

3 Activism of Contemporary women's Movement

Diverse forms of activism comprise the women's movement in Jordan today. We believe that the general picture of the women's collective action consists of various forms of collective actors. In contradiction to what has been presumed by the theory of civil society, that; social movements are independent or autonomous actors, the women's movement in Jordan consists of diverse actors that are not necessarily independent or even autonomous. This nature does change the fact that there are organizations which belong to a social movement, being the women's movement. This chapter will provide an analysis of the diverse forms of activism in the Jordanian women's movement on two main levels. On one hand we will analyze forms of organized activism i.e. women's organizations. On the other hand, we will analyze forms of member- and leadership in these organizations.

However, in order to understand the structure of women's organizations in Jordan, it is useful to distinguish between three main forms of organizations in terms of their internal legitimacy, as well as in the transmission of authority. In this concern, we will distinguish between: 1) Independent mobilizations; 2) association linkages/organizations; and 3) directed initiatives. By this, we are following the typology of women's organizations proposed by Molyneux (1998).

Yet, Molyneux' typology is an ideal distinction between the three forms of organizations; the directed, independent and associational linkages. With respect to this research, we modified the three forms in terms of content. On one hand, we included state and royal feminisms (namely the princess initiatives) under the category of directed organizations. On the other hand we include a non-institutionalized women's collective action under the form of independent initiatives, namely the national campaign to eliminate 'Honor Crimes' in Jordan. In addition, our typology is based on a certain criteria. In fact, the distinction between the so called directed organizations, associational linkages, and independent initiatives is based on their connection to the state. While most women's organizations are registered under the law article 33/1966 in state institution, they have a different connection to the state. The Law of Social Organizations and Bodies (No.33 of 1966) and its amendments

identifies women's organizations as charitable or social bodies . The term " Social body" is defined as: " Every body comprising seven or more members, and that offers social services, whether educational, cultural, training, charitable or artistic" (al-Khateeb 1977). The actions of women's organizations are; according to the law, to be supervised by the relative state institutions, namely the Ministry of Social Development. Hence, women's unions, small societies and clubs, and centers, are analyzed in terms of their connection to the state, as well as their organizational characteristics. Such an analysis would allow us to identify what authorities/parties are defining women's interests, priorities, and actions in Jordan.

3.1 Organizational form of women's collective action

As has already been explained, the radical history of women's organizations in the 50s and 60s has influenced the course of their action today. In fact, in response to the radical actions of women's organizations, namely with respect to the Palestinian issue, the state undertook several affirmative measures concerning the political activities of women's organizations. On one hand, the state limited the work of women's organizations through the application of laws and legislation, as will be discussed later in more details later. Women's organizations were therefore forced to be active in the fields of social and welfare services. On the other hand, the state setup several organizations which aimed at framing women's public work in Jordan, such as the General Federation for Jordanian women. These measures influenced the forms of women's organizations in two main ways. First, several state directed organizations were established in order to serve as a general umbrella under which most women's organizations should be registered (as members), as NGOs active in women's issues advocacy. Secondly, many women's organizations have sought protection through building contact with some prominent state figures or a royal family member. Next, we will provide a detailed description of the diverse forms of women's organizations.

3.1.1 Directed Organizations

This form of “ directed collective action“ applies generally to those cases where the authority and initiative clearly comes from outside and stands above the collectivity itself. Women’s organization are therefore subject to a higher (institutional) authority, and are typically under the control of the government. Yet, two main forms of organizations fall within this category. First, those organizations established by governmental members such as Ministers (in the case of the General Federation of Jordanian Women). Secondly, those organizations established by an initiative of ‘Princess Basma Bint Talal’ as governmental or quasi-governmental organizations (normally termed royal non-governmental organizations RO-NGOs). These organizations are: The Jordanian National Committee for Women JNCW (Governmental); The Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW);, and Princess Basma Women's Resource Center - (PBWRC) (Quasi-governmental).

3.1.1.1 Governmental Initiatives

Despite being mainly characterized as governmental initiatives, four organizations in Jordan cannot be excluded from the discussion of the women’s movement in Jordan. Those organizations which have been established by a governmental initiative such as the General Federation of Jordanian Women, or those succeeding the princess initiative (such as The Jordanian National Committee For Women, The Jordanian National Forum for Women and Princess Basma Women's Resource Center) constitute fundamental components of Jordanian women’s movements, for both forms have succeeded as initiatives which aim “theoretically and proved by practice” at enhancing women’s conditions in Jordan. A closer look at their structure, function, resources, projects and programs will then help us to determine the real impact of such organizations on women’s lives and the women’s movement.

The General Federation of Jordanian women

Preparations were underway to launch the General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW) ever since the creation of the first Social Development Ministry in 1979. The government was seeking to combine all women’s activities within an organizational

framework to be directly associated with the ministry of social development. The plan was first raised in a working paper, entitled: "The Ministry of Social Development-Women's organizations". This paper pointed out the need to set up qualitative associations, such as already existing associations and clubs. However, after the idea was closely examined, the Ministry of Social Development realized that this formula was impractical. The idea was substituted for another, based on combining the already existing women's associations in one institution capable of serving as a base for the GFJW. Therefore, a general meeting was held on September 5, 1981 during which the fundamental idea and bylaws of the GFJW were discussed. Article 2 of Association of the GFJW states the following:" A federation to be called the general Federation of Jordanian women shall be established in the Hashmite Kingdom of Jordan, with Amman as its headquarters. The federation may open branches in the governorates of the kingdom." The goal of the GFJW was cited as enabling women to play an active role in the comprehensive development of society and to enhance women's capabilities and skills in all domains. This then will strengthen their role in effective participation in an effort to develop the country politically, socially, and economically (Article No.3. / Objectives Law No.33, 1981). The federation is seeking to pursue several objectives, such as: Engaging women in cultural, political, environmental and socioeconomic development; training and rehabilitating women to achieve suitable jobs and help them in labor issues; represent the Jordanian women at the national, Arab and international level; and finally to serve and monitor women's equities ensuring the non-violation of their lawful rights.

In order to meet these objectives the GFJW has established a plan of action, which is understood in general to be framing the work of the Federation. The GFJW's plan of action consists of three main issues that deal with the social, economic, as well as with broadening membership. In order to broaden the membership spectrum, the GFJW is developing its charter, which allows for increased membership of Jordanian women; also through establishing new branches to cover all regions of Jordan:

With respect to the economic field, the plan of action is aimed at increasing women's capabilities and rehabilitating their vocational skills, creating job opportunities

through income generating projects, and to allow full coordination and integration with the other socio-economic, developmental local and foreign institutions.

In the social and the cultural field, the GFJW's plan of action highlights a follow-up in the improvement of a Personal Status Law, the Social Security Law, and the Retirement Law, all of which are in favor of women. It also highlights the importance of combating illiteracy and school dropouts among young girls. In addition, this plan of action is to support efforts aimed at raising the standards of health, education and political awareness among women.

Since its formation in 1981, the GFJW started exercising its functions and duties as a federation, which, included in its membership, are women's associations and committees. The federation has represented Jordanian women since 1981 in many Arab and international conferences. According to their internal Laws, the president of the GFJW is to be chosen by election, which is held on regular intervals. Members who elect the president are representatives of member societies in the federation.

The general administration of the GFJW has its headquarter in Amman. It has 11 branches distributed in accordance with the geographical division of districts. The main branches are located in the governorates of Amman (as has been indicated), Mafraq, Balqa, Zarqa, Ajloun, Madaba, Jerash and Irbid. An elected administrative committee presenting independent members, as well as societies and clubs who are members of the general federation, governs each main branch. Moreover, there are 25 multi-purpose centers rendering services to women and their families in all parts of the Kingdom. As for the organizational structure of the GFJW, it consists of 72 women's associations and societies distributed in all governorates of the Kingdom. They include 32 associations in Amman, which consists of around 45% of the total number of associations who are members of the GFJW. Many scholars view these organizations (federation members) as women's movement organizations. Yet, according to the definition of a women's movement organization, which we earlier introduced, one may argue that most of these organizations are charities and societies run by women and not WMOs. In fact, the thematic work of these organizations

provides that they are active in many fields and not specialized to women's issues, or in the advocacy of women's interests.

The GFJW is also seeking to amend its articles in a manner that would guarantee the equal right of all Jordanian women to join the GFJW. Such attempts however, have not succeeded until now. The first attempt to broaden their membership and to include individuals was under way in 1989, namely within the context of the liberalization process. Some changes were introduced by internal legislation with respect to membership forms. These changes provided that independent actors could join the federation, as well as societies and associations. In light of these new changes, thousands of independent women have joined the federation. Regular elections were held in 1990, giving both associations, as well as independent members, the right to run for office, and to elect the president as well executive committees to the federation. Yet, the elections were won by the Islamic bloc and by female members of Islamic organizations¹. The victory for the Islamic bloc provoked the remaining members to take the issue to the Supreme Court demanding that the elections be declared null and void. This was because they were not legal but contradictory to the law governing the operations of voluntary associations. They argued that the articles for the association of the GFJW provided for the membership of social women's associations, societies and committees, as well as for independent members, while the law that governs the operations for voluntary associations, which is the law applicable to the GFJW, consists only of voluntary associations and societies.

The Supreme Court examined this complaint. It acted first by appointing a temporary committee for three months, and then renewing its appointment for a further three months. It then issued a ruling which stated that the last elections should be considered null and void and that new elections should take place in accordance with the law of Social Associations and Societies number 33 introduced in 1966. The

¹ Membership of the GFJW is open to all forms of societies and associations that are run by women. In Jordan there are several Islamic oriented societies that are active in providing social services and charity services, such as helping people in need, orphanages, or even social services such as kindergarten, training and rehabilitation programs, as well as some lectures. One of the most active organizations of this kind is the "Anwar Al Huda" society, which was established in 1982. The society is being directed by seventeen women, who provide. Services such as kindergarten, aid for people in need, and lectures on Islamic teaching and Islamic behavior.

content of the Supreme Court ruling was that the GFJW is a specialized federation. In other words, only voluntary associations registered within the ministry of Social Development are allowed to participate. The number of these women members could reach 1000, distributed into 72 women's associations in the various governorates and districts across the country.

The General Federation held new elections and elected a new president and abrogated the individual membership of women in the federation. From this result well over 10,000 Jordanian women were deprived of their rights as independent members. The new winners of the elections were of liberal, national or leftist backgrounds, with no more Islamists. The GFJW held its general congress on April 19, 1996 and elected an executive committee for the current term (1996-1999). Ms. Nujoud Fawzi was elected as a Chairwoman of the executive committee, as well as nineteen other women elected as members. The Federation, however, is sponsoring and implementing several Programs on the national level². A few examples are: 1) A training project of productive folklore skills established in 1988; 2) a Tricot project established in 1988; 3) the productive Kitchen project established in 1989, Amman Governorate; and 4) the project of manufacturing school and other uniforms established in 1997.

In addition, having Queen Noor as the honorary president facilitates a cooperation between GFJW and the Noor Al-Hussein Foundation³ in implementing the women and Development program (WDP), which has already established six pilot, productive projects. These are: (Bee-keeping in the Karak governorate; heritage doll production in the Amman governorate; medical herbs drying and packaging in the Irbid governorate; rabbit raising in the Balqa governorate; light footwear production in the

² On the regional and the international levels, the Federation holds membership in many institutions, such as: the higher committee for the Combat of AIDS –ministry of health; the national committee in charge of preparation for the 1994 international year of the family – Ministry of Social Development; The national committee for women's affairs, which is headed by Princess Basma ; the higher National Committee for voluntary work- the ministry of youth. The GFJW also holds membership in other Arab and international committees, such as: the national committee for the preparation of the UN habitat conference; the General Arab women's Union; and occupies the position of general secretary assistant of the Union since 1982. In addition, the GFJW held numerous seminars in conjunction with other organizations. The most important of these were the seminar on the desertion of the husband and the impact of this desertion on the family, the national conference on the role of Jordanian women in the democratic process, and the seminar on the "one man, one vote" law.

³ An NGO active in social development supervised by the Queen Noor Al Hussein, the wife of the former king of Jordan.

Zarka governorate; and ready-to-wear garments in the Mafraq governorate. During its participation in all the preparatory work for the 1995 Peking conference on the local, Arab, and international levels, the former president of the GFJW (Haifa' Abu Ghazaleh) was chosen as the regional coordinator for west Asia.

In terms of revenues, it is widely known that no exact numbers can be obtained from most Jordanian civil society organizations, as is the case in many other Arab countries. Yet, and according to its yearly financial report, the revenues of the GFJW totaled JD 48615 while its expenditures totaled JD 42750 for 1999.

3.1.1.2 The Princess Initiatives

Most Jordanian civil society organizations have a royal family member as sponsor or sitting on their board of directors. Most, if not all independent social and political actions in Jordan tend to get absorbed, or is better, yet are controlled by the state, namely the royal family. What supports this interpretation is the fact that the once independent Jordanian women's movement still, as it has always been, is "consolidated" under the leadership and patronage of Princess Basma. Princess Basma is the direct and indirect supervisor of several women's organizations in Jordan. The princess, however, is a very strong, highly educated, and very active woman in the Jordanian public sphere concerning women's and developmental issues. Yet, the title of "princess" offers her access to people in power (her family), and a significant influence on the government (the Cabinet and the Parliament). Despite the fact that the state of Jordan is a "neo-patriarchal" one, which means that women in the royal family have no direct access to political power, Princess Basma Bint Talal is politically significant, and considered to be one of the main women's activists in Jordan being a special resource to the Jordanian women's movement. She supervises directly and indirectly most of the women's organizations in Jordan, in addition to Queen Alia Fund (now The Hashmite Jordanian Fund).

Princess Basma Bint Talal was born in Amman, Jordan, in 1951, to King Talal bin Abdullah and Queen Zein Al Sharaf.. She was educated at the Ahliyyah School in

Amman, and then at Benenden School in England. Later she went on to specialize in languages at Oxford University and currently she is preparing her dissertation for a Dr. Phil in Development Studies at Oxford University. For more than 20 years she has worked nationally, regionally, and internationally in the areas of development and advancement for women, as well as in the development of children. She still plays an active advocacy role, contributing to global strategies through various forums such as the United Nations, and is committed in Jordan and the surrounding region by promoting policies that will ensure equal opportunities for women. In 1995, Princess Basma was appointed as Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Noeleen Hezyer, Director of UNIFEM, announced the appointment of Princess Basma at an event in New York on March 7, saying, "There is much work to be done, as we seek to help women in developing countries transform their lives. The Princess brings vast knowledge of the needs of women in Jordan and the Middle East, and will play a key role in our efforts to bring the voices of these women into the international forum" (Hezyer, 1995).

The Princess is an active patron of over 25 national and local organizations, most notably the Women's Police, the Jordanian Young Women's Christian Society, the Inner Wheel Club, the Amman Little League Association, and the Nurses and Midwives Union. In 1992, she initiated the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW). This Commission is the highest policy-making forum in Jordan concerning women's issues, both at the governmental and non-governmental levels.

Under her leadership, the JNCW formulated in 1993 a National Strategy for Women (explained in detail in the next chapter). This was adopted by the Jordanian Government and was one of the first developed women's strategies in the Arab World. JNCW was recently responsible for having incorporated the main elements of the National Strategy and the Beijing Platform for Action into Jordan's Socio-Economic Plan 1998-2002.

One of her main duties as Chairperson of the JNCW is in supporting and making amendments to a number of laws and legislation concerning women, and in increasing the profile of women in national and local decision-making bodies. For example,

Princess Basma encouraged and supported a number of local women activists to gain first hand experience in municipal councils. As a result, in 1995 for the first time in the history of Jordan, thirteen women ran in local council elections. Ten women won seats, one of whom became Jordan's first woman mayor.

Moreover, in December 1995, Princess Basma established the **Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW)**. The Forum grew out of the work of local voluntary women's committees, which Princess Basma had initiated earlier, in an effort to strengthen women's leadership and to make local communities aware of the National Strategy. Chaired by Princess Basma, JNFW is the largest "grassroots" women's organization in the Kingdom, with 27,000 members, advocating women's rights and increased women's participation in decision-making processes.

On an international level, Princess Basma played a significant role prior to and during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. She was a member of the International Advisory Group to advise the UN Secretary General on the Preparatory Process of the Conference, and helped to guide pre-Conference Pan-Arab discussions. In addition, she headed both the official Jordanian delegation and the non-governmental organization delegation to the Beijing Conference in September 1995. Part of her main work during the conference was to focus attention on the Platform Action, which she said, "would be of little meaning" unless it was accompanied by a genuine commitment for genuine work. She argues, "The time for rhetoric is over. It is now time for deeds, not words".

In response to the Beijing Platform for Action and its call to strengthen gender research and analysis, Princess Basma inspired the establishment of the **Princess Basma's Women's Resource Center (PBWRC)** in March 1996. Acting as a support mechanism for women's groups and policy makers, PBWRC houses a research and information center, which provides important information and statistical indicators on all issues, related to women. In order to understand the involvement of the princess in these organizations, as well as their role in the project of women's advancement in Jordan, each of the above-mentioned organizations will be introduced and analyzed in terms of structure and activities.

As can be seen in figure (1), the three organizations are supervised directly and indirectly by the Princess. This kind of supervision facilitates the work of these organizations, as they are very active in mobilizing several women's issues. Moreover, they are almost the only organizations recognized by the government to identify women's issues in Jordan; although they are not grassroots organizations. In addition, these organizations form a network, as they seem to be complementing each other's work concerning women's issues. The analysis of the projects and programs support this interpretation concerning the representational level of associational organizations supervised by the princess. The main work concerning women and politics, women's social problems, and the involvement of women in development were the main concerns of these organizations. This means that they have touched a new arena of women-related issues, namely her productive and community management roles. Next, we will provide a general description of each organization.

FIGURE (1)

3.1.1.2.1 The Jordanian National Committee for Women

The establishment of the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) in 1992 came as a response to the frequent calls from the United Nations for the establishment of national committees that are concerned with women's issues. The committee was established by the Jordanian Cabinet decision on March 12, 1992, to serve as a "reference body entrusted with drawing up general policies and identifying the priorities of women in Jordan" (JNCW 1996:1).

The Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW) was established as a policy forum in March 1992. It is headed by Princess Basma Bint Talal, and it comprises several ministries concerned with women's issues, representatives from women's organizations and university professors⁴. The Committee has several objectives, the most important of which are: 1) To amend legislation obstructing women's participation in development, and enacting new legislation and policies that will guarantee the completion of a legal legislative framework emphasizing and accentuating their full participation; 2) to create public awareness regarding the importance of women's roles and their status in the progress of the Jordanian society; and 3) to increase women's participation in development and to create job opportunities for them in the public and private sector.

Members of this committee are selected obviously to represent all state and some social institutions such as Social Development, Justice, Planning, Labour, Internal Affairs, Environment and Rural Affairs Ministries, as well as many other individuals that are supposed to represent and support the Committee.

⁴ The Committee was reformed in Nov. 19, 1995 as follows: Princess Basma Bint Talal/Head of Committee; Minister of Planning; Minister of Justice; Minister of Social Development; Mr. Abdul Kareem Al-Dughmi; Secretary General of Ministry of Labour; Secretary General of Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment; Secretary General of Ministry of Interior Affairs; Representative of Noor Al-Hussein Foundation; Head of General Federation of Jordanian Women Mrs. Shadia Nusseir/Queen Alia Fund; Dr. Amal Al-Farhan/ Academic Sector; Mrs. Fatina Kabariti / Private Sector; Mrs. Mai Abu Al-Samin/ Jordanian National Forum for Women; Mrs. Nawal Fa'ouri; Mrs. Miyassar Al-Sa'di / Jordanian Women's Union; Ms. Hiam Kalimat.

The committee has, however, a set of responsibilities. On one hand, the committee has to conduct a general survey of existent legislation. On the other hand it has to; 1) follow up suggested laws and legislative projects, 2) identify areas and articles that obstruct the progress of Jordanian women, or do not assist in improving their status and putting continuous efforts towards the amendment of existent legislation, and 3) enacting new laws and policies to achieve the objectives of the Committee.

The committee is considered the first of its kind in the Arab region, and is meant to be an important tool for eliminating gender discrimination. Moreover, we may argue that the committee did not deal with women as one category, the committee is covering Jordanian women in many fields; but are all women really represented by this committee? And this question leads us again to the question; from where does the authority to define women's goals, properties and actions come? Only a critical reading of the committee structure and functions would prepare us to answer such a question.

Here, it might be noteworthy to mention that the level of representation in this committee facilitates them an effective role in the public space. The committee comprises several governmental, nongovernmental, and individual representatives all headed by princess Basma Bin Talal. This means that their access-channels to decision-making people and processes are very open. Moreover, this committee is recognized by all state institutions as the main and simply only women's representative in Jordan.

On the representation level, one may argue that the committee obviously suffers from several problems. On one hand the only women represented are; professionals, members of organizations, or by one way or another connected to the state (through ministries). Housewives who comprise a significant category of women in Jordan (65,4% of women above the age 15) (Shakhatreh 1992) are obviously not represented. On the other hand the representation of women's organizations in this committee is also problematic: First, the General Federation of Jordanian Women is meant to be on this committee as the only representative of women's organizations. Unfortunately it does not at all represent most women's organizations in Jordan. It seems however, that

some small societies and NGO's which have no political interests; or, in other words are not radicals,⁵ are the only ones being represented in the GFJW. In addition, the Federation suffers several critique points concerning its autonomy financially and ideologically from the State. As has been earlier discussed, the establishment of the federation was a step in controlling women's public action and in directing it towards social services. Furthermore, the committee's members, as Ministers and governmental institution deputies, make it difficult to ensure a real revision of the state's policies concerning women. It is as if the government is reviewing governmental legislation in women's favor. Transparency and real revision is hence questionable in this case. In addition, we wonder if men, as being members of the committee, are able to determine what women's needs and issues are. They have been in power since the establishment of the state and nothing significant has been done by them in order to change women's lives and conditions.

3.1.1.2.2 Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW)

The Forum is another initiative of Princess Basma. The main idea behind this forum is to enhance women's participation in politics and other various decision-making processes at the local level. This is meant to pursue several objectives such as: 1) Spreading awareness among Jordanian women to the content of the National Strategy, which was ratified in 1993 and aimed at improving women's status; 2) raising awareness on health, education, culture, legislature, economy, and politics; and 3) forming pressure groups to influence decision makers.

A higher Council, chaired by Princess Basma Bint Talal who also governs the Forum, operates the forum. The Council consists of elected representatives of the committees of each of Jordan's twelve governorates⁶, as well as other women activists. Elections in the Forum take place nationally every four years leading to the election of one representative from each governorate who will serve on the Higher Council. The Higher Council determines the policies and strategies of the Forum, and the

⁵ As an example, see the case of the Jordanian women's Union.

⁶ Abu Assamin, the coordinator of the Forum was appointed by the princess to direct the forum, and was not elected (Personal interview, Mai abu Alsamin, 15.03.2001).

governorate committees set the plans and activities of each governorate. The Programs are then implemented by the co-coordinators of each local community.

The higher council is, however, responsible for several issues such as: 1) Conducting a general survey of existent legislation; 2) identifying areas and articles that obstruct the progress of Jordanian women, or do not assist in improving their status; 3) putting continuous efforts towards the amendment of existent legislation, or enacting new laws and policies to achieve the objectives of the Committee; 5) forming specialized committees to achieve the Committee's objectives whether for conducting research, or studies, or for the representation of the Committee in the various regions of the Kingdom.

3.1.1.2.3 Princess Basma Women's Resource Center (PBWRC)⁷

Following recent developments for women in Jordan, a center was created to support women nationally and to inspire their full participation in all sectors of life, particularly that of decision making, as well as for social and political processes. In March 1996 the center was established as a support mechanism for policy makers and women's groups. The center is located at the Queen Zein Al Sharaf Complex for Development (another initiative of the princess in the field of social development), with access to national training facilities and expertise from the staff of Queen Alia Fund for Social Development. The center is pursuing several objectives such as: 1) Assessing women's needs by gathering and analyzing information; 2) enhancing effective policies concerning women's issues by providing decision makers with up-

⁷ The center is divided into three main units, each of which has its own responsibilities, and in the end are intended to complement one other: 1) Research and Studies Unit: The unit was established to support ongoing qualitative research, and aims at providing an accessible flow of reliable and up-to-date information reflecting the true situation of women in Jordan. The information will then be used for needs assessment, program evaluation and monitoring. The center also involves people at the grassroots in providing data of their own communities under the expertise and supervision of specialized researchers. The unit will oversee the functioning of an information network that will extend to the governorates, and form a dynamic framework for the exchange of information to and from the field. 2) Design Unit: This unit is responsible for the technical and editorial work relating to PBWRC's publications, media, and literature. It oversees the center's web site, and the publication of the newsletter, in addition to producing awareness raising material, training manuals, and all project documentation. 3) The Media Unit: With the support of the European Union, and in preparation for the November elections, PBWRC has established a media unit, which aims at providing basic services such as information, assistance, and design services to candidates as well as to their campaign teams.

to-date and reliable information; 3) raising public awareness on women's issues; and 4) increasing the participation of women in the development process.

The center is said to offer help to individuals and groups by identifying their needs and providing them with an access to technical assistance. This, however is realized through; the application of diverse educational programs, providing awareness materials, media campaigns, conducting workshops, and seminars. All these actions are aimed at bringing people up-to-date with the latest on women's issues. In order to meet its objectives the center has developed different specific programs, which are:

Women in decision-making:

This program was initiated with the aim of increasing the role of women in the decision-making process through skill enhancement, raising awareness of rights and the status of women. The program targets professional women, young women at schools and universities, candidates for municipal and parliamentary elections, and community activists.

Women in development:

This program was initiated with the aim of improving the status of women, and integrating them into the sustainable developmental process through training and the raising of awareness in the fields of income generation, health, education and poverty alleviation.

Policy project:

This project is being implemented in co-operation with The Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA), and aims at involving women's groups in advocacy work on the community level by forming pressure groups and in becoming active advocates of positive change to their societies. The project involves: Training workshops throughout Jordan in which women will be trained as trainers for their own communities; analyzing electorate lists; providing technical services (posters, platforms ... etc); advertising services; design and the arrangement of press coverage; and finally in providing editorial services for campaign material.

3.1.2 Associational Linkages

A second type of organizational structure with a different conception of authority is presented in what is called (associational forms of organizations). In Jordan, associational organizations can be identified as those wherein independent women's organizations, with their own goals and institutional autonomy, choose to form alliances with other governmental organizations with which they are in agreement on a range of issues. These may be seen as associative in terms of their quasi-independent status within an alliance of interests; their actions are not directed by a superior power, as women remain in control over their own organization and set its agenda. In this situation the women's organization may also choose to delegate power to outside agencies such as the GFJW, the General Federation of Societies and Charities, or to a public figure (the Princess or the Queen). Most small societies and charities in Jordan fall under this category, for they form alliances of interest with bigger organizations, or with public figures that are more powerful.

These alliances are mainly made for survival purposes that can be seen in two different ways: political, and economic. Alliances for political survival are commonly formed by strong well-organized societies, who enter such alliances in order to escape direct confrontation with the state (Example; The Arab Women Organization), or simply to gain some political recognition (the case of the Human Forum for Women's Rights (HFWR), and the Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC). Alliances that seek financial support are mainly common among small charities and welfare oriented small societies.

3.1.2.1 Arab Women Organization (AWO)

The AWO was founded in 1970 by a group of women activists aiming at gender equality as well as social justice for all citizens. For its first 20 years, AWO's emphasis was on the economic empowerment of people. Since 1990, the organization has broadened its scope and added activities related to the environment, reproductive health, human rights and political empowerment.

Activities are conducted through 10 centers located in the poorest areas of Amman and other governorates. Each center offers training for women, literacy classes, kindergartens and health clinics. A paid director administers each center. Training includes sewing classes, tricot, typing and the likes. The training courses run normally for a nine-month period. Trainees pay JD10 for the course, at the end of which each trainee obtains a certificate. The certificate is needed as a qualification for employment. The centers also run literacy programs with the help of the Ministry of Education. If the NGO can gather 15 women, the Ministry of Education is willing to provide class supplies, textbooks and the teacher. A third activity at the centers is a kindergarten. Sessions lasting two and half hours are held daily, each with about 50 children whose parents pay about JD3 per month.

The heads of this organization, namely Emily Nafa', are active members of the Communist Party in Jordan. In an interview, president Nafa' stressed that the only way for women's advancement in Jordan is through empowering them economically as well as raising their awareness. The society is very active in supporting poor families, mostly in refugee camps. Their best-known activities in Jordan concentrates mainly on family planning, reproductive health, as well as environment protection. The radical history of the society, as explained in Chapter two, explains why this organization seeks to be a member in the GFJW. As has already been explained, the activists of this organization were mobilized by the National movement, and therefore along with the nationalists have conducted some activities against state foreign policy as well as Israeli actions in Palestine concerning refugees. Activists in this organization were also supported by the 'Al Nabulsi' government which was socialist oriented. Nafa', as was her father and husband, is an active member of the communist party in Jordan. Being a member at the GFJW allows the AWO a representative status. It is a women's organization active in women's and other issues, yet is still recognized by the state.

3.1.2.2 The Business and Professional Women's Club (BPWC)

The Business and Professional Women's Club represents a constituency of middle- and upper class employed women. Established with its four chapters in 1976, it is affiliated with the International Federation of BPW. Some of its 350 members own their own businesses (factories, shops, nurseries, schools or law firms); others are professionals.

The Club aims to encourage women to acquire an education, occupational training and to become employed. It also promotes cooperation with other local, regional, and international women's organizations. These goals are executed through: (1) small business counseling for women, (2) information and documentation for women's studies, and (3) a consultative service office for women. The Club holds lectures on women's studies as well as seminars on legal issues, women's rights and obligations. It holds activities on education, democracy, and freedom of speech in conjunction with other organizations. It advises micro and small businesses through Small Business Counseling in association with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF). It has held some courses ranging from managerial leadership, to scientific research methods and writing, to using the computer and even to election campaigns. The Club recently established a business incubator with 12 offices to provide businesswomen access to office resources such as copiers, faxes, computers, and a graphics machine (we will describe the incubator in the next chapter under the analysis of projects and programs in women's organizations).

3.1.2.3 The Human Forum for Women's Rights (HFWR)

The Human Forum for Women's Rights is a small NGO that was established in 1995, in the wake of convening the Fourth World Conference on Women and NGO Forum-Beijing 1995, through efforts of its 25 founding members. Dr. Hiafa Abu Ghazalih directed the Forum during its establishment. Currently Mrs Lamis al-Nasir directs the forum⁸, which has now 31 members and 11 board members. The primary goal of the

⁸ Mrs Lamis Al Nasir is a woman's activist in the fields of human's and women's rights.

HFWR is to address women's issues and concerns as well as to protect their rights, specifically, in relation to monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which the government of Jordan signed with reservations in 1980, and ratified in July 1992.

Since its establishment, the HFWR has attempted as its first activity the analysis of the 12 areas of critical concern (of the Beijing's Platform for Action) and to tackle each of them in its future seminars. Its first major activity was to conduct an innovative field study on violence against women in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The Study was based on data collected from interviews with male prisoners responsible for perpetrating violence and with female victims of violence who are also imprisoned for their protection. Results of the study were published during December 1998 as part of UNIFEM's Western Asia Campaign for the Elimination of violence against women.

The HFWR has conducted several projects and programs, such as: Establishing a counseling Center for Women's Rights in Cooperation with the European Union. It was also active in establishing a women's shelter for victims of domestic violence, in cooperation with the ministry of Social Development and the Public Security Department. Finally, it issues a bi-yearly newsletter aimed at promoting awareness concerning women's rights as human rights.

However, in addition to having their internal authority shared with other national organizations or public political figures, the women's organizations in Jordan make alliances with other international organizations and institutions. This alliance might be on one hand, an alliance of interest. Yet, on the other hand might also be a financial support alliance. Although here we are following Mylonuex' typology of women's movement organizations, her thoughts did not extend to the closing of alliances at the international level. In fact, many international actors are now promoting women's rights, and sponsoring gender democracy. Such financial supports and alliances raise normal questions concerning; is the organization in implementing the alliance project

following internal priorities of Jordanian women, or is it implementing the interests of the sponsor⁹?

3.1.3 Independent Women's Organizations and Initiatives

Two main cases could be discussed under this category of women's mobilization. First, the independent women's union in Jordan (The Jordanian Women Union), and secondly, the initiative of the National Campaign to Eliminate Honor Crimes. Concerning the first case, the Jordanian Women's Union is an independent body, not affiliated with the GFJW, and has been registered in accordance with the Social Association's law number 33 of 1966.

The history of the Jordanian Women's Union shows that the union was, and still is very active concerning women's political, social, and economic issues. This union fulfils the main aspect of the autonomy criteria by being independent from the state. In fact, the state does not participate by drawing its projects, programs or themes by its agenda. Nonetheless, the union is dependent on other resources, which seems to draw its work agenda. The union receives considerable amounts of international aid for certain projects and programs. A lack of financial resources forces the union to direct its programs to themes which fall within their international aid interests¹⁰. The case study of the union supports this interpretation.

⁹ It is now known that the European Union sponsors activities related to women's rights and gender democracy. In their financial plan for the year 2003, gender issues and women's organizations are of significant importance (European Union, 2002). In fact, European Union programs in the Middle East can be sorted into nine categories: General human rights, women's rights, children's rights, socio-economic rights; media and freedom of expression; democracy; rule of law; confidence-building; and support for civil society (Karkutil/Buetzier 1999: 35-42; Mair, 1997).

¹⁰ In an earlier study on the relationship between the Jordanian and international civil society organizations, it was found that the Jordanian civil society organizations mostly work on issues that are indirectly inspired by the international sponsoring organizations. This means that the civil society organizations might not be working on issues that are important for the local society, rather the issues that are interesting for the international organizations or are being sponsored by them (see al-Atiyat, 1998).

3.1.3.1 The Jordanian Women Union (JWU)

The JWU was established on November 17, 1974. A short time after its formation, it claimed a membership of 3500 women, while its centers and branches spread into various parts of the country. However, in 1981 the JWU was dissolved. Although a Supreme Court ruling was issued in 1982 abrogating the decision to dissolve the union, the JWU resumed its activities only 1989. In 1994 the Union was registered with the Ministry of Interior under the name “The Jordanian Women Union”, after being active for almost tow decades under the name of Arab Women Union.

The JWU spelled out a number of objectives in its articles of association. All these objectives were focused on the central issue of educating women concerning their rights and duties, and making these women aware of their rights, whether in Badia, refugee camps, villages or cities. The union also sought to rejuvenate its concepts and plans, and to co-ordinate efforts and resources by pooling them into a union that would hold all women’s groups together. It also sought to highlight the women’s role on the Arab and international levels.

To achieve these goals, the JWU divided its activities into various supervisory committees. These include a child committee, social committee, foreign relations committee, as well as other committees. It sought behind this division to co-ordinate all efforts in achieving the basic goals and objectives of the union. The JWU provided various services to the community, such as the setting up of vocational training and anti-literacy elimination centers, teaching embroidery, and typing in various parts of the country -such as Ramtha, Karak, and Irbid. Moreover, although the JWU had started with some members distributed all over the kingdom, the size of its membership has greatly increased over a period of six years. The union now claims some 6000 members (3000 in Amman and another 3000 in the other branches of the country). The union has branches in Irbid, Salt, Zarqa, Madaba, and Aqapa.

Moreover, the formation of the union coincided two main happenings in Jordan. on the one hand, the preparations to celebrate the International Women’s Day in 1975 and on the other hand, the launch of the democratization project and reestablishment

of the parliament. Therefore, it was decided that its major objective should be focused on mobilizing and encouraging them to participate in the forthcoming legislative elections 1989, ten years after women managed to obtain their right to vote and to be elected to office.

The JWU continues to be an existing women's organization seeking to raise the cultural, social, and economic standard of the Jordanian women and enabling her to exercise her full rights as a citizen, worker, and housewife. Moreover, the union conducted certain projects contributing to solving social problems, such as violence against women, discriminating laws and legislation, as well as illiteracy among women. In fact, the project of the "Hot line", which was launched in 1998, targets women as victims of domestic violence. Moreover, the project of "Children House" was established in the year 2000, and aims at offering divorced parents the opportunity to not have to visit their children at police stations, the way it was previously.

Several governmental measures were taking place in Jordan to suppress this Union. Such measures are meant on one hand to direct the public work of women's organizations towards social issues and services, however, on the other hand are limiting the radical political actions of women's groups as well as other civil society organizations.

The Union represents the only independent women's organization in Jordan; it however, suffers from several problems. Data collected from field visits to the Union show that it is unable to generate financial resources through its activities. However, one can argue, that the union is implementing programmes that should not generate revenue. Moreover, the revision of the union's activities and programs show that sometimes the themes being followed are geared to fall within the framework of the sponsor's interests. Finally, when violence against women came to be a social problem in the late 1980s, as well as had some international interest and support, the union, as did many other organizations, ran to propose and design programs that deal with the problem of violence. Thus the financial problems, which are dependent on

external financial resources, are a serious challenge to the union, and a main source of critique to its real mission.

The second type of independent women's action is represented here by the national campaign to eliminate honor crimes. The campaign has a nonhierarchical organizational form. In fact, the campaign's committee decided not to go formal as well as deciding against NGO-zation.

3.1.3.2 The National Campaign to Eliminate Crimes of Honor

Several social as well as political measurements were undertaken to deal with the crucial issue of violence against women in the Jordanian context. One of the main issues that has been heavily debated within this context is the issue of honor crimes. Honor crimes are a widespread phenomenon in Jordan which knows no particular socio-economic background, educational level, or familial status. It is simply practiced nation wide and at all levels. To give a simple description to the phenomenon, an honor crime is a crime committed against women for having had a sexual relationship outside of marriage. Women who do so are sentenced to death by their family members. One of the family males is being obliged to kill the woman (a sister, a wife, a daughter, or even the mother) in order to cleanse the family honor.

The issue of honor crimes was raised within the context of celebrating the International Women's Day in 1999 at the national level. Within the celebration several actions took place which were sponsored by various institutions. One of the main actions in this context was a campaign against honor crimes supported by the UNIFEM's regional office for the West Asia Region in Amman. Activities within this campaign took the form of conferences, and workshops which addressed various social preoccupation with this issue. The issue at this level was included in everyday newspapers and discussed widely among diverse social groups with different perspectives.

However, political activity against crimes of honor in Jordan began much earlier than that. In fact, it goes back to the early 1990s when some female lawyers began to speak

about them at conferences in order to raise public awareness with respect to this issue¹¹. More recently, several journalists have reported on killings and statistics in this respect in the national press, namely the *Jordan Times*. This however, has raised a wider public awareness of honor crimes and was considered the first step in the National Campaign to Eliminate Honor Crimes. One of the main journalists, 'Rana Hussein', who carried on in reporting on this matter was awarded in 1998 the Reebok Award for Human Rights for her active involvement in defending women's rights (*Jordan Times* 24 March 1998) . Granting this prize as well as the phenomena of honor killings attracted the attention of the international press. CNN produced in connection to this a 15-minute telecast highlighting honor crimes in Jordan. This telecast brought a lot of international attention to the phenomena at both a national and international level. While the international press and human rights organizations and initiatives viewed the phenomena as negative, official governmental and a societal response to the issue presented contradictory views.

Several people including lawyers, journalists, and women activists contacted Hussein in order to set up an initiative that consolidated their concern for the issue. A national campaign was launched within this context, and targeted not only the actions of honor killings but also the institutional support to these killings. As a matter of fact, the campaign members, as well as many women's activist criticize the legal framework which regulates these killings and does not treat them as murders. In fact, the laws that were mostly criticized were those framing the issue namely article 340 and article 98, which provide a reduced penalty to murders committed under the circumstances of protecting family honor. They see Article 340 as a "license to kill women in contradiction to Islamic law, the foundations of human rights, and the Jordanian Constitution." (*Jordan Times*, August 24, 1999).

The Campaign was officially set up at a press conference held in Amman on August 23, 1999 (*Jordan Times* August 23, 1999). Several articles were published in English speaking newspapers, namely the *Jordan Times*, viewing the inhuman aspects of these killings, as well as the abuse of such reductions in the penalty of murder which might

¹¹ Personal interview with the female lawyer Asma Khader. She is the head of regional office of the 'Sisterhood Is a Global Institute' in Amman. This organization is active in defending female legal rights all over the world, and its first office in the region is in Jordan.

invite some to commit crimes against women without real reasons, at least nothing to do with honor. The campaign then went to the streets. The campaign members worked out a petition that aimed in collecting signatures of Jordanians demanding the elimination of law article 340. This petition targeted all sectors of society, given more people a chance to express their opinion with regard to this issue. It also viewed the extent to which the everyday Jordanian is suffering under the social pressure of such an action.

A call to all citizens was also published on an internet website inviting them to sign the petition¹². Names and contact numbers of the committee members were also included. The members of the committee, assisted by 200-300 volunteers, collected signatures in the larger cities of Jordan. By November 1999, the Campaign had collected over 15,000 signatures.

With respect to the internal organization of the committee a coordinator and co-coordinator were elected. The coordinator is responsible for note-taking and record keeping. In addition, the Campaign was organized on a voluntary basis. In fact, the door was open to anyone who wanted to participate and gather signatures. Moreover, aware of the negative image of foreign funds, the committee also accepted no outside help¹³.

Along with these grassroots activities, the Jordanian government also started working against honor crimes. In fact, concerned about the negative image of the kingdom, as well as being committed to the convention of CEDAW which Jordan has signed earlier in 1991, the government established a special legal committee to study Article 340. The legal committee, with the assistance of Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW), examined article 340 and plead for a draft of its cancellation to be presented to Parliament. In July 1999, the Cabinet approved the proposed amendment,

¹² see the website of the campaign WWW.the national campaign to eliminate honor crimes. com. jo.

¹³ Information concerning the campaign was also collected from internet sources, namely the website of the campaign.

and presented it to the Parliament,¹⁴ for their approval is necessary to sign a bill into law.

While the Upper House of Parliament agreed upon the amendment, the Lower House of Parliament rejected the cancellation of the law. Members of the Lower House argued that the cancellation would lead to "the destruction of the foundation of Jordanian society, the increase of moral crimes and an invitation to decay and anarchism and is thus rejected by religion" (al-Ra'y November 22, 1999). As is the case with all female related discourses, many of the Lower House deputies accused foreign influence as an attempt to interfere in Jordanian society, which he called "by nature a religious, traditional society" (al-Ra'y November 23, 1999). At a conference organized by the Jordanian Writers Union to debate the issue, a deputy of the Lower House stated: "This (canceling of the article) is a call to spread corrupt morals and obscenity and will bring total destruction to our society (Jordan Times February 26, 2000).

The accusation of foreign intrusion, mainly western and Israeli, was the main premise of criticism in the attempt to cancel Article 340 presented by other civil society organizations, namely the Muslim Brothers Group and their Islamic Action Front political party. Abdul Latif Arabiyat, secretary general of the Islamic Action Front Party summed up the view of the Islamists up by saying: "We feel that whoever is leading all these campaigns for change is aimed at demoralizing our society, and the women's issue has been used by the West against the Arabs and the Muslims to push Arab women to abandon their honor and values and start acting like animals". He added that this movement "to liberate women is the work of the Zionists to devalue our society"(Jordan Times November 18, 1999).

These views correspond to prevalent views in Jordanian society, which remains largely a conservative (tribal), religious (Muslim) society. It also views the limits facing actions of civil society in general and those of women in particular. Women

¹⁴ The Jordanian parliament is divided into an Upper and a Lower House, each with 40 members. The Upper House is appointed by the King, while the Lower House is popularly elected. Both houses must approve proposals for them to be signed into law.

and their issues remain the protected arena, and should not be the target of civil society.

However, the Lower House of Parliament decided to call the issue for a vote in November 1999. The draft calling for the cancellation of Article 340 was soundly defeated, with all but one of 80 deputies voting to keep it. The draft was then returned to the Upper House, which again approved canceling the article and sent it back to the Lower House. On January 26, 2000, the majority of deputies of the Lower House rejected again canceling the article by a show of hands (Jordan Times January 27, 2000). Since the two houses of Parliament did not agree, the bill would now be discussed in a special joint session between the government and the Parliament. A joint session must be called by the King.

The government then took another approach, and announced a protest march that was held on February 14, 2000. Under the supervision of the royal family, more than 5,000 Jordanians, namely tribal activists from all corners of the Kingdom, showed up for the march (Jordan Times February 15, 2000).

The support of the March by the royal family created some division among committee members. Some of the members felt that the royal intervention would give them the support they needed to get Article 340 canceled. Others however, argued that they should remain committed to the principle of democratic activism and that the campaign should remain "a people's movement". After the march and the legal stalemate, signaled by the most recent vote of the Lower House of Parliament, campaign activities were slowed down.

In recognition of their efforts on behalf of human rights, the campaign was awarded the Human Rights Watch Award by the New York based organization, Human Rights Watch. The committee members are now faced with the challenge of creating a more permanent, sustainable organization to further their cause.

The signature-collecting campaign to demand the cancellation of Article 340 reveals a new, although still limited, development of civil society in Jordanian politics. The campaign employed a strategy of direct citizen action in a political context that is not

yet accustomed to participatory politics. Its executive committee members strove for egalitarianism within the organization itself and democratic participation in the larger political arena. In solidarity, they pursued a vision of the common good and peacefully attempted to convince others of their vision. Collectively, they struggled to maintain their independence from the state by not registering with the Ministry of the Interior. In their discourse and their activities, they pursued a democratic method in order to present their demands. By virtue of their insistence on independence from the government and their reliance on a measure of participatory citizenship, the campaign fits very nicely into civil society models of politics in emerging democracies. Although facing severe limits on its action, the simple fact that the campaign has succeeded to raise awareness that led somehow to a social change, as even the idea of such an action was unthinkable two decades ago. Finally, the practice of the politics of influence through this campaign was also very significant, as the debate on the cancellation of the article moved to the parliament and made some noise.

To summarize, the campaign was the first of its kind at this level of national community in Jordan. Such actions are considered the basic steps towards an effective women's movement in Jordan. Moreover, we consider the campaign as one of the basic elements which contributes effectively to the formation of a specific identity of women's action in Jordan. The nonnegotiable demands, and the splitting from the professionalization of women's organizations, make this campaign a promising action in the progression of women's liberation in Jordan.

3.2 Members and activists

Statistics -with regard to the membership size- provided by the WMOs were for us questionable: Can one consider that all female members of women's organizations as challengers and activists of the women's movement? If yes, then the women's movement could have one of the largest membership bases in the country. Compared for example with the membership size of the Islamic movement, a popular movement in Jordan, membership of the women's movement is one and half times larger than that of the Islamic movement. Yet, the real engagement of huge masses of members in

the organization's activities, and their real belief in the objectives of the women's movement, or at least in the organization in which they are members, has to be clarified.

For this part of analyzing women's activism with respect to members and activists of the women's movement, a quantitative analysis is required. As was explicitly explained earlier, members and activists of women's organizations were the subject of the study questionnaires that were prepared for this purpose. The analysis of the study results and in processing them through the SPSS program points out significant differences between women's organizational activists and members. Next, we will introduce the general results of data collected concerning the socio-economic backgrounds of members of the women's movement.

3.2.1 Socioeconomic characteristics of members and activists of women's organizations

Despite the improbable sample upon which this study is being based; the quantitative analysis of data collected concerning members and activists of women's movement organizations in Jordan points out several significant characteristics of leadership and membership structures.

Table number (3) presents the main characteristics of the member's sample. It points out that most of these members are between the ages of 40-49, as this category comprises around 66% of the sample. Comparing this proportion of female members in women's organizations with the social characteristics of Jordanian women in general, one can note that women's organizations lack the participation of young women between the ages of 20-39, who comprise 28% of women in general, as well as 40% of the educated women in Jordan (Khasawneh, 1999).

Education, as articulated earlier, is becoming no problem for women as the proportion the illiteracy has fallen to 20.6 percent in 1994 compared to that of 48 percent in 1949. Still however, the level of education that women in Jordan pursue is very low

compared to that of men. This is being successfully reflected by the percentage of female members in women's organizations. The selected sample of members indicates that they are poorly educated. The results show that around 36% of them have finished their primary school, and only 6,6% of them have a bachelor degree. Comparing this with proportions of educated women in Jordan in general; the statistics show that 46,6% of Jordanian women have a high school education or less. This however, is a very significant indicator, as it has some influence on the kind of members that women's movement organizations have, as well as a good indicator of the organization's success in attracting more members. It is obvious then, by these results, that women's organizations are not able to attract young highly educated women.

Concerning the member's social class and social status, the study results show that 37.7% are generally married women who belong to the middle class¹⁵ (around 52% of the study sample). For their professions, around 32% of them were public sector employees (workers, clerks etc.) while 34,4% were working at home as housewives.

¹⁵ Social class has been measured through several indicators. On the one hand through the evaluation of the member themselves to their social class, the psychological dimension as to why do they believe that they belong to this class; on the other hand through other indicators like their place of living (Area), individual and familial income, as well as the familial property (see study questionnaire: attachment ())

Table (4): Socioeconomic backgrounds of members of women's organization

Characteristic	Indicators	Frequency	Percent
Age	Less than 20	10	8,2
	20-29	22	18,0
	30-39	32	26,2
	40-49	48	39,3
	50 +	10	8,2
	Total	122	100,0
Educational level	No education	22	18,0
	Primary School	44	36,1
	High School	32	26,2
	2-years college	16	13,1
	Bachelor	8	6,6
	Total	122	100,0
Field of Education (2-years college or Bachelor)	Humanities	18	75
	Natural and applied sciences	6	25
	Total	24	100,0
Social status	Single	30	24,6
	Married	46	37,7
	Widow	28	23,0
	Divorced	10	8,2
	Else	8	6,6
	Total	122	100,0
Social Class	Upper Class	30	24,4
	Middle Class	64	52,5
	Low class	28	23
	Total	122	100,0
Individual Income	No individual income	42	34,4
	Less than 120JD ¹⁶	28	23,0
	120-199JD	18	14,8
	200-399 JD	26	21,3
	400-599 JD	6	4,9
	600 JD and more	2	1,6
	Total	122	100,0
Jobs and professions	Housewife	42	34,4
	Student	10	8,2
	Technicians and experts (high ranked profession)	18	14,8
	Clerical Work, Sales, Services	40	32,8
	Managers	6	4,8
	Businesswoman	3	2,5
	Else	3	2,5
	Total	122	100,0

¹⁶ According to the Ministry of Social Development 120 JD is the poverty line in Jordan.

However, the socioeconomic characteristics of the member alone gives no chance in judging women's organizations in terms of the type of membership, as the determination of membership implies the employment of other various variables such as the level of engagement and integration of the members within the activities of the organization, and the belief in its objectives.

Variables such as the duration of membership, reasons for joining a woman's organization, members evaluations of the women's movement and organizations, members participation in the activities and programs and the role that its members play in the ongoing or previous activities of the organization. Table (5) shows that 70.5% of the members, who responded to the study questionnaire, joined the organizations because they benefited from its services. The role they played in the organization's activities reveals more, as 70% of them are beneficiaries of the organizations activities. Mostly, they have benefited from the offered income generating projects, as well as the rehabilitation activities that offer training to women in making them fit for certain jobs (secretary, clerical work and the likes).

Table (5): Membership type and condition

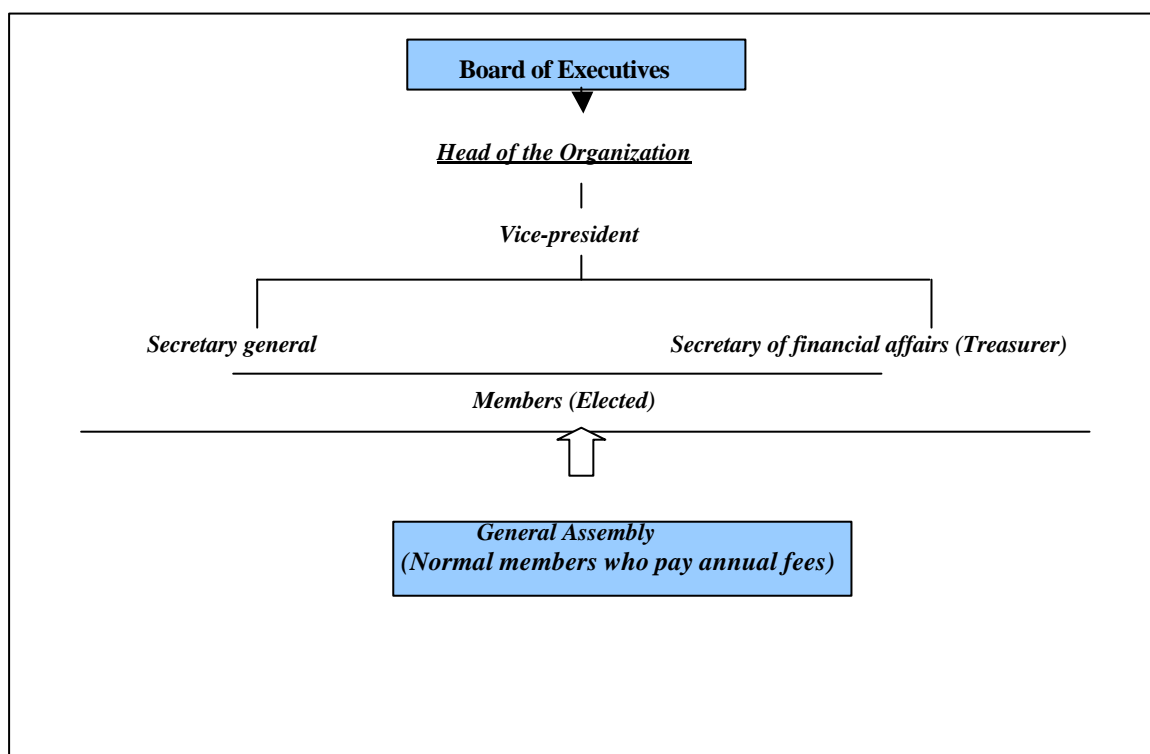
Variable	Indicators	Frequency	Percent %
Duration of Membership	Less than 1 year	28	23,0
	1-3 years	50	41,0
	4-6 years	22	18,0
	7-9 years	6	4,9
	More than 10 years	16	13,1
	Total	122	100
Reasons for joining the organization	To benefit form it's services	86	70,5
	Occupy my free time	13	10,7
	Believe in it's mission	9	7,4
	Serving my society	7	5,7
	Influenced by women activists	5	4,1
	Appointed to do some work in the org.	2	1,6
	Total	122	100
Meetings attendance	Always	78	63,9
	Mostly	22	18,0
	Sometimes	8	6,6
	Only foe elections	8	6,6
	Rarely	6	4,9
	Total	122	100
Participation in organization's activities	Always	96	78,7
	Most of the times	20	16,4
	Sometimes	2	1,6
	Rarely	2	1,6
	Not at all	2	1,6
	Total	122	100
Members role in these activities	Beneficiary	90	73,8
	Designer	16	13,1
	Supervisor	16	13,1
	Total	122	100,0

3.2.2 Members role in decision-making processes within the context of women's organizations

The socioeconomic backgrounds of the members of women's organizations leads the analysis to examine what role do these members play in the general decision-making process within women's organizations. Yet, it might be useful first to examine the general process of decision-making that is taking place in the organizations before going into the examination of roles undertaken by members.

The decision-making structures within women's organizations often takes the form presented in figure (2). The figure shows that the organizational structure of the women's organizations consists normally of a general assembly where members are included, and an executive board within which active members as well as the leader (the main person of the organizations), are represented. Yet, while the general internal rules within the organizations provide that decisions are to be taken initially at the level of the general assembly, the reality (proved through field visits to some of the women's organizations) provides other facts.

FIGURE (2): ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS



In fact, the real decision making processes are taking place only at the level of the executive board. The general assembly in this case is hardly included and is used only as a formal assembly required by the state's institutions responsible for applying the Law Article 33/1966 which frames and regulates the work of NGOs and charities in Jordan.

Other fascinating results that can be referred to in this respect are related to the circulation of power within women's organizations. In fact, six out of the nine

organizations examined in this study pointed out that they have had the same women as activists since the establishment of the organizations. This, however, goes back to the fact that several women's organizations have been established mainly by the initiative of one woman. This woman hence deals with the organization as if it was of her own. Moreover, she is considered the main dynamo of the organization, for it is her ideas that move the organization. In this respect, as much as the leader is a prominent as much as becomes significant actions and the activities that are being run of her organization.

Yet, only two organizations, namely the JWU and the GFJW, have witnessed a change of leadership at the level of presidency. However, this change of leadership was not due to the practice of democracy on the internal level of these organizations, but rather because their leaders have gotten better positions in the state's apparatus or in other international NGO or UN agencies. Haifa Abu Ghazaleh, for instance, was the head of the GFJW for the period between (1993-1996), she however, left the organization as she recieved another position as the head of the regional office of the UNIFEM in Amman. Ms. Nujoud Fawzi (1996-1999) who succeeded Abu Ghazaleh has also left the GFJW after winning a seat in the Jordanian Parliament in during by-elections held to cover the seat of a deceased member in the year 2001.

The lack of leadership circulation and the lack of integrating members in the decision making processes within women's organizations raises questions related to the real representation of these organizations for the everyday women in Jordan, namely those less privileged. This result if applied to the civil society in general raises questions related to the real praxis of democracy within the internal level of its organizations. In fact, within a wider understanding of their role, civil society organizations should seek the democratization of state institutions and policies. Yet, how are they going to demand such democratization, while it is far from their daily internal practice? Consequently, this question leads us to look at the general role that members play within the women's organizations, as well as their general attitudes towards their actions and performance.

3.2.3 Members of women's organizations evaluating the general organizational Performance

Concerning the evaluation of membership in Jordanian women's organizations, the results show that 24,6% of the members have no idea how to evaluate the organization in general, as to whether it is successful or not. Moreover, 14,6% of them have no idea as to what kind of problems that the organization suffers? This indicates however, a separation of the normal members (the public base) from the main stream (the directors) of these organizations. The results would then support the interpretation that women's organizational members in Jordan are potential beneficiaries, which means that they benefit from the organization's services and do not necessarily believe in the organizational objectives.

Table (6) presents the results concerning the member's general evaluation of the organization's performance. It seems that most of the organizational members (96%) are satisfied concerning the fulfillment of their own objectives through the organization's activities. Women's organizations then seem to satisfy certain needs and interests of women in Jordan. Nevertheless, what are women members in these organizations expecting from these organizations? Answers to this question were clearly moving in the direction of seeking services, such as lectures to occupy their free time, financial support, or rehabilitation programs.

In addition, it might be noteworthy to add that membership fees are very low¹⁷ and that members receive discounts, normally known as symbolic fees (if they have to pay at all) in every rehabilitation program they participate in, in addition to free lectures, and in the income generating projects.

¹⁷ Members in some organizations pay 1 JD per year, others do not exceed five JD per year.

Table (6): Member's evaluation of the organizations

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>	<i>Members</i>		<i>Activists</i>	
		Freq	in %	Freq.	
Meeting objectives	Yes	118	96,7	9	100
	No	4	3,3	0	0
	Total	100	100	100	100
The general performance of the organization	Successful	70	57,4	8	84,0
	Unsuccessful	17	13,9		-
	Do not know	30	24,6		-
	Else (successful with limits)	5	4,1	1	16,0
	Total	100	100	100	100
Main problems the organization suffers	Legislation and laws in Jordan concerning public work	58	47,5	6	68,0
	Bureaucracy of the state's institutions	8	6,5	2	25,0
	State's intervention	13	11,0	1	7,0
	Do not know	43	35,0		
	Total number	122	100	9	100

Table (7) presents the various benefits of the members from programs carried out by the women's movement. According to table 38% of the study sample gained more self-confidence as a benefit of participating in programs and activities implemented by women's organizations, this can be described as empowerment in its psychological dimension. One woman responded to our questionnaire, in describing her benefit at this level by saying "we learned, now, how to talk.... And we are being respected for things that we say". Another said "we know now more about ourselves, our bodies and our problems..". Both women were referring to the various lectures they attended since becoming members of a women's organization.

The results have also pointed out that 35% of the members see their benefit in financial terms. The participation in women's organizations is a possible way to get credit (in order to set up a small project) with low taxes, and more payback facilities. This also can be included under empowerment in its economic terms. Yet the type of projects being sponsored by the women's organizations, as we will see later, warns us from dealing with projects like raising awareness, income generating projects and small credits as being definite empowering projects to beneficiaries. Women's organizations with these kinds of activities are still enhancing women's traditional roles. In fact, table (7) shows that there is a significant focus (in the awareness programs) on household issues such as the kitchen, child rearing and garden care. This makes the empowerment assumption invalid according to these terms.

Table (7): Impacts of the projects and programs implemented by women’s organizations on their members

Item	In %
More self-confidence	38,0
Financial help	35,0
Raising awareness in various issues:	
Women’s legal rights	9,0
Women’s political rights	6,0
Religious rights and duties	8,0
Social rights and duties	2,0
Health	14,0
Child care	17,4
Family planning	13,0
Kitchen and cooking	15,0
House and gardens	13,6
Having a meeting place (forum) to contact other women outside home.	14,0
Literacy elimination	5,0
Total N= 122	18

3.2.4 Types of Member- and Leader-ships within the Women’s Movement

The previously provided results are very significant, for they indicate the nature of the membership within the women’s movement in Jordan. In this connection, the diverse variables stated above will be now used to draw a general typology of female activism at the levels of membership and leaderships. The variables such as the socioeconomic backgrounds, evaluation of the organization’s general performance, the level of benefits from the organization, as well as reasons for joining the organization, are of significant importance and will assist at this level in the description of activism at the individual level. Table (8) summarizes three main forms of membership presented within the women’s movement.

¹⁸ The total here is not equal to 100% for the question here was of an open-end nature. The examined members named therefore more than one impact to their participation in women’s organizations. Their answers were then summed up in categories as presented in the table.

Table (8): Types of Membership within the Women’s Movement Organizations

Organization	Total active members		Adherents		Potential Beneficiaries		Horizontal Percentage
	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%	
Arab Women Society.	65		20	30,8	45	69,2	100
General Federation of Jordanian Women.	-		0	-	-		
Jordanian National Committee for Women.	-		0	-	-		
The National Forum for Women’s Committees.	1584		84	5,3	1500	94,5	100
Jordanian Women Union.	950		250	26,4	700	73,6	100
Princess Basma Center for Women’s Issues.	-		0	-	-		
Professional and Businesswomen Club.	62		27	43,5	35	56,5	100
The Human Forum for Women’s Rights.	27		7	25,9	20	74,1	100
n = 9	2688	100	388	14,4	2300	86,4	100

According to the table two main forms of memberships can be distinguished:

Beneficiaries and Potential Beneficiaries: The potential beneficiaries are understood as those, who benefit directly from the success in a fulfillment of the movement’s objectives. This form of membership is the most common among those registered within the general assembly of the organization. They form 86,4% of the total active members included in this study. They are described as “potential beneficiaries“ as they may benefit from the movement’s success, yet not risk the failure of the organizations. These members come and go from the organization whenever they like and only with regard to availability of projects and programs that they might benefit from or be interested in. The member in this case defines by herself her own benefits and accordingly the form of her participation in the projects. These members do not normally pay their fees on time, they also do not participate in meetings called for by the organization, as well as in the election processes of the organization. Due to a lack of time for those working outside the home and the need for a male’s permission for women working at home, are some of the main reasons named by interviewed members in excusing this form of membership

This, however, indicates that most of the members do not really believe in the movement’s objectives and mission, as much as they join to gain benefits that are

observably personal. Benefits from the organization as presented in table (8) take various forms, yet the most common of which are financial in terms of benefiting from projects like income generating, which women make use of to help in improving their family's financial status and not particularly their own

Adherents: Adherents are those, who believe in the movement's objectives, are constituent members, and mobilize the movement's resources. Active members normally belong to the executive board of the women's organizations. As expected they form a very small percentage (14,4%) of the total number of active members examined in this study. They are very often a cycle of friends, or a group of women involved in a common issue who have decided to do something about it. In many cases these members have assisted in the establishment of the organization, and have agreed to give power to the most active woman among them who is often also the initiator of the organizations. However, the real belief of the organization's mission in particular and in the women's movement objectives in general is not easily measured. These members benefit also from the organization, as one might argue that some of them participate actively as they are waiting to be administrators of the organization. Moreover, working on women's issues and women's organizations is becoming a trend and one of the most successful ways of gaining prominence.

3.2.5 Leadership Forms and Conditions

Table (9) views results related to the socio-economic backgrounds of activists of women's organizations. The table shows that 66,7% of women's activists, who responded to our questionnaire, belong to the upper class in Jordan¹⁹. They are generally high-educated women 55,6% Bachelor degree, and 22,2% Masters degree, 22,2% PhD degree). The field of their studies was mainly humanities (88,9%). Besides, that they mostly work as "volunteers" in the women's organizations.

¹⁹ It is noteworthy to add that there are no comprehensive studies of the class structure in the Jordanian society. For the purpose of this study, diverse variables were used to examine the class-backgrounds of members and leaders. In fact, the family name, living area and standard, father's job, own job, and family's as well as individual income were the determining variables.

Although women's activists point out their strong belief in the project of emancipating women, it is not safe, however, to presume that these women are really adherents. On one hand, it is not clear in what concern the real reasons for which they join the organizations, and for what reason they choose to work on women's issues. On the other hand, some of these women were assigned to supervise or administrate some women's organizations . This means that women such as Mai Abu Assamin/ The National Forum for Women's Committees., and Amal Sabbagh/ the head of the National Commission for Women's Issues were selected by the Princess, and were not elected. Moreover, it is not easy to measure the real motive in women's issues and to differentiate it from the showoff image often associated to the work of Upper-Class women doing public work in Jordan.

Table (9): Socioeconomic characteristics of women's organizational activists

Characteristic	Indicators	Frequency n =9	In %
Age	40-49	3	33,3
	50 +	6	66,7
	Total	9	100,0
Education	Bachelor	5	55,6
	MA degree	2	22,2
	PhD	2	22,2
	Total	9	100,0
Study field	Humanities	8	88,9
	Natural and applied sciences	1	11,1
	Total	9	100,0
Social status	Single	2	22,2
	Married	7	77,8
	Widow	0	0
	Divorced	0	0
	Total	9	100,0
Social Class	Upper Class	6	66,7
	Middle class	3	33,3
	Total	9	100,0
Individual Income	200-399	1	11,1
	400-599	3	55,6
	400-599 JD	1	11,1
	600 JD and more	1	11,1
	No answer	3	33,3
	Total	9	100,0

To go over the main points, there are two main forms of leadership at the level of studied organizations in the women's movement:

Elected Leaders: Elections based on the main rulings of the organization is the normal way of selecting the head of the organization. As discussed previously (within the context of describing the decision making process with women's organizations), the head of the organization has to be elected by members of the general assembly in the organizations through a democratic process of nomination and election. Yet, cases from the field show that the election of the head on a democratic bases, that is by counting votes, is a very valid process within many women's organizations. The main problem lies within the context of nominations. In fact, not all members of the women's organizations feel confident to run for the position of leading the organization. Lack of time, interest, and above all self-confidence are the main reasons for such a problem. An additional problem that can also be added in this connection is monopolization process of nominations by members of the board of executives as well as the actual head of the organization, who is normally also the founder. In other words, most leaders of organizations deal with the organization as if it was their own, and therefore, none of the members would dare to claim a share of the power. This process reveals that the process of selecting the head of the organization is a formal process that might have the democratic form, yet, not the spirit.

Designated Leaders: This form of leadership is often seen within the directed form of women's organizations, namely the princess initiatives. These activists are normally chosen with accordance to some certain criteria, such as, their educational background, and or their experience and active involvement in the public work of female related or even social justice issues. The selection of a woman like Amal Sabbagh the head of the National Commission for Women's Issues, was based on her academic background (as she holds a PhD Degree in Psychology) as well as her active involvement in the women's related activities, such as workshops and conferences. She, however, does not consider herself, a feminist or even an activist within the women's movement. She argues that she belongs to the state's machinery of advocating female rights and providing more justice in women's favor, and unlike activists of the women's movement, she lacks the history of defending women's

issues²⁰. Moreover, upon the wish of the Princess, Sabbagh is now leading one of the most significant women's initiatives in Jordan.

Let us also consider another example within this context, namely the case of Mai Abu Assamin. The selection of Abu Assamin has different circumstances, yet the same process of selection, and also is being designated upon the wish of the princess. In respect to her educational background Abu-assmain has a Masters degree in Education from the University of Jordan. She has extensively worked as a school director of one of the main female schools in her home city of 'Salt'. There, she was also actively involved in several public meetings that was targeting several important issues. In the context of these activities, she played an active role in an initiative of the Princess, which targeted more political integration of women at the level of municipalities²¹.

Her academic background as well as her active involvement in women related activities was also the reason for selecting Dr. Amal Daghistani as head of the Princess Basma Center for Women. Daghistani was active in respect to women's issues in the mid 1990s, namely when associated to the conduct of two main empirical studies on women's political participation in Jordan one with the support of the Center of Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan and Titled "Obstacles Facing Women's Political Participation in Jordan" in 1996. The other is related to female participation in politics at the municipal levels in 1997. Among her main goals as the head of the center, is the conduct of diverse studies on several woman related fields, such as economy, politics and social development²².

These conclusions are similar to what some studies on the women's movement in Jordan came up with concerning women activists in Jordan in earlier stages. Al-Tall argues that the work of some women activists in Jordan is nothing but "showoff", as the majority of women activists belong to the middle upper and upper-class in Jordan, and public work from these women does not extend to the range of charity. For them heading the organization is very essential, this is what makes their work worth while (al-Tall 1989:45).

²⁰ Personal Interview with Dr. Amal Sabbagh in April 2001.

²¹ Personal Interview with Mai Abu-Assamin in March 2001.

²² Personal Interview with Dr. Amal Daghistani in March 2001

General Evaluation

Women's movement activists

The above analysis, which provides variables concerning the general characteristics of women activists in Jordan, points out several significant issues. In the first place, the ways in which women activists (directors of women's organizations) are being selected mirrors diverse internal and structural problems within the women's organizations. In fact, the process of electing women leaders is more or less a formal process, in other words a process of conformation. Even if the internal law of the organizations states something different, the director is normally chosen before the elections even take place. Several criteria plays a role in this respect, the most important of which is the long service of the candidate working for the organization, as well as her educational, political and familial background. This is valid in the case of directed women's organizations such as the General Federation of Jordanian Women , as well as the independent women's organizations such as the Jordanian Women's Union. In regard to the organizations initiated by the princess, directors are normally appointed by the princess. Selection criteria is normally based on an educational level, familial background, as well as the level of engagement in social work.

However, we might argue in this respect that there is another category of women activists in Jordan, which is not identified by some activists in the above-mentioned organizations. Namely, we are referring here to the case of Taujan Faisal.

Denied activists: the case of Taujan Faisal

Taujan Faisal was the first woman elected to the Jordanian Parliament, where she served from 1993 to 1997. She had recently announced that she would be running again for a parliamentary seat in the upcoming national elections taking place in June 2003. She is well known for her vocal pursuit of domestic and women's rights reforms in Jordan.

She is well known for her courageous actions defending women's rights. Conducting her actions Faisal was risking, as we will see, her life as well as her political career. She as very few men and no woman has done before, fought against the conservative two-headed giant in Jordan, that is the Islamists and tribalists.

Previous incidences reveal that Faisal has had some conflicts with the conservative islamists in the country a long time before planning to run for office in 1993. The first incident was in 1984, when she organized a seminar on child abuse with the Business and Professional Women's Club. The data collected and discussed within the context of this seminar showed a high incidence of child abuse, many cases of which were of a sexual nature (Jordan Times, November 4, 1984). After the seminar, Faisal was attacked in the mosques. Expectedly, she was accused of trying to "break down the solidarity and moral structure of the Islamic family" (Jordan Times, November 4, 1984). Islamists claimed that child abuse was a disease that existed only in the West, and that she should not have brought such foreign ideas to Jordan.

In 1988, she was still working in media as a TV moderator. In one of her programs she directed a discussion on violence against women. In the programs the issues of beating wives was the main focus. In many cases during this program it was stressed that violence against women was also being protected by state institutions. In fact, "when a woman goes to the police to complain, she is told she must have disobeyed her husband". As a response religious Mullahs accused her of attacking Islamic law and also said she had tried to abolish it. They went to see the Chief justice of the Shariah Court, who in turn approached the Director General of television. She could not appear on TV for a week, until the minister of information interfered and continued the program.

On September 21, 1989 Faisal wrote a newspaper article in the Al-Ra'y Arabic newspaper arguing that there is a negative image of women in Jordan. The capabilities and qualifications of women are underestimated by the Jordanian male based culture, and criticized the way in which Islamists view women, namely with respect to polygamy, and their capability as humans. In fact, her article came in response to a two-month campaign waged in the national media by some Islamic fundamentalists

who claimed women should not be permitted to run for political office because they are not mentally competent to do so. Daily in the national press, the Islamists claimed, "Women are deficient and lacking in religious education and understanding, and guided by their emotions" (al-Ra'y, September 21, 1989). Moreover, their newspaper articles stated that women are minors throughout their lives, and need male guardians to run their affairs and keep them on the straight path. Also that women are so deficient they are only capable of cleaning, cooking, and serving members of the family, and that they possess a physical makeup suitable only for menial tasks. In return for these services, a woman's payment will be that she is fed, given shelter, and clothed.

Faisal argued in her article that these fundamentalists had gone too far, and that they are portraying women in an inconvenient way (al-Ra'y, September 21, 1989). She responded to the arguments that stated for example that women 'go crazy' when they have their period, and that a woman's love for her children is a sign of their weakness. She was mostly angry that the Islamists considered the entire female population not qualified for political office. Faisal angrily replied with an article entitled "They Insult Us ... and We Elect Them!" in which she argued that the critics of women's rights have misinterpreted the Koran. They were claiming, 'A woman's deficiency lies in the fact that she becomes pregnant, gives birth, and menstruates. This -she claims- means that they consider motherhood, which is highly valued in Islam, is the cause of a female's deficiency. In her response she dedicated some valid questions to the argument stated above, she asks if we should "deduce from this that the barren woman is more complete than one who is fertile? Or whether women who do not menstruate are more complete than those who do?" (Al Ra'y, September 21. 1989).

Her article was widely viewed as a very clever first step in along the lines of her political ambition (The Star March 24, 2002). Nobody officially moved against her ideas and arguments until she registered her political candidacy on October 14. The elections were to be held on November 8. Jordanian political campaigns are very brief. Once she declared her candidacy, things moved fast. In this context, she was

declared an apostate by two conservative clerics²³, one of whom was a Mufti (a religious leader and interpreter of Islamic law) in Jordan's army, who claimed the case was filed "in the name of the people and in defense of Islam." The charges against Faisal were also quietly backed by some leading Jordanians as a means of keeping the country "intact, conservative, and not so liberal as Western societies" (Brand:55).

In the Shari'a Court, where the hearing sessions of Faisal's case was given a major coverage by the media. The judge listened to evidence provided by the Islamists, and then postponed the case until two days after the election. What was remarkable in these sessions was that the "hate campaign" against Faisal was very organized, and the death calls were repeated in a professional manner (Brand:66). Yet, the case was, closed one day before the elections. The argument provided in this context was that the court did not have the jurisdiction to try a case of apostasy. Others argue that the state has intervened in order to protect the image of the state and to limit the popularity of the islamists and their power.

The Jordanian society was confronted again by Faisal's actions in 1993. In fact, during the second legislative elections in 1993, only two women ran for Parliament, and only one, Taujan Faisal, won a seat. Her platform was based on concepts of human rights, and she stood as an independent candidate. She nominated herself again as an independent candidate for the legislative elections of November 4, 1997, but did not win a seat. In fact, not a single woman won any seat in these elections.

Her standpoint in favor of women's rights, on the basis of human rights, was often demonstrated in her parliamentary debates. She emphasizes that she did not gain popularity by presenting issues related to services in the parliament, but through her political discourse, which was understood and supported by her constituents (Amnesty International (newsletter) 1997). She describes the nature of her performance within the parliament saying: " I am trying to present a new form of parliamentary work, a

²³ The Muslim Brothers (the most Organized Islamist Group in Jordan) have denied any contact and any arrangements with both clerics. As they also did not declare any position against the case of Faisal in 1989. Yet, many of their supporters joined the crowd in the court and around Faisal's House (Brand 1998).

type that offers radical solutions to political issues”(Amnesty International (newsletter) 1997).

Her radical solutions made Faisal, in the eyes of the Jordanian public, a very aggressive and offensive woman. She was widely viewed as “Rude” as she provoked the religious and conservative trends within the parliament, as well as in the streets. She was also widely viewed as providing a bad image of Jordanian woman in public. Conservatives normally used her case as a “convincing” excuse to exclude women from political participation, or to predict what would happen if we integrate more women in the parliament. This all makes the case of Taujan Faisal very complicated. While for some, she presents the new image of the Jordanian women, an aggressive self-confident woman with a “significant” political experiment (namely in the western media); she does not represent for others, the Jordanian women, neither in her way of behaving nor in her ideas²⁴.

Recently, Faisal rocked the Jordanian public space in her critique on the Jordanian government, accusing them of corruption. In an open letter, appearing on March 6, 2002 on the Website of a Houston (Texas)-based Arab Times (www.arabtimes.com), as well as aired on the Qatari-based Al-Jazeera satellite station, Faisal accused the prime minister (Abu Al Raghib) of having profited financially from a government decision to double vehicle insurance rates, because he owns shares in the insurance companies (Arab Times March 6, 2002). The Premier that decided the allegations were very serious and asked the prosecutor general of the State Security Court to press charges against her under article 150 of the newly-amended, and extremely controversial, penal code. She was arrested on March 16, for allegedly damaging the reputation of the state. The prosecutor or of the state security court freed her on bail on March 27, but she was arrested again two days later on the eve of a press conference she was about to hold at her home (Amnesty international, March 28, 2002). According to press accounts, a judge ruled that Faisal's statements were "harmful to the country's reputation and that of its citizens" in violation of Jordan's controversial

²⁴ Some of the interviewed women leaders have stood against the inclusion of Faisal within the women’s movement leaders in Jordan. They, however, demanded that we not mention their names in this respect.

new penal code, which was enacted last year after the parliament was dissolved (The Star, March, 2002).

The arrest was based on recent laws passed through a provisional order in the absence of Parliament, in the wake of the September 11 events, and which came into effect on October 2, 2001, immediately after approval by King Abdullah bin Hussein. The new laws place (as has been explained earlier) limitations on the freedom of expression by making illegal a number of new, indistinctly defined offences in relation to harming national unity, inciting disturbances, sit-downs and unauthorized public meetings; destabilizing society through the promotion of deviance and immorality; and dissemination of false information and rumors". In light of this legislation, she and three other (male) Journalists were sentenced to 18 months jail. Her 18-month jail sentence cannot be appealed under Jordanian law.

The issue has shifted from uncorroborated charges of government corruption to firmly grounded, and always popular, causes of public liberties and freedom of expression. Faisal's case this time attacked many international human rights actors and organizations. Amnesty International has repeatedly stated that "All laws allowing for the detention of those exercising their right to the freedom of expression should be immediately repealed," and urged the Jordanian government to bring the country's legislation into line with international human rights laws. Moreover, Reporters Without Borders, a Paris-based group that acts as a watchdog for press freedom worldwide, has criticized her arrest. In a letter addressed on King Abdullah II, they said "We are outraged at this decision by the state security court (especially since no appeal is possible) and we cannot accept the imprisonment of someone for simply expressing an opinion on the Internet"(Arab times). At the Jweidah Women's Rehabilitation Center, Faisal started a hunger strike. On June 26, Taujan Faisal was released from the King Hussein Medical Center in Amman. Her release followed a private amnesty by Royal Decree from King Abdullah. Members of the Jordanian Chechen-Circassian community had appealed for her release during a meeting with the Prime Minister. However, her conviction remains in force despite her release (Arab Times, June 26 2003).

In the national press, Faisal's criticism was viewed as a new tactic for winning sympathizers and probably voters for the coming elections in which she is going to run. In an article for the Star (English and French speaking newspaper) Osama El Sherif, Responsible Editor-in-Chief argues that since Faisal lost her bid for re-election in 1997, to a fellow Circassian, she has been distant from the political limelight (The Star *March 24, 2002*). He argues furthermore: "True she did not waste an opportunity to criticize and lambaste various governments and policies but her influence on public opinion was limited and she was seen more as a nag rather than a real threat; until last week that is. Prime Minister Ali Abul Ragheb was infuriated with her allegations, published on a sensational and openly anti-Jordanian Website, that he personally stood to gain from a recent government decision to hike compulsory car insurance". Suddenly, he notes, "the forgotten Taujan was a hot news item again. International press agencies, major Arab, and foreign newspapers picked up the story of an opposition former lady deputy thrown in jail by the very government she had accused of corruption and of confiscating public liberties" (The Star *March 24, 2002*).

For him, if Taujan was looking for an incident to kick-off her election campaign for this year's parliamentary polls she could not have found a more valuable one. Here, he states "we have a woman deputy, an opponent of unpopular, even if they were sound, government policies, a staunch anti-normalizer, anti-Israel figure, who finds herself in jail by the orders of a military court for violating a vaguely written article of a controversial, some say unconstitutional, law that has been rejected by all sectors of Jordanian civil society for infringing public liberties" (The Star *March 24, 2002*). Finally, he sees in what he calls "the melodrama of the hunger strike" a masterful addition from "a seasoned politician who knows how to "manipulate" the media and the public. Bravo Taujan!" he comments on her action.

Again, Faisal's case is very complicated. In fact, her actions provoke both the conservatives (the Islamists and the Tribal activists) as well, as some progressives such as women activists, some liberal political figures, and journalists. For these reasons, women's leaders and members also do not view her as being one of them or representing the Jordanian women's movement by any means. When we were forced to deal with the case of Faisal, the first question that faced us was where to situate her

actions and case; within the mainstream of women's actions, or does she provide a distinct form of female activism?

To answer the question we might argue that a distinction between two main categories of female activism is required here, namely the category of "active women" and the one of "Women activists". The first category includes, at the individual level, those women who are active in the field of advocacy of women's rights and interests, women who are normally members in women's organizations, known for their long history of working on women's related issues and advocating women's rights. The second category, that of active women, are those prominent women who are active in the public sphere in diverse fields, such as politics, environment, human development and the likes. Yet, while the first group represents activism forms within the women's movement, the second group represents other forms of activism within other forms of movements and organizations. Hence, only these described in the first category are normally accounted as representatives of the women's movement and the active advocacy and politicization of women's rights and interests. Yet, how to deal with other forms of individual activism? The various analyses of women's movements, especially those provided by feminism, leaves this question without an answer. While Molynueux has solved the problem of activism at the organizational level, including a wide range of women's mobilizations within the context of a women's movement, she did not provide the same thoughts concerning, or analytical tools of activism at the individual level. This, one might argue is a missing item, and an open question to any coming analyses regarding women's movements.

Organizational form of Activism

In this chapter, we tried to demonstrate the impact of the internal and external factors on the forms of women's organizations representing the women's movement in Jordan. The analysis of the various case studies presented in this chapter pointed out that the liberalization process, the international interest, and the history of women's public work had a significant impact forming diverse forms of women's organizations. Moreover, the emergence of these forms (namely, the directed, associational and

independent) are relatively new in the Jordanian public space. In fact, they mostly started to show up in the late 1980s and 1990s, the period in which the state had launched its liberalization project and the international actors with their interest in women and women's issues were developing.

The cases provided in this chapter have pointed out significant characters of the relationship that binds state and civil society actors in Jordan. One might argue in this respect, that although the state has made several measurements towards more liberalization and political opening, it did practice at the same time several controlling policies on the action of women's organizations and many other civil society actors.

Yet, women's organizations did not seem to have enough power and capacity to resist state power and its control. They rather accepted the various regulations, which framed their work and actions and moved it in the direction of social services and welfare.

However, one might interpret this strategy in pragmatic terms from the women's organizational party. In fact, rather than radically rejecting this state's control, women's organizations have developed diverse pragmatic resistance politics. One resistance is the strategy of borrowing power through making alliances with a semi-governmental organization or seeking the integration of a state figure. Although this strategy moves women's organizations away from the mainstream of political action (which is widely associated in Jordan as providing a critique to the state's internal and foreign policies), these organizations (even with state control) were able to practice political power and influence. They have learned through experience that radical resistance leads them nowhere. In other words, they have learned to negotiate power. In the next chapter we will see how women's organizations, attached to the state, were able to cause pressure and to achieve gains in women's favor.

However, the lack of autonomy from the government or the palace means that controversial issues may not be raised. In fact, NGOs and other civil society organizations, those which are dependent on government approval and guidance, cannot operate as effective checks on governmental power or policy. This means that the dual project of civil society (targeting the state and the civil society) suggested by

Cohen and Arato, might not be the best explanatory paradigm in this case, although they guarantee its adequacy to cases of the south.

To summarize, this form of organization does not play a significant role in determining the sociopolitical outcomes of the women's movement. Rather, in the case of Jordan, there are other factors such as; how powerful are the organization's activists, and how capable is it to mobilizing financial resources, were more determinant. The financial problems facing women's organizations determine not only their work thematic, but also their survival. This conclusion will be explained in more detail in the coming chapter.