

Factors affecting political participation (Jordanian universities students' voting: field study 2017-2018)

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Received 27 May 2019
Revised 10 July 2019
15 July 2019
Accepted 18 July 2019

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to identify the factors affecting the political participation of Jordanian university students, especially their voting in national and local elections. The study examines the impact of gender, age, family income and regional affiliation that represent important social and economic factors affecting political participation on the voting of Jordanian university students.

Design/methodology/approach – Quantitative research method was used in this study. The study population contained three Jordanian universities representing the various segments of the Jordanian society: Al-Al Bayt University (Northern Region), Jordanian University (Central Region) and Mu'tah University (Southern Region). The study relied on a purposive sample of 900 students, 300 students per university (150 males and 150 females). The survey was conducted in the academic year 2018-2019. A questionnaire reviewed by two jurors (peer reviewers) was used to collect the data.

Findings – The study concluded that the gender, age, family income and regional affiliation factors affect the voting of Jordanian university students in national and local elections. The more the gender varies, the more the voting shifts in favor of males students. The more the age varies, the more the voting shifts in favor of older students. The more the family income varies, the more the voting shifts in favor of high-income students. The more the regional affiliation varies, the more the voting shifts in favor of Jordanians students.

Originality/value – This study is an approach to interpret the factors affecting voting of Jordanian university students, such as gender, age, family income and regional affiliation, which led to different voting in the national and local elections.

Keywords Elections, Political Participation, Voting, Voting in Jordan, Gender, Age, Family Income, Regional affiliation

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Political participation is recently one of the important political topics, as it shows the citizens' interest in political issues within their society. This interest might take various forms such as support, rejection, protest or demonstration, etc. Meanwhile, the political participation of youth, particularly in developing countries, plays a vital role in bringing political change. Although the youth represent the largest number in these countries, their voting in elections is very poor.

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The democratic transition in Jordan started in 1980. The Jordanian decision maker realized the shifts in internal and international circumstances. Therefore, the Jordanian leadership showed more interest in expanding political participation by declaring the return of parliamentary life and resuming the parties activities after a suspension that lasted for many years, as well as establishing civil organizations.

After Arab Spring revolutions had broken out in the late 2010s, peaceful demonstrations and protests began in Jordan. The protesters demanded many political and economic reforms. The Jordanian leadership responded and announced constitutional amendments in 2011.

Moreover, in 2016 further amendments were conducted.

Although the political participation base expanded in Jordan, youth remained reluctant to participate in elections. Therefore, this study examines the factors affecting the voting of Jordanian university students in national and local elections, focusing on some social and economic factors and examining the reasons for voting or not voting, which relates to the performance of the elected councils and the effectiveness of their members.

Literature review

[Lawless \(2004\)](#), [Atkeson \(2003\)](#), and [Koch \(1997\)](#) emphasized on the impact of gender on political participation. They pointed out that the political participation of females has always been less than males. This was due to many reasons, such as women's political alienation and their belief that their ability to make a political change is still weak, etc. [Pyeatt and Yanus \(2018\)](#) concluded that these reasons reflected the low and limited participation of women in political issues, political parties, and civil organizations. This, in turn, affected women's political aspirations and supported their sense of marginalization and lack of their equality with men.

[Homana \(2018\)](#) and [Oliver \(2016\)](#) indicated the impact of age on political participation. The ratio of participation varied among different age groups, such as young, adults and older people. The low voting turnout was with the young people group, especially university students. The reluctance of students to participate was attributed to their lack of interest in political issues and their poor involvement in community activities. In addition, their aversion from the activities of the parties. Most important, young people did not see any role or tangible achievement of the elected councils. In the USA, the participation of the youth in elections is very low. the USA estrangement about engagement in electoral campaigns and community participation. [Brooker \(2013\)](#) concluded that in Australia, the ratio of youth participation in voting was low.

[Lawless and Fox \(2001\)](#) and [Cohen and Dawson \(1993\)](#) linked between income levels (wealth, social well-being, money and economic development) and political participation. Moreover, they concluded that high income and wealth encourage individuals to political participation and engaging in government. [Solt \(2008\)](#) and [Brady et al. \(1995\)](#) noted that inequality in the distribution of incomes affects, political participation, such inequality makes the poor reluctant to vote in elections. [Lawless and Fox \(2001\)](#) pointed out that Low-income people refuse to vote because they have no incentive to do that. They suffer from bad social and economic conditions because most of the wealth and resources are concentrated in the hands of businessmen.

[Pyeatt and Yanus \(2018\)](#) have also concluded that the difference of regions within the same country and the ethnic or racial diversity affect voting in elections. The ethnic diversity impacts cultures and political orientations. In addition, ethnic groups feel that they are marginalized within society, and they do not receive adequate political attention, So, they are reluctant to participate in voting. In the same context, the regional affiliation affected voting. For example, refugees in any country, who are granted the right to vote in

elections, while they are suffering from the shortage of basic services, they would feel discontent and in turn they would disregard voting in the elections.

Research problem

The Jordanian Constitution and laws have witnessed many amendments to strengthen political participation of all the Jordanian people segments, at the national level (parliament) and the local level (local councils). These amendments aimed at increasing the ratio of women's representation and voting, by granting equal rights for women to vote and run in elections, such as a quota in Parliament. In addition to strengthening the participation of young people, especially university students participating in voting and community participation (Jordanian constitution, articles 6, 16, 17, 18, and the election law No. (6) of 2016, articles 3 and 8).

Although all these amendments, the political participation of Jordanian university students is still poor. Moreover, they are still reluctant to vote in national and local elections. Also, the ratio of women's political participation is low. So, the research problem is concerned with examining the impact of social and economic factors (gender, age, family Income, and regional affiliation) on voting of Jordanian university students in the elections.

Theoretical framework 1: political participation

Political participation is the knowledge and behavior involved in political activities (Bernstein, 2005, p. 299). In addition, political participation is voluntary activities, in which the individual participates in the selection of rulers, and formulates public policies, directly or indirectly. This means that the engagement of the individual at the different levels of the political system is a must. Moreover, political participation is a legitimate right for all citizens, their choice of the members of the government and the decision makers would influence their actions (Verba and Nie, 1978, p. 1).

In the light of the democratization, especially in many developing countries, political participation forms expanded and diversified to include voting, participating in the campaigns, community participation and expression of opinion in society related issues (Childs, 2004, p. 422). Participation witnessed further expansion, as some studies have pointed out: Street protest, involvement in institutional policies, participating in social movements (Roth and Saunders, 2019, p. 572), and engagement in political debates (Bernstein, 2005, p. 299).

Among the forms of political participation, the present study focuses on voting as a traditional form of political participation and the most prominent form that can be observed and measured during elections by monitoring the numbers of voters.

Factors affecting political participation

Homana (2018), Pyeatt and Yanus (2018), Solt (2008), Atkeson (2003), Lawless and Fox (2001), Koch (1997), Brady *et al.* (1995), Cohen and Dawson (1993) discussed the factors affecting political participation. They concluded that the social and economic factors such as (gender, age, education, place of residence, family, tribal affiliation, unemployment, income, poverty, economic growth, social relationships, and regional affiliation) affected political participation, especially voting in elections. In addition, they pointed out that there were some political factors affected voting in elections, such as the constitutional right to vote, performance of the elected councils and candidates, political trust, party activities, etc.

The present study focuses on four factors: gender, age, family income, and regional affiliation. The reasons of that choice are represented in: Samer (2017), Atiyat (2017), Dababneh (2012), Nahar (2012), Nahar and Humaidan (2013), Tillian (2011) emphasize that

these factors were the most important social and economic factors affecting political participation.

Jordanian Elections Law No. (6) of 2016 does not discriminate in voting between males and females (gender), young and old people (age), rich and poor (income), Jordanians and Palestinians who were granted the Jordanian nationality (regional affiliation). The law allowed all males and females as of 18 years old to vote in elections (Article 3). Moreover, the law determines a quota of 15 seats for women in Parliament (Article 8). In addition, it does not discriminate between Jordanians and Jordanians of Palestinian origin (Palestinian refugees who were granted the Jordanian nationality in 1947 or 1967), where the law gave them the right to vote without discrimination (Article 3).

Based on the above, the present study examines the impact of (gender, age, family income, and regional affiliation) on the voting of the university student in elections, because of the reluctance of Jordanian university students to vote in elections. This is a problem problematic because one-third of the Jordanian people are young people (Jordanian Annual Statistical Report, 2018, p.7).

Gender. Political participation of females in most societies is less than that of males, not only in developing countries but also in developed countries. [Fitzgerald \(2013\)](#), [Taft \(2014\)](#) pointed out that women in American society are less engaged in politics than men. Similarly, in Britain, there is a gender gap in political participation. Men vote more than females ([Childs, 2004](#), p. 422). [Koch \(1997\)](#) and [Verba et al. \(1997\)](#) attributed that to the lack of political interest of the females. Moreover, women believe that they do not have the ability to make political change, and their participating would make no change in the society. In addition, unemployment high rate of female makes them reluctant to vote in elections ([Roth and Saunders, 2019](#), p. 574). Moreover, the electoral system of the country affects the political participation of women. As the participation of female in voting in the electoral list system was high which led to reducing the gender gap between males and females voting in the elections ([Beauregard, 2014](#), p. 617).

[Pyeatt and Yanus \(2018\)](#), [Dolan \(2011\)](#), [Fox \(2011\)](#) discussed how to overcome the gender gap in voting. They concluded that the sociopolitical interest of young females could help to overcome this problem, education could be one of the solutions, as political participation of females increases, when they are aware that political events would directly affect their lives. To solve this problem, females have to overcome their psychological beliefs that their equality with men is impossible.

[Atkeson \(2003\)](#) indicated that the greater the involvement of women in the public sector, the more barriers of their political participation are broken. In Sweden, women's political participation increased as a result of women's engagement in the public sphere and demonstrations at the rate of 5.5 per cent contrary to the United Kingdom, where women's participation rate in demonstrations was (1.9 per cent) ([Roth and Saunders, 2019](#), p. 572). Moreover, some studies linked between democracy and active political participation, voting, participating in campaigning, and citizen protests. It concluded that democracy depends on political participation ([Leigh, 2018](#), p. 7).

It can be concluded that marginalization of women in the past, and the denial of their right to vote for political and social reasons, made women feel alienation within the society and they were unequal to men. This, in turn, made women lose interest in political issues, events, and party activities. Although the democratic transition in many developing countries and the legislative amendments, which granted more rights and freedom for women's participation in politics, there was still a gender gap stemming from the differences in voting between males and females as well as the low voting turnout of women in elections. Based on the above.

(Gender affects voting in elections) – Age. Some studies concluded that the difference in age between individuals affects political participation as the ratio of political participation between young and older people is high (Pyeatt and Yanus, 2018, p. 189). Another study asserted that there is a reluctance from young people to participate in voting, joining political parties and contributing to political campaigns (Homana, 2018, p. 40). In the USA, the turnout has been declining since 1972, especially in presidential elections. This declining continued until the national elections in 2012, where the ratio of youth participation (ages 19-24 years old) in voting was (41 per cent), and they were reluctant to engage in election campaigns and contacting elected officials. In Australia, the participation rate of young people (aged 18-19 years old) was (53 per cent) and their participating in community participation also declined (Homana, 2018, p.41).

It can be concluded that the difference in age groups affects political participation. The ratio of participation for young people is low, because of their different interests in political activities. Moreover, university students are reluctant to vote in elections, because of their feeling of alienation within the society, especially young female students. In addition, there are political factors which lead to marginalize students participating in the political sphere. Also, some social factors such as tribal affiliation affects students voting. Based on the above:

(Age affects voting in election) –Family income. Pyeatt and Yanus (2018), Palmer and Simon (2008) indicated that the difference in family income affected political participation. So, the higher the income, the higher the participation rate was. Brady *et al.* (1995) emphasized that there were three sources affecting political participation: time, money and social skills. The present study focuses on money (income). the individual needs money to be able to participate in political activities. Consequently, high-income families can support the candidate who they chose. This, in turn, increases their political participation (Leigh, 2018, p. 9).

On the other hand, some studies found that there was a link between the working class, poor families or citizens living in poverty and those with low incomes in the one hand and participating in voting and traditional political activities in the other hand. Moreover, those with wealth and a high level of well-being within society were the most participants in voting and in practicing political activities. In addition, political participation required some resources, such as money to support the candidates (Lawless and Fox, 2001, p. 362).

Thus, the ratio of voting in the elections differed according to the difference between poor and rich people, where the ratio of voters who have wealth and enjoy social welfare is high. In contrast, poor or low-income families are reluctant to vote as they suffer from accessing basic services, proper education and health care. Moreover, their belief that elected councils, whether national or local, are not able to change their lives in the future. Based on the above:

(Family income affects voting in elections) – Regional affiliation. Palmer and Simon (2008) pointed out that difference of regions within the same country affected the political participation of the inhabitants of these regions. In addition, ethnic diversity, different habits, incomes of people led to the difference in political participation. In the same context, Pyeatt and Yanus (2018) asserted that the difference in regional affiliation affected the political orientations of individuals. This, in turn, affected their voting in the elections.

Therefore, the diversity of regional affiliation affected political participation. In addition, it led the marginalized groups to be reluctant to participate in the voting. Moreover, it was known that in some countries, such as Jordan, Palestinian refugees have been granted the Jordanian nationality. So, the Palestinians had the right to vote in Jordanian national and local elections. But, since the Palestinians feel unequal, and short of accessing basic services,

such as education and health care; this resulted in their decline of voting in elections. Based on the above.

Political participation in Jordan (regional affiliation affects voting in elections)

Given the development of the Jordanian women's political participation, before 1974, Jordanian women had no right to vote and run in the elections. Afterward, law No. (8) of 1974 was issued to change the political life for Jordanian women. In addition, some women's organizations (Arab Women's Union) demanded more equality, freedom, and education for Jordanian women (Atiyat, 2017, p. 109). The process of democratization in Jordan began in 1989. It included respecting of human rights, popular participating in political life, etc. (Nahar, 2012, p. 122).

The limited participation of youth in the political parties' bodies and in civil society institutions was one of the most prominent features that accompanied the democratic process in Jordan since the promulgation of the Parties Law in 1992. In spite of the dissemination of civil society institutions after 1989, awareness of civil culture and political participation was still poor (Tillian, 2011, pp.1-2).

Moreover, after the Arab revolutions in late 2010 and early 2011, and Jordanian peaceful demonstrations and protests, the political leadership allowed more constitutional and legal amendments, which strengthened the political participation of all segments of people including Jordanian young people, particularly women (Mohammad, 2017, p. 2). However, young people participation in voting remained low (Dababneh, 2012, p. 215).

Atiyat (2017), Nahar (2013), Kang (2009), Ross (2008) attributed the low ratio of the women participating in voting and politics to tribal, cultural, economic and patriarchal constraints. While one of the studies attributed it to the negative perception of women regarding their role in leadership positions, their low self-confidence and lack of their equal rights with men (Dababneh, 2012, p. 215).

The Jordanian Constitution included a number of articles that emphasize the equal rights and duties of women (Article 6) and the freedom of women to express their opinions, to engage in civil society, and their freedom to join parties (Article 15, 16, 17). Moreover, The Constitution guarantees appointment in government institutions with integrity (Article 23). To ensure representation of women in Parliament, a quota of 15 seats was allocated for women in the 2016 Parliament, To promote the empowerment of Jordanian women by granting them more social, economic and political rights, and supporting their political participation (Atiyat, 2017, p. 109).

Although all changes and amendments in Jordan, there was a reluctance of young people, particularly the university students to vote in the national and local elections (Al-Mohammad, 2017, p. 2).

Political participation in Jordan is the practice of citizens for their right to influence the political decision, by running for elected councils such as the chamber of deputies, the Council of Trade Unions, the municipal councils and administrative bodies in civil society organizations, as well as voting in elections, whether they were parliamentary or local elections. Therefore, the present study focuses on the voting of students of Jordanian universities.

Methodology

This study aimed at identifying the factors affecting the political participation of Jordanian university students, especially their voting in the national and local elections. So, the study examined the impact of gender, age, family income, and regional affiliation factors on the voting of Jordanian university students.

The quantitative research was used in this study. The study population contained three Jordanian universities. They represented all segments of society: Al-AI Bayt University, which is located in the northern region of Jordan (14 colleges, 7,434 males and 9,809 females), the Jordanian University, which is located in the central region of Jordan (20 colleges, 12,716 males and 25086 females), the Mu'tah University, which is located in the southern region of Jordan (19 colleges, 7,614 males, Female 7,172). The reason for not choosing private universities was that they were limited to high-income students. These universities do not represent all segments of Jordanian society.

The total number of students in the three universities was (177,516) students. A Purposive sample was taken from the three universities, (300) students per university (150 males and 150 females). The sample was chosen from the youth segment because they were the most numerous in the Jordanian society, as well as the fact that the sample was more accessible in terms of data collection and distribution of the questionnaire.

The survey was conducted in the academic year 2018-2019 and the questionnaire was used to collect the data after being reviewed by two jurors "Peer Reviewers" from Cairo University and Al-AI Bayt

University. In addition, the questionnaire included two section, the first is related to the four factors: Gender (male-female), Age (8-22 years old - 23-30 years old), Family Income (less than 500 dinar- 500 less than 700 dinar – more than 700 dinar), and regional affiliation (Jordanian Origin - Palestinian Origin). The second is related the voting in elections, Reason for voting and reason for not voting as the study relied on the literature review to prepare the questionnaire.

Hypotheses:

- H1. The more the gender varies, the more students voting in the elections differs.
- H2. The more the age varies, the more the students voting in the elections differs.
- H3. The more the family income varies, the more students voting in the elections differs.
- H4. The more the regional affiliation varies, the more students voting in the elections differs.

Results

The survey was conducted on the students of the three Jordanian universities (Jordan, Al-AI Bayt, and Mu'tah), to identify the impact of gender, age, family income and regional affiliation on the voting of Jordanian university students in national and local elections:

The first hypothesis

Table I shows the results of the analysis of the public universities students views on voting in national and local elections according to the gender. In the context of responding to the question "Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections?" It was noted that male students were the most Jordanian university students voting in the elections with (66.2 per cent). In contrast, the voting of the female students was (33.8 per cent). This ratio of the female students is less than that of male students. So, the voting was in favor of male students.

The main reason for voting in the elections according to gender was "practicing the constitutional right." with (49.5 per cent) for males and (20.4 per cent) for females. In addition, the main reason for not voting by females students was "inefficiency of candidates

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for such councils” with (42.2 per cent) was the “Ineffectiveness of the performance of elected local councils” against (11.9 per cent) for male students.

Thus, there was a gender gap between Jordanian university male and female universities students’ voting in national and local elections. It can be concluded that: The more the gender varies, the more voting in the elections differs in favor of male students.

The second hypothesis

Table II shows the results of the analysis of public universities students views on voting in national and local elections according to the age. In the context of responding to the question “Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections?” it was noted that the number of the students in the age group (18 less than 23) was a total of (654) included (427) participated in the voting with (65.3 per cent) in the same category. It was noted that the number of students in the age group (23 less than 30) was a total number of (171) including (141) participated in the voting with (82.5 per cent) in the same category.

The main reason for voting in the elections according to age was “practicing the constitutional right.” with (45.1 per cent) for the age group (18 less than 23) and (24.8 per cent) for the age group (23 less than 30). In addition, “Ineffectiveness of the performance of elected local councils” with (44.7 per cent) for the age group (18 less than 23).

Thus, there was a difference in the ratio of voting of Jordanian public universities students in the national and local elections according to the age group. The ratio of voting

Table I.
Gender and voting of
Jordanian university
students in national
and local elections

Question	Answer	Male	Female
Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections?	Yes	376 66.2%	192 33.8%
	No	68 21.3%	252 78.8%
<i>Reason for voting:</i>			
Trust in the ability of candidates to provide services to people	Yes	251 44.2%	91 16%
Family considerations and connections	Yes	228 40.1%	72 12.7%
Practicing the constitutional right	Yes	281 49.5%	116 20.4%
<i>Reason for not voting:</i>			
Ineffectiveness of the performance of elected local councils	No	38 11.9%	105 32.8%
Inefficiency of candidates for such councils	No	0 0.0	135 42.2
Did not get the election card	No	0 0.0	86 26.9

Table II.
Age and voting of
Jordanian university
students in national
and local elections

Questions	Answer	18 less than 23	23 less than 30
Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections?	Yes	427 75.2%	141 24.8
	No	290 90.6%	30 9.4%
<i>Reason for voting:</i>			
Trust in the ability of candidates to provide services to people	Yes	247 43.5%	95 16.7%
Family considerations and kinetic connections	Yes	205 36.1%	95 16.7%
Practicing the constitutional right	Yes	256 45.1%	141 24.8
<i>Reason for not voting:</i>			
Ineffectiveness of the performance of elected local councils	No	143 44.7%	0 0.0
Inefficiency of candidates for such councils	No	135 42.2%	0 0.0
Did not get the election card	No	86 26.9%	0 0.0

for the category (18 less than 23) was low; this was problematic because the majority of university students were allocated in this category. The voting rate in the category (23 less than 30) was high. It can be concluded that: The more the age varies, the more voting in the elections differs in favor of older students.

The third hypothesis

Table III shows the results of the analysis of public universities students views on voting in national and local elections according to family income. In the context of responding to the question “Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections?” It was noted that the number of students with family income (500 dinars) was of a total number of (484) including (233) participated in the voting with (48.1 per cent) in the same category. Also, It was noted that the number of students with family income (500 less than 700 dinars) was the total number of (185) including (171) participated in the voting with (92.4 per cent) in the same category. Moreover, it was noted that the number of students with family income (more than 700 dinars) was at the total number of (219) including (164) participated in the voting with (88.6 per cent) in the same category.

The main reason for voting in the elections according to family income was “practicing the constitutional right.” with (33.5 per cent) for the family income category (500 dinars), and (22.2 per cent) for the family income category (500 less than 700 dinars). In addition, “Trust in the ability of candidates to provide services to people.” for the family income category (more than 700 dinars) at (19.5 per cent).

Thus, there was a difference in the ratio voting of Jordanian public universities students in the national and local elections according to the category of family income. The ratio of voting in the category (less than 500 dinar) was low, but, the ratio of voting for the other two categories was high. It can be concluded that: The more the family income varies, the more the voting in the elections differs in favor of the high-income students.

The fourth hypothesis

Table IV shows the results of the analysis of public universities’ students’ views on voting in national and local elections according to regional affiliation. Some Palestinians have lived in Jordan since 1947 and 1967, they were granted the Jordanian nationality and the right to vote in the elections. In the context of responding to the question “Have you ever voted in

Questions	Answer	less than 500		500 less than 700		More than 700	
		dinar		dinar		dinar	
Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections?	Yes	233	41%	171	30.1%	164	8.9%
	No	251	78.4%	14	4.4%	55	17.2%
<i>Reason for voting:</i>							
Trust in the ability of candidates to provide services to people	Yes	148	26.1%	83	14.6%	111	19.5%
Family considerations and kinetic connections	Yes	131	23.1%	80	14.1%	89	15.7%
Practicing the constitutional right	Yes	190	33.5%	126	22.2%	81	14.3%
<i>Reason for not voting:</i>							
Ineffectiveness of the performance of elected local councils	No	105	32.8%	0	0.0	38	12.7%
Inefficiency of candidates for such councils	No	118	36.9%	0	0.0	17	5.7
Did not get the election card	No	86	26.9%	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table III.
Family income and voting of Jordanian university students in national and local elections

previous national or local elections?" It was noted that the number of students (Jordanians) was a total of (450) including (314) participated in the voting with (69.8 per cent) in the same category. It was noted that the number of students (Palestinians) who have the right to vote was a total of (438) including (254) participated in the voting with (58 per cent) in the same category.

The main reason for voting in the elections according to regional affiliation was "practicing the constitutional right." with (43.7 per cent) for the (Jordanians). In addition, "Trust in the ability of candidates to provide services to people" with (31.5 per cent) for the (Palestinians). Moreover, the reason for not voting was the "ineffectiveness of the performance of elected local councils" with (20.3 per cent) for the "Jordanians" and "Inefficiency of candidates for such councils" with (38.4 per cent) for the (Palestinians).

Thus, there was a difference in the ratio of voting of the Jordanian public universities students in the national and local elections according to the regional affiliation. The ratio of voting within the category (Palestinians) was low. Thus, regional affiliation affected the political participation of university students. It can be concluded that: the more the regional affiliation varies, the more the voting in the elections differs in favor of the Jordanian students.

Discussion

The survey on students of the three Jordanian universities (Al-AI Bayt University, Jordanian University, and Mu'tah University) was conducted to explore the impact of gender, age, family income, and regional affiliation on the students voting. The results showed the following:

First: The more the gender varies, the more the voting in the elections differs in favor of male students as there was a gender gap between the voting of male and female students in the national and local elections. The voting ratio of female students was lower than that of males. This result was consistent with the studies of [Atiyat \(2017\)](#), [Fitzgerald \(2013\)](#), [Taft \(2014\)](#), [Roth and Saunders \(2019\)](#), which confirmed the low voting of females.

The reasons of the low voting ratio of female students in Jordan was due to the fact that they didn't see a tangible role for elected councils within society in addition, tribal, social economic constraints as they didn't feel equal to males in education and employment. This made them feel political alienation, which led them to be reluctant to vote in the elections.

Second: The more the age varies, the more the voting in the elections differs in favor of older students. As there are differences in voter turnout ratio according to age groups, the voting ratio in the age group (23 less than 18 years old) was low. This was consistent with the studies of [Pyeatt and Yanus \(2018\)](#), [Homana \(2018\)](#), which confirmed the low participating of young people in voting.

Table IV.
Regional affiliation
and voting of
Jordanian university
students in national
and local elections

Questions	Answer	Jordanian		Palestinian	
Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections?	Yes	314	55.3%	254	44.7%
	No	136	42.5%	184	57.5%
<i>Reason for voting:</i>					
Trust in the ability of candidates to provide services to people	Yes	163	28.7%	179	31.5%
Family considerations and kinetic connections	Yes	214	37.7%	86	15.1%
Practicing the constitutional right	Yes	248	43.7%	149	26.2%
<i>Reason for not voting:</i>					
Ineffectiveness of the performance of elected local councils	No	65	20.3%	78	24.4
Inefficiency of candidates for such councils	No	12	3.8%	123	38.4%
Did not get the election card	No	13	4.1%	73	22.8%

The reason of the low voting ratio of 18 less than 23 category in Jordan was due to the fact that they saw the elected councils ineffective within society. In addition, they did not have Political orientation, and they did not care about party or civil society activities.

Third: The more the family income varies, the more the voting in the elections differs in favor of the high-income students, as there were differences in the voting ratio in the elections according to the level of family income. Moreover, the voting ratio of the family income group (less than 500 dinars) was low; it was problematic because this group covered the majority of university students. This was consistent with the studies of [Brady *et al.* \(1995\)](#), [Lawless and Fox \(2001\)](#) that concluded that wealth, welfare and money affected political participation process.

The reasons for the low voting ratio of less than 500 dinars category in Jordan was due to the fact that they saw the candidates' inefficiency. In addition, they did not get high quality public services. Moreover, the lack of fair distribution of resources and the concentration the wealth in the hands of businessmen, made them feel marginalized. This made them reluctant to vote in elections.

Fourth: The more the regional affiliation varies, the more the voting in the elections differs in favor of the Jordanian students, as there were differences in the students voting ratio in the national and local elections according to regional affiliation. In addition, the voting of the students' category (Palestinians) was low. This was consistent with the studies of [Pyeatt and Yanus \(2018\)](#), [Palmer and Simon \(2008\)](#) that emphasized that the difference in regions, districts and regional affiliation affected voting in elections.

The reason for the low voting ratio of the Palestinians in Jordan was due to the fact that they saw the candidates' inefficiency. In addition, they felt marginalized inside the Jordanian society. This, in turn, made them reluctant to vote in the elections.

Conclusion

The study concluded that, Although the democratic transition and the subsequent constitutional and legal amendments in Jordan, which gave women equal rights with men, and allowing engagement in political parties and civil activities, there was a gap in the voting of Jordanian university students in national and local elections due to some demographic factors (gender and age), economic factors (family income) and some social factors (regional affiliation).

There was a gender gap between males and females in voting in national and local elections. As female students' voting was low. In addition, there was an age gap in voting in national and local elections, as young students' voting was low. Moreover, there was a family income gap in voting in national and local elections as low-income female students voting was low. As well as, there was a regional affiliation gap in voting in national and local elections, as non-Jordanians' (Palestinian) voting was low.

Finally, the voting gap in the elections was due to political, social, economic reasons such as ineffectiveness of the national and local councils' performance, inefficiency of candidates of these councils, political alienation, the difficulty to access public services, inequality in distribution of income, absence of political socialization, the feeling of inequality with men in education and employment.

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Further reading

Huntington, S. and Nelson, J. (1976), *No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries*, Harvard University press, Cambridge.

The First Section

1	Gender: 1. Male 2. Female	
2	Age: 1. 18-22 years old 2. 23-30 years old	
3	Family Income: 1. Less than 500 dinar 2. 500 less than 700 dinar 3. More than 700 dinar	
4	Regional Affiliation: 1. Jordanian Origin 2. Palestinian Origin	

The Second Section

5	Have you ever voted in previous national or local elections? 1. Yes (Go to the question 6) 2. No (Go to the question 7)		
6	Reason for voting:		
	Item	Yes	No
1	Trust in the ability of candidates to provide services to people.	1	2
2	Family considerations and kinetic connections.	1	2
3	Practicing the constitutional right.	1	2
4	Others.....		
7	Reason for not voting:		
	Item	Yes	No
1	Ineffectiveness of the performance of the elected local councils.	1	2
2	Inefficiency of candidates for such councils.	1	2
3	Did not get the election card.	1	2
4	Others.....		

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