THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL
OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

THE INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES

IMES CAPSTONE PAPER SERIES

CENTRALIZED DECENTRALIZATION: SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE IN JORDAN

GRACE ELLIOTT
MATT CIESIELSKI
REBECCA BIRKHOLZ

MAY 2018

THE INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
THE ELLIOTT SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

Table of Contents

Introduction

Jordan is one of the last bastions of stability in an otherwise volatile region. However, its stability is threatened by a continuing economic crisis. In a survey conducted across all twelve governorates in 2017, only 22% of citizens view Jordan's overall economic condition as "good" or "very good" compared to 49% two years ago.[1] Against this backdrop of economic frustration, Jordan is embarking on a decentralization process at the local level in an attempt to bring decision-making closer to the citizen. In 2015, Jordan passed its first Decentralization Law, which continued calls from King Abdullah II dating back to 2005 to "enhance our democratic march and to continue the process of political, economic, social and administrative reform" by encouraging local participation in the provision of services and investment priorities.[2] This is the latest in a series of small steps taken by the central government intended to improve governance at the local level and secure long-term stability in the Kingdom.

In our research on the beginning stages of these newly implemented reforms, we set out to explore a number of research questions: Why is Jordan pursuing decentralization? What are the developmental and political implications of decentralization? What are the vulnerabilities and opportunities associated with decentralization in Jordan? While exploring these questions, we observed a large amount of political rhetoric surrounding the ongoing reforms. In his earliest speeches on decentralization, King Abdullah II referred to political development as the "gateway to the full participation of all segments of society".[3] An article from Jordanian newspaper *Al-Ghad* called decentralization "a path to democracy".[4] However, over the course of our in-person interviews with key stakeholders and individuals knowledgeable about reform in Jordan, not a

---

[1] Day, Ramsey. "Jordan's decentralisation and economic stability are linked", *The Jordan Times*, 15 July 2017, https://bit.ly/2uniIZR

[2] "Address by His Majesty King Abdullah II to the Nation Announcing the Decentralisation Plan," (2005) Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: https://kingabdullah.jo/en/speeches/nation-announcing-decentralisation-plan.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Jihad Al-Mansi, "40 + 40", *Al-Ghad*, 14 February 2018, https://bit.ly/2H0ThRI

single person referred to Jordanian decentralization as an initiative aimed at bolstering democracy in the Hashemite Kingdom. Our observations of the new local governance bodies as well as a more in-depth study of the rhetoric surrounding decentralization reinforced the notion that these reforms in Jordan are not democratically motivated. Decentralization in Jordan is an effort to administratively decentralize in order to improve economic development through more targeted service provision in Jordan's rural periphery.

This distinction carries important implications for the way decentralization will continue to evolve in this context, and helps show why decentralization efforts by a hyper-centralized state like Jordan warrant further scrutiny. Jordan's centralized makeup and its historical reliance on patronage networks to link rural tribal groups to the central government through service provision and handouts present complications for decentralization. Rural areas are historically underdeveloped, and many individuals and smaller tribes are left out of these patronage networks (Clark, 2018, p. 176). If and how the Royal Court intends to incorporate these parties into decentralization initiatives was an integral part of our research. Unpacking the objectives of decentralization in Jordan, and situating it within a larger framework of authoritarian political calculations will help to shed light on opportunities for success as well as highlight the many obstacles in its way.

In addition, because decentralization efforts are so new, there is a lack of understanding both within the international community and among Jordanians concerning its aims and objectives. The Decentralization Law of 2015 created new popularly elected councils at the governorate level. In theory, these councils are meant to oversee budget allocation, advise on the needs of the governorate, and serve as a check on the executive councils whose members are appointed by the central government (Ranko et al., 2017). However, a lack of adequate information campaigns and vagueness within the law itself has caused widespread confusion

over the role of the governorate councils. The first elections held under the new law were in August 2017, where the council members were elected for the first time. The fact that less than a year has passed since these reforms took effect presented both opportunities and challenges for our work.

Literature Review: Decentralization and Authoritarian Upgrading

Decentralization is defined as "a state reform that seeks to transfer authority and responsibility of major government functions from central to sub-national governments — including local governments, civil society, and the private sector" (World Bank, 2013). Kathleen O'Neil defines it as "the devolution of autonomous political and fiscal power to subnational officials" (2003, p. 1070). In essence, decentralization seeks to bring policies closer to citizens. The term has been employed to refer to various initiatives, generally falling into four categories: administrative, political, fiscal, and economic (Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007, p. 7). These distinctions allow us to better understand where state drives for decentralization arise from. For example, political decentralization "transfers policy and legislative powers from central governments to autonomous, lower level assemblies, and local councils that have been democratically elected by their constituencies" while administrative decentralization "places planning and implementation responsibilities in the hands of locally situated civil servants and these local civil servants under the jurisdiction of elected local governments" (World Bank, 2013). Importantly, the existing literature on good governance tends to highlight political decentralization as an avenue towards better democratic governance (Saito, 2008, p. VI) as well as better governance outcomes, in the context of the World Bank's push for "community-driven development" initiatives (World Bank, 2013). This follows a global trend in neoliberal development over the past few decades that sees democracy promotion and inclusivity as an essential part of developmental reform. Economic development and democratic governance are

understood by some to be intertwined (Lipset 1959). Indeed, proponents of "good governance" initiatives such as decentralization, believe that political decentralization will increase the likelihood of realizing these governance gains (Kauzya, 2007, p. 75). While greater input from citizens is an important part of many decentralization efforts, administrative and political decentralization do not always occur together.

In theory, decentralization can drive economic growth by "increasing bureaucratic performance and predictability" and "contributing to the effective delivery of public goods that are necessary for productive businesses" (Humphreys, 2003, p. 77-78). Decentralization is generally not a goal in and of itself, but a means to a variety of ends that straddle the political and the administrative, including "improved allocative efficiency", "greater responsiveness to citizens", "increased revenue collection via local taxes and charges", and "stronger accountability." (Scott and Alam, 2011, p. 35) As such, international financial institutions have advocated for decentralization as a means of development. The World Bank has advocated for decentralization "as a way of improving access to services, tailoring government actions to private needs, and increasing the opportunities for state-society interactions" (World Bank, 1998, p. 108-113). The evidence, however, is mixed as it relates to the effects of these efforts on economic growth, service delivery, and public participation (Cheema and Rondinelli, p. 8). Increased chances for elite capture, limited capacity at the local level, and increased administrative costs complicate the image of decentralized governance as a panacea (World Bank, 1998, p. 108-113). Indeed, many countries have struggled to implement decentralization reforms, as they give more power to those outside of the structures of the central government, widening possibilities for losses of control.

Understood historically, decentralization as a policy instrument of development came into focus in Europe after the Second World War, but "developmental efforts in the 1950s, 1960s

and 1970s were basically guided by the notion of big government" (Sarker, 2003). The reasons that states have pursued decentralization since then have varied, but as Hess notes "most explanations for the reforms of the 1980s and 1990s focus on global trends: (1) the neoliberal move away from state-led developmentalism and toward free-market economics and (2) the transition, particularly in Latin America, from authoritarian to democratic forms of government." "Big-government" policies geared towards national, and particularly rural, development focused on import-substitution and central economic planning went out of vogue and cash-strapped developing countries began to see decentralization as a way to better developmental outcomes. These trends have been reflected in both general neoliberal shifts in domestic governance and the strategies of international financial institutions, donor countries, and other international organizations towards decentralization as fix for inefficient state bureaucracies. (2013, p. 30)

There are a variety of motivations that push centralized governments to devolve powers to local actors and institute good governance policies more broadly, even in the face of these mixed economic results and the risks of moving power away from the center. Mustafa Jari asks the dual questions of why international donors promote decentralization as a component of democracy promotion in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and why governments in the region have shown interest in these initiatives, drawing implicit ties to their dependency on foreign aid (2013). However, while international actors like the World Bank, the IMF, and USAID have pushed for decentralization as a tool of development and have funded efforts in Jordan and beyond to decentralize, a focus on these actors obscures the domestic political motivations for implementing these reforms. O'Neill, in her study of Latin American decentralization efforts, details different explanations for decentralization on the part of governments, including fiscal and political crises, and support from international donors (2003, p. 1073). Authoritarians are "reluctant decentralizers" and seek to keep power close to

themselves and their allies. However, some authoritarians have decentralized governance. While some scholars posit a causal relationship between democracy and decentralized power, efforts to decentralize are often driven by political calculation and the "distribution of political power among self-interested elites" (Hess, 2013, p. 31). Janine Clark finds that some regimes are adopting decentralization efforts to avoid giving up power. Decentralization is intended to improve municipal participation and service delivery, but in reality, "it keeps authoritarian regimes in power and, in municipalities, keeps decisions and services in the hands of elites."[5] Hess argues that decentralization in China has encouraged "protest patterns to emerge in localized, particularized, and more manageable forms that pose less of an existential threat to the party state" (2013, p. 37). Similarly, Clark shows how the Moroccan monarchy used decentralization as a means to extend its patronage systems to opposition parties, eventually discrediting them and rendering these parties virtually indistinguishable from the regime (2018, p. 131).

Across the MENA region, poor municipal governance, service delivery, and economic performance contributed to the Arab uprisings of 2011-2012. While dictators were overthrown in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya, many authoritarian regimes managed to remain in power by reorganizing strategies of governance to adjust to new global, regional and domestic circumstances. This continued the trend of what Steven Heydemann calls "authoritarian upgrading" (2007). He argues that authoritarian upgrading involves the development of policies that are designed to "stabilize and preserve authoritarian rule in the face of ongoing demands for political change" (p. VII). These adaptation policies began over the last two decades, but have intensified in recent years in response to Western calls for global democratization.

---

[5] Clark, Janine, "The dismal failure of efforts to empower people in the Arab world," *The Conversation*, 26 Mar 2018, https://bit.ly/2rAj6kf.

According to Heydemann, Arab regimes have become proficient at containing and disarming democracy promotion, sometimes exploiting it for their own purposes. While there is no single model or template for authoritarian upgrading, autocratic regimes across the Middle East utilize several strategies to preserve existing power bases or shift them around in ways that benefit the regime. In some instances they temper their opposition to Islamist political participation, selectively adapt to demands for economic liberalization, attempt to integrate their economies into global markets, and expand opportunities for social and economic elites. They can expand political spaces – electoral arenas in particular – where controlled forms of political contestation can occur. Finally, they recognize that authoritarian governance can benefit from strengthening state capacity and public services through civil service, education and labor market reform. Regimes come to these conclusions through a process of "authoritarian learning" whereby dictators learn from each other by drawing on other examples. The Chinese model has recently emerged as a system that has improved economic performance without conceding political control (p. 1-3). Jordan's motivations for implementing decentralization through the passage of its new Municipal and Decentralization Laws, and the subsequent creation of governorate councils, or as they are colloquially known, "decentralization" councils", are not well documented.

Methodology

We selected this research topic in order to address a gap in the literature on decentralization in Jordan. Not enough time has passed since the passage of the laws in 2015 and the first local elections under these laws in 2017 for a full picture of Jordanian decentralization to develop. In fact, the current academic literature on Jordanian decentralization does not extend much past 2015. We do not attempt to present a full analysis of subnational governance in the Jordanian context, but seek to situate Jordan within the analytical framework of decentralization,

and analyze the implementation process in order to identify and analyze political calculations and policy-making processes in semi-authoritarian states during the process of reform. Our paper tests several hypotheses about the intentions behind these decentralization efforts: Is decentralization about better targeted service provision and economic development? Is it about increased political participation, democracy promotion and decision-making at the local level? Is it about mitigating against regime security concerns? Or is it about creating wider systems of patronage at the local level?

We combined a variety of research methods in order to explore the history of decentralization efforts in the Jordanian context, the current state of these efforts, and the discourse around these efforts at the elite, civil society, and media levels. First, we reviewed the literature on decentralization efforts by Jordanian non-governmental and civil society organizations, international organizations, and the Jordanian government, including the text of the law itself. Next, we conducted a discourse analysis of Jordanian media sources in order to survey both elite and public discourse about these reforms. This research was intended to draw out key themes, dominant narratives, and the differing perspectives on the goals of the reforms and their progress thus far. We collected roughly 100 online articles in Arabic from three of the most prominent Jordanian news sources – *Al Ghad*, *Ad-Dustour*, and *Al-Ra'i*. We selected our articles by searching online news archives from the period of mid-2015 until March 2018 for key phrases like 'decentralization' (*al-lāmarkaziya*). We subsequently drew out phrases and themes from the articles and grouped them into coding categories in order to identify key sentiments and narrative trends. We analyzed the results to create a comprehensive picture of the public discourse around decentralization. This body of data informed both the final analysis of this paper, and the questions we asked interview subjects during our research visit to Jordan.

Our field research took place from March 9-17, 2018 in Amman; including two days in Jerash and Zarqa governorates. We interviewed more than 35 key stakeholders and individuals knowledgeable about reform in Jordan. We interviewed current and former Jordanian government officials involved in both the creation and implementation of the governorate councils. We met with the Jerash governorate council and municipal council members in Dalil and Hallabat in Zarqa province. We also interviewed academics and civil society leaders at the Center of Strategic Studies, the University of Jordan and the Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development. We spoke with officials from international organizations in their Amman offices including USAID, the National Democratic Institute, the UN Development Programme, and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Some of these organizations played a role in coordinating activities around the governorate and municipal elections of October 2017. Others, such as USAID and UNDP, have played a role in the implementation of the new local governance structures and continue to work with Jordanian ministries and the governorate councils on the implementation of these reforms. Our interviews with other individuals provided valuable background on the history and aims of decentralization efforts in Jordan that informed our broader thinking on the process of reform in the country. A full list of interviews is available in the appendix of this paper. Finally, we incorporated information from these interviews into our coding categories from our media analysis in order to inform our final analysis.

Local Governance in Jordan

Jordan is an absolute hereditary monarchy, led by King Abdullah II. The King is the Head of State and controls Jordan's armed forces. Members of the Cabinet and Jordan's Senate are appointed by the King, while members of the other house of Jordan's bicameral parliamentary system, the Chamber of Deputies (*majlis an-nuwwab)* are elected. The King "ratifies and promulgates the laws" and "directs their enactment" (OECD, 2017, p. 37-38).

Jordan has a two-tier administrative governance system that is divided into twelve governorates and one hundred municipalities. Governorates "have long been the administrative and deconcentrated arm of the central government". They fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), which "employs the personnel of the governorate and determines and allocates the budget" (OECD, 2017, p. 67). Each is led by a governor appointed by the Prime Minister, who is essentially "an extension of the central government" and has no accountability to the local constituencies of the governorate (Ranko et al., 2017). Governors are responsible for the execution of national policies at the governorate level (OECD, 2017, p. 37). Executive councils, a key part of the developmental functions of the new decentralization law, are chaired by the governor and includes local representatives from each of the national ministries. Prior to the creation of the governorate councils, the bodies now referred to as the executive councils, were the sole body at the governorate level. The executive councils draft each governorate's budget according to the ceilings set by the Ministry of Finance, and feedback provided by municipalities and the governorate councils. They also draft strategic and executive plans for development projects and public service provision (Ranko et al., 2017).

Municipalities are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MOMA) and their governing administration consists of a mayor, a municipal council and (in the majority of cases) one or more local councils (OECD, 2017, p. 70-72). The involvement of municipalities in local planning is restricted to minor development projects such as road infrastructure and garbage collection. As per 2015's revised Municipalities Law, smaller bodies called local councils are now elected and consist of five to seven members. The local councils make proposals to municipal councils to address the needs of local businesses such as restaurants and street vendors (Ranko et al., 2017). In a report from the European Commission from 2015, just prior to the adoption of the Municipality Law, the municipal councils were described as "highly

dependent on state funding and policy planning and [are] weak in comparison to central government decisions."[6] In 2007, the mayorship of municipal councils became an elected position, but its "de-facto power [was] limited vis-à-vis central government and its regional managers." [7] Municipal governance is also limited by the central government's significant oversight of the Greater Amman Municipality, the Petra Tourism Developmental Authority, and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (OECD, 2017, p. 54, 72). As stipulated in the new laws, input from municipalities is in theory connected to the governorate councils and beyond. However, a detailed analysis of Jordan's municipalities and the 2015 Municipalities Law are beyond the scope of this paper as their official relationship to the governorate councils to date is unclear.

Finally, the governorate councils are new locally elected bodies created by the 2015 Decentralization Law, replacing "consultative councils", which were fully appointed bodies. [8] In contrast, the governorate councils "introduce a democratic component at the highest level of the governorate administration." 85% of council seats are elected by a popular vote in a number of sub-governorate 'districts' determined by the government, and a maximum of 15% of seats are appointed by the Cabinet (OECD, 2017, p. 68). The law also ensures, via a quota system, that ten percent of each council is comprised of women.[9] The number of seats on each of the 12 governorate councils is proportionate to the size of the governorate and ranges from 14 to 41.[10] These new councils are designed to inform strategic planning and foster socioeconomic development at the governorate level by giving advice on service provision to the executive councils based on local needs, looking over and approving the budget, and proposing investment and development initiatives. They are seen as consultative bodies with the authority to check the

---

[6] *Jordan- Fact Sheet; Vertical Division of Power*: European Commission, 2015. https://bit.ly/2wx5wUe
[7] Ibid.
[8] Interview Number 15, see Appendix pg. 49.
[9] "Proposed by-law increases seats, women's quota at governorate councils."*Jordan Times (Amman, Jordan*), Feb 18, 2017. https://bit.ly/2kVG9Bt
[10] Independent Election Commission, "Governorate Councils Electoral District By-Law No. 135/ 2016 1 Issued According to Article (6) of the Decentralisation Law No. 49/2015", IEC.jo, 2016. https://bit.ly/2jOZN35

government-appointed executive councils. Legally, the governorate councils have financial and administrative autonomy. Their creation has the potential to introduce "an unprecedented level of popular control and influence" to the process of local governance and budget allocation (OECD, 2017).

Political Economy and Reform

Jordan's political economy has largely been defined by rentierism in the form of remittances from the Gulf, the dominance of a strategic coalition between the Royal Court and Transjordanian tribal elites, and a generous public sector that supported these elites with employment despite varying economic conditions. Jordan's tribal elite has relied over the years on its historical relationship and social compact with the Hashemite dynasty to provide them with the *wasta*, or connections, that provide resources, usually in the form of services for their local constituencies. *Wasta* is employed as a "mediator" between state and the citizen and it is key to understanding Jordanian politics (Lust, 2009, p. 124) However, since the drop in global oil prices in the mid-1980s, and the subsequent imposition and embrace of neoliberal economic reform, most Jordanians - especially those who previously benefited from the tribal social contract and *wasta* with the monarchy - have seen increased economic austerity (Yom, 2014). This trend has been exacerbated by the massive influx of Iraqi and Syrian refugees since 2003, and rising prices due to regional instability and subsidy reforms. Economic development in Jordan has been particularly stunted in governorates with limited economic viability such as Ma'an, al-Tafileh, and al-Mafraq (Doan, 1991, p. 180-182). A lack of opportunity, manifesting in increased grievances and according to some, increased levels of radicalization, has been a main driver of decentralization efforts. This lack of opportunity and increasingly unstable access to social services exists in a number of poverty pockets in these rural areas (World Bank, 2016, p. 32-33). The lack of economic viability in these governorates mattered less before the IMF's

Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) that began in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as public employment supported most people in rural areas with majority tribal Transjordanian populations. According to Anne Marie Baylouny (2008), "At the advent of structural adjustment, 92% of the domestic labor force in Karak worked in the public sector; 99.5% in al-Tafileh; 90% in Ma'an — all in the southern region." (p. 285) Public employment is still high in these areas, but positions have decreased in recent years, particularly in the military, as a result of neoliberal reforms put in place by King Abdullah. Despite the King's military background, he presided over cuts to social services for retired military personnel and limiting of military pensions for newer recruits (Tell, 2015, p. 5).

This lack of opportunity and stability contributed to the rise of the *Hirak* movement of 2011-2013, which included "40 tribal youth activist groups" from rural areas in Jordan, "long thought to be unflagging supporters of the autocratic regime" (Yom, 2014, p. 1). The deep lack of opportunity exposed by the neoliberal reforms in the absence of adequate public support for these often poor rural communities mobilized these actors, only to be quashed when the *mukhabarat* viewed the protests as a legitimate threat to the stability of the regime (p. 235). While tribal politics are still important in Jordan, the traditional clientelistic networks have been shaken by Abdullah's neoliberal-oriented government reforms. In 2001, municipalities were amalgamated in an attempt to save costs. According to Janine Clark, the then minister of MOMA (and former mayor), Abdel Razaq Tubaishat, reduced the number of municipalities from 328 to 99 and then, shortly after that, to 93 (Clark, 2012, p. 367). This was accomplished by combining jurisdictions, therefore reducing the number of mayoral and councilor positions at the local level. Municipalities "erupted into protests demanding the undoing of amalgamation in 2011". According to Clark, "…those who protested were by and large the smaller and less influential tribes and/or clans demanding their own municipalities in the hope that they could establish

tribally based clientelistic networks that would work to their favor." New municipalities were created in response to the protests (p. 176). While the regime emphasizes democracy, it practices clientelism and attempts to manage service provision and tribal coalition relations at the same time. They are intimately tied together.

Jordan's uprisings passed without the kind of major upheavals experienced in Syria, Libya, and Egypt. However, the legacy of the protests and the larger context of Jordan's protest movements in 2011-2013, which encompassed the Hirak, Islamist, and secular protests for reform (notably, *not* for the fall of the regime), was the linkage of participation and democracy with economic and developmental concerns at the local level. Previously, these issues had mostly been addressed via shifts in the patronage strategy of the regime to keep important tribal actors satisfied with their lot (Clark, 2018). According to Sean Yom, "younger tribal Jordanians utilized politics rather than economics to anchor their concerns about their changing relations with the Hashemite state… By enshrining popular participation and political openness, rural communities would have a new way to engage the regime and protect their interests on a level playing field with the urban classes of 'Amman" (2014, p. 242). The regime's response to these calls for democracy were a series of what opponents called cosmetic reforms (Ryan, 2014, p. 152), with an emphasis on participation and accountability.

Increasing economic hardship has also played a role in the drive for decentralization. While Jordanians haven't seen civil strife in the last few years, economic pressures as a result of the influx of Syrian refugees, neoliberal reforms, and a generally sluggish economy have gradually pushed many Jordanians to their breaking point over the last few years. In another round of economic reforms aimed at addressing the state's crippling debt, the government ended bread subsidies in January 2018. The policy change, which caused a 40% price increase for

white pita bread and doubled the price for large pita, resulted in the eruption of protests.[11] With payouts, subsidies, and other financial gifts running out in an increasingly austere fiscal environment, the government is seeking to fill this gap by "empowering citizens" to "take responsibility" at the local level.[12]

Demands for civic participation and economic difficulties have shaped the fashion in which the regime has responded to calls for change from this part of the population. These determining factors were reflected in the 2015 Decentralization Law.

Decentralization in Jordan

King Abdullah first declared the state's intention to decentralize in a speech in 2005, where he stated:

> "Accordingly, and in order to enhance our democratic march and to continue the
> process of political, economic, social and administrative reform, and out of our
> keenness to have people in their respective governorates participate in affairs
> related to public facilities, investment priorities, expenditures on capital and
> services projects and in overseeing the performance of official bodies in all areas,
> we have deemed it necessary to reconsider the current administrative divisions of
> the Kingdom. We shall have a number of "development areas or regions," each of
> which consisting of a number of governorates. Each region will have a local
> council directly elected by its people to work hand-in-hand with the elected
> municipal councils in the governorates to set priorities and draw up plans and
> programmes related to their respective region. These tasks should no longer be

---

[11] Suleiman Al-Khalidi. "Jordan Ends Bread Subsidy, Doubling some Prices, to Help State Finances." Reuters, Jan 26 2018, https://reut.rs/2Ke7Q4x
[12] Article Number 65, see Appendix, pg. 44.

exclusive to central decision-makers because the people of each region are more aware of their interests and needs."[13]

Robert Satloff posited in 2005 that the push for local elections and representation was inspired by other democratic elections in the region, particularly in Palestine and Iraq (Satloff, 2005). George W. Bush's democracy agenda and 'nudges' were likely an incentive for the democratizing rhetoric of the King (Yom, 2018, p. 136). However, Jordan has toyed with the idea of administrative reform at the governorate and municipalities levels since the 1990s, as a result of varying internal political and administrative calculations. Decentralization at the governorate and regional levels encountered a number of roadblocks before it fully came to fruition in the form of the 2015 Decentralization Law.

The King's announced plan eventually became a proposal to establish three "regions" in Jordan, which was drafted in 2007 by the newly-formed Royal Committee for Decentralization and spearheaded by Abdel Raouf al-Ruwabdeh, the president of the Senate. This plan would have divided the twelve governorates into three regions - North, Central and South. The proposal ultimately failed due to the perception that it would have created a more federalist system that could open the door to regional competitional and the creation of a "fourth" region in the West Bank.[14] Furthermore, the political elite objected to the various implications of the plan, among them "a huge shift of influence over jobs and money from politicians and bureaucrats in the capital to local officials in the provinces" (Satloff 2005 in Clark 2018). Another vague decentralization plan was drafted in 2010, but was eventually tabled due to "concerns [about] the jurisdiction, authority, and regional divisions" (Clark, 2018, p. 117).

---

[13] "Address by His Majesty King Abdullah II to the Nation Announcing the Decentralisation Plan."
https://bit.ly/2K0zant
[14] Interview Number 17, see Appendix pg. 49.

Plans for decentralization had stalled when, in 2011, Jordanians joined in the "Arab Spring" protests, demanding more employment opportunities, democracy, and anti-corruption reforms from the regime. King Abdullah initiated various reform programs ostensibly aimed at addressing the concerns voiced by demonstrators. These included the creation of the National Dialogue Committee[15] and the Independent Election Commission (IEC). Following a hiatus and a period of upheaval that resulted in thousands of Syrian refugees flooding into Jordan and mounting economic difficulty, the Cabinet began drafting the new Decentralization and Municipalities Laws in 2014.

The Cabinet worked with Parliament to draft the Decentralization and Municipalities Laws in early 2014. Parliament received the draft law in April 2014 and debated the language of the law for over a year before it was initially passed in August 2015. However, the draft law was later returned to Parliament in October 2015 to address the King's concerns over the lack of clarity given regarding the financial and administrative independence of the governorate councils.[16] During this process, the draft laws were also publicly debated outside of Parliament by civil society organizations, such as Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development and its RASED initiative, which worked to present its recommendations to Parliament during the drafting process. Dr. Musa Shteiwi, the Director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, argues this process could have benefitted from further community involvement, but that it was more responsive to feedback than previous reform processes.[17] With the passage of the Decentralization Law, along with a new Municipalities Law, a Royal Decree and the passage of subsequent bylaws, Jordan approved new legislation establishing elected

---

[15] Courtney Freer and Shadi Hamid, "How Stable is Jordan? King Abdullah's Half-Hearted Reforms and the Challenge of the Arab Spring," Brookings Institution, 1 Nov 2011, https://brook.gs/2IeZSI2.

[16] "Royal Decree ratifies decentralisation law." *Jordan Times (Amman, Jordan*), Dec 17, 2015. https://bit.ly/1mpdmVZ

[17] RASED, *Statement on the Recent Development on Decentralization Legislation in Jordan*. Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development, 2014.

councils at the governorate level. Joint elections for governorate, municipal, and local councils were held in August of 2017.

Jordan's Independent Election Commission (IEC) was formed in 2012 in order to create an independent electoral body capable of carrying out Jordan's elections in a transparent, accountable manner. It has been lauded by many for improving the quality of Jordan's elections and being a key player in the 2017 governorate and municipality elections .[18] It was expected to hold elections "immediately"[19] after the government introduced decentralization, reflecting a sense of urgency to hold elections and staff the new governorate councils. In the month before the elections, the IEC attempted to educate voters on the Decentralization Law. It used infographics and social media, created a one-page summary of the law, compiled a comprehensive election atlas and held interactive meetings where young potential voters could ask questions and share concerns. The IEC also recruited 20,000 youth volunteers to lead a door-to-door campaign across Jordan to urge people to vote and educate local community members on important issues.[20]

Since the elections, a number of organizations such as USAID, UNDP, the EU, IRI, NDI, the IMF and the World Bank have all been involved in the planning and implementation stages of decentralization.[21] USAID Jordan's Cities Implementing Transparent, Innovative, and Effective Solutions (CITIES) project currently has a $50,000 budget to work on supporting the development of more inclusive local government operations. The project aims to improve local service provision by better identifying local needs (Chemonics). USAID is also working with the Ministry of Finance to identify fiscal and legislative gaps in the Decentralization Law. They are working alongside the EU and UNDP to help the Jordanian government develop a broader

---

[18] Interview Number 2, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[19] Interview Number 7, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Interview Number 14, see Appendix, pg. 49.

strategy and vision for decentralization, which many in Jordan find lacking.[22] The EU signed an agreement for development assistance in 2013 in which decentralization was not a condition for funding, but rather an indicator as part of an overall agreement to receive EU funding that also included goals of poverty alleviation and local development.[23] UNDP, which originally took part in consultations with the Jordanian government in 2013, voiced that international actors have not prescribed specific reforms, but merely supported their implementation. The UN Development Programme took over the EU mandate for improving the decentralization reform efforts after the 2015 passage of the Law. One of its contributions was the creation of an interministerial committee to coordinate decentralization reform among the ministries.[24] NDI originally consulted on decentralization, but its role was reduced during the implementation phase. NDI indicated that, in the future, it will support government improvements to the decentralization process, but for now it is focusing on good governance from the executive branch.[25]

To date, decentralization has been a joint effort by the Jordanian ministries and the international community. However, the good intentions of these parties are also subject to the prevailing political climate and regime security calculations in Jordan. Clientelism still plays an important role in Jordanian politics and administration. The results of decentralization will likely depend on how these considerations interact with improvements and reforms to administration, bureaucracies, and donor coordination and funding. In the next section, we analyze, based on our research in Jordan, how the country seems poised to implement these reforms, who they are intended to benefit, and their developmental and political implications.

---

[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Interview Number 1, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[25] Interview Number 2, see Appendix, pg. 48.

Decentralization as a Development Initiative

Decentralization in Jordan can be characterized primarily as an administrative initiative responding to calls from the Transjordanian base for economic development. While the Palace's goal is the creation of increased development opportunities in Jordan's rural periphery through more targeted service provision, regime stability and the security of Jordan as a whole remains the primary motivating factor behind decentralization efforts. Economic development and regime stability calculations are often dichotomized as mutually exclusive; however, this can preclude real opportunities for improved service delivery and economic opportunity that are beneficial to both the regime and the populace. Jordan's hyper-centralized governance structure has disproportionately benefited Amman, particularly West Amman, but a desire to develop the areas outside the capital has been a key driver of the government's decentralization efforts. Jordan's economic development, particularly in the various governorates outside of Amman, is a stated goal of Jordan's Vision 2025.[26] The creation of the governorate councils as a new, nominally representative body demonstrates the Palace's intent to bring economic development to Jordan's most impoverished rural areas. This commitment was generally unquestioned in all of our interviews, but past initiatives to encourage development at the governorate level, such as Local Development Units, have failed due to a lack of political will, elite capture, and a lack of resources (Hallaj et al. 2015, p. 20). The governorate councils and the new Decentralization Law in general face similar obstacles.

Jordanian decentralization can be placed in the context of constituency clientelism (Woldner, 1999), rather than as a radical political reform. While local media coverage and interviews downplayed the role of the tribal coalitions, they firmly stated that decentralization was an effort to develop areas outside of the capital. While it is difficult to assess the effect that

---

[26] "Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy" (2015) http://inform.gov.jo/en-us/By-Date/Report-Details/ArticleId/247/Jordan-2025

the government's awareness-raising campaigns had on voter turnout, statistics show that voter turnout in areas with a high concentration of rural (usually tribal affiliated) voters such as Jerash (91%), Ajloun (62%), Mafraq (59%), Ma'an (54%), and al-Tafileh (54%) was high.[27] In urban areas with high Palestinian populations, such as Amman, Zarqa, and Irbid, turnout mostly followed the patterns of past parliamentary elections with extremely low turnout, usually attributed to political marginalization of Palestinian and thus sympathetic in Islamists. Rural voters in Zarqa governorate, however, voted in overwhelmingly high numbers as well. More than 75% of the population in both the municipalities of Dalil and Hallabat, both in rural areas of Zarqa, voted in the elections.[28] [29] In this light, the get-out-the-vote campaign can be seen as a success. It sent a signal to rural areas that an opportunity for decision-making and self-representation was coming. Rural voters overwhelmingly seized this opportunity. Various factors can explain this enthusiasm, one of which is the influence of tribal actors. Following the elections, *Al-Ghad* estimated that around 85% of all seats were won by tribal candidates.[30] However, people from areas such as Dalil and Hallabat, located in Zarqa province, anecdotally reported high rates of competition among civic candidates. Whether governorate councils can truly help to strengthen developmental decision-making at the governorate level or not, voters in rural areas saw these elections as an opportunity to raise their voices in hopes of more responsive governance and better service provision.

An important aspect of Jordan's governance structures that illustrates decentralization's focus on rural areas is the special status of the most economically important and, to date, highly

---

[27] Abdel Hadi, Nefeen "Amman… hal taḥtaj li man "yestifazha" lil mushārika bil intikhabāt?", *Ad-Dustour*, August 26, 2017.

[28] Independent Election Commission – Jordan (2017), "Al-nata'ij al-murashiḥeen fi majales al-muḥafaẓa", https://bit.ly/2JdTkth

[29] Independent Election Commission – Jordan (2017), *al- ātlas al-intikhabi lil-intikhābāt al-baladia w majales al-muḥafaẓa*, p. 445.

[30] Sowell, Kirk, "Jordan's Quest for Decentralization", Sada - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 24 Aug 2017, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/72905

developed areas of the country. Large gaps still exist in important parts of the country, including Amman, where the governorate council will almost surely be subordinated by the General Amman Municipality (GAM). GAM, as well as the Petra Tourism Developmental Authority and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone are all subject to oversight and control by the government (OECD, 2017, p. 54, 72). Constituting the majority of land in the Amman/Capital governorate (*al-Asima*), the GAM is a mostly technocratic structure that is led by an appointed mayor and a municipal council of which half of its members are appointed. The duties of the executive and governorate councils of Ma'an and Aqaba governorates have been limited from the start. The Decentralization Law stipulates that they must "not contradict with the provisions of the valid ASEZA Law, the valid Petra Development and Tourism Region Authority Law and the authorities of their boards of commissioners" (Decentralization Law, Articles 5 and 8). In light of their special status, it is likely that the GAM and the areas of Ma'an (where Petra is located) and Aqaba governorates under the respective jurisdictions of these special economic and developmental zones, will continue to be subject to technocratic rule without the substantive democratic input envisioned by the Decentralization Law.

This focus on rural, tribal areas does not necessarily preclude successful local development. As mentioned above, decentralization is a key platform of the good governance agenda for development. The idea of market-based, neoliberal solutions and ideas touted by IFIs such as decentralization have likely been pushed by King Abdullah's technocratic advisors and inner circle, many of whom are successful businessmen (Yom, 2014, p. 241). In general, they are advocating for growth and local development through neoliberal reforms such as public private partnerships and smaller government. As a result, these advisors have supported and helped develop Jordan's decentralization initiative as a means of moving decision-making closer to the citizen. This policy prescription rests on the assumption that devolving decision-making to the

local level will allow for better identification of local needs. With this goal in mind, the development of rural areas is seen as a way to shore up regime security by attempting to institute developmental reforms based on widely accepted theories about the benefits of popular participation in local development, while targeting a specific population to benefit from these reforms. According to Ahmad Ajarmeh, the former head of the International Cooperation Unit at the Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, decentralization is "not a political process; it's a development project".[31] According to USAID, Jordan's decentralization experiment is about equitable development and popular participation in local decision-making.[32] Officials at NDI pointed out that many development organizations were brought in to assist the central government with decentralization efforts, highlighting the developmental nature of the initiatives.[33] In over half of the 100 articles we compiled, government officials and civil society representatives strongly noted the potential of decentralization as a boon for local economic development. In contrast, many interview subjects emphasized the lack of political aims or the political empowerment of subnational bodies in this process.

The 'stabilization' intended to be brought about by decentralization consists of two components – implementation and elections. 'Implementation' includes the actual implementation of the governorate council and its interaction with the central government, Parliament, the executive council, municipal councils and local councils. The ultimate goal of this development-oriented decentralization project is to allow the governorate councils to better identify local needs in order to provide more targeted services and invest in capital projects that will serve the community. While the reforms are intended to placate the population with potential growth via popular participation, the weaknesses of the governorate councils and the

---

[31] Interview Number 18, see Appendix, pg. 49.
[32] Interview Number 6, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[33] Interview Number 2, see Appendix, pg. 48.

vague language of the Decentralization Law demonstrate that decentralization is not a primarily political initiative. Furthermore, legislative power, financial independence, detailed bylaws, and well-delineated roles and responsibilities that lay out the mechanisms available to these bodies are missing. One of the primary criteria for political decentralization is the transfer of legislative power to local councils, which the governorate councils, despite being popularly elected, do not have. Currently, they only have the power to "see and approve".[34] When we asked for peoples' opinions on whether governorate councils would ever be granted legislative power, the answer was overwhelmingly "no". Amer bani Amer, the founder and director of the Al Hayat Center, clarified, "no legislative powers will be granted to the governorate councils, because this is not a political project".[35] He further specified that more participation by citizens is a secondary goal; the primary goal is moving the decisions of the ministries from Amman to the governorates in order to enhance development outcomes.

Another criticism, voiced strongly by local council members, was that budgets are not sufficient to meet local development needs.[36] The King, under the auspices of the Constitutional Court, intervened during the drafting process in 2015 and passed down a ruling stating that "any units or councils established under a law should be administratively and financial independent from the central government".[37] While financial independence has been promised by the central government and governorate councils are increasingly pushing for amendments that provide them with their own budgets,[38] for now, governorate councils are relegated to approving or rejecting the budget of the executive council for each governorate.

---

[34] Ibid.
[35] Interview Number 8, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[36] Interview Number 12, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[37] "King rejects decentralization bill for 'unconstitutionality', Jordan Times, 19 Oct 2015, https://bit.ly/1GmaxxM.
[38] Interview Number 12, see Appendix, pg. 48.

The current lack of clarity surrounding the governorate councils, the roles of their members, and their relationships to executive councils limits the relevance of the councils and has caused widespread confusion among Jordanians over their roles and jurisdiction.[39] Bani Amer pointed to vague language in Article 8 of the law, which outlines the duties of the governorate councils vis á vis the executive councils.[40] Regarding the duties of the governorate councils, Section 7 of Article 8 reads: "Discuss reports on the implementation of projects, plans and programs that are being carried out by the government departments in the governorate, without contradicting with the work of the competent government monitoring agencies, and follow up and assess work progress in the development projects." Working definitions of mechanisms for these 'discussions', 'follow-up' and 'assess[ment]', not to mention detailed by-laws are non-existent. Fares Braizat, a leading political analyst in Jordan, expressed concern about Section 3 of Article 8, which states that among the governorate's duties is the ability to "look into the means of implementing the annual budgets of all the governorate's municipalities."[41] The question of what the phrase "look into" legally allows council members to do in their interactions with the executive councils of each governorate is unclear, and may set the stage for conflict between the central government and local elected leaders.[42]

Some see this vague language as not only a limiting factor to the success of the law, but as an intentional move by Parliament and the central government ministries to ensure that the governorate councils do not take away their power and control over local patronage networks.[43] One of the expressed aims of the Decentralization Law is the removal of informal service

---

[39] Various Arabic media articles from Ad-Dustour, al-Ghad, and al-Rai. A list is contained in the Appendix.

[40] Interview Number 8, see Appendix, pg. 48.

[41] Law on Decentralization, Law No. 49 of 2015, Independent Election Commission, Jordan. 31 Dec 2015. https://bit.ly/2kWCM1E (Translation); https://bit.ly/2o5f6Y4 (Arabic)

[42] Interview Number 5, see Appendix, pg. 48.

[43] Interview Number 8, see Appendix, p. 48.

provision from the responsibilities of parliamentarians.[44] Jordan's members of parliament (MPs) "are elected by promising services they can deliver to their constituents" (Clark, 2018, p. 80). Former Jordanian MP Jamil al-Nimri estimated that 80% of MPs' time is spent operating in networks of *wasta* to provide services to constituents with connections to the parliamentarian.[45] The royal court, at least rhetorically, has sought to limit the social frictions that the selective provision of social services creates.[46] In 2015, former minister of Municipal Affairs Hazem Qashua said he saw the new law as working to lessen "pressure" on the legislature; "transforming" them from deputies of "services" to deputies of "the nation".[47] Debates surrounding Parliament's efficacy as a legislative body were widely covered in the Jordanian press during 2014 and 2015. Some critics even discussed the total dissolution of Parliament. Others suggested cutting down the number of Parliamentary seats from 150 to 130, an idea that came to fruition with the 2015 amendment to the Election Law.[48] This discussion has been revived recently with some, including King Abdullah, suggesting a second decrease in Parliamentary seats from 130 to 80 after the creation of the new governorate councils.[49] Parliamentarians; therefore, have a vested interest in keeping any attempted reforms vague. Indeed, bani Amer reports that MPs strongly opposed the possibility of legislative or financial autonomy during the drafting of the law.[50] Decentralization, in theory, creates an opportunity to limit the influence of these informal networks to allow more equitable social service provision and limit popular discontent.

---

[44] Article Number 39, see Appendix, pg. 43.

[45] Interview Number 17, see Appendix, pg. 49.

[46] Dana Al Emam, "Royal Discussion Paper offers 'timely critique' — analyst", Jordan Times, 26 Oct 2016. https://bit.ly/2IBFqVf

[47] Ezzeddin an-Naṭur, "al-lāmarkaziyya – māhiyatha w āliyat 'milha", AmmanNet, 11 Mar 2015, https://bit.ly/2t8RMIG

[48] Curtis R Ryan. "Deja Vu for Jordanian Election Reforms." The Washington Post. https://wapo.st/2IAml5w

[49] Article Number 43, see Appendix, pg. 43.

[50] Interview Number 8, see Appendix, pg. 48.

Several of the international organizations that we met with criticized aspects of the reform process. A UNDP official highlighted the seemingly hurried implementation of the reforms and the problems of coordination and lack of clarity in the legislation, which limit the relative power of governorate councils.[51] During our meetings with local councils, members voiced skepticism about the feasibility of applying Western knowledge to Jordanian decentralization. USAID expressed a similar sentiment, saying, "the French peg does not fit the Jordanian hole".[52] The UNDP official reported an interaction with a Wales city executive who participated in an exchange with Jordanian municipal council members. He said that he did not find any relevance for the Jordanians in his home experience with decentralization.[53] Academics like Janine Clark highlight the mismatch between decentralization efforts in other parts of the world and current decentralization efforts in the Middle East. International financial institutions promoted decentralization in Latin America in the 1980s after these countries had democratized, while in the MENA region, decentralization programs are being implemented while authoritarian regimes are still in place, putting clear limits on the extent and scope of these reforms.[54]

Other obstacles to robust legislation and implementation of the Decentralization Law's mandate are the Ministry of Interior (MOI), whose *mukhabarat* networks operate between MPs, municipalities, and local power brokers, and its relationship with the other ministries implementing these reforms (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, and the Ministry of Parliamentary and Political Affairs). Anecdotal evidence suggests that the MOI is loath to give up any power, specifically the power of the governors to be in full control of governorate finances.[55] While it remains to be seen whether

---

[51] Interview Number 6, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Interview Number 1, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[54] Clark, Janine, "The dismal failure of efforts to empower people in the Arab world."
[55] Interview Number 1, see Appendix, pg. 48.

governorate councils will truly be able to exercise veto power on governorate budgets handed down by the governor-headed executive councils, it is clear that this development would weaken the MOI's hold on local patronage networks, or at the very least, cause them to adapt to a newly formed network, containing new actors with differing interests.

The regional security situation and the timing of the passage of the Decentralization Law played heavily into our interview discussions about the reforms.[56] Most see it as a central and local government interest to produce budgets that lead to better service provision in order to quell any potential instability that further protest movements could produce in Jordan. This is especially pertinent considering ISIS' presence on Jordan's borders, and economically-motivated destabilizing factors stemming from the heavy economic burden of the refugee influx and rising prices. According to an op-ed from Jordanian newspaper Al-Ghad, "one of the most important objectives to achieve the Royal vision of decentralization is for the governorates to become developmental units to contribute to the development of society".[57] This, it is hoped, will help lead to a more stable Jordan.

Political Rhetoric

The second aspect of the Palace's 'stabilization' initiative focused on elections, with the government emphasizing its commitment to democratic decision-making through a series of awareness-raising sessions, workshops, and media coverage. This emphasis is reflected in the political rhetoric around the Decentralization Law, which highlighted aspects of political development such as local elections, youth and women's empowerment, civic and democracy education, and shifting decision-making from the center to the periphery.[58] In King Abdullah II's 2005 decentralization speech, he discussed how it is "essential to expand the base of public

---

[56] Article Number 40, see Appendix, pg. 43.

[57] Article Number 49, see Appendix, pg. 43.

[58] Various Arabic media articles from Ad-Dustour, al-Ghad, and al-Rai. A list is contained in the Appendix.

participation" in the reform process and stated, "As political development is the gateway to the full participation of all segments of the grassroots and civil society institutions in the various aspects of the development process, I assert here that political development should start at the grassroots level, then move up to decision-making centres, and not vice-versa".[59] This focus functions as both another facet of the political rhetoric surrounding decentralization reform, as well as a genuine widespread effort to mobilize citizen engagement at the local level. The various ministries involved in the decentralization process - the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, and the Independent Election Commission – as well as international donor agencies, particularly the European Union, various European agencies, and USAID, were heavily involved in supporting these campaigns.[60] The newly-formed IEC was also a key player in the run-up to governorate council elections.

The central government's dissemination of political rhetoric functions in several ways. First, it works as a signaling tool to the international community that Jordan's reforms are democratic-leaning in nature, and therefore worthy of being supported by outside funding. It also reflects King Abdullah II's collaboration with a Western-educated technocratic elite who advocate for neoliberal policies. Finally, it follows the trend that emerged in the 1990s that entwines economic development with democratic "good" governance (Kauzya, 2007, p.75). However, this ultimately serves to add a political layer to what is, in reality, administrative decentralization whose goal is to spur economic development through more targeted service provision at the local level.

Jordan's lack of natural resources, its proximity to regional conflicts, and its large refugee population make it historically reliant on international aid. The heavy layer of political discourse surrounding the decentralization project aligns it with the international push for democratization

---

[59] Article Number 49, see Appendix, pg. 43.

[60] Various Arabic media articles from Ad-Dustour, al-Ghad, and al-Rai. A list is contained in the Appendix.

as a means to improve governance and stem conflict at its roots. Elections signal to the international community that Jordan is undergoing real reform that is worth funding. In addition, the 2017 local elections provided the government with a good opportunity to tout its political reformist credentials. Heydemann refers to how, in recent years, the Arab world has seen growing levels of "political competition, increased attention from regimes to issues of electoral reform, and a widespread sense of progress in the liberalization, if not the democratization, of electoral arenas" (2007, p. 10). However, there is less to these changes than meets the eye. According to Heydemann, "electoral reforms in Arab countries have less to do with democratization than with making elections safe for authoritarianism" (p. 11). UNDP also stressed that, to date, the thought around the Decentralization Law has been mostly about elections, not about implementation.[61] USAID agreed that the law is "three-quarters about elections and one-quarter about structure"; the law itself does not clarify how any concrete change will take place.[62] Officials from the National Democratic Institute also pointed out that there have been no reforms on individual liberties or democratic rules thus far, despite the overt focus on elections.[63] The inclusion of a 10% quota for women was lauded as a significant achievement for the creation of the governorate councils.[64] However, Dr. Musa Shteiwi was more critical of the democratizing impetus behind this: "democracy in Jordan is a numbers game. [The government] can promote how many women are in the council, but if they're not elected then it's not democracy. If no one participates, it's not democracy".[65]

---

[61] Ibid.

[62] Interview Number 6, see Appendix, pg. 48.

[63] Interview Number 2, see Appendix, pg. 48.

[64] Interview Number 8, see Appendix, pg. 48.

[65] Interview Number 14, see Appendix, pg. 49.

Opportunities and Challenges

It is clear that while the formation of governorate councils seems to, at least in its current iteration, fall short of the developmental and democratic panacea it has been touted as, the renewed *promise* of accountable local governance may push open still-closed doors to more effective decision-making at the local level. Inefficient funding, the lack of effective cross-level mechanisms, and the likelihood of clientelism present a number of possibilities for failure. However, the technocratic elite that surrounds the King is oriented towards efficient neoliberal development, and will likely push for effective reforms that empower the local councils. This sentiment was expressed by a number of critics of the current iteration of the law from a variety of backgrounds, including current government officials,[66] officials from international aid agencies,[67] [68] and others. As such, opportunities for neoliberal development, focused on jobs and public private partnerships, in cooperation with local NGOs and international organizations, will likely be pursued by governorate councils. However, given the current macroeconomic woes Jordan faces, it seems unlikely that local development through popular accountability, even if successful at reflecting the will of local residents in rural areas, can fully address the issues that most acutely affect all Jordanians, including Palestinians in urban areas.

Many of the articles we read and interviewees we spoke with advocated for amendments to the Decentralization Law. Governorate council members from various governorate councils have grouped together to discuss specific amendments to the law.[69] Our meetings with the Social Democratic Party and the governorate council in Jerash stressed the need for amendments to the law as well. Musa Maaytah, the Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs has responded by calling for amendments to the law that would expand the powers of the governorate councils to

---

[66] Interview Number 18, see Appendix, pg. 49.
[67] Interview Number 1, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[68] Interview Number 6, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[69] Interview Number 12, see Appendix, pg. 48.

allow for better service provision to local communities. He emphasized that "the widespread disappointment [over the law] may give policymakers an opportunity to review and adjust before the issues become difficult to address".[70] Amer bani Amer stated that the government is trying to come up with a new draft of the law in the next two years. Governorate councils do not currently have the power to legislate, nor are they fiscally independent from the central government. From a purely developmental standpoint; however, the governorate council can still identify local needs and communicate these to the executive council without the power to amend, legislate, or question the executive council about overarching policy prescriptions.[71]

Another topic of discussion is whether the government intends to utilize decentralization to open up new channels of patronage at the local level for individuals and groups that are currently excluded from existing networks in its attempt to "stabilize".[72] The governorate councils would then function as what Janine Clark calls "imitative institutions", which imitate democratically elected bodies, but function as vehicles for patronage (2018, p. 306). We heard this idea supported in many interviews and articles where governorate councils members called for the same kind of perks that Parliamentary Members currently have; namely, cars, immunities, offices and secretaries.[73] Some believe that they cannot truly represent the people without having the means to respond to requests.[74] Having these items would give governorate council members legitimacy that they are currently lacking.[75] However, others view these requests as signals that governorate council members expect to be folded into existing patronage systems, risking the creation of another level of elite capture and corruption.[76] From this perspective, governorate

---

[70] Article Number 35, see Appendix, pg. 43.
[71] "New Municipalities Law Aimed at Entrenching Decentralisation." (2014) *Jordan Times,* Amman, Jordan. http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/new-municipalities-law-aimed-entrenching-decentralisation.
[72] Interview Number 1, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[73] Article Number 71, see Appendix, pg. 45.
[74] Interview Number 12, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[75] Interview Number 8, see Appendix, pg. 48.
[76] Interview Number 5, see Appendix, pg. 48.

council members should not have these amenities because they are meant to act as civil servants rather than as "local Parliaments".[77] Extension of patronage may indeed be part of the intent of decentralization reforms, regardless of the rhetoric surrounding the law. However, providing salaries, holding elections, and maintaining positions at the governorate level is a large investment for a country struggling to stay afloat financially, even with help from the international community. It could also add another bureaucratic body in an already saturated hierarchy of bureaucracy. Rather than devolving the service burden from Parliament, the creation of governorate councils could obfuscate how services are disseminated.

However, even if the intention behind decentralization is to bring more people and smaller tribes into the political patronage networks, this does not inherently preclude more targeted and widespread service provision. There is a fine line between Jordan's tribalist clientelism and political representation; both, in theory, reflect the interests of wide swathes of the population. Recent political decentralization efforts in Jordan cannot be removed from the context of an authoritarian state. While Jordan remains an authoritarian state, political decentralization cannot lead to sweeping democratic reforms. Instead, political decentralization in Jordan could result in increased citizen participation and government responsiveness to citizens' demands, particularly in the rural periphery. New elected bodies, such as the governorate councils, created at the local level, open a new space for potential political engagement and contestation, especially among youth, who are looking for channels to engage outside of the traditional clientelism networks. In theory, governorate councils set a precedent for checks on the executive, something that has technically been the domain of Parliament since its inception. Local demands for accountability can move the site of political contestation down a level, giving local actors and activists more pinpointed targets for their discontent. If seen as a

---

[77] Interview Number 17, see Appendix, pg. 49.

real site for political contention and not "an empty container"[78] decentralization can be a vehicle for a more engaged style of governance. This will need to involve a more coordinated and widespread education campaign to inform voters about the role and jurisdiction of the new councils.

Recent signs of increased civic engagement around issues-based politics among youth show potential for further political engagement. In the face of widespread voter apathy, the IEC is implementing a nationwide civic education campaign, starting "from kindergarten through college"[79] in order to foster a culture of engaged, educated, and informed citizens. Tim Shorter, who worked with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) to create and help implement the IEC, lauded the institution's success with youth engagement efforts. Even if young potential voters were skeptical about elections and the new law, there was consistently high turnout during the IEC's community programming in the run up to the decentralization elections. "Youth want to want to care and be involved", he said.[80]

However, if better developmental outcomes are not achieved, this could exacerbate frustrations among Jordanians. While it seems that policy-makers in the Royal Court are well-intentioned in their pursuit of local growth, a number of mitigating factors still exist. Given the lack of substantial budgets, the low amounts of funding provided to governorates for the yearly budget, and limits on the revenue-raising abilities of subnational bodies, even the best public servants are not going to be able to make significant investments in their communities. If seen as just another site of elite capture, clientelism, and *wasta*, decentralization may seem like just another example of failed governance and corruption to rural Jordanians. This could work in the government's favor if dissatisfaction is now aimed at these local bodies, but given their new

---

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Interview Number 18, see Appendix, pg. 49.

status and lack of information surrounding them, anger is more likely to be projected towards Amman. The government is aware of this, and is therefore incentivized to ensure more positive development outcomes to ensure stability. Whether the inertia of one hundred years of tribalism can be overcome in a way that includes citizens in the development process remains to be seen.

A robust system that allows for checks on executive power from the subnational level will rely on the interaction of a number of institutions, nominally directed by the Royal Court and the King, which are also pursuing their own institutional interests. Future research, should avoid simplistic notions of the flow of power from the Royal Court down to the local level and look critically at the interplay of institutional interests at hand, particularly between the Royal Court, MOI, MOPPA, MOMA, and Parliament. While the Royal Court always has the upper hand and can direct the ministries to do its bidding, these institutions do have agency, particularly when it comes to information flows about the costs and benefits of administrative processes. Coordination between the ministries on decentralization, directed by MOPIC and UNDP is already beginning. These types of coordination and dialogue can reduce gaps in understanding and strategy, and allow for the strengthening of coordination on what is a complicated and potentially destabilizing process in a highly centralized state like Jordan.

Conclusion

While the implementation of decentralization has been hurried and confusing to many, it is an ongoing process. Decentralization should not merely be thought of as a cynical response by an authoritarian regime, but rather an attempt to make gradual change in a limiting environment. King Abdullah has expressed frustration, mostly to Western audiences, about the factors limiting inclusive governance and better economic performance in Jordan - clientelism, tribalism, and a fear of the unknown.[81] At the same time, the Royal Court and the government are deeply

---

[81] Goldberg, J. (2013). The Modern King in the Arab Spring. *The Atlantic,*
https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2013/04/monarch-in-the-middle/309270/

implicated in the perpetuation of these structures. *Wasta* still rules in Jordan, and this benefits a ruling elite that do not want to see Islamists, Palestinians, or a vast chunk of marginalized Jordanians threaten their rule. The longer these structures are in place, the more limited the fruits of decentralization will be to Jordan's population. In attempting to navigate a "middle way", increasing opportunities for local level decision-making to exist in the context of privileged constituencies, Jordan has taken a significant step towards more inclusive governance. Centralized decentralization may seem like an oxymoron, but in the absence of democratic reform, the introduction of robust local decision-making, new political spaces, and institutions that could benefit some of Jordan's most marginalized have the potential to present a new model for local governance in the region.

Works Cited

"Address by His Majesty King Abdullah II to the Nation Announcing the Decentralisation Plan," (2005) Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: https://kingabdullah.jo/en/speeches/nation-announcing-decentralisation-plan.

Al-Khalidi, S., (2017) "Jordan Holds Local Elections in Step to Devolve Powers," *Reuters* https://www.reuters.com/article/us-jordan-election/jordan-holds-local-elections-in-step-to-devolve-powers-idUSKCN1AV2EK

"Arab Uprising: Country by Country - Jordan," (2013) BBC News, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-12482679

"Jordan Ends Bread Subsidy, Doubling some Prices, to Help State Finances," (2018) https://www.reuters.com/article/us-jordan-economy-subsidies-bread/jordan-ends-bread-subsidy-doubling-some-prices-to-help-state-finances-idUSKBN1FF2CP.

Baylouny, A.M. (2008) "Militarizing welfare: neo-liberalism and Jordanian policy." *The Middle East Journal* 62.2: 277-303.

Cheema, G. S., & Rondinelli, D. A. (2007) *Decentralizing governance: Emerging concepts and practices*. Cambridge, Mass.: Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Chemonics International, "Strengthening Municipal Governance in Jordan," www.chemonics.com/projects/strengthening-municipal-governance-jordan/.

Clark, Janine A. (2018) *Local Politics in Jordan and Morocco: Strategies of Centralization and Decentralization*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Clark, Janine A. (2012). Municipalities go to market: Economic reform and political contestation in Jordan. *Mediterranean Politics*, 17(3), 358-375.

Clark, J.A. (2018) "The Dismal Failure of Efforts to Empower People in the Arab World." *The Conversation*. https://theconversation.com/the-dismal-failure-of-efforts-to-empower-people-in-the-arab-world-93425

Doan, P. L. (1991) "Changing administrative regions in Jordan: Regional development strategy or distraction?." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 82.3: 177-184.

Dutta, D. (2009) "Elite Capture and Corruption: Concepts and Definitions." N*ational Council of Applied Economic Research.*

EuropeAid (2010) "The Quest for Decentralizing Government in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan: Some Preliminary Findings of a Situation Analysis."

Jordan - Fact Sheet: Vertical Division of Power, (2015) European Commission.

Falleti, Tulia G. (2005). A sequential theory of decentralization: Latin American cases in comparative perspective. *The American Political Science Review* 99, (3) (08): 327-346,

Gibson, E.L., ed. (2004) *Federalism and democracy in Latin America*. JHU Press.

Hess, S. (2013) *Authoritarian landscapes: Popular mobilization and the institutional sources of resilience in nondemocracies*. New York: Springer Science & Business Media.

Heydemann, S. (2007) "Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World." The Brookings Institution, vol. 13.

Humphreys, C. (2003). Better governance for development in the Middle East and North Africa: enhancing inclusiveness and accountability. *World Bank Publications*, Washington, DC.

Independent Election Commission (Jordan). "About Us." https://iec.jo/en/content/about-us.

"Law on Decentralization" (2015) Government of Jordan, https://iec.jo/sites/default/files/6DecentralisationLaw2015EN.docx%20%281%29_0.pdf

Lipset, S. (1959). Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy. *The American Political Science Review, 53*(1), 69-105.

Lust, E. (2009) "Competitive clientelism in the Middle East." *Journal of Democracy* 20.3: 122-135.

Independent Election Commission – Jordan (2017), *al- ātlas al-intikhabi lil-intikhābāt al-baladia w majales al-muḥafaẓa*.

Jari, M. (2010). "Local governance in the MENA region: Space for (incremental and controlled) change? Yes, promoting decentralized governance? Tough question." *Journal of Economic and Social Research,* 12(1), 9.

"Jordan 2025: A National Vision and Strategy" (2015) http://inform.gov.jo/en-us/By-Date/Report-Details/ArticleId/247/Jordan-2025

"New Municipalities Law Aimed at Entrenching Decentralisation." (2014) *Jordan Times,* Amman, Jordan. http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/new-municipalities-law-aimed-entrenching-decentralisation.

Kaufmann, D. & Aart, K. (2002) "Growth without Governance." *Economía*, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 169-229.

Kauzya, J.M. (2007) "Political Decentralization in Africa: Experiences of Uganda, Rwanda and South Africa." in eds. Cheema and Rondinelli, *Decentralizing governance: emerging concepts and practices.* Brookings Institution Press, Washington, DC: 75-91.

OECD (2017) *Towards a New Partnership with Citizens: Jordan's Decentralisation Reform*, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris,http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264275461-en.

O'Neill, K. (2003) Decentralization as an electoral strategy. *Comparative Political Studies*, 36(9), p. 1068-1091.

"Profile: Jordan". http://www.acauthorities.org/country/jo.

Ranko, A., et al. (2017) *The Municipal and Governorate Council Elections of 2017: Decentralization Efforts in Jordan*. Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2017, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_49922-1522-1-30.pdf?170914085356

RASED. (2014) *"Statement on the Recent Development on Decentralization Legislation in Jordan." Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development*, http://www.hayatcenter.org/uploads/2015/02/20150218140127en.pdf

Ryan, C.R. (2015) "Deja Vu for Jordanian Election Reforms." The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2015/09/02/deja-vu-for-jordanian-election-reforms/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.9a0bbe544c27

Ryan, C.R. (2014) "Jordanian foreign policy and the Arab Spring." Middle East Policy 21.1: 144-153.

Saito, F. (2008). *Foundations for local governance: Decentralization in comparative perspective.* Heidelberg: Physica. http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_49922-1522-1-30.pdf?170914085356

Sarker, A.E. (2003). The illusion of decentralization: Evidence from Bangladesh. *The International Journal of Public Sector Management* 16, (7): 524.

Satloff, R. (2005) A Reform Initiative in Jordan: Trying to Keep Pace with Iraqi and Palestinian Elections. *Washington Institute for Near East Policy.* (February 4, 2005) http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/a-reform-initiative-in-jordan-trying-to-keep-pace-with-iraqi-and-palestinia

Sowell, K. (2017) "Jordan's Quest for Decentralization", Sada - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/72905.

Wedeen, L. (2013) "Ideology and Humor in Dark Times: Notes from Syria." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 39, no. 4.

Tell, T. (2015) "Early Spring in Jordan: The Revolt of the Military Veterans." Washington, DC: Carnegie Middle East Center.

Yom, S. L. (2008) "The Dilemmas of American Democracy Promotion in the Arab World." Yale *Journal of Int'l Aff*airs 3 : 131-145.

Yom, S. L. (2014) "Tribal Politics in Contemporary Jordan: The Case of the Hirak Movement."
The Middle East Journal, vol. 68, no. 2: 229-247.

The World Bank, (2016) "Report No. 103433-JO: Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan - Promoting
Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity, Systematic Country Diagnostic," *The World
Bank Group - Middle East and North Africa Region*.
http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/368161467992043090/pdf/103433-
replacement.pdf

The World Bank, (1998) "World Development Report 1999/2000: Entering the 21st Century:
The Changing Development Landscape - Ch. 5: Decentralization: Rethinking
Government", *The World Bank Group*.
https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/5982/9780195211245_ch0
5.pdf

The World Bank, (2013) "Brief - Decentralization", *The World Bank*.
http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/communitydrivendevelopment/brief/Decentralization

Appendix

Articles from Al-Rai

1. "Al-iqtiṣādī w al-ijtimāʿī yuwaṣay bi-dawr lil-baladiāt fi tanẓīm al-naql;" *Al-Rai,* Jan 18, 2018. https://bit.ly/2Ddnryh.

2. "6.2 milyār dulār bi-nisbat 71% al-mabāligh al-multazim bi-hā l-tamwīl mashārīʿ munafidḥa w qāʾima." *Al-Rai,* Nov 22, 2017. https://bit.ly/2iDWCev.

3. "Al-dawla al-ʿarabīa fi ādhhān mafakirī al-ʿarab: istiqlāl w ḥurīya w ʿidāla w hawīya jāmʿia;" *Al-Rai,* Aug 17, 2016. https://bit.ly/2rraPiw.

4. "Al-malik yatasalam mulakhṣān li-āham ʿamāl al-ḥakuma ʿla muda ʿām." *Al-Rai,* June 19, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K2umxo.

5. "Al-ṭafīleh: Ākhttām mashruʿ tashīl wṣul sukkān lil-kḥadamāt;" *Al-Rai,* Feb 1, 2018. https://bit.ly/2KJHCZ0.

6. "Rūʾasāʾ majāles al-muḥāfazāt yaṭalibūn bi-tuwasiʿa ṣilāḥīāt al-istathmār." *Al-Rai,* Nov 20, 2017. https://bit.ly/2ImjyNm.

7. "Al-Maʾāytah: al-ḥāja li-ijrāʾ tʾadīlāt ʿala qānūn al-lāmarkazīa marhūna bil-tajriba." *Al-Rai,* Oct 23, 2017. https://bit.ly/2yHNKLq.

8. "Wizīr al-shabāb: hadafnā shabāb munkhirat bil-ʿamal al-ʿām w qāda lil-mustaqbil;" *Al-Rai,* Feb 3, 2018. https://bit.ly/2JZl2KC.

9. Abadi, Hatem. "Muḍāmīn al-ḥiwār al-malikī... rihān ʿlī al-shabāb li-naqila nūʿaīya bil-iṣlāḥ;" *Al-Rai,* Feb 1, 2018. https://bit.ly/2DQzcyU.

10. Abusmakha, Tawfiq. "Āwsāṭ intikhābīa tatawaqʿa tawazzʿa āṣwat al-nākhabīn bʿad iktimāl tashkīl al-kutul bil-Mafraq;" *Al-Rai,* July 30, 2017. https://bit.ly/2vaIeSe.

11. Al-Adayla, Hiba. "Al-ṣalaḥyāt waḥududhā wal-muāzanāt wʿalāqat al-jadīd mʿa al-qadīm asʾila (Al-lāmarkaziya);" *Al-Rai,* Aug 1, 2015. https://bit.ly/2FTR4Fb.

12. Al-Aqili, Jaafar. "Khubarāʾ yuʾakidūn ḍarūrat injāz barnāmaj islāḥī waṭanī." *Al-Rai,* Sept 10, 2015. https://bit.ly/2wpMBec.

13. Al-Damour, Nasreen. "Al-ʿamārīn: intikhābāt al-lāmarkaziya taʾārīkh lil-marḥala mufaṣlīya fī ḥayāt Al-Urduniyyin w masiratinā al-dimuqrāṭiya." *Al-Rai,* May 23, 2017. https://bit.ly/2HY0ndl.

14. "Al-ʿAmāreen: al-lāmarkaziya taḥaqaqa al-tawzīʿa al-ʿādil li-makāsib al-tanmīya." *Al-Rai,* May 27, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K2tLvz.

15. Al-Damour, Sir. "al-Tarāwneh: al-lāmarkaziya tazīd al-mushārika ash-shʿabiyya;" *Al-Rai,* Dec 24, 2014. https://bit.ly/2FR28D3.

16. Al-Khawaja, Khaled. "(al-idārīya) tarudu daʿwaʾa li-murasḥ (la-markazīya) ḍida (al-mustaqila lil-intikhābāt) li-ʿadam al-ikhtiṣāṣ;" *Al-Rai,* Feb 14, 2018. https://bit.ly/2GcrmfI.

17. Al-Khudari, Majid. "iftitāḥ markaz tadrīb fī (āwqāf al-Zarqāʾ);" *Al-Rai,* Jan 18, 2017. https://bit.ly/2wgiRAe.

18. Al-Khuraisha, Khaled Sayeel. "al-lāmarkaziya al-ʿirjāʾ;" *Al-Rai,* May 20, 2015. https://bit.ly/2roPYgC.

19. Al-Qamaz, Haydar. "60 milīun dīnār li-itanmīya al-muḥāfaẓāt fī 2014;" *Al-Rai,* Dec 17, 2014. https://bit.ly/2KHIoFH.

20. Al-Qatamin, Riyad. "Al-ʿAqaba... Al-nisāʾ taghayyab ʿan (lāmarkaziya al-bādīya) w taḥaḍiru fī al-madina;" *Al-Rai,* Aug 17, 2017. https://bit.ly/2vFiNYD.

21. Al-Zayyud, Muhammed. "(mālīya an-nuwāb) tūwaṣa bi-inshāʾ majlis ʿālin lil-tʿalīm w at-tadrīb al-mahanī w at-taqanī." *Al-Rai,* Dec 13, 2017. https://bit.ly/2I4tHLa.

22. Habashneh, Samir. "al-lāmarkaziya... maḥāwila l-afahum w tabdīd lil-hawājis;" *Al-Rai,* Dec 3, 2014. https://bit.ly/2HN87LN.

23. Hindawi, Ibrahim. "al-thālutḥ al-ṭibī mā bayna al-muʾasisa wal-qūninta w al-masāʾla." *Al-Rai,* Dec 17, 2016. https://bit.ly/2KG4l7Y.

24. Majali, Hussein Hazaa. "bʿad al-lāmarkaziya.. aʿadīl qānūn al-intikhāb ḍarūra mulaḥa." *Al-Rai,* Aug 19, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rsMsRg.

25. Majili, Hussein Hazaa. "mara ākhra... thamānūn nāʾibān āktḥar min kāfin;" *Al-Rai,* Feb 19, 2018. https://bit.ly/2EFcElp.

26. Omar, Hiam. "mādhā āʿdidnā limā bʿada intikhābāt al-lāmarkaziya;" *Al-Rai,* Aug 4, 2017. https://bit.ly/2jJfR6B.

27. Omar, Hiam. "al-dawr al-māmūl li-majālis al-baladīāt wal-lāmarkaziya." *Al-Rai,* July 17, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K266ve.

28. "lāmarkaziya al-ḥūkuma ar-rashīda;" *Al-Rai,* Aug 29, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rsFNqn.

29. "Majālis al-lāmarkaziya wal-maṭālib al-mustajida." *Al-Rai,* Jan 31, 2018. https://bit.ly/2I2HGBj.

30. Saket, Mazen. "Qānūn al-lāmarkaziya ʿanwān li-ḥiwār āshmal w āʿamaq;" *Al-Rai,* Aug 16, 2015. https://bit.ly/2KEAT2d.

Articles from Al-Ghad

31. "Taṭweer al-ʿamāl" yuwaqʿa mudhakira tafāhum mʿa majilis muḥāfaẓa al-ʿĀṣima." *Al-Ghad,* Jan 21, 2018. https://bit.ly/2GSZaA9.

32. "Al-lāmarkaziya" … māhīatuhā w āhadāfuhā w ālīa ʿamalihā." *Amman Net,.* http://bit.ly/2t8RMIG.

33. "Al-kharīshā: Al-malik Yuajih Liḍarūrat Iʿṭāʾ Al-shabāb Dawrihim Fī Bināʾ Al-dawlat Al-ḥadītht." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 22, 2018. https://bit.ly/2pKMymw.

34. "Al-mʿāiṭṭ: Taṭbīq Al-lāmarkazīt Yaftaḥ Al-āfāq Liāitikhādh Al-qarār Al-tanmawī Wal-khadamī." *Al-Ghad,* Mar 6, 2017. http://bit.ly/2F5N4SH.

35. "Al-mʿāiṭṭ: Tawajah Ḥukūmī Litawfir Maqarrāt Limajālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 22, 2018. http://bit.ly/2CLMYh7.

36. Abu Sbeih, Mu'ayyad. "Tuāfiq ʿly Tʿdīlāt Jadīdat L "qānūn Al-āmānat"." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 17, 2018. http://bit.ly/2o6jK8e.

37. Abuhmour, Mona. ""Taṭwir Al-āʿmāl" Yūqʿ Mudḥakirat Tafāhum Mʿ Majilis Muḥāfaẓat Al-ʿāṣimt." *Al-Ghad,* Jan 21, 2018. http://bit.ly/2Bz1tI4.

38. ""Qawī Qalbik Kulnā Maʿk".. Mubādarat Ṣhabābyt Litamkīn Al-marāt." *Al-Ghad,* March 18, 2017. http://bit.ly/2BAR3Yv.

39. "Drāst: Qānūn Al-āntikhāb Al-jadīd Lm Yuḥsin Tarkībat Majilis Al-nuwāb Wādāʾh." *Al-Ghad,* Jan 29, 2018. http://bit.ly/2ocaZbK.

40. al-Adayla, Hishal. "Al-mulk Yadʿū Litaṭbyq Nahj Al-lāmarkaziya Bial-muḥāfaẓāt." *Al-Ghad,* June 5, 2014. http://bit.ly/2FyORRh.

41. Al-Ali, Nawal. "Ābū Bakr Taqadam Bḥthāaⁿ ʿn Khuṭat Al-malik ʿbdāllah Al-t_hānī Ḥawl Al-lāmarkaziya." *Al-Ghad,* July 28, 2006. https://bit.ly/2GhEsNo.

42. Al-Khaitan, Fahd. "Qānūn Al-āntkhāb: Jumlat Malakīt Taftaḥ Bāb Al-niqāṣ_h." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 1, 2018. http://bit.ly/2Fy1gEY.

43. Al-Mansi, Jihad. "40+40 / Jihād Al-mansī." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 14, 2018. https://bit.ly/2H0ThRI.

44. "Al-baḥth ʿn Qānūn Āntikḥāb Jadīd." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 7, 2018. https://bit.ly/2J8pGWR.

45. Al-Qadi, Naif Saud. "Al-urdunīun Baīn Mafhūm Al-lāmarkaziya Fī Al-āqalim Wamafhūm Al-lāmarkaziya Fī Al-muḥāfaẓāt;" *Al-Rai,*May 22, 2017. http://bit.ly/2jdIGXX.

46. "Al-mṣrī: Al-ʿlāqt Baīn Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt Wal-baladiāt Wal-maḥalit Wāḍiḥat Walaīs Fīhā Āay Tʿāruḍ." *Al-Ghad,* Jan 11, 2018. http://bit.ly/2Fa4Dl9.

47. "Al-lāmrikuzīt" ... mahīatuha wāhdafuha wālīat 'malihā." *Al-Ghad,* Dec 13, 2017. http://bit.ly/2t8RMIG.

48. Al-Shobaki, Sanaa. "Al-mujtamʿ Al-madanīu Sharīk Fy Al-ḥukm Al-maḥalī;" *Al-Rai,* Feb 10, 2015. http://alrai.com/article/697126.html.

49. Al-Tamimi, Ahmed. "Fāʿliāt Shʿbīt: Ghiāb Al-mashārīʿ Al-āstithmārīt Bimūāzanat Irbd Yazīd Min Al-faqr." *Al-Ghad,* Nov 25, 2017. https://bit.ly/2IhvY5j.

50. Asila, Majid. "Barāmij Wānshiṭat Ṭamūḥat Yasʿī Al-majilis Al-āʿlīa Lilshabāb Ilyīa Tanfīdḥihā." *Al-Ghad,* June 28, 2010. https://bit.ly/2GGoHyT.

51. Attiyat, Farah. "Mūtamar Waṭanīun Yadʿū Litʿzīz Al-lāmarkazīt Fī Al-baladiāt." *Al-Ghad,* March 11, 2014. http://bit.ly/2GNMfhL.

52. Dr. Tweissi, Bassem. "Wizārat Al-lāmarkazīat Watanmīat Al-muḥāfaẓāt." *Al-Ghad,* Nov 25, 2017. https://bit.ly/2Bn2oJh.

53. Fares, Eman. "Al-nāṣr: Mashārīʿ Miāh Waṣarf Ṣaḥiun Biqīmat 32 Miliūn Dynār." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 20, 2018. https://bit.ly/2DZLf8B.

54. Gaboon, Hadeel. "Tasjīl 350 Ālf Nākhib Jadīd." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 18, 2018. http://bit.ly/2C9dyEW.

55. Ghneimat, Talal. "Laṭwf: Dawr Al-tanmīat Al-āijtimāʿīt Lm Yʿud Yaqtaṣir ʿlī Rʿāit Ālfqrāʾ." *Al-Ghad,* Dec 3, 2017. https://bit.ly/2pR7h8r.

56. Kamal, Muwafaq. "Al-ʿbdāllāt: Qānūn Al-lāmarkaziya Ḥd Min Ṣalāḥiāt Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt." *Al-Ghad,* Feb 12, 2018. http://bit.ly/2FAp5fx.

57. Kamal, Muwaffaq. "Al-nʿīmāt Yadʿū Litʿdīl "Al-lāmarkaziya" Wamanaḥ Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt Ṣalāḥiāt Jadīdt." *Al-Ghad,* Jan 28, 2018. http://bit.ly/2GnC2IP.

58. Shawabka, Ahmed. "Shaḥādt: 13 Miliūn Dynār Al-furaṣ Al-āistithmārīīt Limuḥāfaẓat Mādbā Al-ʿām Al-muqbil." *Al-Ghad,* Dec 29, 2017. http://bit.ly/2FeZ1Xb.

59. "Wizārt Al-taḥaqāfat Tunafidḥ Āktḥr Min 1500 Nashāṭ Al-ʿām Al-ḥālī Watanqul Al-nashāṭāt Ilay̱ Al-muḥāfaẓāt." *Al-Ghad,* Dec 21, 2017. http://bit.ly/2FeYuVb.

Articles from Al-Dustour

60. Ālʿamel āl-islāmy": 3 riʾāsāt baladiya w 25 maqʿadān bi-āl-." *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 16, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K6Kr5d.

61. "10 Mashāreeʿ istathmāriyya fi Madabā bi-kilfat 13 milyūn dūlar." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 29, 2017. https://bit.ly/2IrnbBu.

62. "Āl-Kalāldeh: ajebnā ʿala ākthar min milyūn istafsār wa al-āl-intikhābāt." *Ad-Dustour,* July 26, 2017. https://bit.ly/2jDMAde.

63. "Āl-malik Lil-muḥāfaẓayn: āmāmkum mas'ūliya wataniyya Lil-nahaūḍ bi-ālmuḥāfaẓāt;" *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 27, 2017. https://bit.ly/2jI2nHV.

64. "Āl-malik yatasallem taqriran yulakhas āham āʿamāl al-ḥukūma ʿala mudat ʿām." *Ad-Dustour,* Feb 4, 2018. https://bit.ly/2ruI84e.

65. "Āl-malik: len yuqūm āḥed bi-musāʿadatnā inna lem nusāʿid infasinā āwalan." *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 14, 2017. https://bit.ly/2Iofk82.

66. "Āl-Mulqi yedaʿū li-bedʾ bil-ʿidād āl-muwāzana istʿadādān lil-lāmarkaziyya." *Ad-Dustour,* July 19, 2017. https://bit.ly/2wkiQey.

67. "Āl-muqābila : idhā lem tuḥal hadhahi Āl-āshkālāt sayunaʿkas silbān ʿala āl-ādāʾ." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 24, 2017. https://bit.ly/2wn5BtD.

68. "Āl-Maṣry: ruwātib ruwasāʾ wāʿḍāʾ āl-majālis al-baladiyya w āl-maḥaliyya yuwākeb āt-tadarruj." *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 9, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rsXN4N.

69. "Āl-maʿāyṭah: āl-urdun ātakhadh ṭariqān lil-iṣlāḥāt al-siyāsiyya tatʿamad āt-tadarruj." *Ad-Dustour,* Nov 16, 2018. https://bit.ly/2wn5NZT.

70. " Āl-maʿāyṭah: āl-hadaf āl-isāsi lil-intikhābāt al-lāmarkaziyya tefaʿil musẖārikat āl-muwāṭṭun fī ṣinaʿa āl-qirār." *Ad-Dustour,* July 5, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rs63lA.

71. " Āl-maʿāyṭah: Āl-ḥiṣāna āleti yuṭalib bihā baʿḍa āʿaḍāʾ majālis ālmuḥāfaẓāt lā tansejim mʿa āl-dustour." *Ad-Dustour,* Oct 23, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K6VCdR.

72. " Āl-maʿāyṭah: hunāk muʿāyyir li-taḥdid muwāzanāt fi majālis āl-muḥāfaẓāt." *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 15, 2017. https://bit.ly/2HZ5f1Y.

73. " Āl-maʿāyṭah: majālis āl-muḥāfaẓāt hiyya āl-āqdar ʿala taḥdid iḥtiyājāt ālmuwāṭun." *Ad-Dustour,* Oct 22, 2017. https://bit.ly/2HcYeKq.

74. "Āl-quds lil-dirāsāt yunaẓẓem warisẖat aʿmal ḥawal āl-lāmarkaziyya." *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 28, 2017. https://bit.ly/2jIanZO.

75. "Āl-ṭarāwneh: lā tuqāṭʿa bayna ʿamal "āl-nuwwāb" w majālis āl-muḥāfaẓāt." *Ad-Dustour,* Oct 24, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K7lExY.

76. "Āl-tawaʿiyya bi-āl-lāmarkaziyya ... masʾūliya waṭaniyya." *Ad-Dustour,* July 24, 2017. https://bit.ly/2IoEEdZ.

77. "ĀlʿAwāyseh: intikhābāt āl-lāmarkaziyya riwayya malekiyya wāḍiḥa tusẖekelu qifzatan nouʿaiyya lil-urdun" *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 23, 2017. https://bit.ly/2ruFMlU.

78. "Irbid: mukhāwwuf min aʿdem al-qudra ʿala āt-taʿāmel mʿa mukẖaṣiṣāt "al-lāmarkaziyya"." *Ad-Dustour,* Nov 1, 2017. https://bit.ly/2KMjrJi.

79. "āʿḍār al-lāmarkaziya yataraqibun āṣdār biṭāqāt taʿrifiya min al-āḥwāl al-madina." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 16, 2018. https://bit.ly/2rtwMgQ.

80. "Jalsat tunhī al-tawatur fī majliis muḥāfaẓa jarasẖ "al-lāmarkaziya "." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 31, 2017. https://bit.ly/2Il7mwe.

81."Lajna wizārīya tabḥath mʿa majālis al-muḥāfaẓāt ānjāḥ masḥruʿ al-lāmarkazīa lilʿām āl-muqbil." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 13, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K76mZJ.

82. "Al-Mulqi: al-lāmarkaziya tuaʿziz ʿmalīat altanmīat Ḥasab āwlawīāt ālmūāṭinīn wāḥtiājātihm." *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 20, 2017. https://bit.ly/2I3PId3.

83."Majālis almuḥāfaẓāt tantakhib ruʾsāʾhā watushkil lijānhā;" *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 11, 2017. https://bit.ly/2FWuN9Y.

84."Muqābalat : āstiqṭāb mustathmir liqāmat 36 sḥālayahā biminṭaqat ām qays." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 3, 2018. https://bit.ly/2K4rErf.

85."Rāṣd: āl-mutaqāʿdūn ālʿskraīún wālmūzifūn ālḥukūmīūn ālsābiqūn yushakilūn nṣf alfāẏ̌zīn birẏāsat ālbaladīāt." *Ad-Dustour,*Sept 17, 2017. https://bit.ly/2ImDjnP.

86."Rūsāʾ majlis ālmuḥāfaẓāt yuṭalibūn biʿādat al-naẓar fī "allāmarkaziya." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 1, 2018. https://bit.ly/2FZ8PTW.

87."Rúsāʾ majlis mḥāfẓāt: almuhamāt kabīrat wālmawārid maḥdūdt." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 27, 2018. https://bit.ly/2Ipwq56.

88."Warshat libināʾ qudrāt ālmajilis āltanfīdḥī fī ʿjlūn." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 28, 2018. https://bit.ly/2I4CLQ5.

89."Wazīr āltkhṭīṭ ystsrās ājtmāʿāaⁿ mūsʿā limujtamʿ ālmāniḥīn Ḥawl āllāmarkaziya." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 15, 2018. https://bit.ly/2rsK0Ll.

90. Abdulhadi, Nivin. "Alquds lildirāsāt" yadʿú murshaḥī "āl-lāmarkaziya" lilānḍimām liḥamlat «ʿhd wamīthāq mʿ nisāʾ ālārdin"." *Ad-Dustour,* July 13, 2017. https://bit.ly/2FUjD5p.

91.Abi Said, Deir. "Al-khawālidat: Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt Satatawalay Aqrār Mashārīʿ Al-tanmīat Wamutābʿāthā." *Ad-Dustour,* July 8, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rwlg4q.

92. Al - Harawi, Ahmed. "Madabā: Al-mshhd Al-āntikhābuy Yṭgḥ ʿlyah Al-ṭābʿ Ālʿsḥāŷrī Fī Ẓili Gḥīāb Ālāḥzāb;" *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 6, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rsp1IA.

93. Al-Atom, Hosni. "Majalis Muḥāfaẓa Jarasḥ Wabaladīthā Yabḥathūn Subul Al-tshārkyt." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 7, 2018. https://bit.ly/2rsTjuU.

94.Al-Atoum, Hosni. "Jarsḥ:Jilsat Tʿrīfīat Bimahāmi Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt Wawaẓāŷf Al-lāmrkzīat." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 18, 2018. https://bit.ly/2jFHtcv.

95."Qrāʾt Lilfuraṣ Al-mutāḥat Linajāḥ Al-marāt Biāntikhābāt Majilis Muḥāfaẓt Jarasḥ." *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 6, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rpQgni.

96. al-Faouri, Mohammed. "Qsḥweʿ: "al-lāmarkaziya» Mrtbṭ Bimanhajīat Al-ḥukm Al-rasḥīd." *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 1, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rn8Rj0.

97. Al-Farayeh, Saleh. ""Nwāb Al-krk" Yabḥathún Mʿ Majils Al-muḥāfaẓt Mashārīʿhā Al-tanmawīat." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 4, 2018. https://bit.ly/2K1m34Y.

98. Al-Haj, Hamdan. "Tashkīl Lajnat Tansīqīta Mʿ Al-jihāt Al-māniḥat Lidʿm Winjāḥ Musḥrūʿ Al-lāmarkaziya." *Ad-Dustour,* July 9, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K0late.

99. Al-Hajj, Hamdan. ""522" Min Murashaḥī Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt Yatabanawn Wathīqat ʿhid Wamīthāq Mʿ Nisāʾ Al-urdun." *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 30, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rsvljg.

100. Al-Hakban, Ahmed Hamad. "Al-Idārāt Al-ḥukumīat ʿlay Mustaway Al-āqālym... Lmādḥā?;" *Ad-Dustour,* May 21, 2017. https://bit.ly/2jFjc6z.

101."Lā Markazīat.. Wabaldīāt.. Wʿsḥāir." *Ad-Dustour,* June 15, 2017. https://bit.ly/2FUcC4x.

102. Al-Harawi, Ahmed. "Ḥarāk Āntkhābī Qawī Yughlibuh Ālṭābʿ Ālʿsḥāŷrī Fī Mādbā." *Ad-Dustour,* July 12, 2017. https://bit.ly/2jGgkpK.

103. Alkhaddarat, Nadia. "Jalst Teʿyfyt Biṣlāḥīāt Wamuhām Āʿḍāʾ Mjls Mḥāfẓt Ālʿqbt." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 27, 2018. https://bit.ly/2ruHyDD.

104. Al-Qaisi, Ibrahim Abdulmajeed. "Al-ḥukūmat Juzʾ Min Al-thawrat.." *Ad-Dustour,* Oct 27, 2016. https://bit.ly/2HV6gaZ.

105. Al-Tal, Suhaib. "Al-mʿāyṭ: Al-āsās Fī Al-āntikhābāt Hū Mushārakat Al-shabāb Fī Al-tarashuḥ Wālāntikhāb." *Ad-Dustour,* July 6, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rxqBsf.

106. Al-Tarawneh, Mansour. "Al-mrābḥt: Al-krk Biḥājat Litkātif Al-juhūd Lilkhuriūj Min Ḥālat Al-tahmīsḥ Bimustawayāt Al-khidmat." *Ad-Dustour,* Jan 22, 2018. https://bit.ly/2rsUl9B.

107. Al-Zubaidi, Khaled. "Al-lāmarkaziya Tusāhim Fī Tanmīat Mutawāzinat;" *Ad-Dustour,* July 9, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rsWfqu.

108. "Al-lāmarkaziya Wamutaṭalbāt Al-najāḥ.." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 26, 2016. https://bit.ly/2HYqf8K.

109. Hadi, Nafin Abdel. "36 Ṭʿnā Biqrārāt Rafḍ Ṭlbāt Al-tarashuḥ Lilāntikhābāt Al-baladīt Wallāmarkaziya." *Ad-Dustour,* July 15, 2017. https://bit.ly/2jErYSc.

110. Hadi, Nevin Abdel. "Al-mulk Yaḍʿ Kharīṭat Ṭarīq Lilmajālis Al-maḥalīt Tawajah Masār Khuṭwatihā Naḥw Injāz Ḥaqīqī." *Ad-Dustour,* Oct 14, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K5cphI.

111. "Al-mulk Yuṭliq Muʿādilat Numūdḥajīt Linjāḥ Al-āntikhābāt Al-baladīt Wamajālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt." *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 16, 2017. https://bit.ly/2FSSq3i.

112. "Al-ʿmal al-islāmi" : 3 Ryāsāt Baladīat wa25 mqedaan Bial-llāmarkazit; *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 5, 2017. https://bit.ly/2K6Kr5d

113. Hadi, Nevine Abdel. "Qarāʾt Muẇshrāt Mā Bʿd Al-āntikhābāt "Al-baladīt Wālmuḥāfaẓāt" Ḍarúrat Litʿzīz Al-āījābīāt." *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 18, 2017. https://bit.ly/2ruEJ5v.

114. Hadi, Nivin Abdul. ""Rāṣd" ywṣy Bilghāʾ Al-tʿyīn Fī Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 28, 2017. https://bit.ly/2I9Acfy.

115. Hassanein, Ismail. "Āntikhābāt Tajrībīt Lilāmrikuzīt Fī Al-raṣīft." *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 2, 2017. https://bit.ly/2JZK8sD.

116. Kallab, Omar. "Al-lāmarkaziya.. Ḥuḍúr Ḥukúmī Biṭʿm Al-ghīāb." *Ad-Dustour,* Dec 5, 2016. https://bit.ly/2HWHvLH.

117. Khada, Ali. "Ḥwārīt Fī ʿjlūn Ḥawl Al-lāmarkaziya." *Ad-Dustour,* July 19, 2017. https://bit.ly/2I41BzN.

118. "Ajloun: Āintikhābāt ʿshāẏrīat Wamunāṭiqīat Lirẏāst Bladīāt ʿjlawn Wakafarnijat Wālshfā." *Ad-Dustour,* July 1, 2017. https://bit.ly/2FSMbMZ.

119. Khatib, Qassem. ""Al-qāʿidat Al-ʿṣḥāẏirīat" Talʿb Al-dawr Al-ābraza Fī Al-mashhad Al-āintikhābī Biālshārʿ Ālmʿānī;" *Ad-Dustour,* July 12, 2017. https://bit.ly/2I4pEOQ.

120. Majali, M. Hashim Nayel. "Dīmuqrāṭīat Al-lāmrkzīat ... !!!" *Ad-Dustour,* Nov 16, 2016. https://bit.ly/2KI01oR.

121. Sweileh, Anas. "Al-Zuʿbī : Āintikhābāt Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓāt Wal-baladīāt Satushim Fī Ikmāl Al-bināʾ Al-diymūqrāṭī Lildawlat." *Ad-Dustour,* Aug 5, 2017. https://bit.ly/2HZ7z8Y.

122. "Al-zʿbī: Tawfir Jmīʿ Al-mstlzmāt Al-lāzimat Liāijitmāʿāt Majālis Al-muḥāfaẓā." *Ad-Dustour,* Sept 6, 2017. https://bit.ly/2ru2mvz.

123. Zakarneh, Kamal. "Ābú Fāris: al-mushārakat fī al-intikhābāt al-lāmarkazīat Wasīlat Litʿzīz Tamāsuk Mujtamʿnā." *Ad-Dustour,* July 26, 2017. https://bit.ly/2rqh8CE.

Interviews

1. Interview with **Richard Chambers**, Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Amman, Jordan, March 2018

2. Interview with**John Maisner**, Program Manager - Youth Political Participation and **Jonas Cekuolis** Deputy -Chief of Party - National Democratic Institute (NDI) Amman, Jordan, March 2018

3. Interview with **George Hawatmeh**, Chairman of the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation (JRTVC) board, former editor-in-chief of the *Jordan Times*, *Al-Ghad*, and *Al-Rai*, Amman, Jordan, March 2018

4. Interview with **Adnan Abu Odeh**, former political advisor to King Abdullah, former member of the Jordanian House of Parliament from 1998 to 1999, Amman, Jordan, March 2018.

5. Interview with **Fares Braizat**, Co-founder and Chairman of NAMA Strategic Intelligence Solutions, Amman, Jordan, March 2018

6. Interview with **Monica Wisner**, Foreign Service Offier (FSO) and **Sean Osner**, Director for Democracy, Human Rights and Governance (DRG) at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Amman, Jordan, March 2018

7. Interview with **Aous Qutaishat**, Senior Advisor to the Chairman of the Independent Election Commission (IEC), Amman, Jordan, March 2018

8. Interview with **Amer Bani Amer,** Founder & Director of Al-Hayat Center for Civil Society Development, Amman, Jordan, March 2018

9. Interview with **Nidal al-ʿAoudat,** mayor of Dalil Municipality, Dalil, Jordan, March 2018

10. Interview with **Fatih al-Khalayleh**, Deputy Mayor of Zarqa**,** Zarqa, Jordan, March 2018

11. Interview with **Imad Momani**, former Mayor of Zarqa, Zarqa, Jordan, March 2018

12. Meeting with the Jerash Governorate Council in Jerash, Jordan, March 2018; In attendance: **Dr. Ali Mhassneh, Fatima Al-Arareh, Dalal Qardan, Ahmed Yahya Ahmed Beni Ahmed, Dr. Yousef Zraigat, Ahmad Marazig, Muhammed Ali al-Jazazeen, Hind Al-Shorouqi, Ahmed al-Aʿtoum, Salim Ali Muhammed Hamdan, Hamza al-Nuasireh, Ahmed Mustafa, Raed al-Aʿtoum, Mahmoud Daraghmeh, Ahmed beni Abdeh, Hatmal Ahmed Ali al-Zaboun, Aqleh Abdullah Musaleheh, Muhamed Saleh al-Barmawi, Muhamed al-Ghadayreh, Muhammed al-Afeef**

13. Interview with **Dr. Rakiz Zarir** at Center for Strategic Studies (CSS), Professor at University of Jordan in Amman, Jordan, March 2018

14. Interview with **Musa Shteiwi**, Director of the Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) at the University of Jordan in Amman, Jordan, March 2018

15. Interview with **Waheed Qarmosh**, Vice President and Organizer for the Jordanian Social Democratic Party (Hizb al-Dimocrati al-Ijtima'iyya) in Amman, Jordan, March 2018

16. Interview with **Tim Petschulat**, Resident Director for Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Amman, Jordan, March 2018

17. Interview with **Jamil al-Nimri**, General Secretary of the Jordanian Social Democratic Party, former member of Parliament, columnist for Al-Ghad, Amman, Jordan, March 2018

18. Interview with **Ahmed Ajarmeh**, (former) Head of International Cooperation Unit, Ministry of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (MoPPA), Amman, Jordan, March 2018.

19. Interview with **Tim Shorter**, Program Officer for International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Washington, D.C., March 2018