corruption was recorded in Mafraq and seven cases in Ma'an regarding lands, finance, cooperatives, and non-governmental organizations, while Jerash recorded three cases of corruption. The actions taken as a consequence were rectifying of financial matters, turning the issue and those involved to the judiciary, or terminating the services of those guilty of corruption.

Local government institutions depend on several preventive procedures and mechanisms to prevent the spread of corruption such as the application of the rules and regulations that control the work, the internal administrative, the financial monitoring bodies that monitor the execution of the administrative, and financial procedures and decisions from inside these institutions; in addition to the role of the comptroller's office, an official arm that is independent of these institutions.

1.4 Human development indicators

Jordan is classified in accordance with international standards among the list of countries with medium income and medium human development. Jordan occupies number 86 out of 177 countries listed on the human development indicator for the years 2007/2008 which is issued by the United Nations development program (UNDP). Jordan is also third among Arab countries in the rate of literacy with an average of 91.1% and comes immediately after

Kuwait and Palestine, while in the field of human development on the whole, Jordan comes immediately after Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Libya, Oman and Saudi Arabia.

As for the rates of schooling and education, Jordan achieved a rate of 78.1% and came third within Arab countries after Libya and Palestine, while in a UNESCO report (2008) Jordan occupies the 55th position among 129 countries and the second position among Arab countries after Bahrain. But there are disparities in the indicators between the different areas and cities in Jordan.

1.4.1 Health indicators

The rate of infant mortality at the national level in the year 2007 was 19 from each 1000 births, while it was 24 in 2004. This shows a clear improvement in health standards in a period of three years. As for infant mortality at the governorate level, we find that it is close to each other but there are no indicators for cities.

Table (1-11) shows some health indicators according to the governorates subjected to the study

Table no. (1-11)

Indicator	Jordan	Mafraq	Ma'an	Jerash	Zarqa
Number of hospitals	101	4	2	1	8
Number of hospital beds	11.009	225	194	135	939
Number of health clinics	428	46	21	18	33
Number of village clinics	234	37	21	10	8
Number of maternity centers	406	39	18	18	31
Number of infectious disease centers	12	1	1	1	1

Source: Department of general statistics, Governorate indicators (2003-2006), Dec. 2007.

The number of medical doctors in Jordan on the whole in (2007) was 3702 doctors, while in Mafraq there were 63 (1.3 doctors/one thousand citizens), 31 doctors in Ma'an (1 doctor/one thousand), and 165 doctors in Rusaifa (0.8 doctors/thousand citizens).

1.4.2 Educational indicators

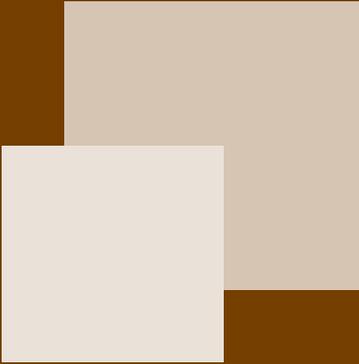
The number of teachers in Jordan is 83.900 teachers in both basic and secondary schools. As for kindergartens, there are 17 in Mafraq (0.4 per each thousand citizens), 8 kindergartens in Ma'an (0.4 per each thousand citizens), while in Jerash there are 62 private and public kindergartens (0.9 per each thousand citizens). The following table shows some indicators including the number of teachers in the four cities under study.

Table (1-13)

Educational indicators for Jordan and the four governorates subject to the study

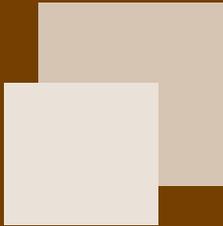
Indicator	Jordan	Mafraq	Ma'an	Jerash	Zarqa
Number of schools	5,517	423	210	206	578
Number of students	1,567,856	75,222	31,927	51,455	229,614
Number of teachers	88,256	6,086	2,686	3,087	9,775
Number of students/ teacher	17.8	12.4	12	16.7	23.5
Rate of illiteracy	9.3%	17.5%	15.6%	9.8%	8.6%
Rate of education	90.7%	82.5%	84.4%	90.2%	91.4%

Source: Department of general statistics, Governorate indicators (2003-2006), Dec. 2007.



Chapter Tow

Representative Democracy





Section one: Institutions

2.1 National and legal framework

2.1.1 Legislative framework that regulates local governance

Article (121) in the Jordanian constitution states that municipal affairs and local councils are to be run by municipal or local councils, leaving all details for the municipalities law and other pertinent regulations.

The government which draws in its actions upon the administrative divisions' law for the year 2000 and its amendments has divided the country into 12 governorates, delimited into 51 counties and 38 districts. The counties contain 753 cities and villages while the districts contain 400 cities and villages. Thus the kingdom is composed of 1153 cities and villages. There are a total of 93 municipalities in accordance with the decision by the minister of municipal affairs for the year 2007, in addition to Greater Amman Municipality.

The national legal and administrative framework governs the election process for municipalities, delineating all details of the election process. The municipalities' law (no. 14 for the year 2007) covers the election regulations pertinent to municipal councils, and empowers the minister of municipal affairs with determining the number of council members in each municipality and also the number of seats allocated for women which then are added to the original number of seats for municipalities.

a. Forming new municipalities electing their councils

If the majority of the inhabitants of any town wish to form a municipality in their town or integrate the existing one to another municipality, they should submit a petition to the governor. The governor then adds his remarks and refers it to the minister of municipal affairs. The minister forms a committee that should include at least two of the town's inhabitants to ascertain the wishes of the town's citizens and determine its borders. The minister then assigns a temporary committee to assume the duties of the council and appoints its head from among them. The authority of this committee should not exceed one year during which a new council is elected to assume the duties of the council for the rest of its term.

b. Date of municipality elections

Once every four years, the elections for 93 municipalities in addition to Greater Amman Municipality take place at the same time, on a date determined by the minister of municipal affairs and usually fall during the month of July.

The Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority and Petra Zone Authority are exempted from the provisions of the municipalities' law. The council's members of those two zones are appointed by the cabinet providing that half are representative of the local community. As for Amman, 50% of the council members are elected by citizens of Amman while the rest including the mayor are appointed by the cabinet.

c. Representation of marginalized groups

There are no special procedures for increasing the representation of marginalized groups, except when the cabinet resorts to appointing a number of women (excluding the women's quota), minorities and youth among those appointed by the cabinet to the council of Greater Amman. Women acquired the right to vote and be elected in municipal election for the first time in 1982 but did not actually exercise this right until 1995.

d. complying with international election standards

Election legislations comply with international standards for municipality elections to a reasonable degree, including allocating a percentage of council seats for women that is not less than 20%. But the municipality law that regulates the election process does not recognize the right of civil society in observing elections and opposes any independent international or regional monitoring of elections. Additionally, the law does not permit Arab or foreign residents to vote in municipality elections.

2.1.2 Election disputes

a. Mechanisms for solution of disputes

Election disputes are made of three categories: the first category pertains to the challenges that concern the election process directly such as the objections to the electoral lists. These objections are handled by the voter registration committee with the possibility of appealing these objections before the court

of first instances. The decision of the court in this case is final. Then there are the challenges to ballot papers, and in this instance, the decision of the head of elections is final. As for the challenges to validity of the election of the mayor or any member of the council, they are handled by the court of first instance and its decision is final.

The second category pertains to election crimes and includes 16 items relating to attempts of election rigging or influencing their results. In this instance the case legal proceedings are instituted by the attorney general, or based on a complaint by a voter or nominee within 15 days of the announcement of election results. The third type of election disputes are the type that take place at the fringes of the election process and these are settled amicably within the framework of the group, family or tribe, but if that becomes impossible then the governor steps in to solve the problem.

b. Nature of disputes during the last three elections

The main disputes revolve around the challenges to the election lists and are solved within the pertinent legal framework, but the authorities do not provide any data on the size of these disputes. As for practices that fall under election crimes, especially when educated persons vote as illiterate, we find that it is wide spread but ignored by the authorities.

The other election disputes that have been monitored are all of a local nature, such as failure of a group or tribe to honor their pact with another group or tribe to vote in a certain way, or accusations of election rigging without submitting an official challenge. These disputes were not of a severe nature during the last three municipal elections in Ma'an and were less intense than the disputes that accompanied parliamentary elections. The number of these disputes in Mafraq was limited, whereas in Jerash, most of the objections were concentrated on rectifying the names that were inadvertently dropped from election lists. In Rusaifa, there were also objections to the election of some council members, but the issue was dealt with quietly.

But the most prominent disputes that were witnessed by the last elections were the wide objections by The Islamic Action Front (IAF) against the manner of participation by military persons. The IAF decided to boycott the elections after a few hours of voting. Additionally, a number of candidates who were

disadvantaged by the participation of military personnel also challenged the results of the elections.

The Islamic Action Front objected also during the 2003 elections to the amendments that were made on the municipalities' law by a temporary law issued during a parliamentary break which gave the government the right to assign heads of municipality councils in addition to half of the council members. As a consequence, the IAF limited their participation to the elections of the municipality of Greater Amman and boycotted the elections in the rest of municipalities.

2.2 The electoral system and its performance

2.2.1 The election system

The municipalities' law for the year 2007 adopts the "First past the post" (FPTP) system to elect the head of the council and the "Block vote" (BV) system to select the council members. But the block vote was replaced with the "Single non transferable vote" (SNTV) system based on the ruling by the "Office of Interpretation of laws" number 4 for the year 2007 dated 11 June 2007, bearing in mind that decisions by this office have the power of laws.

As for the quota reserved for women in municipality councils, the law gives women the right to compete for all the seats in the municipality, and then applies the quota system at a later stage on the candidates who were unsuccessful in winning a seat competitively during the first phase. Women candidates with the higher number of votes gain a seat on the quota reserved for women. But here the method of winning is interpreted in accordance with the ruling of the "Office of Interpretation of laws" in a manner where women that obtain the higher percentage of votes in proportion to the number of voters in their electoral districts are considered the winners. Additionally, the decision number 2 for the year 2007 deemed that seats won by women candidates competitively are not considered part of the women's quota, but are added to them.

2.2.2 The effects of the electoral system on the party system

The Block vote system which was adopted since the 1995 municipal elections (the year it was decided to conduct all municipal elections on the day) enjoyed a general approval even by political parties because it allowed the formation of pacts between tribes or parties, even though it did not give any preference to the political parties. The only party that has any chance in competing with the tribes in municipal elections is the Islamic Action Front, but in spite of this, the IAF limit their participation in urban areas. While the “single non transferable vote” system does not give any special advantages to small parties, it curbs the ability of large parties to gain a majority and obliges them to divide the votes of their constituents among their candidates very carefully in multi member districts so that they all have an equal chance of winning.

It should be mentioned that ruling of the “Office of Interpretation of laws” which replaced the block vote system with the single non transferable vote system was formally a legal procedure but “unfair” in content because it deprived the IAF from winning a majority in the councils of larger municipalities. Consequently, the dominance of tribes on the election process was preserved.

2.2.3 Electing the mayor and formation of the governing majority

The last three elections were conducted in accordance with three different electoral systems that have different effects on the formation of the majority in municipality councils and the election of the mayor. In 2007, the single non transferable system was in effect and the IAF boycotted the elections. Consequently, there were no organized parties qualified to achieve a majority in any of the municipalities. Although the rest of the parties did not boycott the elections, but they nominated candidates in only a limited number of districts and supported independent candidates in other district. On the other hand, the election of the mayor is somewhat different because the voter in the SNTV system votes for one candidate in his district regardless of the number of seats allocated for that district, whereas all voters in all districts vote to choose a winner from all the candidates for the position of mayor. Therefore, the number of votes required for winning the position of mayor far exceeds the number of votes required to win a seat on the council. Additionally, candidates for mayor need supporters and allies in all districts.

The elections in 2003 were completely different, because the government integrated the adjacent municipalities together and reduced their numbers from 300 to only 93 and amended the municipality law with a temporary one during the absence of parliament. This allowed the government to assign the mayors of all municipalities and half of their council members, leaving the other half for elections. Additionally, since the IAF boycotted the elections the majority in all municipalities became government majorities.

The elections of 1999 were the most in conformity with the history of municipal action because the electoral system in effect was the block vote system which gives an advantage to the large parties and groups. This allowed the IAF to gain the majority in a number of the large municipalities, and tribal alliances to win the majority in a wide number of municipalities.

As for Ma'an, whose municipality is composed of one electoral district, the tribal alliances formed the main instrument for translating election votes into seats in the municipal council. During the last elections the alliances centered around deals to exchange support between municipal and parliamentary elections. In spite of the fact the position of mayor during the last two elections was filled by assignment, the traditional formula of municipal elections appears again in the form of sharing of the position mayor and membership in parliament between the large tribes. In Rusaifa, there were suspicions of government interference to influence the results of the elections. The electoral system does not provide any special arrangements for political parties in Mafraq and Jerash which weakens their role and allows the tribes to dominate the municipality councils.

2.2.4 The transparency and integrity of the electoral system

The electoral system does not contain any indication for electors on how to translate their votes into seats in municipal councils, but in spite of that, the electors do not think that there is any shortcoming in this regard, because there is a collective experience in this field derived from the application of the single non transferable vote system in parliamentary elections since 1993. But the main draw back here is changing of the electoral system from "block vote" to the "single non transferable vote" system, only one and a half months before

the elections. This imposed a new confusing reality on those who wanted to stand for election and burdened them with having to inform their constituents of the new situation and its repercussions.

The electoral system is perhaps clear in allowing electors to exercise their free choice between candidates, but lacks integrity because it does not provide a proper solution for the illiterate person who must tell the head of the voting committee of his choice of candidate, which is contradictory to the secrecy of voting. Furthermore, many educated voters, including some with high credentials claim before the election committee that they are illiterate, in order to reveal their choice of candidate in front of candidate representatives. But in spite of the fact that the law warns against this practice and provides for penalties, it is still rampant and the legislator ignores any need to find a solution for it.

There is also another deficiency relating to military personnel who were permitted to participate in large numbers for the first time in municipal elections in 2007. Any soldier can exercise his free choice between candidates in the municipality he belongs to, but when soldiers are brought in groups from their barracks to vote in adjacent areas where they are unfamiliar with its inhabitants or candidates, many believe that in this case they vote according to what they are told and not according to their free will.

Although the electoral system deals with candidates in an impartial manner, the tribes and large parties have a better chance of winning. But the electoral system provides a better opportunity for social pluralism since it limits the ability of larger forces to monopolize all or most of seats in the municipality council.

2.2.5 Electoral campaigns

a. The effects of the electoral system on electoral campaigns

The electoral system has a negative effect on electoral campaigns because the law does not specify fixed dates nominations and electoral campaigns and does not specify the length of the campaign. These details are left for the minister of municipal affairs to decide and this leaves the door open for some

potential candidates to initiate an “indirect” election campaign for themselves in the papers before the official start of the campaign.

The single non transferable vote system limits the effectiveness of election campaigns especially in rural areas, because the tribes decide to nominate a candidate from among themselves and strive to make all their members for him.

b. Political parties and election campaigns

The electoral system did not play a motivational role for political parties to widen the base of their supports and direct their campaigns to certain categories of the local community, on the contrary this system had a frustrating effect and lead some parties to lower the number of their candidates. The Islamic Action front which nominated around 100 candidates in the 1999 elections did not nominate more than 32 in 2007. Other parties resorted to forming a pact among themselves and with some independent candidates as what happened when the Democratic Jordanian Peoples party (Hashd), Communist party, Ba’ath party, progressive party, and Arabic party decided to form an alliance under the “National democratic movement” which put forward 27 candidates. But on the other hand, the adoption of the women’s quota encouraged main parties to nominate women for municipal elections for the first time in their history.

c. Subjects of election campaigns

The election campaigns of the candidates concentrate on all types of local services, and the same issues are repeated in all municipalities. Some others have special features like vitalizing of tourism in tourist areas and protection of the environment in areas that are subjected to high levels of pollution. But the political parties concentrate on public issues such as legislations, development, and unemployment.

Some of the most significant issues that were raised during the election campaigns were the development of infrastructure, creation of job opportunities in municipal projects, taking care of the cleanliness of the city, and building of libraries and parks. These issues reflect the agendas of local administrations through the priorities that the municipalities set for themselves in the light of real requirements, the positions stated in the municipalities’ law and through the demands expressed by citizens.

2.2.6 Dividing municipalities into electoral districts

The municipalities' law gives the minister of municipal affairs the authority to divide the municipalities into electoral districts in order to organize the participation of voters. Table no. (2-3) shows the number of districts and number of seats in the municipalities of the four areas subjected to the study.

Table no. (2-3)

Number of electoral districts and composition of municipal councils in Rusaifa, Ma'an, Mafraq and Jerash

Municipality	No. of districts	No. of members including the mayor	No. of seats in the women's quota	Total no. of council members
Rusaifa	5	11	3	14
Greater Ma'an	1	9	3	12
Grater Mafraq	5	9	3	12
Greater Jerash	3	8	2	10

There are no uniformed or proclaimed standards to be used as a basis in determining electoral districts, either with respect to the number of inhabitants or the number of representatives for each district. This results in huge discrepancies in the number of districts and distribution of seats. The number of districts in municipalities varies from one electoral district as in Ma'an to 23 districts as in Irbid and 27 in Amman. Additionally, there are similar differences in the number of seats in each district as they range from one to 8 seats.

Therefore, boundary delimitation is subject to various random standards, some of which naturally are the number of inhabitants, the administrative divisions adopted by the central government, the rural or urban nature of the area, the demographic nature of the area, and the tribal distribution.

No challenges were monitored during the last three years, but the main objections to boundary delimitation goes back to the decision by the government to the amalgamation of adjacent municipalities in 2002 and resulted into converting dozens of municipalities into mere precincts in other larger municipalities and represented by one or two councilors instead of

having its own council. This process faced wide criticism, either because of the deterioration of services that former municipalities used to enjoy or due to the decrease in the level of representation.

2.3 The political party system

2.3.1 Political parties and local government

a. Current parties and their magnitude

The number of existing political parties reached 15, they are: Islamic Action Front, Islamic Center Party, Democratic Arabic Islamic Movement (Dua'a), Jordanian Communist Party, Unified Peoples Party, Jordanian Democratic Party, Democratic Jordanian Peoples party (Hashd), Jordanian Arab Ba'ath Socialist party, Progressive Arab Ba'ath Party, National Constitutional Party, Risala Party, Direct national democratic Movement, Jordanian National Party, Unified Jordanian Front Party, Jordanian Life Party, Jordanian Welfare Party.

The new political parties' law for the year 2007 stipulates that the founding members of any political party must not be less than 500 members, residing in at least five governorates, with at least 10% coming from each of the governorates, compared with only 50 members according to the previous law issued in 1992. Consequently, 22 political parties failed in securing the necessary members to put their affairs in order, whereas most of the other parties found difficulty in securing this number, while a few parties presented a list of members exceeding the minimum numbers by 100 or 200 members.

None of the existing political parties has a definite vision toward securing local government. Meanwhile, half of these parties (seven parties) joined under the umbrella of "the Higher Coordination Committee for Opposition Parties" which includes the "Islamic Action Front", three leftist parties (the Communist Party, Hashd, Unified Peoples Party) and three nationalist parties (the Ba'ath Socialist Party, Progressive Ba'ath Party and the Direct National Democratic Movement).

The other eight parties are classified as moderate "centrist" parties and include two Islamic parties (Islamic Centrist Party and Dua'a) and the National

Constitutional Party which was formed through the integration of nine parties in 1997. The other five parties (Risala, Welfare party, national Party Unified front, and Life Party) have all been formed recently.

In legal terms, there are no ethnic or religious parties. The political parties' law stipulates that "parties are formed on the basis of citizenship without discrimination on sectarian, ethnic or factional merits, or on the basis of gender, origin or religion". In spite of that there are three parties that are categorized as operating within the domain of political Islam, that is to say that they combine between calling for the application of "Islamic Sharia Law" and participating in political life in accordance with existing legal and constitutional regulations.

b. Participation of political parties and their financing in elections

Out of the 15 licensed political parties there are three parties that have been licensed after the last elections in 2007, while the other eight parties are the ones that rectified their status in accordance with the new political parties' law for the year 2007, out of a total of 35 parties that existed before the new law. Those 12 parties were all licensed before 1992 and have all participated, in varying degrees in the 1995 elections, but mostly without stressing the political affiliation of their candidates so that they could get the full support of their tribes. But in the last elections, only three parties plus and one alliance of four parties under the name "National Democratic Movement" participated in elections with a total of 93 candidates and that includes those who announced their political affiliations and those who didn't.

There is a limited number of parties represented in municipal councils. As for the "Islamic Action Front", it had pulled out of the last elections on Election Day in protest over what they considered as fraud in the elections, but two of their candidates did not pull out in Karak and won seats in the council. Additionally, eight of its members ran for elections outside the parties' official list, two of whom won mayor-ship of a municipality and three others won membership in municipality councils. The "National Democratic Movement" which is composed of four parties and independent personalities has gained wins in 10 municipalities with a total of 15 members, three as mayors and 12 as council members, 10 of whom were women. Out of the 10 women, 2 had won by competition while the other eight won by virtue of the women's

quota. Finally, the Islamic Centrist Party which did not officially announce the names of their candidates announced the names of nine winners in eight municipalities, four of them as mayors.

As for party financing, the new political parties' law for the year 2007, approved a clause in the national budget for the first time in the history of political party activity in order to contribute in the financing of political parties. The financing of political parties' regulation was issued in September 2008 and granted each licensed party an annual sum of 50 thousand dinars paid in two installments, in June and December. Additionally, there is no local financing for parties at the governorate level outside of the central financing determined for the party as a whole.

c. Nomination of women by parties

The last three elections did not witness any women nominations with the exception of the latest elections in 2007, during which a quota for women was designated which was not less than 20%. The percentage of women nominated by the parties was 20.4%, three of whom were nominated in Rusaifa and two of them won membership in the council of Rusaifa. Also worth mentioning, is that one woman was at the head of one of the political parties during the last elections, but that party did not announce any nominations for that election.

2.3.3 The effects of the electoral and political party systems on performance

There are generally no effects for the political party's law on the performance of municipal councils, their mayors or local administration, even when the mayor or a council member belongs to a political party. They conduct themselves on the whole like the independent members, due to the weakness of political parties in dealing with the local administration.

The mayor is elected by the voters directly and not by the council members which gives the mayor a large degree of independence and additional powers to run the municipality.

2.3.4 Opposition within municipal councils

A number of municipality councils include representatives of opposition parties, but their numbers are limited. Additionally, there are dozens of councils in which independent members play an opposition role. This opposition role could be on personal or tribal backgrounds or a reflection of differences over priorities.

There are no prohibitions that prevent the opposition from introducing alternative programs and policies in municipal councils. But Rusaifa's experience refutes this possibility because of the lack any communication channels between the various parties and the municipal councils. The ruling majorities in councils on the whole demonstrate intolerance with any kind of public criticism to their performance. This limits from the ability of opposition parties in exercising free criticism in order not to strain relations within the council.

2.3.5 Social categories not represented

There was no indication in areas subjected to the study of the existence any social groups that are excluded from representation in their municipal areas in any manner that has any political significance. But there are groups of "gypsies" outside the studied areas that do not enjoy any representation. Additionally, the representation of smaller minorities such as the Kurds and Armenians is weak. Moreover, the representation of women, in spite of the huge leap in their representation through the quota is still not congruent with their numbers.

Gypsies still resist any form of organization and prefer living in closed groups, and Armenians have a school that teaches their own language.

2.4 Evaluation of elected officials

2.4.1 Election of the mayor

The mayor is elected simultaneously with the election of councilors but with a separate ballot paper for the mayor to be deposited in a special box designated for him. All registered voters in all districts participate in the election of the mayor, but each voter can vote for only one candidate in his electoral district, for membership in the municipality council.

Since the mayor is elected by all voters in the municipality, compared with the council member who are elected only in their electoral districts, he enjoys a great deal of moral power, which he would not have if he had been elected by the councilors. Concerning jurisdiction, the position of mayor is not honorary but carries a lot of authority, as he is the chief of the executive body in the municipality.

2.4.2 Rules regulating the operation of the municipality councils

The mayor calls for a meeting of the council on a date designated by him. He prepares the meetings agenda, shares its sessions, and represents the council in signing contracts like mortgages, rents, loans, conciliations, bids, contracting, buying and selling, in accordance with the effective regulations. Additionally, he represents the municipality before official circles and is considered the head of its executive body. But on the other hand, the mayor must comply with the decisions taken by the council and work on implementing them.

The tools and mechanisms for subjecting the mayor for accountability before the council members or directly before the electorate are not clear, especially if the mayor enjoys a majority in the council. But one of the mechanisms that can be used is calling for an extraordinary session providing that it is approved by two thirds of members and the purpose of the meeting is stated beforehand. In this instance, the mayor must comply within one week of the call for the meeting. Additionally, a complaint can be lodged to the governor pertaining to any grave misuse of power by the mayor. Furthermore, any citizen who has an interest in a subject on the agenda has the right to participate in the discussion of that subject, in view of the fact that the council sessions are open, except for the time when decisions are taken.

2.4.2 Orientation programs for new members

The orientation programs that the newly elected council members are not adequate. The only available programs are given by civil society institutions and are oriented more towards women rather than men. But during the last

couple of years, the European Union and some American institutions financed by USAID have been more active in conducting rehabilitation programs for council members. Examples of these programs that have been conducted in Mafrq are “Development of municipalities and strengthening of participation program” conducted through the information net for women in municipal councils, and “Basic administrative skills” conducted through the local society development program.

The National Assembly of Jordanian Women’s Committees, headed by princess Basma Bint Talal, also conducts training and orientation programs for women candidates and winners of council seats. The most recent of these programs during 2008 – 2009 was “Enhancing women’s participation in public life in municipalities” in participation with the National Jordanian Committee for Women’s Affairs and the support of the United Nations Development Program and UNIFM.

2.4.4 The size of the municipality council and its duties

There are big differences in the sizes of municipality council in accordance with the differences in the sizes of cities and their populations. The size of municipal councils varies between a minimum of 5 to 8 seats (in addition to two seats for women’s quota) which is the most widely spread category and can be found in 76 municipalities, and a maximum of 34 elected members and 34 other members assigned by the cabinet in Greater Amman, including the mayor.

Municipalities have a wide range of duties which includes at least 29 functions, such as: planning of towns and streets, Issuing of building permits, Sewerage and drainage of rain water, regulation of public markets, regulation of handicrafts and industries, building of public transport stations, monitoring of public shops and stores, establishment of public parks, fire hydrants and prevention of fires, taking precautions for floods, relief of disaster victims, establishment of sport and cultural institutions, monitoring of food stuffs, creation and monitoring of slaughter houses, general cleanliness, health inspection, protection of public health, establishment of cemeteries, prevention of hazards, monitoring and regulation of roaming salesmen, licensing of advertisements, pulling down of

old faltering buildings, administration of municipality properties, and others.

As for the procedures adopted in making decisions, the mayor presents the issues for discussion which are submitted to a vote if necessary. The decision is taken in accordance with the vote of the majority of members present. But when the votes are equal, the side that the chairman voted for is considered the winner. If both the mayor and his deputy are not present, the session is chaired by the oldest member.

There was no significant public criticism in relation to the magnitude of municipal councils by political parties or the media during the last three years, with the exception of Jerash, which raised criticisms in the media claiming that the number of council members is not proportional with size of population. There were also similar criticisms leveled by some political parties especially the Islamic Action Front concerning the size of the municipal council in Rusaifa.

2.4.5 Monitoring of municipal administration by the municipal council

The administrative offices and employees come under the supervision of the mayor who is the head of the executive, while the municipality manager, who is the senior employee and is appointed by the minister of municipal affairs, is the direct manager of the executive apparatus. Hence, there is no direct authority for municipal councils over administrative offices, save what is raised about them on the agenda of the council. But there is nothing preventing councils from conducting investigations and obtaining information on the operation of administrative departments, providing that this is done with the approval of the mayor or a decision from the council.

2.4.6 Performance evaluation mechanisms

The municipal law and pertinent regulations do not specify any provisions for evaluating the performance of elected members and officials on a permanent basis during the periods between election cycles. But there are other ways for achieving that through civil society organizations which can conduct seminars and workshops with the participation of the mayor and council members. The municipal councils do not have any of the modern systems for follow up and

evaluation of standards of performance that are based on pre-determined goals pertinent to the quality and availability of services. Furthermore, most municipalities suffer from administrative congestion and masked unemployment, and require restructuring and training of employees to improve their productivity and performance.

2.4.7 Official procedures for impeachment of elected members

There are three instances for impeachment of elected officials and nullification of their election, two of which pertain to the elections and the third pertains to their subsequent performance and conduct:

- a. When a member is convicted by a court of law of an election crime stated in the election law then his election is nullified whether he was the mayor or a council member.
- b. If a voter contests the validity of the election of the mayor or a council member, within 15 days of the publication of election results then the court, if convinced, can revoke the election of the person contested and affirm the election of some one else for mayor-ship or membership of the council.
- c. The mayor or any council member will forfeit their position in the following instances: (1) If he misses three consecutive council sessions or a total of sessions that amount to one quarter of the sessions held by the council during the year. (2) If he works on a case brought against the council, whether as an attorney, expert or agent, or purchased the rights of something disputed with the council, or acquired that right by any other means. (3) If he concludes a deal with the council or was a beneficiary in any deal conducted with the council or its representative. (4) If he loses any of the qualifications that he must have in accordance with the law.

There is no available information on the impeachment of any elected member or official during the last three years.

Section 2

2.5 Administration of elections

2.5.1 Election Administration

The minister of municipal affairs is responsible for assigning the “chief of election” in each municipality, who is usually a local governor. The chief of election then forms the necessary committees. The administration of elections includes the following:

- Municipal elections process begins with the assignment of the “chief of election” for each municipality by the minister of municipal affairs. The chief of election then assigns the necessary committees, preparation and revision of the electoral list and then publishing for the public. Any one objecting to the list can appeal the decision of the election registration committee before the court of first instance, which has jurisdiction in the area within one week of publication of the list.
- The appellee receives notice of the appeal within three days of submitting the appeal. The head of the court issues a ruling within one week of sending the notice and his decision is final. The head of the registration committee then signs each of the lists pages, thereby becoming final. Each candidate has the right to obtain a copy of the final election list.
- The minister assigns a period for nominations and a date for voting and notifies the chief of election of that. The chief of election has to announce that to the public at least 5 days before the nomination period.
- Nominations for membership of the municipal elections begin by submitting the nomination form approved by the minister to the chief of election during the designated period. The form has to be properly signed and accompanied by a receipt verifying that the candidate has paid to the municipality accountant a sum of 100 dinars for the first and second category municipalities and a sum of 50 dinars for third and fourth category municipalities as insurance. It should be mentioned that first category municipalities are the centers of governorates and

any other municipality with a population exceeding 100 thousand inhabitants. The second categories of municipalities are the centers of provinces and municipalities with a population between 15 thousand and 100 thousand people. The third category is the centers of districts and any municipality with a population in excess of 5 thousand and less than 15 thousand inhabitants. The fourth and final category is all other municipalities that do not fall under any of the other three categories.

- The chief of election designates one or more poll centers, the time for beginning of voting and the time for closing of ballot boxes, providing that the voting period is not less than 10 hours. The chief of election assigns an election committee for each polling center and provide the head of each committee with one ore more ballot boxes, two copies of the electoral list and an adequate number of ballot papers approved by the minister.
- The chief of election assigns one or more committees for the counting of votes. The committee commences its work at the location of polling and the candidates or their agent have the right to be present at the counting process.
- The chief of election announces the name of the winner to the position of mayor, the names of winners to the membership of the council and the names of winners on the women's quota. The minister of municipal affairs announces the results in the official news paper and forwards to each winner an attestation of their election.
- The validity of the election requires that more than half of the electorate cast their votes, but if that is not achieved during the designated time, then the process is resumed the following morning and continues for another 10 hours. After that, the boxes are closed and the results become final, regardless of the number of voters.

2.5.2 Observation of the last three municipal elections

Local observers from civil society organizations and international observers were not permitted to observe and evaluate the freedom and fairness of the elections in general during any of the last three municipal elections. Therefore,

none of the local, national, regional or international organizations participated in the observation of elections.

2.5.3 The fairness of the last three municipal elections

The administrative framework of the elections did not lead to the organization of free and fair elections in the latest three elections, especially the last one, which witnessed the mass participation of military personnel and the one before that when the citizens were deprived from electing the mayors and half of the council members.

The main shortcomings of the administrative framework that regulates the elections is illustrated in the governmental supervision over the whole election process, which tarnishes the independency of the elections, and not permitting the observation of elections, in addition to other discrepancies such as the public voting of illiterate persons which violates the secrecy of voting.

The report issued by the National Center for Human Rights (an independent government institution), is considered the most important official report for the evaluation of elections, but their latest report issued on the 11th of September, 2007 did not deal with a number of complaints that they received. However, it dealt with 11 different types of violations to the fairness of elections.

2.5.4 Effectiveness of election administration

Election administration activities need to be improved especially in the field voter registration, design of ballot papers, voting process and administration of polling centers. Other activities, such as registration of candidates, counting of votes and administration of election disputes are considered successful.

2.6 Voter participation

2.6.1 Rate of participation in municipal elections

The minimum age for voting is 18 completed years on the first day of the year of elections, so the youngest voter would be 18 years and seven months when elections are conducted in July.

The rate of voting in Amman was 50%, but the rate of voting in most other areas surpasses this, especially in rural areas where the rate of voting is higher than urban areas. As an example of that in the municipal areas studied, we find that the rate in Ma'an was 52% and 58% in Jerash.

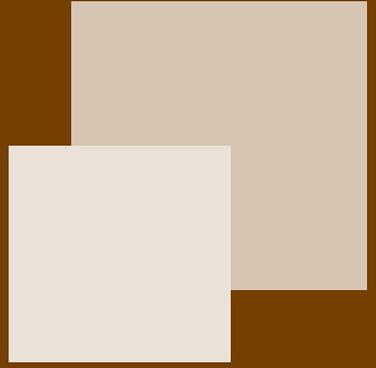
The rate of voting on the whole, in the last municipal elections reached 56% and rises up to 62% if we exclude the capital Amman, while the rate of participation in parliamentary elections was higher than the rate of participation in municipal elections and reached 57.2% in the last parliamentary elections.

There are no big differences on the whole in the rate of participation between the genders, as it was 57% for females and 55% for males, while at the level of municipal elections, we find that the gap is bigger and recorded 6 percentage points, 65% for females and 59% for males.

2.6.2 Voter education

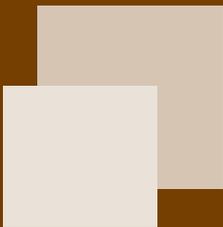
There are no voter education programs at the local level. We find that much of the effort exerted in this sense is done through radio and television, but besides that, there are some initiatives by some independent media institutions. Most initiatives are conducted by civil society organizations, in addition to some important local initiatives conducted by Hussein Bin Talal University through the university radio.

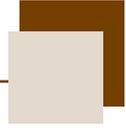
The Ministry of Municipal Affairs announced that they had taken the necessary measures to help people with special needs without specifying those measures. While there were no measures taken for this purpose in Ma'an, persons with special needs were allowed to vote on the ground floor in Rusaifa. The old and the blind usually come to the polls accompanied by their kin or supporters of the candidates they wish to elect, while the illiterate voter is allowed to choose a member from the election committee to write the names of candidates that he tells him in front of election members.



Chapter Three

Interactive Democracy





First Section: Institutions

3-1 Local Authorities and Interactive Democracy

3-1-1 Openness

From a practical point of view, Municipal Council meetings are not open for citizens; in spite of the fact the Municipal Law guarantees them the right to attend those meetings. This is mainly because citizens are not used to practicing this right which is unfamiliar to them, moreover, the Municipal Councils do not take any actions to inform the local community of the dates of those meetings or encourage them to attend. But the Municipalities of Ma'an and Rusaifa organize special meetings for citizens at the City Hall, and there is a public committee in Ma'an Municipality that follows upon the activities of the Municipal Council, while in Rusaifa there are public committees at the districts level that form a link between the citizens and the Municipal Council.

Ma'an Municipality uses written advertisements and sign boards to inform the public of the open meetings for citizen participation; sometimes it prints invitation cards in addition to communicating with other parties, while the Municipality of Rusaifa uses written and oral invitation for this purpose. There was no mention of any open meetings with citizens either in Mafraq or Jerash.

3-1-2 Integrity and Equality

There are no standard programs or policies to verify that the interests of different groups are observed equally. But in most cases, these groups by their nature work on protecting their interests on their own, but patronage and "favoritism" are not completely absent.

The report of Ma'an has reported complaints about the role of nepotism in the distribution of services. During the months of September and August, 2008; 14 complaints were made about public services through the local radio of the King Hussein University, but without reaching the level of accusation of being biased and unfair.

3-1-3 Transparency

A. Municipal documents which are available to citizens

The Municipal documents that are available to citizens include the decisions of the Municipal Council, its projects and instructions directed to citizens. Those

instructions are usually announced in local papers, in the special billboards of the Municipality and in the streets of the city. Moreover, the citizens in Jerash can get acquainted with organizational blueprints and relevant decisions, and in Ma'raq citizens may acquaint themselves with the available documents through the services sector in the Municipality. The Municipality of Ma'an issues a bulletin which includes information useful to the public. The Rusaifa Municipality Council uses meetings, seminars and sometimes radio, as well as workshops to inform citizens of decisions and projects. In Ma'raq, the municipality advertises operations that are related to the public through loud speakers, it also has an internet site but most people are not aware of it.

B. Municipality Websites

Neither Ma'an nor Jerash municipalities have an electronic website to provide information on the municipality, its divisions and activities. The Ma'an Municipality Council intends to request assistance from King Hussein University to set up a website for the municipality. In Jerash the issue is still under discussion. On the other hand, Ma'raq Municipality has a website but no one knows about it, while Rusaifa has a website which has not been activated.

Internet is still limited in Jordan generally, only 12% of the population uses it. Therefore, it is not a regular method to receive information in any of the study's areas. This is applicable on all areas outside the capital. University and college students are the largest group of Internet users.

C. Transparency in discussing Municipality Balance Sheet

With the exception of Ma'an, the municipalities of Jerash, Rusaifa and Ma'raq discuss the budget on the municipality council's level only; this means that if some citizens have opinions or suggestions regarding the budget, the real available area is to convince their representatives in the municipality to adopt it.

Ma'an municipality council discusses the budget in public and through several sessions held for this purpose after the Finance Department in the municipality has prepared the general outlines of the budget. But it is abundantly clear that the local communities are not aware of the importance of discussing the budget.

D. Transparency in taking decisions and advertising vacancies

Municipalities follow valid rules and regulations according to valid legislations when taking decisions on several levels. There are weekly decisions, the decisions taken by mayors according to recommendations of the relevant departments or specialized committees.

When the matter pertains to tendering, leasing, purchasing or other contracts, special committees deal with it such as tendering or purchasing committees. The role of mayors is restricted to the endorsement of the recommendations of those committees. Vacant jobs are advertised in national newspapers for one week on average. Jobs which require degrees and experience are usually advertised in the newspapers, while jobs that do not require advanced qualifications are filled according to the discretion of the mayor. Some municipal councils open new and unnecessary positions just to fulfill the vast demand of the local community for employment.

3-1-4 Response to citizens needs

The studies of the four municipalities reflect their willingness to receive complaints at certain sections. In Ma'an there is a complaints register office under the supervision of the municipality secretary, which receives complaints about services and other claims in person or by phone, which are then followed up by the executive departments of the municipality.

In Jerash, the complaints bureau receives written complaints that are referred to relevant authorities to solve them and if necessary, they are put before at the municipality council. Replies to these complaints are made in writing. Rusaifa Municipality established a section to receive citizens and direct them to the right department to take the suitable action. The municipality of Mafraq express their willingness to receive complaints, but they suffer from tribal attitudes of citizens who come seeking favoritism and wish to have their demands fulfilled immediately, and who do not hesitate to solicit the mayor or one of the council members for this.

There are no accurate statistics on complaints about Municipal services during the last year in any of areas under study, it was replaced by estimations. In Ma'an the estimated number reaches 20 complaints monthly, most of them around issues like building regulations violation, dust, stray dogs and garbage. In Jerash, the average number of complaints reaches 5-7 daily. In Rusaifa, the number of complaints is small and centers around issues like opening streets and removing the rubble hills left by the phosphate mines. According to estimations, the rate of complaints that were dealt with or solved in the last year is between 70-90%: 70% in Jerash, 80% in Ma'an, 90% in Rusaifa. There are no numbers or estimations regarding repeated complaints.

3-2 Civil society, private sector, international groups and media

3-2-1 contribution of civil society organizations in implementing local policies

There are 29 civil society organizations in Ma'an, 26 in Jerash, 39 in Rusaifa

and 45 in Mafraq.

The CSO's in Ma'an include 25 non-governmental organizations, 19 charities' 4 cultural organizations, one environmental organization and one women organization branch. There are also 4 branches for trade unions but no public branches to any political party. In Jerash, there are 12 charities, 6 cultural clubs, 3 branches of trade unions, 2 branches of political parties, 3 sports clubs and youth centers. In addition to the 45 NGOs in Mafraq, there are 12 private organizations, working in social, cooperative, health, culture, and sports fields. In Rusaifa, most of the organizations are considered local private organizations.

Civil society organizations do not interfere usually in the formation and implementation of local policies, which are decided by the municipal council. The civil society organizations have their own agenda, while municipalities have their own agenda but there is some cooperation between them, especially in public activities like seminars and workshops held by either of them.

3-2-2 partnership between municipalities and private sector companies

The studies on Ma'an and Mafraq agree that there is no actual/real partnership between the municipality and the private sector, except some private sector companies winning service tenders in Ma'an, or renting lands in Mafraq. In Jerash, the number of private partnerships with the aim of providing services is 91 including property leases, providing services, improving the services level in the city and fulfilling the needs of the local community.

The study on Ma'an drew attention to the limited contribution of the private sector in social responsibility towards the municipality and local community, especially the large companies in the area such as the phosphate company, the fertilizers company and the industrial zone and others.

This partnership with the private sector was received with praise and satisfaction in both of Jerash and Rusaifa municipalities. The municipal council in Jerash considers this partnership an important element in drawing up of future policies of the municipality, and the municipal council in Rusaifa discusses any deficiency in work and seeks to find suitable solutions, meanwhile there is coordination with the phosphate company to remove the company's excavation residues from recent decades. This partnership was encouraged by local organizations and media in both Jerash and Rusaifa.

3-2-3 partnership between municipalities and civil society organizations

There are several partnership cases between Jerash and environmental societies and sports clubs, cultural clubs and cooperative societies in the city. Also there is a limited partnership between Ma'an municipality and governorate and some civil society organizations; the municipality provides some assistance to those organizations to provide services in health, social and cultural fields.

This partnership was praised by the municipal council in Ma'an which is looking forward to developing this partnership and maximizing its benefits. Jerash municipal council also expressed its satisfaction regarding this partnership which contributes to the achievement of the municipality's goals, especially enhancing its cultural roles and providing a clean environment. Those partnerships also receive proper coverage from media sources which call for more opportunities to be given to civil society.

3-2-4 the role of private companies in providing basic services

Four private corporations provide communications and IT services in the Kingdom, after the privatization of Jordan Communication Company in 2002. Electricity distribution is provided currently in Jordan by three companies, each one has a concession area, and two of those companies were privatized in the summer of 2008.

The municipal council in Ma'an received the privatization of some basic services with some discomfort at the beginning. The council noticed wide criticism and doubt in the national media about its feasibility and benefit for citizens, but after a while, the council realized the difference it has made in the quality of services, especially in the communication sector and praised it. But, in spite of that there is still some general criticism to the policy of privatization.

While in Jerash, the municipal council feels that the public sector provides basic services with less cost and stability in prices, against the higher cost of the private sector services. The Jerash study perceives that attitudes to privatization as one of the faces of globalization has changed, consequently it receives praise from the parties that are pro globalization. The parties that believe the role of the government in providing services, do not support privatization and consider it not in the interest of the poor and middle class.

3-2-5 cooperation between municipalities and civil society organizations

A. regular meetings

No regular/periodical meetings or specialized meetings were noticed in Ma'an and Jerash dedicated for the purposes of direct cooperation between municipal councils and civil society organizations. Some individual meetings are held but they are not up to the level of real cooperation. But, in Mafraq, a "town dialogue club" was established in 2007 under the patronage of Mafraq Cultural Club and Mafraq Chamber of Commerce with the aim of assembling the activists and local community elite to talk with officials in open meetings which discuss the society and town issues. In Rusaifa, regular meetings are held for communication between the municipal council and civil society organization when necessary in order to devise better plans and solutions.

B. treatment of disputes which lead to violence

Civil society organizations do not have programs to deal with disputes that may lead to violence, such as systematic deprivation against particular demographic groups, or discrimination and in-equality in job opportunities. But there are other mechanisms that work in this direction, key among which are private social organizations (non-official) such as the "diwan" or "tribal meetings which provide frameworks for solving the disputes among the groups themselves, and between them and society or governmental authorities or the municipal council. Those social frameworks are widely seen in Ma'an, as the "diwans" work on managing the local policy efficiently. They are described as utilities for managing the local policies and public meetings which go beyond the ties of kinship, which gives them an extra advantage because they are not subject to having to obtain prior approval for public gatherings.

3-2-6 international donors and international NGOs

Some international donors are active across the four studied areas in different forms. The "South Society for Special Education" in Ma'an received international donations during the last five years which exceeded one million dinar to finance the largest center for treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of people with special needs in the southern governorates. The British Cultural Council also financed the establishment of a local radio and provided English learning Programs for Imams of mosques. Moreover, international NGOs have financed the establishment and management of "Masahelnour Hospital for Chest Diseases".

In Jerash, international donors financed several projects such as: the third tourism project in Jerash at the cost of JD8 million (World Bank), development

of municipalities and enhancing local projects (USAID), improvement of infrastructure (World Bank and French Agency), and protection of natural water resources (USAID). Among other projects implemented by international donors in other municipalities was the elimination of poverty and unemployment program which was implemented by the European Commission in cooperation with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in 18 municipalities from 2004 – 2008 at the value of EUR30 million.

There is no direct or clear influence for the international organizations and donors in the administration of Ma'an city, with the exception of the local radio financed by the British Council for Al Hussein University, which was transformed into a local tool for following up and monitoring of local administration at different levels. The Jerash study perceives that the influence of donors on the local administration is indirect. Additionally, there are no regular frameworks or clubs through which international parties can participate in the formation and decision making in the different study areas.

3-2-7 local media

There are no media sources of any kind in the study areas except the local radio in Ma'an which was established two years ago as a community radio managed by the Studies and Society Development Center in Al Hussein University. The radio was able to provide a special experience in the community development media and in the support of interactive democracy between the local administration and the local community.

The local communities in the study areas rely on obtaining information on local affairs from national media like radio, TV, official news agency, daily and weekly newspapers and private radios. The government owns the national radio and TV channels and the official Jordanian news agency "Petra". On the newspapers level, the government and related corporations own more than one third of shares in the largest daily newspaper in the Kingdom and around one third of shares in another important daily. The other four dailies and tens of weeklies are all independent. Hence, we can say that the government owns the larger part of media sources.

Second section: Operations

3-3 forms and means of communication with the public

The following table is a brief on the most important means and forms of communication used in the study areas:

Table 3-1

Types of communication with citizens used last year

1=not used 2=used from 1-3 times 3=used more than 3 times

		Ma'an	Jerash	Mafraq	Rseifeh
Providing general information					
1-1	Distribution of materials (flyers, periodicals...)	3	1	3	2
1-2	Ordinary meetings with media sources	3	2	2	3
1-3	Exhibitions	2	2	2	2
1-4	Scheduled programs in local media	2	2	3	2
1-5	Internet and emails	2	1	3	1
1-6	Other means	-	A	-	1

Consulting the public

2-1	Consulting meetings	3	2	3	3
2-2	Social clubs	3	2	-	3
2-3	Public opinion polls	2	1	2	2
2-4	Other means	-	B	-	-

Making of public decisions

3-1	Working groups on certain topics	2	1	-	3
3-2	General work shops	3	2	-	2
3-3	Other means	-	-	-	1

Joint implementation of decisions

4-1	Partnership with private sector & society org.	2	3	-	3
4-2	Other means	-	C	-	1

Other types of communication

5-1	Other types of communication	-	D	-	E
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(A)-mail, local newspapers, sign boards, (B) random individual meetings and calls, (C) executive board of the municipality, (D) seminars, lecture, public celebrations, (E) indirect meetings (weddings and funerals)

3-4 communication with citizens

3-4-1 evaluation as a part of municipal communication with the community

Jerash municipality does not have any evaluation means or methods as a part of communication operation with the community. Rusaifa municipality depends on evaluations and feedbacks to communicate with citizens and know their opinions on its projects and procedures. There is continuous evaluation for positive and negative effects of decisions taken by the council.

The Mafraq, the municipal council asserts its belief in the importance of communication with citizens in the assessment of the work and programs of the municipality, because they are always subject to questions from their electoral base on what they have achieved from their promises in their election programs. Therefore, the municipal council tries through evaluation methods, to justify its programs and advertise its future plans and apologize for any shortages in public service, and also to explain that this shortage is a result of scarce financial sources, non-efficient labor force, shortage of equipment and lack of public awareness and participation in responsibility.

Mafraq municipality adopts a “complaints box” system. They also receive citizens and follow up the municipal news in newspapers as well as criticism and complaints in the radio in order to overcome faults and improve performance. Rusaifa municipality expresses its readiness to re consider its decisions and programs in accordance with the results of evaluation process and specialized

committees reports. There are several evaluation tools in Ma'an at the level of the council, the heads of sections and departments in the municipality, but this has to be developed to achieve the basic conditions for a reliable system for building policies and reviewing them.

3-4-2 Evaluation as a part of communication processes for the civil society with the local community

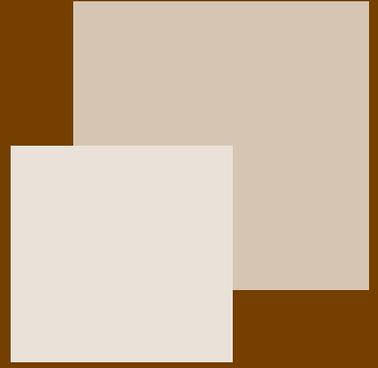
In Jerash, the civil society organizations do not depend on assessments as a part of communications process with the society as a whole. The civil society organizations in Ma'raq show interest in communication and cooperation with the municipal council, and are keen to involve them in cultural and scientific conferences they organize. Furthermore, those organizations participate in the activities and celebrations organized by the municipality on public occasions and national celebrations. Civil society organizations communicate with the public in Rusaifa by holding meetings and seminars to assess performance and communicate actively, while in Ma'an it is difficult to gauge this because of the limited existence of civil society organizations and their limited role.

The rate of participation in the communication process with the public in Jerash is 10% and in Rusaifa the rate rises up to 70% as a maximum, while the rate of participation in meetings and gatherings in Ma'an is remarkably high, and the instability that the city experienced recently increased the interest in public affairs.

The Municipality of Jerash believes that the key obstacles preventing communication with the public are: illiteracy, work hours difference between municipality and other departments, cultural elements, ignorance of the role of municipality. The Rusaifa municipality thinks that key obstacles in the area are: illiteracy, cultural differences, indifference, unemployment, difficulty of communication with women, in addition to lack of confidence in some institutions.

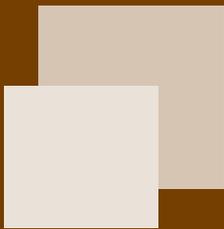
3-5 referendums and public initiatives

Neither the Jordanian constitution nor any of the legislations contain any text on referendums at the local or national levels. The only time when the principle of carrying out an official questionnaire was discussed, was during the preparation of the "National Charter" in 1991. This charter is a guidance document for the government and the society that represented a new social contract. Later on, this referendum was dropped lest the charter which only has moral power become stronger than the constitution (1952) which is issued by a Parliamentary resolution and ratified by the King.



Chapter Four

From Evaluation to Recommendation



Conclusions:

General Framework of Jordanian Cities

The Jordanian cities, were formed because of the quick urbanization, the internal migration from the countryside to the cities and the flow of immigrants from abroad, which led to the quick urban growth. Moreover, international crises influenced the flow of immigrants into Jordan during the last two decades, which had its stamp on the structure and formation of Jordanian cities. The rate of population in urban areas reached 83% in 2008, with an increase of 5% on what it was in 2003.

The report showed that the historical circumstances by which the Jordanian cities were formed left a clear impact on some of the aspects of the local policy practice. This is reflected through the types of settlement. The study shows richness and diversification in the types of formation of Jordanian cities from well known historical cities to country side that developed into civil administration centers because of centralization and government actions and finally cities that were established near the capital due to the flow of immigrants and refugees.

The Jordanian cities have a kind of diversity which achieved an advanced level of social integration; meanwhile there are indicators that the quality of life in most areas is still humble. This is obvious in the high level of poverty and unemployment in those societies compared with the national level. The quality of life indicators decline the further you go from the capital.

The inputs indicate that the development directed to most of the locals in Jordanian cities and towns are selective and limited to mining and service oriented projects that lack any social dimension. Even the large projects in some cities still have stronger connections with the capital than they have with the towns around them, which means they have only a small role in the social productivity and the development of local communities surrounding these large projects.

The indicators relating to municipalities demonstrate the importance of their social, cultural and service roles. But the role of municipalities in the local policy administration still needs more awareness. They lack many tools and the infrastructure, which would enable them to carry out this role more effectively. Most municipalities do not have a “city hall” to provide a venue for public activities like cultural and social activities and public discussions. The municipality budgets also lack the budgetary articles for this kind of expenditure.

The civil society organizations in Jordanian cities and towns are not widely spread. In fact, they hardly have any role in some cities, while the relations

between civil institutions and municipalities are described as weak and there is mutual unawareness of the importance of these relations. This is more evident in the relations between municipalities and the private sector, because the private sector is still far from assuming its social responsibility. One of the conclusions within the general framework about the cities is the scarcity of information available on cities and their contradictory nature from different sources.

The Jordanian cities are connected by economic relationships with their rural and Bedouin surroundings and are mutually dependent on each other. Additionally, the fact that the main cities are administrative centers increases the ties of surrounding societies with them as services centers. Taxes constitute the most important source of revenue for municipalities which amounts to more than half of their income.

The level of income per person in the cities included in the study is still lower than the national average by around JD200. The per capita income in those cities is around JD883. This applies also to other indicators concerning the quality of life in these cities, such as the high rate of infant mortality, in addition to a lower rate of life expectancy, which is 70.5 years for men and 72 years for women compared with the national average, which is 71.6 for men and 74.4 women.

In summary, the strength of Jordanian cities, on the whole, lies in social integration and harmony and at the same time, in the diversity and ability to receive and communicate. Meanwhile, the humble rates of development, quality of life, non-maturity of civil society and non-awareness of private sector to its role; limit the possibility of developing local democracies and spreading values and principles of governance.

A. Representative Democracy

The legislative framework represented in the municipalities law which organize elections and administration of municipalities' affairs is still under discussion; The legislative framework represented in the municipalities law, which regulates elections and administration of municipality affairs is still under discussion. The merger of municipalities, in which 300 municipalities were merged into only 93 still lacks consensus. There are many calls, both at the local and national levels for the reconsideration of this decision and returning to the past formula.

The voices calling for the return to the former formula believe that the merging process has created a new state of centralism in favor of the center of the municipality, (the city in which the municipality is located), at the account of other towns and villages which formerly enjoyed the existence of independent

municipalities. This led to the emergence of selective and unfair distribution of services, infrastructure and non-real representation.

Although this experience did not have its full scope, and we should not hasten to judge it, but one of the alternatives that are currently on the table, is selecting a limited number of municipalities which include distant towns that suffer the negative effects of the merging process, in order to re divide them into new municipalities.

The first municipal elections were held in 1925 in accordance with the municipal law, which was issued in the same year, following the establishment of the East Jordan Principality in 1921. In 1928, a new municipal law was issued, which allowed women to participate in municipal elections. The latest municipal law was issued in 2007, according to which the last elections were carried out. The most significant amendment in the 2007 law was that it treated the municipality as a private institution, financially independent and has a service and developmental role at the same time. The approval of the developmental dimension was a major addition to the role of municipalities. The law also lowered the voting age from 19 to 18 years in order to expand the public participation in the elections. The law allocated no less than 20% from the municipal council seats to women, in order to give them an opportunity to be active in public decision making. It also allowed the integration of women in municipal activities. The law also adopted the one-vote-principle (single non transferable vote) to be a voting mechanism and allowed the army and security personnel to practice their voting right.

It should be noted, that current law has maintained the clauses depriving the Aqaba Special Economic Zone and the Petra Zone Authority from having their own freely elected municipal councils or electing their own representatives from the local society to the boards of administrative authorities, in addition to depriving the citizens of Amman from electing half of the members of the Greater Amman municipal council, who are appointed by the government. Furthermore, the electoral law (the single non transferable vote), in spite of the fact that it was adopted according to the interpretation of the Special Bureau for the Interpretation of laws whose interpretations ascend to the rank of laws, yet this electoral law is marred by injustice because this decision was in clear contradiction to the provisions of the law which pertain to the electoral process. Furthermore, the first elections that were conducted in accordance with this law have shown manifestations of some shortcomings in the legal framework of municipal elections which include the following:

- The minimum legal age for voting is over eighteen and a half years of age.
- The voting of illiterate voters by announcing the name of whom they choose in front of the voting committee in order to have it written on

the ballot paper contradicts the secrecy of voting and encourages the violation of the elections integrity

- Voting of army personnel is not in conformity with the right of citizens to vote in their municipal districts.
- Failure to define the date for municipal elections in the electoral law, in addition to the period for nominations and election campaigns.
- Absence of any clear criteria for the distribution and delimitation of electoral districts, either when it concerned the size of the population or the number of representatives from each district in the municipal council. Consequently, there were large discrepancies in the number of districts and the distribution of seats.

Other important conclusions reached by the report include the inexperience of council members in the basics of the municipal work and the legal provisions regulating it, the absence of an institutionalized process for the assessment of municipality performance and its elected councils. This is also complicated by the weak participation of political parties in the running of municipal operations. Other conclusions recorded include still depriving expatriate workers and investors who have resided in the kingdom for a long time from participating in municipal elections in the areas where they live.

Also noted was the absence of guarantees to carry out free elections in the Kingdom's municipalities as they are held under the total control of the governmental without any observation by the local civil society or by international NGOs.

The weakness of political parties in the kingdom is reflected significantly on the state of municipal life, and kept those institutions under the monopoly of tribes and their allies. There is indifference towards the financing of election campaigns of parties in municipalities. The weakness of political parties has forced some of them to enter local elections in many municipalities without announcing it clearly. In summary, the last municipal elections results in 2007 indicate the presence of representatives of only 3 parties in 22 municipalities: the Islamic Action Front, National Democratic Party and the Islamic Center Party which won the position of mayor in 9 municipalities, while the parties obtained 8 seats through the women quota. On the other hand, the research team did not note in any of the experience of the municipalities under study any clear vision by political parties regarding local rule whether in relation to election campaigns or candidates programs.

The participation of women in local rule is still low, while the women quota in the last elections in 2007 worked on improving the women's position in local administration. There was no party nominations for women in the previous three municipal elections except in the last election. The rate of women nominations by political parties was around 20.4%.

There are a number of elements behind the weak role of political parties in local rule and local elections. Most of them stem from the weakness of parties themselves because they do not have a platform, so their interest in municipal work is limited. In addition to the weak financial sources and the absence of democracy inside the party itself which is based on central structure, that gives the executive leadership the final decision regarding the official nominations of the party.

The available indicators point out that the rate of participation in elections in the governorates cities is higher than the rate in the capital city. The rate of participation in voting for the election of members of the capital's municipal council was 50%, while the rate of participation in voting in other municipalities in the kingdom was 62%.

The report also pointed out that civil society organizations do not have programs or vision on local rule and the performance of municipalities, and there are no regular or designated meetings in most municipalities with the different sectors of civil society. While some of those institutions are active in social or humanity or charity areas, others are active under religious cover in large charity works especially in the month of Ramadan. Likewise, the relations of municipalities with the private sector are still limited, and partnership prospects are limited to certain areas despite the willingness of municipal councils, civil society organizations and the media to go into partnerships with the private sector. At the same time, there are clear indicators on the limited contribution of the private sector in carrying out its social responsibility towards the municipality and local community, especially large companies in the municipal areas.

B. Interactive Democracy:

Interactive democracy is the face of democracy and local participation, through which the level of participation may be measured and how successful it is and how successful are the services provided in response to the society needs. Despite the weakness of the interactive democracy frameworks in the Jordanian cities experiences, it is obvious that the local social tradition has played a role in bridging the gap, like the role played by local social forces and diwans and places for meetings in communicating needs and requests. The social traditions have an added value in the development of discussions and formation of public opinion.

On the other hand, we find that the weakness of institutionalized frameworks and immaturity of civil society structure has a negative effect in this reality. Additionally, we find that there is institutional weakness in the openness of municipalities towards citizens. Examples are the indifference of municipal councils to activate the legal rights of citizens to attend the council meetings,

and most of the councils do not hold regular seasonal meetings to discuss municipal affairs with citizens; indicating that the councils do not exert efforts to guarantee the contribution of citizens in decision making. The municipalities do not exert any effort to institutionalize the right of citizen to have access to the municipal council's documents or any other information according to the right of access to information law of 2007.

On the other hand, council members show interest in relations with citizens during the periods that precede elections. But there are no legislative controls or code of conduct that stresses the importance of municipal councils commitment to a balanced approach to the dissemination of services, in order to step on the rights of minorities or marginalized groups or those who did not vote in favor of the council in the elections. Although the councils stress their keenness to hear the opinions of service receivers but this process is not regular.

The report showed that there is a lack in transparency, the municipal budget, which is the main driving force behind all its' activities is approved within the council itself without allowing citizens to participate in discussing it. Moreover, the adherence to rules and regulations governing tenders, purchasing contracts and job announcement is mostly just surface deep.

The citizen has right to submit complaints to the municipal council on its performance, but there are no accurate mechanisms to receive complaints and follow them up.

Media sources allow more opportunities to improve the level of interaction between the civil society and municipal councils, but we find the experience of cities and municipalities is still humble in this field. The experience of Ma'an is distinguished by a social radio managed by the Al Hussein University, which provides a voice for public opinion and is a tool for monitoring.

On the level of networking between civil society, private sector and local society; the area of achievement is very humble, and still depend on the good will of individuals not stable mechanisms within tested frameworks that fulfill the needs of all parties and the common interest of developing the city itself.

Recommendations;

(A) General framework of cities

- **Short term:**

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(A) General framework of cities

- **Short term:**

- 1- Put an urgent national plan at the municipalities level for assessment and self review, to enable the local rule administrations to set up a preventive system against all types of corruption, and to be appraised of the efficiency of its procedures and equipments in implementing its goals.
- 2- Establishing a national plan, to develop a set of criteria for the quality of performance in local administration that includes quality standards in the municipal field, and programs to create awareness of the quality concept in municipal performance and services.
- 3- Provide a public hall “city hall” in every Jordanian city to be the public space for practicing local democracy activities, meetings and public discussions.

- **Medium term:**

- 1- Re-consider the developmental role of municipalities in Jordan and the speedy construction of development units in them.
- 2- Call on municipalities to develop their human resources, qualify its cadres through an institutionalized rehabilitation and enabling program, which include all elected members in the municipal councils and management personnel.
- 3- Invite municipalities to adopt strategic planning for their work, establish a clear vision for the short, medium and long terms, define goals and work mechanisms and put a clear execution plans.
- 4- Develop local information technology systems on the status of cities and local communities to counter the current lack and discrepancy of information about them.
- 5- Connect investments and developmental projects that are implemented near cities with the local communities and increase their interaction with the needs of those communities.
- 6- Create incentives for the private sector to contribute positively in the partnership with municipalities.

- **Long term:**

- 1- Expand the space of independence and decentralization of local administration units in Jordanian cities and towns. The more decentralization those administrations enjoy; the more they are aware of their priorities, in addition to better monitoring by the local community which will be reflected on higher levels of participation and democratic practice.

- 2- Implement sustainable local development programs, which stem from the priorities and actual needs of local communities and raise their capabilities.
- 3- Support the development of civil societies and create incentives for social activists and local politicians in this field.

(B) Representative Democracy:

• **Short term**

- 1- Developing clear institutional frameworks that ensure the direct representation of all areas that the municipalities include, as well as the distribution of services and development.
- 2- End exceptional situations in Aqaba Special Free Zone, Petra Region Authority and Greater Amman Municipality so as to enable them to elect their representatives in the local councils, and end the process of appointments in the formation of local councils in any other area.
- 3- Adopt a national assessment model for the performance of municipal councils and train those councils on using it.
- 4- Develop the rules that regulate the activities of municipal councils including the relation of the council members with the mayor and the role of members in monitoring the administration of the municipality.

• **Medium term:**

- 1- Amendment of the municipality law by defining a certain day for municipal elections in the election year and announcing it early. Defining a period for nomination and election campaigns relative to the date of election and reconsider the terms for membership of municipal councils.
- 2- Ensuring that the participation of military personnel in the municipal elections is done on an individual basis and in civilian attire within the municipal areas they live in and when they are not on duty.
- 3- Retracting the interpretation of the Special Bureau for the Interpretation of Laws, which amended the electoral system of municipal councils in a way that contradicts the direct provisions of the municipal law, and returning to the (open) block system in the first case and to adopting the “first past the post system” in the second case.
- 4- Provide training for new council members to introduce them to all aspects of municipal work, their rights and duties and raising awareness of good governance.
- 5- Cancel the current method of voting of illiterate people, which is not in line with the secrecy of voting, and designing a ballot paper that

bears the photos of candidates so they can put a sign (x) in front of the person they choose.

- 6- Forming a higher national committee to supervise the municipal elections from notable personalities, both official and private. This committee should be established by royal decree accompanied by the definition of its mission and role to guarantee the integrity of elections.
 - 7- Allow local observation of municipal elections.
- **Long term:**
 - 1- Amend the political parties financing system so as to contribute in the coverage of the parties expenditure on their election campaigns, according to special standards that include special incentives for women and youth.
 - 2- Allow foreigners and Arabs who have been residents in the Kingdom for 10 years or more to participate in municipal elections in their residential areas.
 - 3- Enhance the role of women and achieve higher levels of their participation in political life and administration of local affairs and enable them to assume leadership positions.

(C) Interactive Democracy:

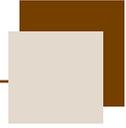
- **Short term:**
 - 1- Encourage municipalities to inform citizens of their legal rights to attend ordinary sessions of the municipal council, and to make administrative procedures which facilitates the use of this right by citizens wishing to attend, and commit to publishing of the date of the municipal council meeting.
 - 2- Institutionalizing the regular meetings between the council and citizens and making it a part of municipal work tradition.
 - 3- Develop a comprehensive system of transparency which guarantees adherence to integrity and equal opportunities in the performance of the municipal council and administration.
 - 4- Adopt transparent mechanisms regarding the receipt and following up of complaints, documentation of those complaints and studying them carefully as a means of evaluation of municipal work.
 - 5- Encourage councils to adopt strategic work plans and work programs for their 4 years tenure, and to consider the citizens opinion and support of those plans.

- **Medium term:**

- 1- Call upon municipalities to upgrade their cultural role as one of the public awareness development requirements, which reflects positively on the public interaction and public interests
- 2- Draw the attention of municipalities to activate the role of social media and the importance of adopting such initiatives, such as issuing or supporting local society newspapers and radio and electronic newspapers
- 3- Develop bulletins issued by municipalities both in form and content and ensuring their regularity and ensuring that they reach the largest possible number of citizens.
- 4- Introduce and update websites as a means of communication, and setting up of websites for the municipalities which do not have them yet.
- 5- Commitment from municipalities to provide information or documents for citizens as a commitment to transparency and the law of access to information of 2007.

- **Long term:**

- 1- Call upon municipalities to organize public participation among their local areas, cooperate with other municipalities in developing codes of conduct to control the councils work and on the basis of good governance, democratic values, integrity and transparency.
- 2- Establish local partnerships with private sector and civil society organizations, especially chambers of commerce & industry in order to develop a common vision for the needs of the cities.
- 3- Cooperation and networking with governmental and private universities in the municipal areas or governorates and benefiting from their scientific, cultural and art capacities.
- 4- Benefit from opportunities provided by international donors and NGOs to raise the developmental role of municipalities in the areas that fall within their responsibilities.
- 5- Invite political parties to give more attention to local rule in their programs and campaigns, as local rule is the corner stone of democracy.
- 6- Invite political parties to give more attention to training of women on democratic practice and increasing their participation in local rule and elections.



- 7- Developing a set of instructions and procedures based upon legal references in order to provide means and mechanisms for questioning mayors and members of municipality councils.
- 8- Put training programs for new council members, adopt cultural programs, provide periodical local media tools to enable citizens to be informed of facts and developments related to municipals work and to the city.
- 9- Institutionalizing the work of municipalities and activate internal legislations and organize relation between the council and executive administration of the municipality.

Annex:

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