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The Quota for Women's Representation in Parliament: an Empty Gesture or a Vehicle for Change? Analyzing the Effectiveness of Women Members of Parliament in Jordan

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The Quota for Women's Representation in Parliament: an Empty
Gesture or a Vehicle for Change?

*Analyzing the Effectiveness of Women Members of Parliament in
Jordan*

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I would like to thank the SIT staff for your unfailing support and guidance, my fellow tribe members and best friends for your companionship, comfort, and tolerance for each other in this time, my family for the opportunity to be here, and my mothers for their guidance, love, and for instilling in me the insatiable curiosity and excitement for knowledge.

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Abstract:

Understanding the unique Parliamentary situation in Jordan and the potential possessed by the quota for women in Jordanian Parliament as a measure to empower women politically and introduce their presence in an otherwise male dominated sphere has enormous implications. Undoubtedly a feminist measure, it merits understanding if the quota has similarly feminist outcomes. This study seeks to evaluate the women elected through the quota, examining how effective the women members of Parliament (henceforth MPs) are, to see if they really are capable of initiating major societal change or if instead they simply perpetuate the patriarchal and tribalism based systems. Through the interview of male and female Parliamentarians, experts on the women's movement in Jordan, the survey of constituents, and the examination of material culture, this study seeks to establish the type and impact of barriers to full participation in Parliament and examine the women MPs on multiple factors to gauge the change they create. This study found patriarchy, tribalism, familial responsibilities, travel requirements, and public pressures to be key barriers and obstacles to women's participation, however women's organizations and NGOs provide invaluable services to the women and help alleviate some of this burden. Overall, women MPs are effective and active in handling women's issues, but their main shortcomings are the lack in formal discussion of women's issues through speeches. Women's rights in Jordan have and will benefit further from the women elected through the quota.

Key Words: Political Science, Gender Studies, Regional Studies: Middle East

Introduction

Most every major international body has recognized the need for increased women's involvement in politics. Not only is it a key component of modernization and social change in both developing and developed countries, but it is also part of a worldwide campaign to improve the lives of women everywhere. One way many countries have attempted to increase the number of women in politics is by adopting quotas for women's representation in politics on all levels, from local to national. Quotas themselves are highly debated as effective measures of affirmative action, especially in regions such as the Middle East where women's rights have progressed notoriously slowly. However it is also recognized that cultures and traditions cannot be changed as quickly as would be liked and great barriers still exist for women trying to enter politics. Quotas try to compensate for the slowness of cultural change by implementing strict political change. This topic highly interests the researcher in part because of her own gender makes her curious and also in her interest in gender issues worldwide.

Quotas are a key issue in the world today and deserve in-depth research, especially on a case study basis. Quotas exist all around the world, in diverse countries with widely varying governments, cultures, languages, economies, etc. (Krook, 2005). Mona Lee Krook argues in her dissertation that four main factors of the spread of quotas work together operating from "multiple causal trajectories" where women's mobilization occurs and influences decision making, while international norms work on the innovation of measures, which can spread and influence other countries (Krook, 2005). The emphasis put on women's issues by the UN notably the Beijing Platform for Action from 1995 and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (henceforth CEDAW) from 1979, and emphasis from other international groups such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Union all work in

this framework to spread quotas internationally (Krook, 2005). They have been adopted in many Middle Eastern countries where many notable barriers exist to women's participation in all facets of life, not only politically. Criticisms of quotas assert that they "privilege" groups rather than individual actors in politics (Krook, 2006), that they are unconstitutional because they violate principles of equality, and that they are unnecessary because women and men are considered equal by the law (Krook, 2005). Also some objections claim that quotas do not necessarily mean that the women elected will in fact adopt woman-friendly policies, that they actually delegitimize women's political actions, yet these concerns do not translate to reality, as will be discussed later (Krook, 2006). Lisa Krook argues in her 2006 articles that these quotas are not feminist quotas and only seek to increase women's representation.

The actual motives for quotas vary, as does the positive, negative, or null real world impact they have in a countries politics and policies, especially related to gender relations. Historically there have been three main arguments for the women's political participation, in addition to more recent and modernized rationalizations. Feminists argue for justice, that women's representation in politics should directly mirror their proportion of the population, for experience, that women's experiences should be integrated into politics as women are socialized and treated differently than men, and for interest, such that unavoidably conflict exists between the interests of women and men or their specific respective groups and that women therefore cannot be entirely represented by men (Dahlerup, 2007). Also it has been recognized that the exclusion of women hinders the overall development of a society, the processes of development, and democratization (Dahlerup, 2007). The lack in gender balance, which is a "prerequisite for development and for a transition to democracy," is beginning to be explained not as women's lack of resources but rather due to "discriminatory attitudes and practices" and "unequal power

relations” between men and women (Dahlerup, 2007). This more radical take requires that institutions and parties involved in the practices take on the burden of change themselves rather than placing it unnecessarily on women. In a way, quotas “effectively break up the male monopoly in elected office” and open the gates for women to contribute to governments with their unique experiences and perspectives (Baldez, 2006).

More research on quotas is needed worldwide, especially in cross-national studies examining quotas that could shed light on the more complex patterns related to quotas. Additionally, the study of quotas is vital for the Middle East since little research has been done to examine quotas after implementation. Knowing and understanding the real implications the quotas have in the Middle East, a region where regional conflicts happen quite often, the culture is deeply tribal and patriarchal, and where traditionally women have not been included in all facets of life. While in recent years many advances have been made, quotas do not follow social awakenings and strong calls for modernization (at least in reference to women’s rights) but rather they precede change; quotas more lead change by the collar than are dragged along with it. Women in Jordan specifically have had very slow gains for women’s rights and involvement in politics. Government was suspended for nearly 30 years in the 20th century, so women could not exercise the right to vote until the 1980s. In the interim some women were indeed involved in the National Consultative Council, the body that worked to consult the King during suspension of government, but this number never went over 5% (Sabbagh, 2007). In the Executive Branch of government there were around 10 total women elected in the last 40 years; with up to 20 women running for Parliament from the 1980s to 1990s, with only one successful in gaining a seat, and from an ethnic group quota (Sabbagh, 2007). Women’s appointments to municipal councils has been in effect since the mid 1990’s, aided by Princess Basma who called for 99 women to be

appointed: in the years following her call there were around 40. The idea of the quota in Jordanian Parliament started around 1996; with women's groups calling for a 20% quota—but with stark opposition as only five of 20 political parties supported the quota (Sabbagh, 2007). Even with training by the Jordanian National Commission for Women (henceforth JNCW), women were not being elected; it was not until 2003 that a small quota of six seats was put in place. (It might be notable to comment that also during this period there was a change in kings as the late King Hussein II passed away in 1999 and his son King Abdullah II ascended to the throne, changing many seats in government, especially the entire upper house of Parliament, which most likely stalled many pushes for similar measures.) Jordan's quota now is for 15 seats of Parliament, 12 for each governorate and three for districts in the Badia, rural areas, while the actual number of seats in Parliament has increased as well, so the quota accounts for 12% of MPs. The quota is one of the few 'reserved seats' quotas that exists, where the seats are set aside and unsuccessful women are ranked based on who received the highest number of votes cast in their respective districts (proportionally, as the votes cast for each woman is divided by the total votes cast in their districts). This open quota has its benefits: the women's seats are a minimum, not a maximum, so women can be elected outside the quota for example in the last election 18 women were elected into Parliament, 3 in their districts and 15 by the quota, the seats are not restricted, and they are independent of other quotas that exist in Parliament. However, the quota is also not without its drawbacks because the representation is not balanced, one governorate can have more than one woman MP elected, and the quota is really not representational as women from large districts, notably the capital, are at a disadvantage.

The special regional differences in the Middle East do not allow for all research in other countries to be applied to it blindly, so further study in the region should be done to examine if

quotas do anything to further women's rights, increase women's political participation, strengthen women's empowerment, or if they are simply an empty gesture without any real impact.

This study aims to answer the question, how effective are women members of Parliament (henceforth MPs) elected through the reserved seats quota in the lower house of the Jordanian Parliament? The researcher will judge effectiveness by looking at how women MPs elected through the quota work to further increase women's rights in Jordan--through their participation in Parliament through committees, legislation they have worked on or presented, their voting records, their participation in other related activities, their speech, evaluation from constituents and peers within Parliament, and evaluation by third party organizations well versed in women's rights. In addition, the researcher will establish if other burdens or obstacles exist for women MPs that impact their ability to be effective MPs as noted above, in addition to analyzing the aid available to women in any form—be it trainings, networking, resources, etc.

It is worth noting that 'effectiveness' is a subjective term that requires more clarification. If the main goal of a quota is to simply increase representation, then the quota is an end in itself, unless it calls for the representation to meet the critical mass necessary for real impact as cited by some researchers. However in many cases the quotas go deeper than that and aim to not only call for representation but aim to address the issues mentioned previously: justice, experience, and interests in addition to increasing development and improving democracy as a whole.

Since the effectiveness of women Parliamentarians does depend on other factors, both internal and external, the researcher will also take into consideration and explore variables described by Amal Sabbagh as key challenges for women's political participation in the Arab world. He addresses personal factors, familial factors, societal factors, political factors, and

factors in the working environment. Personal factors include the influence of patriarchy, hierarchical social structure, illiteracy and legal illiteracy, lack of confidence and barriers to freedom of movement. Familial factors such as the double burden of managing family life and career, traditional gender paradigms, the familial political legacy that a woman must either ascribe to in order to access connections or reject and be forced to work outside the traditional political framework (a risky and burdensome task) make a major impact especially since Jordan's strong cultural and familial networks. On that same note, societal factors consist of tribalism which governs societal relations, the patriarchal leadership systems adopted by the women's movement, and low cooperation between the women's movement and women MPs. Political factors impacting women are that women don't enjoy full rights as citizens, especially requiring intermediaries in some situations, the Western agenda brand and subsequent rejection of pushes for women's empowerment, the marginalization and 'token' status of women in political parties, the extremely gender unfriendly electoral systems, and the more conservative groups taking advantage of political liberalization--resulting in more conservative rather than modernized policies. Finally, factors in the working environment also greatly impact women's participation, especially how the male domination of politics has caused some women to reject it altogether and the pressure put on women MPs to prove themselves to male standards (Sabbagh 2007). Also other factors cited as obstacles in the working environment are lack of women's restroom facilities and child care services, work travel requirements, and the actual meeting times of Parliament being not-family friendly. These variables will serve as the background for establishing whether other women MPs have the opportunity to be effective MPs and voices of women's rights.

As a very complex issue, the researcher does expect to find that there are some obstacles by women MPs to overcome in order to be effective MPs, but overall the increase of women in Parliament elected through the quota do have a positive impact in the increase of women's rights in Jordan.

The theoretical framework for my study will use the theory of patriarchy and tribalism, as presented in Abla Amawi's book *Against All Odds: Jordanian Women, elections, and political empowerment* (2001). Jordanian society is strongly patriarchal in nature, and "reinforces gender based discrimination." Not only does this mean that society only acknowledges women's role in certain acceptable situations within specific boundaries. This system, where the will of the father is absolute, privileges males and elders in vertically organized relationships. Women's place in this system as the mother, consort, and housewife is well defined; they are weak and need protection. This system has a patrilineal descent and patrilocal kinship. Men are the *rabb al-usra*, or head of the household (literally god of the family), where women "annexed to her husband as 'aqila (tied), qarina (linked), hirma (prohibited)." The family, at the center of socioeconomic activities, politically socializes its members, and family affects many culturally important aspects of people's lives, their marriage, honor, status, etc. Cousin marriage is common in order to "preserve the clan's solidarity" and tie in money and honor. The idea of family honor is linked to female behavior (especially sexual behavior), and any problems wreak social havoc on families. However, the familial patterns are changing in recent years, vertical relations are weakening, and improvements have been made in regards to women's status in society—but these changes potentially only represent a "modern form" of patriarchy. The "neo-patriarchal" state is torn between the conflicting wishes of modernization and of preserving tradition and culture (Amawi, 2001).

Tribalism works hand in hand with patriarchy, and forms the basic characteristic of Jordanian societal organization. Tribal affiliations supersede all other relations through the strength of blood. Relationships in tribal structure work vertically and horizontally, but there is no hierarchy of leadership. Main characteristics of tribes are factionalism (the distinction between the tribe and the other), affiliation (the perceived blood connection that has supreme importance), well defined social obligations, and the “Mutually reciprocal tribal collective responsibility over individual actions strengthening kinship and tribal allegiance, and amplifying the individual identification with the tribe as an essence of this loyalty.” Tribal activities are mainly political, and the connections available through the tribe allow members to bypass bureaucracy and red tape, these connections matter more than merit in the case of employment. *Wasteh*, mediation, gives power to those who do not have it. Women cannot bypass the system unless they have connections of their own, can provide services to the community as required by tribalism. This shows up in politics, where in Jordan voters voted for those who provide services to the community, so the system disadvantages women because they cannot provide these services independently of their connections. In one study, 28.5% of voters voted based on their tribe, and this limits the upward mobility of women politicians not linked to the tribe. In addition, Parliament and the elections are significant events in which the tribe can ‘prove their identity as a tribe, and their significance in the political structure.’ However, women do command their own network of resources and *wasteh* relations, under the surface, with which they can make some impacts. (Amawi, 2001)

Literature Review

When Quotas Are Adopted

Sara Sunn Bush did a cross-national study examining why quotas are being increasingly adopted in the developing world, since in 40 years the number of countries with quotas jumped from five to over 100 (Bush, 2011). Using a nested research design combining cross-national statistical analysis for correlation and a case study of Afghanistan for a look at causal processes. She finds that overall that international incentives are significantly related to the adoption of quotas in developing countries. Through two mechanisms, both international actors promoting gender issues in post-conflict countries and the strategic adoption of quotas as internationally legitimate ideas, as signals to the international community of a leader's "commitment to liberal democracy." Bush uses Jordan as one example of this in her paper, and this has important implications on the quota in Jordan (Bush, 2011). If not adopted through internal pressure and works, does this detract from or marginalize the actual effects of the quota on women MPs and women in the country as a whole?

Effects of Quotas

A study conducted by Chattopadhyay and Duflo gave a very interesting picture of how quotas influenced India's politics (2004). They investigated the policy consequences of mandated representation of women by an experiment in India where in 1993 an amendment required that states reserve and randomly assign one third of all positions of chief to women. The researchers conducted a survey of all investments to local and public goods made in reserved and unreserved village councils, comparing those with reserved seats for women to those without.

The researchers found that “reservation affects policy choices” and areas with reserved seats seemed more reflect preferences of women. In addition, in these areas, the political participation of women increased and women were twice as likely to bring a complaint if there was a woman council member. In addition, the gender of the council member affected the distribution of the public goods, and in areas where there were women representatives, the distribution of goods matched the preferences of the women. Even though this example, more on a municipal scale, does not mirror the situation in Jordan, the impacts that women made related to women’s issues are promising that over time similar changes may occur through Parliament. (Chattopadhyay, 2004)

Another study based on data from India, conducted by Neema Kudva in 2003, examined one district in particular from the lens of the reserved seats in that area. Kudva found that a main impact of having women representative seemed “to be on increasing effective implementation of various government programs and schemes.” From her study she found that women representatives had many positive impacts, especially: having more transparency in accounting, directing aid effectively, organizing cultural activities, gaining funds for their constituency, contributing to more orderly and disciplined behavior, fighting against corruption, reflecting women’s needs and concerns, most often giving attention to needs of infrastructure, and also aiding people in accessing state services/subsidies while working against waste and corruption. These are obviously very positive impacts and show that increasing women in lower forms of representation directly influence local communities, in addition to giving the women a sense of empowerment and changing “institutional priorities and accountability.” (Kudva 2003)

Amy Caiazza researched the correlation between women friendly policy in the United States of America and the presence of women elected into the House and Senate. By looking at

the ranking and scores assigned to states based on the amount of female representatives that they had and statistically comparing that to a ranking based on “Indicators of Women-Friendly Policy” from a Women’s Resources and Rights Checklist, 2000 she found that indeed more women represented correlated to more women friendly policies in the states. However, it is worth noting that this correlation could represent the women’s impact on the legislation as much as it could the general women friendly attitude in the states themselves reflecting on both the women and legislation as a mediating variable. This relationship provides an interesting look into how legislation correlates to actual women representatives in a situation where quotas do not exist and instead the women elected do so in direct competition with men. (Caiazza, 2002)

A similar study in the United States, by Cindy Rosenthal by examining state committees and conflict resolution through the lens of gender (2001). After examining a large cohort of men and women, they found that women and men’s styles of addressing conflict differed. Also among the findings were that the distribution of gender and power and the “extent of professionalization influence[d] conflict resolution style” (Rosenthal 2001). The results as a whole give insight into how masculinity may be privileged in legislators, and have implication on the presence of women in Jordan’s Parliament both in how women’s presence may alter the structure of Parliament in addition to how women’s presence may be a distinct threat to the status quo and “existing power arrangements” (Rosenthal 2001).

Irene Tinker (2004) conducted a literature review over quotas and examined the extent to which quotas for women actually result in empowerment. She notes that a limitation that many quotas are “too recent for adequate analysis” into their impact in legislature, which is an important point relevant to the situation in Jordan since the quota is so new. (Tinker 2004)

Research has also been done examining the impact that women MPs have on the women of a country as political role models. Christina Wolbrecht and David Campbell researched to see if the presence of women in political office have an impact on the political activity of women (2007). They had three hypotheses, asking if female representatives affect in the lives of women of all ages in their discussion of politics, their participation in politics, and their overall attitudes and openness to increased participation in the future. They found promising results for women representatives as being positive political role models for women. They found that in all age groups, when there are more women in Parliament, women are more likely to discuss politics. Even though girls were found to be much less likely than boys to see themselves as adults active in politics, this effect was smaller in areas where there are more women representatives. The implications for this in Jordan are tremendous, as the political participation of the country as a whole is rather low, and women have very far to come to be active members of the political world. If, in fact women “lead by example,” there is hope that through the quota Jordanian women and girls will start to enter politics more and more often. (Wolbrecht and Campbell, 2007)

Problems that Parliamentarians Face

Coghill, Lewis, and Steinack address a large problem that Parliamentarians face once they are actually elected into office, actually knowing how to do their job (2012). They note that many Parliamentarians do not have adequate training, nor do they possess the required information for being an MP leaving them “ill-prepared” to do their job and serve their country. In addition to identifying the knowledge, skills, and abilities important for MPs worldwide, this research analyzes how the programs in place for training and education (by both Parliament and external organizations) contributed to developing them. The top two qualities listed by Parliamentarians were the most obvious, representation and legislation, while Jordanian the MPs

also felt a strong commitment to their electorate that extended even after their time in Parliament was finished. Coghill et. al suggest that trainings capitalize on the differences of backgrounds of MPs and that trainings overall should more incorporate adult learning techniques. This article makes it very clear how much trainings leave to be desired and the benefits possible from the improvement of training could provide. (Coghill, 2012)

In addition, research has been done to evaluate organizations whose goal is aiding Parliamentarians, especially women MPs, such as the work Susan Markham did researching the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in 2012. The NDI works very closely with women MPs in Jordan, so it is important to have a critical understanding of their impact and shortcomings. Since women MPs are “less likely to have previously served as politicians than their male colleagues,” Markham argues that trainings should cater to the strengths and weaknesses of new politicians based on their backgrounds. Markham identifies the best practices that the NDI has for aiding women MPs: providing support, strengthening the institution, promote women’s caucuses, and working with committees related to women’s and gender affairs. The assistance of NDI on all of these points allows Parliamentarians address gender related issues, improve the overall functioning and democracy of the Parliament, and meet worldwide development goals, and knowing the extent to which programs like this exist in Jordan is key to understanding whether or not the assistance given in Jordan is useful to them. (Markham, 2012).

Methodology

For this research, the process began very slowly and increased exponentially in the span of one week (the last week). The researcher spent the bulk of the first part of the research period researching literature and making research tools. At the end of the second week, the researcher finally got contacts through the advisor and completed a good number of interviews and

distributed surveys all in the last week. Once things started happening the researcher had a relatively stress free time except for the fact that there was very little time left for actual data analysis. Connections to people were the biggest aid, and time was the biggest challenge. Through trial and error the researcher acquired the skills necessary to conduct her research.

Overall, the researcher conducted ten interviews with four men and six women, handed out 50 surveys to citizens, and collected nine number of pieces of material culture related to the topic.

The research, focusing specifically on female Parliamentarians, sought to examine the factors related to women MPs effectiveness, defined as working towards and furthering women's rights and issues in Parliament. Since the actual records of Parliament are not available online, the researcher had to talk to Parliamentarians directly. For firsthand information, the researcher interviewed two number female MPs and 2 male MPs, in addition to two assistants to two female MPs, one assistant was male and one was female. Since lack of time and emergency sessions within Parliament, the researcher attempted to survey women MPs but since the sessions had ended there were no MPs available other than the ones interviewed, and there were no opportunities to distribute surveys. The interviews with MPs, all semi-structured, addressed themes such as the activities of MPs, their involvement in Parliament, their involvement with women's rights, the status of women MPs in Parliament such as possible barriers faced by women MPs that could potentially influence their full participation in Parliament. The interviews both were conducted at the Parliamentary buildings in Amman, Jordan at the convenience of the Parliamentary members. They were all conducted on the same day, so that the researcher could access multiple Parliamentarians at one time and so that the MPs were not inconvenienced by time.

For the interviews, the researcher hoped to gain insight into the women MPs in terms of their Parliamentary activities, their activities related to women, and barriers and obstacles they faced through their position. Also, in surveying the male and female MPs the researcher hoped to gain a little insight into the differences between MPs in terms of their activities and opinions related to the topics. In order to do this, the researcher prepared a set of about 16 questions for female MPs and 15 for male MPs. Questions for both male and female MPs were related to their time and activities in Parliament, their activities related to women's issues, the representation of groups and issues in Parliament, the atmosphere in Parliament related to women and the quota, and women's organizations. Questions prepared only for women MPs were those about their burdens related to being a woman and an MP and their methods for communication with constituents. Questions only asked of male MPs were the evaluation of women MPs and their representation of constituents. Ideally, the researcher would have asked the MPs all of the prepared questions, in a semi-structured format allowing for comment and building upon topics mentioned. However, because of the nature of the job of Parliamentarians the researcher had the opportunity to ask a selection of the questions of each MP. Some of these questions overlapped between MPs.

Since there were limited MPs present when the researcher had access to Parliament, the researcher adapted to the situation and surveyed National Democratic Institute Parliamentary Fellows who serve as trained assistants to the MPs. The researcher aimed to get more direct and close to the source information about woman MPs, so therefore the researcher also interviewed the fellows. The fellows were asked questions related to their position and the assistance they provide MPs, in addition to the questions intended for MPs, just with different framing.

Since part of the effectiveness of Parliamentarians had to do with their constituents and other groups or interests that they represent, the researcher also distributed surveys to the public in order to gauge public opinion about MPs. These surveys asked participants to rank the issues that they considered important, and then prompted participants to rate each issue individually, based on how the Parliament addresses it, and finally asked questions specifically relating to women MPs and their performance, and which gender the participant thought represented their concerns best. The researcher distributed 50 number surveys in one place, the university of Jordan.

At the University of Jordan, the surveys were distributed with the help of a Masters student in the Women's and Gender Studies department. The University of Jordan was chosen for the ease of access to participants, the connections that allowed for aid with translation, and the diversity of the campus in terms of students from many areas of Amman. Ideally, however, the researcher would have distributed more surveys in different locations across the country. The researcher distributed the surveys around the campus to students in buildings and sitting in public areas, ranging from near the medical side of campus to the law buildings in order to get a wider range of participants. The graduate student assisted in translation, approaching students and explaining the purpose, and addressing any questions that the participants had.

The researcher also interviewed experts in the women's movement or who otherwise had extensive knowledge about women MPs in order to get informed, third party information about women in Parliament. These included two graduate students in the Women and Gender Studies department at University of Jordan conducting their respective theses on women in Jordanian Parliament, the director of NDI, an NGO working directly with women in Parliament giving assistance, training, conducting research related to women's political empowerment in the

country and specifically in Parliament. Also interviewed were a researcher at the Jordanian National Commission for Women, an NGO that works with women's empowerment and rights, an employee at the women's economic empowerment in the Jordan River Foundation, and the head of the Gender and Women's Studies department at the University of Jordan, a key player in the women's movement in Jordan. The researcher conducted all interviews at the interviewee's offices, as that was most convenient to them, except for one graduate student interviewed at a café.

The interviews for experts were structured similarly to those given to the MPs. There was a bank of nine questions with the themes related to the quota overall, the issue of representation, the impact of quotas on women's rights and Parliament, and barriers to women MPs in Parliament. In order to work with the information given by the interviewee, the researcher only used the questions as a framework for the interview as a whole.

Also for analysis of this issue the researcher wanted a well-rounded perspective on the situation that took in account the information available to all citizens about the MPs and the image the MPs had in different types of media. To get this perspective the researcher searched through material culture such as social media, newspaper and NGO publications, and YouTube videos, searching for information relevant to woman MPs.

All interviewees consented to the use of their names in the research by signing consent forms written in Arabic. With this consent, the protection of the interview participants identity was not key, however the transcription of interview notes was kept in encrypted files. Also, the surveys contained a consent statement that described the research and informed the participant that filling out the survey meant they consented to be part of the researchers. No real identifying information was collected, so their identities were already protected in the research design.

The researcher attempted to maintain the integrity of the data received by keeping as much of the material in its original language. Two different translators translated into Arabic the surveys distributed to participants, and SIT staff provided an Arabic consent form. The researcher conducted 5 interviews in English and 5 in Arabic. A NDI fellow proficient in English translated the interviews conducted in Arabic, and the researcher's own capabilities in Arabic allowed her to follow the interview and clarify with the translator if necessary. Also, translators from SIT staff aided in translation of the survey responses written in Arabic. This direct connection with the language and native speakers allowed the researcher to be sure that her data was quality.

Some observations and limitations that arose were that the surveys were not properly translated, so that all students who were in the process of earning an undergraduate degree marked the equivalent of "undergraduate degree" instead of "some college." An issue arose with question 9 that asked each gender separately who they believe best represented their voices in Parliament and the answer was either 'Men' or 'Women' MPs, which did not allow participants to choose neither, and a complaint arose during distribution on this point. A participant commented that 'Men' was their answer only because there are more men in Parliament, which is an accurate judgment, but it means that the question is not valid. This limitation affects the validity of the survey and the ability of the survey to measure what the researcher intended it to. In addition, not all participants were fully aware of politics and therefore did not make fully educated answers, and in some cases, groups of participants discussed answers to questions amongst themselves. Also, one of the questions asked participants to rank issues from 1 to 10, but there were 11 issues. This caused some issues with data and resulted in a smaller sample of

data from un-analyzable responses. For material culture in Arabic, the researcher chose the examples that seemed the most key to her research and had those translated by the staff.

One main obstacle was the availability of Parliamentarians. They were extremely busy so the researcher had limited time to spend with each one. This meant that the researcher couldn't ask all the questions that she would have liked, and therefore had to make snap judgments as to which questions to ask. While there was no systematic way to do this, the researcher tried to prioritize based on questions that had already been answered in previous questions and by asking more personal questions or opinion questions while spreading the more objective questions around so that by the end of all the interviews had covered all the topics.

Initially the researcher had many plans that had to evolve and develop as the research period progressed. First, the research intended to have a larger scope of data by interviewing a larger number of MPs, observing sessions of Parliament, passing out more surveys, and interviewing more people related to women's issues and the women's movement. The main reason that not all of this was accomplished was the limited time available for research. In addition, with Parliamentarians their duties and special sessions cut into the time they had available to meet the researcher and the burden of responsibility did not allow all of the women MPs elected through the quota to fill out the surveys given to them. Also, there were no actual sessions occurring during the time of research, only urgent meetings and committee meetings that the researcher could not sit in on. One way the researcher dealt with this problem was interviewing staff members of MPs that weren't present; concluding that the information they could give would be very accurate in their close work with the MPs. This was one way the researcher got more information within the limited time.

Also, the researcher intended to give out surveys in multiple locations across Jordan. Again, time was a limiting factor. In addition, the researcher intended to distribute surveys in the town of Ar-Rajif; however, the contacts she had there did not understand what the researcher was trying to do, so no surveys were distributed. In addition, a lack in contacts in other locations limited the distribution, as by the time the researcher had the surveys written, translated, and approved by her advisor little time remained to make contacts and travel to other locations. Lack in contacts limited the researcher's ability to contact more experts in the women's rights field and in the women's movement. The researcher did make additional contacts however was not able to actually meet as the contacts were ill or traveling.

Overall, these issues definitely affect the quality, depth, and scope of the research. The lack in surveys is not a devastating issue as this piece is a rather small portion of the research question, and information about the political attitudes of Jordanians is available in other forms from other similar research. The number of surveys distributed is theoretically high enough to be a representative sample, but the sample only included college students. Therefore, while youth (under the age of 30) are the majority in Jordan, there was a sampling bias and the sample was not random nor should be generalized to the population as a whole without reservations. The lack of interviews given to MPs is also restricting, since they are the focus of my research. Firsthand information from more MPs would have been ideal, to really understand the situation from their perspective. In addition, more interviews from third parties would help balance out the possible bias and inflation of their Parliamentary activities to be more socially acceptable. Generally, these negatively influence my research in both its reliability and validity, and if these biases and issues had not occurred, the research would be of higher quality.

Findings

How effective are women MPs elected through the reserved seats quota in the Lower House of Parliament?

Overall sentiment about the quota was varied, however all participants that discussed the quota discussed how it is necessary and an important factor for getting women's involvement in Parliament, especially in Parliamentary settings (Abdou, 2014; Dababneh, 2014; Al Khazaleh, 2014; Hakouz, 2014). Empowerment, a key concept mentioned in several interviews, serves as a main goal for the quota, and some participants noted that the quota forces men to think about women's issues because the women are there and "shift the dynamic" (Abdou, 2014; Al Khazaleh, 2014; Khalifa4 2013). However, both male and female MPs noted that the quota was "discriminatory" and "illegal" and expressed their wish to see it eliminated as soon as possible (As-Sadeen, 2014; Khalifat, 2014)., Yet others acknowledge the discrimination as necessary, as outlined in the articles of CEDAW ratified by Jordan, and "positive" in how it shows the legitimacy of women as politicians and in transforming the gender sensitivity of Jordanian society (Abdo, 2014; Dababneh, 2014; Hakouz, 2014). The actual application of the quota did not escape criticism, as participants noted that the proportional way women get elected 1) favors women from rural areas 2) hurts women from larger cities where they are more likely to be educated and 3) means that women can be elected with less votes than other women, meaning they represent less people (Dababneh, 2014; Hakouz, 2014; Khalifat, 2014). Also there are those that believe the quota has not been in effect long enough for there to be real changes made already in legislation, due to the challenges and groundwork that had to be laid by previous sessions, and they believe that change hasn't really happened but it will (Abdou, 2014 Dababneh, 2014)

Judging Effectiveness:

Through their participation in Parliament through committees/caucus

The current 18 women MPs are active within committees, being the speakers for four different committees, such as the Women's and Family Issues, Agriculture and Water committee, Palestinian Issue committee, (A Zgailat, 2014; Asbah, 2014; Ghargir, 2014). Not only are all women part of at least one committee (with some being on as many as two or three) women are also active in political Blocs and 17 of the 18 women currently in Parliament are in the Women's Caucus (Abdou, 2014; Al-Ghadi, 2014; Rawasbdah, 2014). Nine out of the 18 women serve in the Women and Family Affairs committee, of which Nayem Al-Ajaremeah is speaker, where only one member is male (Abdou, 2014; Khalifat, 2014). The committees women serve on are diverse, with women on committees for women's issues and issues more related to their interests and governorates, for example Amneh Al Ghargir who, the Speaker of the Agriculture and Water committee, and Fatin Khaifat, a member of the tourism committee representing the area of Petra. The new women's caucus, formed in August 2013 through cooperation between the women MPs and NDI, is a valuable resource for the women (Abdou, 2014). The women coordinate ideas, opinion, and efforts in relation to women's issues through the caucus, and it serves as a network where they can work on legislation and their improvement as MPs as a whole to (Abdou, 2014). The caucus allows the women to present their stance as a united front and can show the public and other MPs that "this is the women's work" (Al-Ghadi, 2014).

Legislation they have worked on or presented

The first major wins for women's rights have been the right of women to get a passport without a men guardian (Dababneh, 2014) and the recent social security law change that had major improvements for women, such as social security support for women on maternity leave.

Issues currently being worked on by the women's caucus and committee are numerous. They are seeking to amend, in due time, the labor laws, especially in relation to child care facilities and equal wages, article 308 of the constitution relating to rape, the personal status law, especially changing the legal age of marriage to 18 from the current 15 and alimony rights, giving women equal inheritance rights, and completely redrafting the domestic violence law (Abdou, 2014; Al-Rawasbdah, 2014). Women also cited working on laws related to water (Al-Gharghir, 2014), Juvenile delinquency laws (Al Khalifat, 2014), tourism law (Al Khalifat, 2014), and investment law (Al Ghadi, 2014). However, others, both male and female disagree and believe that the women are doing little if anything to work on legislation for women's rights (A. Zgailat, 2014).

Their Voting Records

The women's voting records were not public and therefore the researcher could not evaluate them on this aspect.

Their Participation in other activities

The women are not only active in Parliament, but also participate in many extra activities. Multiple women's NGOs host trainings and workshops for MPs. For example, the JNCW participated in the Arab Literacy day where a woman MP, Nahaj Al-Azha from the Labor and Development Committee discussed the economic issues related to women and literacy (Mutaman, 2014). In addition, the JNCW hosted a non-mandatory workshop on gender mainstreaming the budget, and a majority of the women MPs attended (Mutaman, 2014). One MP, Nayem Al-Ajareme, attended an International Women's Day event in 2014, and discussed current international women's issues, showing her commitment to women's rights and her activity in women's rights related legislation internationally (Women, 2014).

The ambition of some of the women is not lacking, for one MP; Nayem Al-Ajarmeh successfully completed a master's degree program while simultaneously serving as a MP. In addition, an incumbent MP mentioned how her previous participation in Parliament greatly aided her effectiveness in the current sessions and gave her the knowledge and ability to work better (Gharghir, 2014).

Their Speech

Women MPs discuss women's issues; however, they are criticized for their lack in addressing women's issues in formal Parliamentary speeches (Dababneh, 2014; Hakouz, 2014; Mutaman, 2014; Zgailat, 2014). A source mentioned that in all preliminary examination of the women's speeches, the only time women's issues arose was related to the nationality rights of women, gender mainstreaming the budget, and article 308—all from only two of the women (Zgailat). Another source only mentioned hearing a few minutes about the nationality issue—but otherwise the women were just “repeating the men” (Hakouz, 2014). The Jordanian National Commission for Women discussed this topic in April 2013, citing that through “masculine speech” the women ignored the many problems regarding women, only focusing on service issues that were “electoral bases beggary” (Khadadin, 2013). The article criticized the women for failing to represent those who entrusted the MPs with their voices (Khadadin, 2013). One reason cited for this muteness stems from their already fragile position within the patriarchal structure of Parliament as whole—the women are afraid of becoming “pigeon-holed” into only representing women's issues when they in fact represent the country and its entire people (Abdou, 2014).

In other arenas women are discussing women's issues, for example at the NDI Parliamentary Exchange Program, Reem Abu Dalbough, a Jordanian MP, sat on a panel with other Middle Eastern women MPs and discussed women's empowerment in Jordan and another

MP discussed women's issues on an international arena for the International Women's Day 2014 (POMED Notes: "Women in the New Arab Politics: A conversation with members of parliament from Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia", 2014).

Representation of Constituents

Another factor that influences the effectiveness of any Parliamentarian is their commitment to representing the people. Based on the opinion of others, the women represent themselves and others (Abdo). These 'others' believed to be from their constituents, the nation, women, ashira or their larger tribal affiliation, male family members, etc. (Abdou, 2014, Al Rawasbdah, 2014; Dababneh, 2014; Gharghir, 2014; Al-Ghadi, 2014; Hakouz, 2014; Kasho, 2014; Khalifat, 2014; Mutaman, 2014; Zgailat, 2014).

A woman MP's assistant remarked that she feels responsible for those who "give her their voice," and that sense of responsibility drives her motivation to work for change (Al Rawasbdah, 2014). However, a male MP believes that women represent only a "minority perspective" because they a. do not receive a large number of votes and b. their roles are inherently different than men's roles (Al Khazaleh, 2017).

Evaluation by Constituents

Only one interview was conducted with a constituent, who had little knowledge about women in Parliament. In her opinion (from working directly with women's economic empowerment programs through the Jordan River Foundation), women in Parliament haven't helped women, but rather NGOs do the most work. She did acknowledge that women MPs are good role models and represent women because "women will help women anywhere" (Khasho, 2014).

Evaluation from peers within Parliament

The male MPs interviewed had similar perceptions of woman MP's. One, strongly against the quota in principle, sees women MPs as "active" and "effective" and the other wouldn't mind an increase in female MPs, as it's "what the country needs" (Al Khazaleh, 2014; Al Sadeen, 2014). Al-Khazaleh sees that 50-55% of women are active and believes that only the active members deserve to be in Parliament (Al Khazaleh, 2014).

Evaluation by third party organizations or persons well versed in women's rights

Outside of Parliament, woman MPs evaluations improve somewhat. Some participants saw the women MPs as excellent, and since the women of previous sessions of Parliament paved the way, these women have been able to make a "momentous achievement" in the caucus and law amendments made the past year (Abdou, 2014). Three of the current MPs are top performers based on the RASED Parliamentary monitoring (Abdou, 2014). However, they do acknowledge that the women MPs participation is a work in progress that leads to mistakes that only time and experience can help (Abdo, 2014).

Others were more critical, especially in the way, in their opinion, that the women simply duplicate men's priorities, discourse, and beliefs (Hakouz, 2014; Zgailat, 2014). However, these people did acknowledge that the women are becoming more active and accepted into Parliament, and that the problem has decreased in size through the quota (Zgailat, 2014).

Other opinions were more moderate, acknowledging that the women MPs are "not performing as required," but still are improving through unifying efforts and working together (Dababneh, 2014). In this evaluation the women are cited as divided in belief, with some feminist and others decidedly not feminist (without naming names), and that overall, while some work hard and study the laws, others need to do more and increase their awareness and knowledge of women's rights issues. (Dababneh, 2014).

Other burdens or obstacles

Many obstacles and burdens that make the position of MP harder for women were identified. The Patriarchal nature of society, the most prominent, determines who can and cannot run for Parliament, as a woman electoral candidate must first get approval from all the males in her family and tribe before she can run (Abdou, 2014). In one case, a woman who was in competition for a seat with another male family member was told by her husband that she had to drop out of the race, but she wouldn't, and they divorced—it was unclear from sources who initiated the divorce, however (Hakouz, 2014). Also, in cases where male family members did not approve there were anecdotes such as sabotage of the woman's campaign, assault, and even a candidate had her house burned down—of six cases in the 2012 elections, most of the offenders were related to the female candidate (Abdou, 2014; Women's Participation Gains Ground, Faces High Hurdles, 2001). Furthermore, patriarchy governs women's interactions within Parliament and women's relationships are limited because she is a woman alone (Al Khazaleh, 2014).

In the two interviews with male MPs demonstrated the validity to the idea of the “patriarchal framework of the legislative authority” referenced by another source (Al Khazaleh, 2014). The men's language put all pressure of increasing the number of women in Parliament on the women themselves: they have to “prove themselves” and be “worthy” of participation in the male dominated sphere, saying that more women would vote for women if they “improve” their presence in Parliament, a place where women “aren't taken seriously” (Al Khazaleh, 2014; Dababneh, 2014). Also, one MP posed a solution for the low numbers of women that a woman gaining the position of director of a political party could then put women on the party lists who would then get elected. One man even stated that the laws in Jordan are equal between men and women (Al Sadeen, 2014). The women MPs have additionally the issue that the men “have

problems trusting the women to be capable of the job,” which manifests also in women’s own self-beliefs that they are not capable and are weaker because they were elected through the quota (Al-Ghadi, 2014).

Patriarchy also manifests itself as an issue on the level of voters. Men influence the candidate choices of their wives, daughters, and sisters, and can command them to vote for the male’s preferred candidate (Abdou, 2014). When women comprise the majority of the registered voters, this gives the men immense power.

Women in the public are also a challenge to woman MPs, according to some sources, and don’t vote for women due to lack of faith (Abdou, 2014). Also, women’s jealousy of women MPs for her independence and position was cited as a major issue (without elaboration on how) (Abdou, 2014).

The intense tribal traditions in Jordan also posed an issue for women MPs. There are very traditional tribal voices represented in Parliament that do not accept or acknowledge women’s presence in Parliament, and can stifle the calls for change with their powerful conservative influence (Abdo, 2014). In addition, tribal, traditional, and conservative religious groups preserve traditional norms where it’s contradictory for women to be in positions of power, especially when handling specific issues, for example when a woman MP suggested military power to deal with rioting in a rural town, she was attacked for calling on the government to do something just because she is a woman and doesn’t have that right (Abdou, 2014; A. Zgailat, 2014). Many women get elected through the support of their tribes, even to the extent that “the quota depends on tribes,” in the opinion of one source (A. Zgailat, 2014). This reliance on the tribe influences the activities of women and incites in the women a fear of dealing with women’s issues in a way that the tribe would disagree with, impacting their social lives and their potential

re-election (A. Zgailat, 2014). The tribe's influence can make or break a woman MP—for example, according to one source if the women from rural areas try to move or spend more time in Amman due to the travel burden, the tribe shames them and questions the women MPs connection to the needs of the people and doubts if the women MPs actually represent the tribe (A. Zgailat, 2014).

Also, traditional societal norms give women the “double burden” of being fully responsible for their families and their duties as a MP. Women are expected to care for their families 100% and to be able to meet their every need, such as helping when children have exams or projects (Abdo, 2014). Also, no childcare centers exist in Parliament, meaning that the six to seven women with children under the age of 18 have to spend much more time away from their families and allows for more instances where the MP might have to miss Parliament or leave to attend to their families, especially if children are young (Abdo, 2014). Even if women have the means to outsource the care of their children to a maid or nanny, it isn't appreciated by the rest of the larger family unit since the woman isn't actually caring for her children the way she ought to in the eyes of society (Abdo, 2014). This burden not only impacts their duties as a MP but also their availability for capacity increasing trainings and workshops, due to the weekends being ‘family days’ and April-May being final exam time at school, so that NGOs cannot schedule programs, or if they do the MPs have to bring their children along and are expected to care for them during the day (Abdo, 2014). One male MP noted that both allies and adversaries of women appreciate effort put forth by women MPs to deal with the burden of familial responsibility, however the likelihood that this sympathy translates to any action on the men's part is unlikely (Al-Khazaleh, 2014).

On this same trend, transportation to and from Parliament is an issue. Parliamentarians are 100% responsible for their transport to and from Parliament, and this presents itself as a financial burden (Abdou, 2014; Hakouz, 2014). Compounding on this is the inability of women to relocate their families the way a male MP could, so that instead they have to drive or fly in from all parts of the country three or more times a week to attend sessions and meetings (Abdou, 2014; A. Zgailat, 2014; Hakouz, 2014).

The public's pressures and expectations impacts the perception of MPs and their activities, not allowing the MPs to "have room for growth" or error, for that case (Abdou, 2014). The public expects women to be a unified, homogeneous group without disagreement, acting like men (Abdo, 2014). The women work hard to be effective and active "at the same level of men" (Khalifat, 2014). The public also expects immediate success from the women, who still have to learn the game of politics, and this pressure for performance is felt by the MPs who still have to figure out their own beliefs (Abdou, 2014). Women are put "on the spotlight," and this negatively affects the women, causing them to lose their family relationships, their personal lives, and their privacy (Dababneh, 2014; Gharghir, 2014).

Finally, just the small number of women MPs is a burden unto itself, as at the end of the day the women's votes do not overwhelm those of the men and the find themselves relying on the men (or their votes, in this case) for any change (Abdou, 2014; Hakouz, 2014).

Resources for Women MPs

While the influences of tribes can be negative, examples of their positive influence also exist. The Speaker of the House for Parliament, a progressive man supporting women and their issues, comes from a very large and powerful tribe (Abdou, 2014). In addition, women MPs from each session, especially the first few sessions, came from very large, wealthy, powerful tribes,

and the connections or wasaleh (connections) that come from those tribes aided their run and election into Parliament.

Also, the immense support of women MPs through women's organizations definitely aided women in providing training prior to election on campaigning, training women about their new position after their election in culturally specific ways, and training periodically about issues such as gender mainstreaming (Abdou, 2014; Dababneh, 2014; Mutaman, 2014; Women's Participation Gains Ground, Faces High Hurdles, 2001). For example, for the 2010 elections, 12 of the 13 women elected to Parliament participated in NDI's candidate training program (NDI Article). Women's organizations such as the NDI and the JNCW provide services to lighten the burden of work for women MPs by providing volunteer fellows who assist the MPs with many different tasks, legislation briefs related to women's rights and CEDAW, help them on a case-by-case basis with things like legislation briefs, research, etc. (Al Rawasbdah, 2014; Abdou, 2014; Al Gharghir, 2014; Mutaman, 2014). They also help with building networks for women within Jordan, such as the Women Helping Women network connecting experienced and new MPs and the women's caucus, both created with the help of the NDI, and the gender mainstreaming budget network and Jordanian National Forum for Women created by JNCW (Mutaman, 2014; Jordanian National Forum for Women, 2014). NDI also aided network building outside of Jordan, such as a delegation of MPs from different states in the Middle East, including Jordan, that traveled to Washington DC "to study legislative operations, including committee work, the appropriations process and congressional oversight" (Middle East Parliamentarians Discuss Legislating, Budgeting and Women's Political Participation in Washington, Richmond Visits , 2014).

Survey Data

The sample consisted of 48 respondents; of those 20 were male and 28 female. The age of the students was rather young, ($\bar{x} = 20.5$, $SD = 1.76$).

Based on surveys, constituents were somewhat satisfied with how Parliament addresses the issues of importance to them, averaging 2.82 on a 4-point scale, with four being very satisfied.

The issues with the lowest level of satisfaction were poverty ($\bar{x} = 2.33$, $SD = 1.15$) and economy ($\bar{x} = 2.33$, $SD = 1.00$). The areas with the highest level of satisfaction were with healthcare ($\bar{x} = 3.40$, $SD = 0.95$) and education ($\bar{x} = 3.18$, $SD = 0.97$). Women's issues ($\bar{x} = 7.51$, $SD = 0.91$) ranked rather low, at the 9th rank issue for women ($\bar{x} = 8.78$) and tied at 9th for men, ($\bar{x} = 7.38$).

One question asked participants who they believe more represents their concerns, male or female MPs. For women, 64.3% ($n = 18$) believed that women MPs better represent them, and 83% ($n = 15$) of men think that male MPs represent them better. Of 18 participants who indicated that their areas had female MPs, and only four knew anything specific about the MPs. However, when asked directly about how the women MPs represent the participant, it was neutral, but somewhat on the not much side of things ($\bar{x} = 2.25$), and while it was not tested for significance, there was not much difference between male and female responses to these questions. From this same question, 37.5% of women and 47.1% of men responded "not too well." Also, a similar question asked the participants opinion on the effectiveness of women MPs, and the mean response was 2.4, which boils down to somewhere between well and not too well, very neutral. From these responses, 44% of respondents said the women were effective. Of women, 58.8% believed women to be "highly effective" or "effective." It is worth noting that for these two questions, less than half of all participants responded, and of that only eight were men.

Conclusion

This study aimed to examine how effective women MPs elected to the lower house of Parliament through the women's reserved seats quota are in working to further women's rights in Jordan. Through interviews, surveys, and examination of material culture the researcher examined multiple aspects related to women MPs, burdens to their full participation in Parliament, and their engagements as MPs.

In order to have the proper framework and understanding for examining the effectiveness of MPs, it first merits examining the considerable barriers and obstacles the women face as MPs. Overall, the women MPs face enormous institutional, societal, and cultural obstacles to their full participation as MPs. The way patriarchy and tribalism are woven through things as basic as communication to things as complicated and as rigid as Parliamentary proceedings, give women little room for movement. Without increased progress towards modernization, women will be condemned to boundaries put in place by the culture, the women must either to fit in and adopt the traditional role played by men or to exist on the outskirts of social relations, never fitting in but never independent of the system. The majority of women rely on men's approval and support in order to become a Member of Parliament; the women rely on the men for approval, for *ashira* and *wasaleh* societal and tribal connections, and until women's presence increases in Jordan, they rely on the male MPs for their support and vote. Women in disobedience of these men, either deliberately or perceived, risk their security, their family, and in some cases potentially their life. The women MPs interactions within Parliament also suffer due to the cultural framework, they are not taken seriously all the time, their voices are valued only as whispers, and they are limited to legitimacy in only the subjects that society allows them to handle, nothing

more. Patriarchy and tribalism impact their voters, as women constituents are generally compelled to vote the way their male superiors deem successful, so even though women are a majority of voters they consistently do not vote for women, and even when women gain the facility to make their own electoral decisions, their lack of faith in women candidates becomes a barrier. In addition, women usually owe most of their support to their tribe and their families, so they risk alienation if they deviate from the accepted norms prescribed by the culture.

These ingrained cultural norms have been built into the very framework of governmental organizations, with Parliament as no exception. While outwardly the quota looks admirable and progressive, discreet internal prejudices detract from its successes. The two male MPs interviewed by the researcher displayed deep, while not surprising, prejudice. Their language and attitudes related to the women MPs, the quota, and women's participation in politics suggest that overall it's the women's problem, not theirs. The women have to prove themselves; they must be worthy to gain respect in the patriarchal system. The men's perception is that the women aren't receiving women's votes solely because women voters don't believe in them, and the 'solution' is for a woman to be in power and use this power to give other women access into politics, not for men to help the women. To them, the quota is discrimination, but not positive discrimination, it meets an end that they are indifferent. While these sentiments cannot be applied to the male MPs as a whole, it goes to show how they can be overtly supportive while covertly, and possibly unknowingly obstructive in their very thoughts and attitudes.

One interesting point is how the lack of votes for women by women commonly is translated to a lack in faith of women, however in the results of the survey conducted by the researcher; this is not the case (As-Sadeen, 2014). While the women surveyed felt the women

MPs represented them, the researcher was not able to determine if the women surveyed had faith in the women MPs work in Parliament.

Additionally, women, be they MPs or not, are entirely responsible for maintaining and meeting the needs of their family. The women take on a double burden of their legislative tasks and familial responsibilities. This affects their attendance of Parliament, their relationships with their families, their availability for attending trainings and workshops intended to improve their knowledge, awareness, and overall capacity for being a MP. The women also lack the agency to relocate their family closer to Parliament, so they are forced to commute back and forth using their own time and resources, or relocate alone temporarily and risk losing the support of their constituents. Since men do not have same problem with responsibility for the family, childcare facilities do not exist in Parliament—even though they would allow the women to mediate the cultural responsibilities they have as women and to maintain relationships with their children.

Women also face the intense expectations of the public as a whole. Put on the spotlight by the quota, the women are expected to work together and have immediate, massive results. However the quota has not been in place long enough for real change to happen, women have to prioritize and start with issues that are realistic and attainable, and they are nowhere near a homogenous group with only one set of ideas, beliefs, and opinions. This exaggerated pressure for performance and for success distracts the women from the real goal—changing legislation and changing the minds of the people about the capacity, the capability, and the necessity of including women and improving their presence in the political decision-making framework.

Remarkably, with all these factors working against women MPs, they are effective MPs, working to promote women's rights and are examples of women's empowerment for the country and for the world.

They do owe their success, in part, to the strong support systems in place in Jordan through women's organizations and NGOs that help train women for election, for participation as MPs, and how to address women's issues, in addition to the networks created by these organizations that allow the women to connect and use each other as resources, and the assistance provided by the organizations in the form of volunteers. These organizations use tactics cited in research as providing strong results and impacts, something that surprised the researcher. However, like anything in development, these organizations are not perfect and could still improve, especially in coordination of efforts, in their outreach efforts, and in their quality and consistency of resources and trainings.

The women MPs are active MPs. They participate in committees, especially the newly founded Women's and Family Affairs Committee. They are the speakers of houses, are participating in political blocs, and even came together August 2013 and created the first women's caucus in Jordan—a resource that they use to attack women's issues and seek real, tangible, change. The women are actively working to change legislation, and with one success of the Social Security Law already accomplished, they are strategizing and prioritizing to create the greatest change, taking into account the game of politics and the subtlety of timing. The legislations the women's committee and caucus are working on are legislations controversial in their backwardness for women's rights and their contradiction with CEDAW, the standing precedent for women's related legislation. While the voting records of the women could not be attained, the rest of their work was a testament to their commitment to women's issues.

The women MPs activities are not just limited to Parliament, as they have participated in international events, have been part of international Parliamentary delegations, and voluntarily seek to improve themselves through trainings and workshops provided by NGOs. However, one

major point where they were lacking is actual formal discussion of women's issues in Parliament. While they understandably wish to avoid being token women or being seen as only representing women's issues, they do have the responsibility to the women who paved the way for them to be where they are to tackle women's issues in all arenas of their position. Through the legislation addressed in the women's respective committees, though, it is apparent that they are addressing the concerns of the constituents, as they have generally favorable ratings, however more research on this point is necessary.

Finally, the women have solid evaluation by their constituents, their peers, and by third party organizations and experts. The overwhelming opinion is that there are women that are excellent, and moreover there are some that do need to work harder and seek more education. The women's barriers are duly acknowledged and appreciated, and their successes are equally valued—with reservations in some cases. While all sources saw room for change and improvement, especially with the general awareness of the MPs and their education on women's issues, they did also see improvement from the past as well.

In conclusion, the women MPs indeed are a force for change, even when the odds are stacked much out of their favor. They have been working through the years of the quota, the founding mothers laying the framework for the current MPs to begin the process of changing the society. As one source put it best, "women's issues don't have to do with changing laws, they have to do with changing peoples minds" (Abdo). These women, valiantly starting the slow process of creating these changes in society, are not empty gestures put in place by foreign pressures—they are strong, powerful women acting as vehicles for real change in Jordanian society.

Study Limitations

The main and overarching issue with this research was the lack of time. Especially when working with a busy advisor, it meant that the time it took for research tools to get approved, for example, increased much more than it should have. Managing literature review, theory review, interviews, survey distribution, data analysis, and paper writing all in a three-week period required constant diligence and determination of the researcher.

Also a major limitation was that the researcher is nowhere near being fluent in Arabic meant that the researcher had to outsource all translation of both research tools and material culture articles, and couldn't possibly examine all material culture evidence that exists on the internet in Arabic. Also, this meant that interviews conducted in Arabic had to be translated. This presents a major limitation as translation of interviews always presents error in the situation, especially since the interviews translated were already rushed, so the translator had to paraphrase and summarize the Arabic, unless the researcher asked specifically about words and phrases that she heard. Also, the translator had never before translated conversations in a formal situation, but there were no other options since the other formal translators the researcher knew had other engagements.

A shortcoming of the data collection is the errors present in the surveys and interview questions. The surveys were never piloted before they were distributed, so the researcher didn't have a chance to work out translation, instruction, or theoretical errors with the survey questions. This impacts the quality of the data gathered, and lowers the validity of research, and doesn't allow strong conclusions to be made from the surveys. Also, the researcher would have preferred to pilot interview questions, or at least base them more strongly on theory to make sure that they got the best answers that were possible from each one.

Recommendations further/future studies

While this research is compelling, it does not answer even of a fraction of the questions related to quotas, women's rights, and Jordan. More quantitative studies could be accomplished that look at the speeches given by MPs and analyze them for topics discussed. Similarly, researchers could analyze the voting patterns of Parliament before and after the quota, and analyze how women MPs are voting and how their presence is changing the things brought to Parliament. In addition, one interesting perspective is the impact of increasing women in Parliament in the social and cultural realms, especially related to women's political participation. Examining whether or not this impact exists in Jordan could bring to light whether or not the quota has actually succeeded in empowering women and changing the minds of society.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Interview for Members of Parliament-Women/Men

1. How long have you been a MP?
2. How were you elected, was it through the quota? Can you tell me a little about the process?
3. Do you serve on any committees? What are your duties?
4. Was there any training provided to you once you were elected? If so, what did it cover?
5. Whose interests do you serve as a member of parliament, which are the most important to you?
6. What are your personal political beliefs?
7. How would you say you have done as a MP(self evaluation)?
8. Which legislations have you been most closely associated with in presentation, adoption, or creation?
9. What legislation have you worked on that directly affects womens issues?
10. Women only: Do you have to take on the “double burden” of managing your position and family issues?
11. Women only: Is parliament a “women friendly zone” meaning are there any issues that arise just from your gender (with the times of meetings, child care facilities, travel requirements, toilet facilities, etc)?

Men only:

10. How would you evaluate women MPs, in terms of their participation in parliament?
11. What are the political beliefs of women MPs?
12. Who do women MPs represent as MPs?
13. Is parliament a “women friendly zone” meaning are there any issues that arise just from the gender of MPs (with the times of meetings, child care facilities, travel requirements, toilet facilities, etc)?

Interview for Other Important People

1. What is your opinion about the reserved seats for women in parliament?
2. Who do you think members of parliament as a whole should represent?
3. Who do you think women members of parliament should represent?
4. Who do you think women members of parliament actually represent?
5. What do you think having women MPs does to affect parliament?
6. How do you think having more women MPs has changed Jordanian laws?
7. What is your level of satisfaction with Jordanian female MPs?
8. Do you think women MPs encounter obstacles or barriers in parliament (such as meeting times, travel requirements, toilet facilities, child care access, etc)?
9. Do women MPs experience any difficulty or ease in participating in parliament due to their gender? Why/how?

Appendix B: Survey

1. a. What is your age? _____ b. What is your sex? _____
2. What is your highest level of education?
Primary School High School Some College College Degree Graduate Degree

3. What area and city do you live in? _____
4. How interested are you in politics?
Very interested Somewhat interested Not too interested Not at all interested

5. How important to you is it that your voice is heard by members of Parliament?
Least Important Most Important
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

6. Please rank from 1 (most important) to 10 (least important) the issues you think elected members of parliament should prioritize while in office?
_____ Developing local infrastructure
_____ Improving the status of women in the country
_____ Improving quality of education
_____ Fighting poverty
_____ Improving the economy in general
_____ Improving Access to healthcare
_____ Addressing internal political problems
_____ Fighting corruption
_____ Foreign policy issues, country’s standing in international community
_____ Reinforcing stability, national security
_____ Creating jobs

7. For each issue listed below, please circle the extent to which you think the members of Parliament actually address this issue? Please circle the best answer for each issue. with 5 being addressed very well and 1 being addressed very little.

Developing local infrastructure	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Improving the status of women in the country	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Improving quality of education	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Fighting poverty	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Improving the economy in general	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Improving Access to healthcare	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Addressing internal political problems	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Fighting corruption	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all
Foreign policy issues, country’s standing in international community	Very well	Somewhat	Not too well	Not at all

Reinforcing stability, national security

Very well Somewhat Not too well Not at all

Creating jobs

Very well Somewhat Not too well Not at all

8. a. For women only:

Do you feel like your concerns are better represented by male or female representatives in Parliament?

Male Female

b. For men only:

Do you feel like your concerns are better represented by male or female representatives in Parliament?

Male Female

9. a. Does your district have female representatives in parliament? Yes No

b. If yes, How much do you know about them?

Do not answer the following questions if you answered “No” to question 9.

10. How well do the women representatives in Parliament represent your concerns?

Very well Well Not too much Not at all

11. How effective do you think the women representatives are?

Highly effective Effective Not very effective Not at all effective

Appendix C; Informed Consent

Title: Quotas and Representation

Mackenzie Kieborz, Texas A&M University

School for International Training—Jordan: Modernization and Social Change

1. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of quotas for representation in parliament by evaluating members of parliament elected in the quota.

2. Rights Notice

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. **If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview.** Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

a. **Privacy** - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.

b. **Anonymity** - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.

c. **Confidentiality** - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.

3. Instructions:

Please read the following statements carefully and mark your preferences where indicated.

Signing below indicates your agreement with all statements and your voluntary participation in

the study. Signing below while failing to mark a preference where indicated will be interpreted as an affirmative preference. Please ask the researcher if you have any questions regarding this consent form.

I am aware that this interview is conducted by an independent undergraduate researcher with the goal of producing a descriptive case study on the quotas for women's representation in parliament.

I am aware that the information I provide is for research purposes only. I understand that my responses will be confidential and that my name will not be associated with any results of this study.

I am aware that I have the right to full anonymity upon request, and that upon request the researcher will omit all identifying information from both notes and drafts.

I am aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any question and to terminate my participation at any time, and that the researcher will answer any questions I have about the study.

I am aware of and take full responsibility for any risk, physical, psychological, legal, or social, associated with participation in this study.

I am aware that I will not receive monetary compensation for participation in this study, but a copy of the final study will be made available to me upon request.

I [do / do not] give the researcher permission to use my name and position in the final study.

I [do / do not] give the researcher permission to use my organizational affiliation in the final study.

I [do / do not] give the researcher permission to use data collected in this interview in a later study.

Date:

Participant's Signature:

Participant's Printed Name:

Thank you for participating!

Questions, comments, complaints, and requests for the final written study can be directed to:

Dr. Ashraf F. Alqudah, SIT Jordan Academic Director

Telephone (962) 0785422478

Email: ashraf.alqudah@sit.edu