



IDENTITY CENTER

**Policy Paper: Bridging Divides Between Political Parties
and the Jordanian People**



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Executive Summary

In 2011 Jordanians flooded into streets across the Kingdom. Even though Jordan boasts one of the most liberal and democratic political systems in the region, Jordanians chose to bypass formal means of political engagement in 2011. Instead, they coalesced into informal political movements that came to be known as *hirak*. With strong youth participation, the *hirak* pushed for extensive governmental reform and an end to endemic corruption.

The emergence of *hirak* showcased a widespread lack of confidence in the extant political system. This was confirmed by surveys, focus groups, and interviews that Identity Center conducted, each of which demonstrated that most Jordanians do not believe that the government is working in their best interests. More importantly, the data also indicated that overall Jordanians neither trust the electoral system, nor view Jordan's political parties as effective vehicles of political engagement.

While Jordanians' lack of faith in political parties is partially a result of a wider belief that the electoral system is futile, it is also a result of the inability of the parties themselves to effectively connect with voters. Members of Jordanian political parties who participated in focus groups and interviews for this paper argued that this disconnect is a direct result of governmental discrimination leveled against political parties and their members. They maintained that Jordan's government and security institutions have discouraged partisan activity to such an extent that Jordanians – and particularly young Jordanians – are now afraid to become members of parties or even engage in party activities.

On the other hand, surveys, focus groups, and interviews that Identity Center conducted with non-party members and former party members highlighted very different factors for the dearth of Jordanian participation in political parties. The non-party member participants conceded that both the pointlessness of the political process as well as government repression of parties played a part in their decisions to not join political parties, but they referred to these as secondary factors. Instead, research participants emphasised that their unwillingness to join political parties stems from the failures of the political parties themselves. They stated that political parties, unlike *hirak*, remain distant from Jordanians and rely on ineffective campaigns and abstract platforms to gain support.

Identity Center has previously published works identifying the systemic problems with the political system and provided suggestions for addressing those issues. As such, this paper offers corresponding recommendations for political parties, so that they can begin to address the growing gap between them and the Jordanian people. It focuses on two seemingly self-evident steps that political parties have not yet taken in Jordan:

1. *Learning from Constituents*: To reformulate their currently abstract and homogenous platforms so that they appeal to Jordanians, political parties need to directly engage with their constituencies to identify issues that are actually relevant to Jordanians.
2. *Teaching Constituents*: Once relevant issues are identified, political parties must reexamine their campaign strategies so that the current awareness deficit regarding political parties is addressed. As with the previous step, this will require more active engagement on the street than parties have thus far explored.

Methodology

Significant attention has previously been given to the structural impediments currently preventing the Jordanian parliament, and therefore its political parties, from playing a greater role in governance. In this vein, Identity Center produced a report earlier this year examining the means by which the electoral system privileges independent tribal candidates and marginalises political parties.¹ However, as with the policy papers that other organisations have compiled on the subject, our report focused on solving the current political impasse through legislative reform. This paper is intended to complement our previous work by providing recommendations for how political parties themselves can more effectively engage with Jordanians and thereby encourage the government to initiate the reforms for which the parties are currently waiting.

The bottom up approach for which this paper advocates was encouraged by two recent Identity Center publications: 1) a report on voter opinions regarding the 2013 elections and electoral process and 2) a comparative map of existing political parties and movements in Jordan. From these publications, Identity Center was confronted with considerable data indicating not only a divide between parties and Jordanians, but a lack of agreement as to why this divide exists.

Using these tangential insights as a point of departure, the Center began this project with a protracted period of desk research examining both academic contributions to the study of democratisation in Jordan as well as previous reports by other Jordanian institutions. To supplement this desk research with a quantitative foundation, Identity Center subsequently completed a phone survey with a representative sample of Jordanians regarding their views of the role currently being performed by political parties.² To provide greater context and detail to these findings, the Center convened a focus group with members of civil society movements and former members of political parties. Based on the results of this focus group and phone survey, the Center then held a focus group with prominent members of political parties in Jordan and complementary interviews with key political figures, some of which are included in this report on the condition of anonymity. Specifically focused on the divide between parties and youth, Identity Center held a further focus group with young Jordanians who are politically active in the Kingdom and interviewed students who recently ran as candidates in the University of Jordan's student elections.

The information collected from these interactive research activities was then synthesised with the previous desk research to both examine the disparate views of Jordanians (particularly young Jordanians) and provide recommendations for the Kingdom to move forward. Intending this paper to work in conjunction with our previous study on electoral reform, the recommendations here focus on steps that political parties can take to proactively engage Jordanians and build larger support bases.

Introduction

Democracy is not just about individuals expressing opinions and points of view. It is about aggregating what individuals say into a set of concrete proposals for joint action that will move the country forward. This is the key role of political parties.

In recent years, I have outlined on many occasions my vision for our political system: A small number of major, nationally based political parties, representing views across the spectrum. Only such a system is capable of offering the competition of ideas Jordan needs, as well as achieving the necessary parliamentary consensus on actions to be taken.

—His Majesty King Abdullah II³

Despite His Majesty King Abdullah II's vision for the Kingdom's political system, a recent Identity Center survey revealed that more than 64% of Jordanians do not support a particular political party and that 83% of Jordanians do not feel they have sufficient information about party platforms to make informed electoral decisions.⁴ Yet, these conditions notwithstanding, the poll also showed that 76% of Jordanians believe that political parties should form the government and play a greater role in governance.⁵ Likewise, a majority of participants from a previous Identity Center survey indicated that they would prefer that an increased number of their parliamentary representatives were drawn from political parties.⁶ Together, these results suggest that Jordanians are interested in political parties and their potential, but that most are not satisfied with the current performance and outreach of existing parties.

Political parties in Jordan claim that the disparity between the people's (and the King's) aspirations for effective political parties and the limited role political parties are currently playing is in large part a result of political parties' inability to form the government. These assertions are not without justification. The electoral system, as Identity Center has previously outlined, is designed to ensure that parties remain irrelevant to governance.⁷ Because political parties do not form the government or have a significant impact on policy development, they remain insignificant not only for governance, but also for voters.⁸

However, blaming stalled political progress in Jordan on the government has become an all too familiar pattern. Indeed, reliance on this tired trope has allowed parties to sidestep responsibility for their continued irrelevance. The government has made it difficult for political parties to participate and to grow, but parties (and Jordanians more generally) are now simply waiting for top down reform. Democratisation, however, is not a top down process. It must be pushed from the ground up to succeed.⁹ Rather than waiting for the government to act, therefore, political parties need to focus on encouraging greater partisan involvement. Jordanians are not politically apathetic. Their eagerness to engage with effective vehicles of political participation was made overtly clear by the rise and subsequent prevalence of *hirak* in 2011. So why have political parties become so irrelevant? Why do Jordanian youth who want to engage politically choose to bypass parties and rely on alternative platforms for political participation?

To contextualise the growing polarity between parties and Jordanians, and specifically Jordanian youth, this paper first provides an historical background for the current divide. It then examines both the reasons that political parties believe that their ability to foster Jordanian participation is limited, as well as contrasting reasons why Jordanians claim that they are disinterested in political parties. By highlighting the disparity between these two views, this paper concludes with proposals for bridging the gap between political parties and the people. It provides recommendations for how the parties can better engage Jordanians and facilitate bottom up reform of the political system.

Historical Context

Political parties have existed in Jordan since the creation of the Transjordanian Mandate under British supervision in 1921. During the Mandate period (1921-1947), 17 political parties were born, but they largely remained manifestations of social structures rather than ideological precepts.¹⁰ The parties that emerged in this period mainly focused on independence and development initiatives and were organised around traditional elites, lacking any popular base of support. It was not until the passing of the first Political Parties Law in 1955 that a new breed of ideological parties emerged. The lifespan of ideological party politics, however, proved limited.

When tensions emerged between opposition parties and the Hashemites regarding Jordan's relationship with Britain, and a coup attempt was subsequently launched in 1957, King Hussein initiated martial law. By the time civilian rule came back into effect the next year, all of Jordan's political parties had been banned.¹¹ Political life was further restricted when martial law was again implemented as a result of the launch of the 1967 War with Israel and the seizure of the West Bank of the Kingdom. This time martial law would remain in force until after the 1988 disengagement from the West Bank – more than two decades later.¹²

When the 1989 elections were contested after a more than 20-year absence of parliamentary life, political parties remained technically illegal in the Kingdom. However, while candidates could not stand on party platforms, party members could still run in the election, and in effect most party organisations were allowed to operate openly.¹³ These conditions presented a huge advantage for the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been the only party able to legally organise and expand over the past two decades.¹⁴ Consequently, it took 22 of the 80 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, and independent Islamists took another 12.

While the 1989 elections were immediately followed by a number of other important democratisation efforts that promoted political pluralism in the Kingdom, the momentum carrying reform soon slowed, and the regime began to implement unilateral reforms designed to restrict the power of the opposition. This change in policy was largely a result of the regime's trepidation regarding the rising power of the Brotherhood. Tensions between the Brotherhood and state soon emerged, reaching a breaking point as Jordan neared a peace treaty with Israel in the early 1990s.¹⁵ The Brotherhood voiced strong opposition to normalisation with Israel, and it was able to rally other opposition parties around its cause.

Unwilling to tolerate opposition to its foreign policy in the volatile post-Gulf War politico-economic context, and equally concerned about the growing challenge of political parties, the government introduced a new election law in 1993, significantly curtailing the influence of political parties. The 1993 Law replaced the 1986 Election Law, which had allowed multiple votes and encouraged candidate alliances, with a Single Non-Transferable Vote system (SNTV; commonly referred to by Jordanians as “one person, one vote”).¹⁶ As Jordan is predominantly a tribal society, the government hoped that by limiting voters to a single vote, they would vote only by tribal affiliation and not use additional votes to support ideological sympathies.

Between 1993 and 2012, a plethora of new election laws were passed in response to the demands of political parties, but each maintained the “one person, one vote” system. Following the protests in 2011, however, King Abdullah II bowed to popular sentiment and party demands, launching a comprehensive review process of the political system. The King brought together a coalition of political party leaders, lawmakers, journalists, and activists in the National Dialogue Committee, which was charged with examining possible changes to both the Political Parties Law and the Election Law. Responding to the recommendations that had been suggested by the Committee – as well as the Royal Commission on Constitutional Review – the government passed a new Election Law in 2012, eliminating, albeit not entirely, “one person, one vote” after its nearly 20 year imposition.¹⁷

In the lead up to the passing of the new Election Law, opposition parties and activists requested the genesis of a party list system and proportional representation; these demands were reflected within the new law, but only in form.¹⁸ Whereas opposition parties and movements had been calling for a system in which 50% of the seats were allocated through proportional representation, the 2012 system designated only 27 out of 150 seats to a proportional system. The remaining seats were to be contested through a system that follows the key precepts of SNTV. As such, the changes were insufficient to satisfy either the parties or the voters.

The perpetuation of an electoral process that is widely considered unfair has taken its toll on voter participation. In a phone survey that Identity Center conducted for this paper, respondents who did not vote (43% of eligible voters, according to the Independent Election Commission)¹⁹ indicated that their primary reasons were: 1) distrust of the electoral process, 2) distrust of the political system, and 3) a belief in the uselessness of the electoral process.²⁰

Moving Past Elections: The Growing Gap Between Political Parties and Jordanians

While the widespread perception of the futility of the electoral process is key to explaining voter apathy, Identity Center’s focus groups, surveys, and interviews indicated that it is insufficient for explaining the low levels of Jordanian engagement with political parties in general. In addition to a belief in the futility of the extant parliamentary system, Jordanians identified a plethora of other key reasons for the dearth of membership or involvement in political parties. These factors generally fall into two interrelated

categories: 1) government discrimination against political parties and their members and 2) party failures to effectively engage Jordanians. While party members who participated in our research highlighted the importance of the former category, non-party members emphasised the latter. This lack of consensus merely exacerbates the divide between parties and people.

1) Discrimination Against Political Party Members

In focus groups and interviews with members of political parties, participants repeatedly stressed that aside from the extant electoral system, governmental discrimination against political parties has pushed Jordanians away from participation in parties. Participants insisted that the increasing disconnect between political parties and the people is a result of a corresponding divide between political parties and the government. That is, because of governmental repression and discrimination against party members, Jordanians are being forced to choose between engaging in partisan activity or maintaining a productive relationship with the government.

Party members argued that many Jordanians are afraid to join political parties because they believe that membership can confine their ability to gain employment within state institutions. Discrimination against party members, political parties noted, is most evident in the explicit ban on party membership for employees of Jordan's military and security institutions, but is also manifest within other state institutions.²¹ Indeed, a number of the participants in the focus group stated that members of their parties had been dismissed from public institutions, such as universities, as a result of continued party involvement. While some participants suggested that this discrimination has been less intense since the 2011 *hirak* protests, they maintained that indirect discrimination continues. For instance, party members who are employed in the Kingdom's bureaucracy might find that their potential for career advancement is severely limited.

Party members maintained that this dynamic between parties and the government most acutely affects youth participation in the parties. They insisted that students fear becoming active within parties because of a prevalent belief that such membership could impede their ability to launch fruitful careers. Party members emphasised that this is particularly salient for students who hope to one day participate in the governance of their country because these students believe that engaging in partisan activity carries the potential to endanger future careers in government.

Party members asserted that the government's preferencing of independent candidates for ministerial positions is made overtly clear by the current process through which ministers are appointed. While a large number of ministers are chosen from outside political parties, even Jordanians who have managed to build prominent careers through partisan activity are commonly forced to abandon their parties if they wish to accept a ministerial portfolio. In an interview with Identity Center, the Secretary General of the National Constitutional Party (NCP) Ahmed al-Shunnaq stated that on over 20 occasions members of his party who were chosen to take up government positions were asked to leave the party as a precondition for their new positions.²² This, al-Shunnaq noted, sends a very explicit message to youth who wish to become the next generation of politicians.

Party members also argued that even students who engage in university politics in Jordan largely avoid becoming members of political parties. They suggested that even if the student candidates' ideological sympathies (if they have any) are known, the students are afraid to acknowledge their official participation in political parties. Party members claimed that the threat of interference from the security services and potential damage to future careers scares students away from political parties.

Political party members also emphasised that the government simultaneously works to restrict student participation in a much more direct manner. They suggested that the government strongly dissuades university students from joining political parties by threatening severe repercussions, such as expulsion, if they do. In justifying its unwillingness to allow partisan activity on university campuses, the government argues that universities are a place for learning rather than politics.

In an interview with a leader of a students' rights movement that was conducted on the condition of his anonymity, Identity Center was told that students who attend the university upon military scholarships (even those not bound for military careers after their degrees) and Palestinian-Jordanian students from the refugee camps who study upon state funds are forced to sign an agreement stating that they will not become members of political parties. Furthermore, mere student membership in parties is being discouraged. Political party members claimed that this had created an atmosphere of fear, pressuring students to eschew any party activity.

Party members also asserted that university students who become active either in political parties or *hirak* face continual harassment from the state's security institutions. In Identity Center's focus group with political parties, a representative of the Communist Party noted that the secret service had apprehended two of the youth members of his party that very week. Other participants in the focus group – from both loyalist and opposition parties – stated that this was a frequent occurrence that affected all parties regardless of their political orientation. The focus group participants emphasised that this discrimination, which has scared young Jordanians, accounts in large part for the current dearth of youth engagement in political parties.

In response to the restrictions on youth participation in political parties, the Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs Khaled Kalaldeh is currently spearheading a new proposal to revive partisan activity on Jordanian campuses.²³ This is being tested through a pilot project at the University of Jordan. Members of our political parties focus group stated, however, that they believed this to be a purely cosmetic governmental concession that was not a sign of genuine willingness to allow parties to engage on campuses. A senior member of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) who participated in the focus group stated that the IAF intended to boycott the "shallow" endeavour. Al-Shunnaq confirmed that the NCP will also boycott the project. Other participants in the focus group suggested that they are sceptical of the concession, given the fact that it was quickly followed by a governmental decision to provide the university's security personnel with greater law enforcement authorities.²⁴ Political party focus group participants agreed that these two

decisions in tandem will do little to decrease what they unanimously viewed to be very rampant student fears about engagement in political parties.

2) *Ineffective Party Outreach*

While party members who participated in Identity Center's interviews and focus groups clearly indicated that the key impediment to greater party membership was government discrimination and harassment, these results did not reflect the sentiments of the non-party members who participated in our focus groups, interviews, and survey. The latter group of Jordanians admitted that the disconnect between parties and the people was in part a function of the electoral system and government discrimination, but emphasised that the growing polarity was more fundamentally a result of the conduct of the political parties themselves.

When Identity Center asked phone survey participants who indicated that they were not willing to join political parties why they were not willing to do so, the two most frequently cited reasons were 1) dissatisfaction with the existing parties and 2) a general lack of trust in the ability of political parties to affect change.²⁵ Only 24% indicated that personal security was a factor in their decision. Similarly, the potential for government discrimination and harassment was dismissed by most of the focus group participants as a secondary reason for their unwillingness to become members of political parties.

Participants in the focus group we held with non-party members and former party members stressed that they were more willing to engage in *hirak* than in parties, despite the fact that being a *hirak* member carries similar (or greater) risks as being a party member whilst offering no potential to access greater political influence. Similarly, student candidates from the University of Jordan with whom the Center spoke maintained that student fears regarding security were not as pervasive as the parties has suggested. Student candidates' ideologies and political affiliations are widely known, they are just not explicitly verbalised.

Non-party member focus group participants argued that most Jordanians are unwilling to participate in political parties because of a widespread lack of confidence vis-à-vis political parties; parties remain distant from voters and, consequently, Jordanians neither trust political parties nor believe them to be serious in their desire to represent the concerns of Jordanians. Focus group participants noted that they see little difference between independent electoral candidates and members of political parties, as both merely pursue personal interests. Correspondingly, some participants stated that Jordanians were more willing to engage in *hirak* because of *hirak's* strong presence on the street. *Hirak* built personal connections at a grassroots level, endeavouring not to gain power for themselves, but to facilitate the realisation of a "national project." Focus group participants stated that it was this distinction between *hirak* and parties that pushed so many more Jordanians, and particularly young Jordanians, to get involved with the former rather than the latter.

Crucial for the disconnect between political parties and people is the parties' reliance on ineffective strategies to reach out and communicate with Jordanians. Most Jordanians

have very little specific knowledge regarding parties. Indeed, 83% of Jordanians, as stated above, do not feel they even have sufficient information about party platforms to make informed electoral decisions. While participants in our focus group with political parties stated that they believed the most effective means of disseminating information about their platforms was through electoral campaigns, only 9% of Jordanians polled in our phone survey stated that this was their main source of information about political platforms.²⁶

Instead, both the phone survey and the focus groups with non-party members indicated that Jordanians would prefer political parties to engage them more directly. The focus group participants maintained that radio and newspapers are not useful means of reaching Jordanians, as they are not customary fora for political engagement in Jordan. The only media platform that non-party members considered to be an effective tool for disseminating party platforms was social media. Social media, they stressed, allowed Jordanians to build interactive and engaging relationships with political parties.

In addition to social media, focus group participants argued that the other most effective means of spreading information about party platforms is by holding small workshops directly within constituencies. Focus group participants unanimously underscored that parties need to be active on the street, engaging directly with Jordanians. This engagement, focus group participants argued, would help political parties to formulate more effective political platforms. Currently, the political agendas of parties are disconnected from voter aspirations.

In a recent report, Identity Center compiled a map of all of the political parties in Jordan and analysed their respective platforms.²⁷ The report's findings showed both that the parties' platforms bear striking resemblance to one another and that they are all focused on amorphous and undefined issues such as Jordan's relationship with Israel, pan-Arabism, and the realisation of an undefined "democracy" in Jordan. In another Identity Center report, written in the aftermath of the 2013 parliamentary elections, we asked Jordanians to list the electoral issues about which they were most concerned.²⁸ By comparing these results with the parties' platforms, it is clear that there is no overlap between the people's and parties' priorities. Most Jordanians were not interested in Jordan's national issues, let alone its international relations. Instead, they were focused on smaller issues that visibly affect their daily lives. In fact, focus group participants stressed that this was a key aspect of *hirak* to which Jordanians – and particularly youth – were attracted.

New parties that focus on smaller scale, grassroots activism have recently started to emerge. Hizb al-Fursan, for instance, formed late in 2013 and has since focused on supplying Jordanians (particularly in the Zarqa governorate) with much needed services and resources. It has launched a pilot project in Zarqa, wherein it is maintaining a single street that serves as an example for the type of change the party wishes to see across the Kingdom. The party is also providing staple food products to needy Jordanians, various workshops and lessons for youth, and even university scholarships. In a focus group with Identity Center, the secretary general of the party stressed that this pro-active

involvement is a more effective means of engaging Jordanians, particularly young Jordanians, than the traditional campaign methods upon which the longstanding parties rely. The older parties appear unwilling to engage in this manner. Even the IAF, which has long relied on proxy organisations to provide services, is not willing to directly participate in communities. Musa al-Wahsh, a prominent IAF member who served both as an MP and with the Amman Council, stated that this sort of work is not the job of political parties. Services, he continued, should be provided by the state, not the parties. Parties, al-Wahsh suggested, are better served by relying on electoral campaigns.

With a greater ability to sympathise with the needs and aspirations of young Jordanians, Hizb al-Fursan may represent a new breed of political parties in Jordan that resembles a hybrid between parties and *hirak*. These new political parties have the potential to begin serving as increasingly important platforms for young Jordanians.

While these parties are not in the exact image of King Abdullah II's vision for a party-based system, reformist members of the government are, nonetheless, currently attempting to facilitate the development of newer (and younger) parties. Along with his above-mentioned attempt to allow partisan activity on campuses, Khaled Kalalkeh is currently spearheading a new proposal to reform the Political Parties Law. His suggested reforms would make it easier for young Jordanians to form political parties.²⁹ The reforms would see the number of requisite founding members decrease from 500 to 150, remove former requirements that founders must represent multiple governorates, lower the age of founding members from 21 to 18, and replace the Ministry of the Interior's oversight with that of the Ministry of Justice. Even members of firmly established political parties who participated in our focus groups supported these changes, suggesting they represent a positive step towards building stronger party life in Jordan.

Bringing Parties and the People Back Together

Al-Fursan is a new party, but it is growing. While it is hard to predict its future success, it serves as a model for a new type of political party. Its active participation in the community closely reflects the kind of political activism with which Jordanians, and especially young Jordanians, are currently willing to engage. If the traditional parties want to remain relevant for Jordanians and not be left behind by the successes of new parties and *hirak*, they must focus on fostering stronger relationships with their constituents. It is not sufficient for parties to continually reiterate their commitment to shallow, worn-out platforms. Parties must engage with the people, and build a relationship based on reciprocity and trust. If they do not build stronger relationships with their voters, parties will continue to constitute a side act for political life in Jordan.

Instead of continually blaming systemic issues for their marginalisation, political parties must be pro-active. This necessitates a two-step process. 1) Parties should directly connect with their constituents and attempt to better understand issues that are important for each community. 2) Parties have to then incorporate these ideas into their platforms and actively tackle important problems. Only then will Jordanians begin to see parties as useful tools for achieving political goals.

Recommendations

Representing Voters

- Participants in our surveys and focus groups repeatedly stressed that the agendas for which parties are currently advocating are not attractive to voters. To appeal to voters, parties need to accompany their long-term (and often abstract) policy objectives with more concrete proposals that reflect popular sentiment. Parties need to show voters that their platforms are both relevant and not the same as every other party's.
- In addition to the numerous reports that have already been published regarding voter aspirations (including Identity Center's report), political parties need to undertake their own direct research to better understand relevant issues that will engage Jordanians.
- Jordanians suggested that political parties could most effectively obtain information about voter opinions by holding public dialogue meetings in communities across Jordan. Only in this way, can parties begin to understand the smaller scale, more immediate issues about which Jordanians are most concerned.

Engaging Voters

- Once political parties have formulated platforms that address issues relevant to voters, parties need to focus on effectively disseminating awareness about their agendas. While political party members that engaged in our focus groups argued that traditional media represents an effective tool for reaching voters, our surveys, focus groups, and interviews with the Jordanian public indicated that traditional media platforms do not constitute effective means of spreading awareness about party platforms. Radio and newspapers were dismissed as unimportant sources for attaining information regarding political parties and their platforms.
- The only form of media that was encouraged as an effective strategy for engaging Jordanian voters (particularly young voters) was social media. Social media, they stressed, provides parties with effective tools through which to launch awareness campaigns about themselves and their platforms. While newer parties are beginning to exploit social media to its full potential, older parties have been slower to catch on.
- In addition to social media, political parties also need to focus on spreading awareness through direct engagement with their constituents. Just as Jordanians suggested that political parties should use local workshops to learn about voter concerns, they emphasised that this was also the most effective means of disseminating information about formulated programs. Our research identified this type of engagement as the most effective strategy for building support.
- In conjunction with awareness building campaigns via social media and local meetings, parties also need to become actively involved on the street. While some parties clearly do not consider this to be their role, this activism is proving to be an extremely effective means of gaining support and encouraging Jordanians to become politically active. It provides a potent means of demonstrating to voters that parties are not self-interested organisations focused on abstract political goals.

- Parties also need to continually remain active. Currently parties focus on election time campaigns and then retreat into their headquarters after elections are contested. This cycle, participants indicated, is insufficient. Outside of election periods, parties need to continually implement awareness campaigns and maintain active community engagement.

¹ See Identity Center, "Policy Paper: Fostering a Parliamentary Democracy in Jordan through Electoral Reform," February 2014. <<[>>](http://identity-center.org/en/node/287)

² Identity Center undertook a 500 person, semi-representative poll with a +/- 3% margin of error.

³ King Abdullah II ibn al-Hussein, "Each Playing Our Part in a New Democracy," His Majesty King Abdullah II ibn al-Hussein's Official Website, March 2, 2013.

<<[>>](http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/pol-parties.html)

⁴ When participants in Identity Center's phone survey were asked if they support a particular political party, 36% answered in the affirmative and 64% in the negative. When participants were asked if they believed parties currently supply sufficient information about their platforms to make informed electoral decisions, 17% answered in the affirmative and 83% in the negative.

⁵ When participants were asked if they believe political parties should form the government, 76% answered in the affirmative and 24% in the negative.

⁶ When survey participants were asked if they think believed having a parliament constituted by a greater number of representatives drawn from political parties, 59% answered in the affirmative and 21% in the negative, a further 20% indicated that there were unsure. This question was asked in a survey prepared for Identity Center's policy paper regarding the role of parliament in governance. See Identity Center, "Fostering a Parliamentary Democracy in Jordan through Electoral Reform."

⁷ See Identity Center, "Fostering a Parliamentary Democracy in Jordan through Electoral Reform."

⁸ Identity Center, "Fostering a Parliamentary Democracy in Jordan through Electoral Reform." Also see Ellen Lust-Okar, "Elections Under Authoritarianism: Preliminary Lessons from Jordan," *Democratization* Vol. 13, No. 3, (2006): 456-471

⁹ Glenn E. Robinson, "Defensive Democratization in Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Aug. 1998), 389.

¹⁰ Amin Ali Alazzam, "Political Participation in Jordan: The Impact of Party and Tribal Loyalties Since 1989," Ph.D. diss., (Durham9: Durham University, 2008) 41.

<<[¹¹ Political parties remained illegal until 1992, when a new Political Parties Law replaced that of 1955. See Curtis R. Ryan, "Elections and Parliamentary Democratization in Jordan," *Democratization* Vol. 5, No. 4 \(1998\): 181.](http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/2183/>></p>
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¹² Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank occurred in 1988. The process involved Jordan's administrative and legal severing of ties with the territory. Disengagement also resulted in the removal of citizenship from 1.5 million Palestinian-Jordanians living in the West Bank. Disengagement has not thus far been legally or constitutionally entrenched

¹³ Rex Brynen, "Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratization in the Arab World: The Case of Jordan," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. XXV No. 1 (March 1992): 93.

¹⁴ Linda Shull Adams, "Political Liberalization in Jordan: An Analysis of the State's Relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood," *Journal of Church and State* Vol. 38, No. 3 (Summer 1996): 511.

¹⁵ Alazzam, "Political Participation in Jordan," 137.

¹⁶ Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, "Jordan's 2010 Election Law: Democratization or Stagnation?" Jordan Office, October 28, 2010. <<[¹⁷ Curtis R. Ryan, "The Implications of Jordan's New Electoral Law," *Foreign Policy*, April 13, 2012.](http://www.kas.de/jordanien/en/publications/20947/>></p>
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<<[>>](http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/04/13/the_implications_of_jordans_new_electoral_law)

¹⁸ Ryan, "The Implications of Jordan's New Electoral Law."

¹⁹ Jordan's Independent Electoral Commission, "Number of Voters – Detail of Number of Voters," 2013. <<[>>](http://www.entikhabat.jo/public/EntDay/Main/All.pdf)

²⁰ When survey participants who previously stated that they had not voted in the previous election were asked why (and given the option to choose more than one answer), 60% stated that they do not trust elections, 45% that they do not trust the parliament, 38% that the electoral process is pointless, 31% that no party reflected their interests, 26% that they had insufficient information about political parties. 19% indicated that they had not voted for “other” reasons, most of which related to the unfairness of the Election Law.

²¹ Kingdom of Jordan, “Political Parties Law,” June 7, 2012.

<<http://www.lob.gov.jo/ui/laws/search_no.jsp?no=16&year=2012>>

²² Ahmed al-Shunnaq, Interview with Identity Center, March 25, 2013.

²³ Suzanna Goussous, “Gov’t Working to Reactivate Partisan Action in Universities,” *Jordan Times*, March 6, 2014. <<<http://jordantimes.com/govt-working-to-reactivate-partisan-action-in-universities>>>

²⁴ Khetam Malkawi, “University Guards to Become Law Enforcers,” *Jordan Times*, March 23, 2014. <<<http://jordantimes.com/share-content/university-guards-to-become-law-enforcers.html>>>

²⁵ When participants who had previously indicated that they were unwilling to join a political party were asked why (and given the option to select multiple answers), 39% indicated that they were not satisfied with the existing political parties, 33% that they did not trust political parties, and 24% that they were concerned about security. 12% indicated that they were unwilling to join a political party for “other” reasons, most of which concerned party bylaws and the pointlessness of parties in the current political system.

²⁶ When participants were asked to identify their main sources of information regarding political parties, 47% stated that it was from newspapers and the internet, 36% from friends, 34% from direct party contact, 11% from radio, and 9% from party campaigns.

²⁷ Identity Center, “Map of Political Parties and Movements in Jordan, 2013-2014,” Amman, Jordan, January, 2014. <<<http://www.identity-center.org/en/node/263>>>

²⁸ Identity Center, “The expectations of the Jordanian Citizens as to the House of Representatives No. 17,” Amman, Jordan, March 2013.

<<<http://www.identitycenter.org/sites/default/files/E1.pdf>>>

²⁹ “Roya Publishes a Complete Draft of the New Political Parties Law,” *Roya*, March 17, 2014; and Khetam Malkawi, “Proposed Political Parties Bill Reduces Number of Party’s Founders,” *Jordan Times*, March 13, 2014. <<<http://jordantimes.com/proposed-political-parties-bill-reduces-number-of-partys-founders>>>