Jordanian Women's Quest for Social Justice

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This research paper aims to analyze the perspectives of a selection of Jordanian women between the ages of 20 and 50 on social justice and explore if ingrained gender discrimination prevents women from attaining equality in Jordan. It tries to pinpoint the factors that hinder or motivate women to pursue social justice in Jordan while identifying their views on the existing opportunities and barriers to achieving social justice. Results reveal that the profoundly ingrained dynamics of the Jordanian social structure—culture, socialization, and gender discrimination—play an integral part in preventing women from attaining social justice in Jordan. Moreover, the results show that collaboration between women and their political representatives in society is a must for fostering social justice in Jordan; it is not enough to rely only on providing a good education for women.

Ce document de recherche vise à analyser les perspectives d'une sélection de femmes jordaniennes âgées de 20 à 50 ans sur la justice sociale et à explorer si la discrimination sexuelle enracinée empêche les femmes d'atteindre l'égalité en Jordanie. Il tente de mettre en évidence les facteurs qui empêchent ou motivent les femmes à poursuivre la justice sociale en Jordanie tout en identifiant leurs points de vue sur les opportunités et les barrières existantes pour atteindre la justice sociale. Les résultats révèlent que les dynamiques profondément ancrées dans la structure sociale jordanienne - la culture, la socialisation et la discrimination sexuelle - jouent un rôle essentiel pour empêcher les femmes d'atteindre la justice sociale en Jordanie. En outre, les résultats montrent que la collaboration entre les femmes et leurs représentants politiques dans la société est indispensable pour promouvoir la justice sociale en Jordanie ; il n'est pas suffisant de se contenter de fournir une bonne éducation aux femmes.

For nearly half a century, the term *social justice* has gained traction and permeated its way into the world of development and dictions of organizations, which has led to its constitution as a key pillar in the mandates of many non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, this term is not prevalent in Jordan; most NGOs and policy research institutions have not adopted it and most Jordanians are equally not conversant with it. Despite social justice having been extensively researched, its definition remains elusive. I can, however, define social justice as a concept of fairness focused on equality during wealth distribution, provision of opportunities and privileges in a society such as accessibility to healthcare facilities, fairness in employment, etc. According to Soken-Huberty (2022), social justice is built on four pillars: human rights, participation, accessibility, and equality, without which it can never be achieved. According to Karmel et al. (2014), social injustices can be inflicted on particular society members by unjust laws and customs governing the society or unjust social practices by depriving them of freedom to enjoy their rights.

Although women's demographic, financial, political, and legal status in Arab society has made significant progress, culture still plays a role in degrading women's status in Jordanian society

(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2014). For instance, the inheritance law states that Jordanian women are legally entitled to only half as much inheritance as their male siblings (Karmel et al., 2014). According to Essaid et al. (2019), as of 2018, only 14.6% of women were actively involved in economic activities, their labour force participation was low in all age groups and aggressively dropped with age, which is a clear indication that few women assumed leadership positions. In addition, introducing the quota system in 2003 reserved only 15 seats in the lower house of parliament for women, and allocated 25% in the municipal council and 12% in the senate. As of 2018, only 7 women were nominated and appointed in the cabinet of ministers, which constituted 25% of total ministers. This is seen as a fundamental explanation for the low involvement of women in public life in Jordan, as culture decreases the visibility of women in Arab societies. Culture encompasses people's way of life through the practice of their beliefs, management of institutions, perception of social behaviour, societal norms, laws, and customs passed down from one generation to another and attributed to a region or a specific group of people (Labyad, 2003).

Singh (2014) suggested that women have been exploited, made to endure horrible violence, and deprived of dignity across Jordan's history due to the belief that they were inferior to men. Thus, they were stripped of independence and freedoms that took them much time, energy, and bravery to earn. Essaid et al., in their 2019 study by the Information and Research Center and based on a report by the 1979 United Nations General Assembly Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, showed that, since 2000, no changes have been observed regarding the stereotypical cultures and gender roles in Jordan that overemphasize women's traditional roles as mothers and wives while undermining their social status, opportunities in education, autonomy, and professional careers (Essaid et al., 2019). Essaid et al. (2019) characterized Jordanian society as a patriarchal and tribal society with significant practice of male supremacy over women. Its legal framework needs compelling reforms for gender equality to be achieved. Despite the government's involvement and the small attempts made to bridge this disparity, the lack of existence of genuine political goodwill to implement the changes remains a great challenge since these stereotypes are limiting factors to the integration of women into public spheres.

The conservative culture in some Arab societies puts strain on women, as these societies often distinguish between men and women while putting women in an inferior rank compared to men (Abu Hamdan, 2014). Arabic people, especially Jordanians, are affected by traditional stereotypes embedded in Arab culture; these stereotypes take a long time to change (Al-Maaitah et al., 2012). History shows that upon the establishment of Jordan as a national state, women were recognized and integrated into the public sphere as a predestined step in driving the nation into advancement and modernity. However, this liberation for women was short-lived as some believed in the preservation of traditional roles of women. To regain their civic and political rights, multiple demonstrations were held between the 1940s and 1970s petitioning for equality and women's right to electioneering (Essaid et al., 2019). Despite reforms made as a result of these demonstrations, women were not granted full and equal rights. In 1974, a royal decree was issued by King Husein granting the right to vote to all adult women. This decree was however contradicted in 1976 once the personal status law was passed. The law emphasized women as dependents and preserved their traditional role as caregivers and wives, a ruling that placed women on a dual axis of modernity and tradition (Essaid et al., 2019).

As of today, Jordan has demonstrated impressive parity between women and men in health and education, but this progress has not yet resulted in a substantial change in women's economic,

political, or civil activity (World Bank Group, 2013). The tribe still has a dominant impact on masculinity in the social system, and the position of women remains weak due to the patriarchal politics and culture of Jordan and the economic and social subordination of Jordanian women (Al-Hourani, 2012). Concerning the existing gap in past literature despite numerous studies having been done on this topic, this paper seeks to give clarity and answer the questions: What impact does Jordanian culture have on women's pursuit of social justice? What are Jordanian women's perspectives on social justice? What views do Jordanian women have regarding factors that hinder and motivate them to pursue social justice? Moreover, what perspectives do Jordanian women have about existing opportunities and barriers to achieving social justice? To answer these questions, I examine the existing literature in this regard while discussing the influence of culture on women's perceptions of social justice as a basic demand in Jordan. The paper also sets out the methodology of both the data collection and data analysis, focusing on research sampling and the challenges that I faced during those phases. Finally, the paper presents its findings, which reflect the participants' views and opinions on social justice in Jordan. This paper tries to find out if ingrained culture prevents women between the ages of 20 and 50 from attaining equality in Jordan.

Positionality Statement

I am a 40-year-old female living in Jordan (a country located in the Middle East). I hold a PhD in sociology and have been working in the field of education and social work for the past 18 years. Jordanian women's issues are personal to me and have been since I was a young girl. I witnessed many women being deprived of their rights and living in difficult situations. Therefore, I took it upon myself to learn more about the reasons behind this and to try to help to have a better understanding and to change awareness toward social justice for women in Jordan. When I was a postdoctoral fellow outside Jordan, it gave me the chance and the space to search, think freely, learn more about this issue, and have a comprehensive view of research and life in general.

Literature Review

Women and Social Justice in Jordan: Setting the Context

In preparation for this paper, several studies were reviewed. Dababneh (2012, citing Al-Othman, 2011) observed that, in Jordan, the role of patriarchal domination and the appearance of gender-based social inequality

> has negative impacts on individuals opportunities to education and work, and thus on achieving an appropriate level of living. Al-Othman stresses the fact that women, as a group, have fewer opportunities to access resources—power, income, wealth, and social status. (p. 220)

Pettygrove (2006) argued that the power given to men establishes gender-based roles and legitimizes behaviour in Jordan through socialization processes within the family, schools, and religious institutions and by enhancing the strength of norms, values, and social traditions that create barriers to women's power in Jordan. Pettygrove (2006) added that because of patriarchal values that continue to influence women's social perceptions, women have not gained strategic rights in Jordan; they have been restricted to family values above all else. Focusing on how women

are dealt with by law in Jordan, Al-Sharari and Al-Khatib (2015) argued that Jordanian society is marked by a patriarchal system dominated by tribal culture, tradition, and traditional religious values and that women are experiencing diminishing political and economic positions. Gharaibeh and Al-Ma'aitah (2002) examined the cultural meaning of violence in Jordan by interviewing 42 married Jordanian women; 50% believed that men had the right to practice physical abuse and sexually forsake a rebellious woman. The analysis concluded that culture shapes the values of people in every community and that the traditional acceptance of abuse shapes the cultural views of the married Jordanian women who were interviewed (Gharaibeh & Al-Ma'aitah, 2002).

The National Council for Family Affairs (2008), reporting on the state of violence against women in Jordan, revealed that family abuse is imposed on women as a consequence of conventional gender-specific norms that form the dominant social structure within society. In a quantitative study, Nasarat et al. (2016) showed that women's rights can only be understood within the framework of the social system—cultural, economic, and political—of Jordanian culture. The research pointed out that in a community that can be described as conservative, social norms represent existing patterns of action under which control is allocated to the advantage of males (Nasarat et al., 2016).

When researching social justice, Alkafawin (2018) researched the significance of the role of social work in the field of social justice in Jordan and concluded that social justice is a vague concept that is not enforced in Jordan due to many factors, such as hegemony, the structure that governs culture, decision-makers attitudes, and the influence that some individuals have inherited from their forefathers. The Arab Renaissance for Democracy and Development (ARDD, 2017) concluded that pursuing democratic, economic, and social justice for women in Jordan is only applicable when it comes to guaranteeing legal education and battling illiteracy. Karmel et al. (2014) stressed that

> the term "social justice," however, has not yet become prevalent in Jordan. It has not been adopted by NGOs or policy research institutions (PRIs) in Jordan and it has neither inserted itself in most Jordanians' vocabularies nor become a topic of popular discussion. (p. 1)

A study by Towns (2009), showed that as of today, women's leadership has become crucial in the development process of civilized societies. Civilized societies consider a man and a woman as colleagues in company management and important decision-making. The study claimed that women are now more recognized as great leaders and positive contributors to leadership roles. A different study on women's abilities, done by Zubaidi et al. (2011) concluded that the characteristics of women's personalities had a negative influence on women's efforts to reach leadership positions.

However, the findings of this study cast doubt on the conclusion made by Zubaidi et al. (2011) into question. According to this study, women in Jordan are not raised with the mindset or spirit to assume leadership responsibilities early; rather, they are raised away from positions of authority and decision-making, (Zubaidi et al., 2011). In addition, women's mental development is negatively impacted by being confined to their homes and being forced to obey men's commands without question from a young age. Their early lack of access to education and training can be blamed for their lack of confidence and essential leadership abilities (Ntseane, 2002).

Additionally, Arabic culture instills strength in boys where as women are brought up quite the opposite

Concerning these facts, many impediments faced by women at their workplaces are a result of traditions, cultural heritages, habits, and social values that do not recognize a woman as a leader. These values treat women as supporting elements to their male counterparts rather than a basic active element essential to society building (Zubaidi et al., 2011). Murrell & James (2001) attributed women's low representation into a higher leadership position to the glass ceiling—an invisible barrier within organizations that prevent the advancement of women into senior and executive management positions despite having the professional skills, experience, and education.

Studies on social change in Jordan—in particular, studies on the position of women and barriers to social change—are minimal. Alsawalqa (2016) argued that the culture in Jordan has assigned decision-making and authority to men, deprived women of their freedoms, and limited their presence to traditional positions, such as household work and childcare, which negatively affected social progress for women. Naffa'a's (2010) study has shown that, in Jordan, in the early 1950s women initiated social change by being part of political parties that played a key role in educating, sensitizing, and organizing women to demand reform, particularly political reform. However, the general political situation in the Arabic regions and Jordan in particular bans women from practising their rights and keeps them only performing household chores.

ARDD's (2015) research has demonstrated that there is a great need for social transformation to motivate Jordanian citizens, to contribute to institutional transition that would grant citizens freedom, fair opportunity, and empowerment. World Bank Group (2013) pointed out that to achieve social justice and social change in Jordan, it is imperative to remove constraints on women enforced by social customs, which prevent women from receiving legal aid. This limits their abilities to make decisions, live equally with men, and engage in public life.

WANA Institute's (Johnstone, 2015) research showed that sexism and patriarchal domination sustain a structure in which society works to maintain the status quo. The study looked into important aspects of culture, including socialization mechanisms, to determine how they affected perceptions of social justice, obligations, jobs, and women's duties (Johnstone, 2015).

In conclusion, the studies that have been reviewed have shown a relationship between culture—understood in terms of values, habits, and traditions—and the inhibition of Jordanian women's quest for social justice and social change. Culture, patriarchal authority, literacy, and quality of education are the main reasons behind women's quest for social justice.

Although women enjoy high levels of education in Jordan, violence against women seems to be linked more closely to family, values, traditions, and habits. Those factors affect the type of education women can pursue as well as their access to a leading position in society. The prevailing traditions and habits are an extension of tribal structures. Family values and parental authority still govern women's actions, and because of this, women are unable to achieve what they otherwise might. This milieu affects women in Jordan and makes them tolerant of parental authority and culture in many cases. In a related context, social justice as a concept is still blurry and insignificant in Jordanian society. This applies to both individuals and organizations. Achieving social justice would mean that Jordanian women can enjoy a good education and be freed from some of the social restrictions of traditions that limit them to homemakers' duties only. Socialization is key to attaining social justice, which brings us back to the role of culture. Social change is closely linked to culture, patriarchy, the type of work that women do, and the education they get.

Defining Culture and Examining Its Influence on Women

Brumann (1999) defined culture as the whole set of cultural practices that have been formed by humans and which are successively acquired by each generation. According to Abdul Aziz & Moussa (2015), "There is a growing wave of conservatism, in the name of culture and religion, threatening to repudiate women's human rights norms and standards" (p. 1). A study of Hofstede's dimensions of culture in international marketing studies stated that "Culture constitutes the broadest influence on many dimensions of human behaviour" and that "this pervasiveness makes defining culture difficult" (Soares et al., 2007, p. 277). If we look at the shift in Jordanian society, we note that there is a change in some perceptions and behaviours owing to certain attempts to encourage women's participation in various areas of life, but women's inferiority and subordination is a dominant norm that has not changed as required to alter the stereotyped picture of women (Jordanian National Commission for Women, 2015).

Jordan's values and traditions impose diverse duties and chores on women but less freedom upon them than upon men particularly in rural communities (Al-Braizat, 2017). In a rural homestead, a woman is expected to do all house chores and adhere to the instructions of her husband without question. Women are not allowed to gather socially in areas besides those approved by their husbands. Homestead daily tasks are expected to be fully carried out by the woman without the help of her husband. This leads to a reduction in the time that a woman can engage socially.

Human action is dependent on the location and period connected with these practices and values and even on the language used (Nouadrya & Zadam, 2017). This brings us again to the conformity of women and their adherence to a patriarchal society that interacts with women and judges them according to their subordination and loyalty to that community, even if women assume a leadership role in certain political, economic, or technical bodies. This involvement currently is only symbolic in Jordan; it can bring about the required shift only if it becomes a widespread trend that represents the actual life of Arab women in general (Arab Institution for Human Rights, 1996). To ensure that patriarchal power does not persist, women have begun to pursue reforms to secure their freedoms and break out of the prison of dependence.

In Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1970), an analysis of patriarchal power, she saw male supremacy at all levels in the patriarchal system. Millet (1970) explained that feminism calls for systemic transformation that implies a shift in societal institutions and a reform that will eradicate the unjustified oppression and subordination of women. Jordan's patriarchal society is embedded in radical feminism whereby men are the sole beneficiaries of women's exploitation, subordination, and oppression. Cases of rape and domestic violence are rampant in Jordan, which is a clear indication of methods used by men to secure and maintain their power and authority over women. The cultural perception that men have the right to regulate or punish people through various methods renders people prone to harassment, subordination, and assault.

According to the World Health Organization:

> Cultural and social norms are highly influential in shaping individual behaviour, including the use of violence. Norms can protect against violence, but they can also support and encourage the use of it. For instance, cultural acceptance of violence, either as a normal method of resolving conflict or as a usual part of rearing a child, is a risk factor for all types of interpersonal violence. (2009, p. 3)

In their study, Hernández-Truyol (2017) pointed out that:

> although the woman is given the task of preserving, maintaining, and transmitting cultural attitudes, values, and traditions, it is the man who defines the elements of which that culture is composed. However, this dichotomy does not reflect the reality of all women. For example, marginable women—vulnerable women who exist at the margins of society and the economy—have never found themselves solely in the private realm. (p. 2)

It is evident from the above that women are the first and last people to be accountable for the transformation of patriarchal culture and its unification of the community and to make culture an important part of women's consciousness and identity. Women pass on history, consciously or implicitly, from elders in particular and to society in general. Consequently, what is permissible and what action is to be practised is dictated by culture, so women keep their secondary position and do not experience their independence and complete rights.

The Quest for Social Justice

Justice is a fundamental force in society, and social justice is the "basic structure of any society, it is how the social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages" (de Lucca-Silveira, 2016, p. 9). Its main focus is allocation (Colquitt, 2001). Pence (2012) addressed the idea of social justice as "a powerful one. It is this idea, combined with the vision of a righteous and compassionate world that has historically inspired activists to struggle for social change" (p. 1000). Ballenger (2010) concluded that the idea of social justice is a shifting term because it relies on the sense in which it is applied and that it encourages universal principles like equity, dignity, caring, and fairness. As the meaning of social justice changes, it has become increasingly complex and conflict-ridden, both as an idea and in its application. Today, for example, our conception of social justice is inextricably related to our interpretation of concepts such as dignity and independence and specific policy concerns regarding the roles and duties of persons and communities (Reisch, 2002).

Social justice is commonly characterized as the equal and egalitarian allocation of authority, wealth, and responsibilities in society among all individuals, irrespective of race or ethnicity, age, class, rank, sexual identity, and religious or moral context (Hage et al., 2011). Reid (2004) showed that social justice is not only a way of seeing the world; it can also influence how work is formulated and carried out. Many female champions of social justice endured isolation, deprivation, and/or oppression in adolescence (Arar, 2018, p. 21), which motivated them to pursue social justice.

A study by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (2010) concluded that "Gender justice depends on women's ability to participate in and influence decision-making, whether in the household, the community or at national, regional, and global levels" (p. 12). This implies that women's participation will be expanded and reflected in the best manner. In other words, women must show that they can and deserve to be in these roles, not just the role of a housekeeper. From the above, we recognize that women will adjust their actions, shift toward education, and be more positive when pursuing social justice. Overall, considering various points of view from multiple scholars, the conclusion is that women themselves are responsible for enjoying social justice. Through education, women should become more powerful and self-confident to achieve social justice and fairness.

According to data published by the EU and UNESCO on Youth Employment in the Mediterranean Knowledge Platform, labour laws in Jordan emphasize non-discrimination rules between women and men, however, the substantial pay gap in gender both in the private and public sectors cannot be ignored (Al-Khatib, 2020). The private sector pays female workers 41% less than their counterpart males and an average rate of 1.1 per hour against 2.0 per hour respectively (Al-Khatib, 2020). Joblessness among women in Jordan is attributed to employers' perception of women since they are perceived as liabilities based on an ideology that they may leave to be married, attend to family obligations, and due to pregnancies (Al-Khatib, 2020).

To address the issue of women's representation in public sectors with the capacity and ability to fight for social justice in Jordan, I studied past literature surveys on unemployment rates in Jordan by gender and level of education to better understand factors hindering the attainment of social justice in Jordan. A publication by Harvard University shows that as of 2018, participation in labour by females is prevalent, particularly among women with low attainment of education, and despite an increased rate of women participating in labour as they climb the education system, unemployment also increased up to 30% amongst graduates from universities and over 19% in postgraduates (Kaasolu et al., 2019). The low numbers of women were linked to low participation and unemployment rates via an analytical framework that was used to break down this data and quantify labour force participation, unemployment, and employment in Jordan (Kaasolu et al., 2019).

Research Methodology

To better understand data presented in past kinds of literature, I interviewed a selection of Jordanian women to provide additional insights and clarity to the study. A `qualitative design was used for this. To gain in-depth knowledge and understanding of social injustices against Jordanian women, non-numerical data was collected from the focus group comprising 15 female participants using open-ended survey questions over phone calls to gather information about their personal experiences, opinions, and enlightenment on the topic. During the interviews, a discussion with the respondents was based on different issues revolving around gender discrimination in Jordan and the root cause of these issues. Amongst the topics discussed were gender, culture, social change, and social justice, which they defined in their own words based on their understanding of the terms. In addition, some participants who were aware of their social rights recommended how to achieve social justice and enhance gender equality in Jordan.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical permission for this research was received from the Ethics Committee of the University of Ottawa before the participants were recruited. Approval was received by email on 13/06/2019 from the Office of Research Ethics and Integrity/University of Ottawa (file number S-05-19-1275). Before the onset of the voice call survey, a consent form was issued to the focus group via email, and a request to use their exact words in the research was requested by informing them of the purpose of the research and study. To ensure their participation in the interviews was voluntary, a series of questions were asked in the consent form and answers were provided for their queries. Confidentiality was also guaranteed to ensure their security by keeping personal details anonymous since the researcher understood the risks involved with taking part in this kind of research while living in Jordan.

Data Collection

Research Interview—A Semi-Structured Technique

Interviews were selected to collect data for this study because they provided an additional qualitative perspective on the research questions, which allowed more clarification to be sought regarding some of the responses that emerged from the interviews. "Interviews have become such an important tool to qualitative researchers that many qualitative methods rely heavily or solely on them as the primary mechanism for data collection" (Knox & Burkard, 2009, p. 571). Accordingly, the study utilized open-ended interviews in which the same open-ended questions were asked of all participants; the rationale here is that this approach facilitates faster interviews that can be more easily analyzed and compared (Babbie, 2011). An interview guide was developed by the researcher to allow the participants to respond freely during the interview. The interviews lasted from 60 to 90 minutes. Participants' interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed with the participants' consent.

Research Participants

The total number of participants in this study was 15 Jordanian women because a small sample size provides more useful data for a thematic analysis of the qualitative data (Pathak & Intratat, 2012, p. 4). The research participants were members of the Facebook group *Jo Women*. Those members lived in 12 different cities in Jordan: Aqaba, Ma'an, Al-Karaka, Al-Tafilah, Madaba, Amman, Al-Sult, Jershe, Ajloun, Al-Mafraq, Al-Zarqa, and Irbid. The researcher opted to use this Facebook group after a discussion with their supervisor since the research participants were in Jordan while the researcher was studying in Ottawa/Canada at the time of data collection. This decision was made based on the researcher's belief that the members of the group could provide accurate information reflecting their real situation. This group was approved because of its diverse nature, as it encompassed women from all parts of Jordan.

Participants were born in and lived in Jordan and were aged between 20 and 50 years old. This Facebook group was created by a Jordanian dentist who aimed to find a platform for Jordanian women to discuss social issues and exchange views related to women in Jordan. Consent was obtained via email from the founder of the group to encourage the members to participate in the study. Information about the study was shared within the group. The researcher responded to group members' questions for those who were interested in participating in the study; the participants received a consent form, and all their queries were answered after they signed the consent form.

Security

Participation in this study was voluntary, as participants had the chance to provide detailed information on their age, place of residence, education, marital status, and work. Having gained this amount of information, the researcher had to make sure that this data was kept confidential to ensure that participants would not be exposed to any kind of risk or inconvenience due to their participation. Participants' identities remained anonymous and pseudonyms were used.

Challenges in the Research

The main obstacle that faced the researcher during the data collection phase was the time gap between Canada and Jordan. Such a time gap was about seven hours, which made it difficult for the researcher to contact the participants at their desired time. Moreover, the internet connection was also an issue in this regard. Internet connections were very poor sometimes. Thus, calls were always interrupted, which forced the researcher to carry out more than one call for the same participant. The researcher was afraid to lose the flow in such a case. Although arranging for phone calls was a problematic task, the researcher found it useful in some instances, as the participants felt more comfortable speaking to the researcher indirectly and not face to face. This made it very easy for participants to voice their opinions freely and provided them with an opportunity to choose the best time that fit them without having to leave home or disclose their real identities.

Limitations

The findings of this work are limited to the studies reviewed by the researcher and the study design of interviewing fifteen female participants. The small number of participants means that further research with a larger sample is needed to ensure more accurate and generalizable results regarding the quest for social justice for women in Jordan.

Results

The participants answered 20 questions that were grouped into four categories (see Appendix). The results were as follows.

Gender Inequality

Some respondents' views of the gendered dynamics of culture were compatible with the belief that men have been better protected and treated since birth in Jordanian society: "Males come to life with a package of privileges, but there should be equality between all" (Maha). The respondents stated that rights are granted by legislation, although the enforcement of rights depends on the culture, and that men usually possess more freedoms than women because of social factors such as the dominant social structure. They acknowledged that there is still a shortage of knowledge regarding women's rights, and education is the remedy. "I agree that equity should be present in education, work opportunities, and leadership roles; recognition of rights is essential for the exercise of rights in addition to self-promotion" (Banan).

Some participants claimed that people have feelings of hatred toward women; this feeling cannot be clarified by women, as they cannot explain this unreasonable hate: "People don't like successful women; they conceal enormous hatred" (Diaa). Although participants mentioned this in their interviews, such an attitude is not supported in any part of the literature reviewed.

Participants claimed that divorced and widowed women are still blamed and that people do not have compassion for them if they want to remarry, particularly in rural areas. "Certain people in society think it is a disgrace to remarry. Divorced or widowed women raise their babies ... Divorced women and widows do not have privileges based on culture" (Leen). Some responses suggested that single girls suffer if they do not get married, which makes some people speak poorly

about them or express their concern about their future without a spouse. According to the dominant Jordanian culture, unmarried females are perceived to be imperfect entities, and this imposes a great burden on them: "Married women's value depends on their husbands; singles struggle, and they have to get married or they are defined as incomplete" (Maria).

All participants rejected violence against women, particularly verbal violence against women, and felt angry whenever they heard derogatory comments or words regarding women. "I can't prevent myself from defending abused women" (Eman). Participants, as well as scholars (Al-Maaitah & Gharaibbeh, 2002), also pointed out that some cultural concepts promote violence: "Up to now, females have been killed as honor crimes, and this has been supported by culture" (Miriam).

Culture's Influence on Society

Cultural influence plays an integral part in shaping Jordanians' perceptions of the society they live in, according to participants: "We are a reflection of culture, but we should be stubborn about securing our rights" (Dina). Participants agreed that there are structured positions for women with some responsibilities and requirements and a long list of what to do and what not to do:

> Culture is influencing women's lives; some people are still compelled to choose how their husbands or fathers choose ... Women's views have shifted, but in some instances, we still focus on the effect of society on women's appearance, that we are frail, that we cannot make choices, and that we cannot make judgments. (Miriam)

This theme also shows that some participants felt sad that they needed approval for the simplest activities from their fathers, brothers, or husbands, while some educated their male children better than their female children. This is attributed to the socialization system, which states that males must have better opportunities than females: "Throughout rural Jordan, some girls are deprived of education because of the assumption that their destination would end in the kitchen; as a result, many families choose to educate their boys" (Raia). The respondents said that women could reform cultural values more than men; however, social justice is not simple to achieve in Jordan because of standards and customs, mostly because of the tribal system. This perception is supported by what has been mentioned in Alkafawin's 2018 study. The responses also indicated that women can accomplish justice and social change if they are supported by the community "with sufficient schooling, successful legislation, and equal socialization" (Serina). Some participants believed patriarchy was too entrenched in society: "Social equity cannot be achieved because of patriarchy, which is an unchangeable system; women must remain under the law of men forever" (Sophia). Responses provided by the participants show that inherited unjustifiable customs have influenced socialization. This creates a massive difference between men and women and extends from generation to generation, where women still pay the price. In contrast, men live a better life: "It is unjust to discriminate between girls and boys during socialization, which would promote abuse, discrimination, and a lack of knowledge" (Nuha).

The responses indicated that participants opposed all forms of abuse, which is still a pressing issue in Jordan. They added that violence against women is not only discouraged by law, certain social values, and Islam, but violence had also diminished from their point of view in contrast with previous years: "Now, violence against women is decreased" (Neveen). Most of the participants (13) assumed that today, Jordanian women are better treated than before because

they receive a decent education and better care, particularly by contributing to various household expenses: "Women are valued and well-treated; women are now wealthier, trained, and contribute to the final cost. Some parents now believe more in their daughters" (Banan).

The Quest for Social Change

Fourteen participants concurred that education is the first step toward the social change that would contribute to gender equality and the betterment of life in general: "Without education, nothing can change; I think that women would not be able to achieve justice" (Nuha). Participants affirmed that education is the path to social justice and empowerment for women, providing self-confidence and understanding of the rights that will bring about change: "Education is the miracle remedy if we want to be equal to men; education is woman's power to secure themselves and start up a new wave of justice" (Eman). Just one participant argued that education is not an essential aspect of the search for social justice in Jordan: "Education is not a necessity; a job is better than a university degree" (Sahar). Respondents argued that technology, in general, has tremendous effects on society if utilized in a positive manner—such as promoting women's rights and affirming the value of women's commitment to social progress and fairness—although a few participants agreed that social networking is meant merely to post images and ordinary life activities: "People are busy with unnecessary issues on social media; it makes things difficult, and it won't be easy to achieve social change because social media makes changes for the worse by sharing our private lives" (Leen).

The answers indicated that societal transformation is in a complicated phase in Jordan: "Social change would lead to a better future, a new culture and freedom, but it is not a simple path" (Neveen). However, it requires substantial contributions from authorities and individuals and a major shift in the existing social system. Karmel et al. also confirmed this in their study in 2014. According to seven respondents, the government is the authority that should be the most responsible for social reform by creating a new social structure: "Government is the first to be accountable for social change, for re-creating a modern social framework, but we are using the current system, that is, our lifestyle" (Neveen). Some participants believed that the government must adopt new initiatives and implement special projects to encourage and increase awareness of the majority of Jordanian women rather than only those who belong to specific categories: "Government policy encourages certain people to profit from reform, just to improve themselves and to win high positions in the name of social progress and women's rights" (Sophia). "Women's committees and organizations have accomplished great work and achievements, but sometimes their work concentrates on certain categories of women" (Maha).

One participant argued that social change does not require equality between women and men, as it lays more obligations on women; this implies that if equality happens, women will have more commitments: "It is not acceptable for men and women to be equal in all rights, because that would overwhelm women, particularly in the workforce, which does not lead to social justice in the end" (Meriam). Respondents believed that women's efforts would not be enough to attain their aim of achieving social change in Jordan because of the power of the patriarchal structure: "Whatever efforts women may exert in Jordan in terms of social change, women will remain in the second class; the absence of women's participation is due to customs, male dominance, illiterate women, and a lack of legal knowledge" (Banan).

Respondents argued that as societal reform takes effect in Jordan, social structures will shift, such as vocabulary, images, expectations, and a better existence for women and culture in general:

"Language and women-related representations would certainly be influenced and modified if we succeed in bringing a radical shift into the structures of culture" (Raia). Another respondent said,

> Social change is to empty people's minds from subordinating themselves to what is perceived as unjust customs. Women's lives will be better and easier; it will encourage women to use their talents to develop the nation and transform future generations. (Sophia)

Social Justice

It is evident from the responses as well as the literature (Alkafawin, 2018) that it is important to understand the significance and importance of social justice: "If women make a social change, they must be aware of the meaning of social justice, as some feel that it is contradictory to faith and customs" (Serina). Most of the participants concluded that social justice is a necessity and a must in human existence, adding that what drives them to seek this is an inequality they feel: "Inequality, exploitation, and marginalization bring us to the search for social justice" (Leen). Another participant stated, "It is a necessity to empower people to achieve social change, which would have a beneficial effect on culture and people themselves" (Eman). Three participants believed that some women do not trust other women in different situations and wondered how they might achieve justice while these behaviours exist. For example, "I don't trust going to visit a female physician, while I should go; if we keep underestimating each other's abilities, social justice will remain a dream" (Raiaa).

It was found that injustice, anxiety, and pain were common among the participants because they were worried about the future of social justice and whether it would be achieved one day in Jordan. This concern was not just over social justice's effect on women's status in society; it was also born out of a desire for a decent life: "I wish I could live ordinary days without fear and panic because I was late coming home or speaking to a male or even heading out with my friends" (Serina). Respondents' experiences suggested that an understanding of self-esteem, educational value, learning about social justice and social change, and a strong will that contributes to a kind of justice might someday become a general concept in Jordan:

> I know my rights and duties. Nonetheless, still, I don't dare to request my rights. Therefore, I will not be able to be a part of a change to achieve justice in Jordan unless I and other women are strong and educated enough. (Maria)

Participants agreed that there is much evidence available to confirm injustice in Jordan, beginning with the preparation of newborns and ending with the position and appearance of women in Jordanian society: "Women have hundreds of reasons to seek social justice, however, who cares about them? We must obey social norms and traditions" (Sophia). Almost all participants confirmed that their quest for social justice stemmed from their belief that this was what should prevail regardless of cultural influence, as there should be quality between both genders, which would enable women to live their normal lives without restriction or fear of being forbidden from practicing their basic rights.

Respondents' perceptions showed that their consciousness was saturated with certain beliefs, customs, and traditions that discredited their values and rights and prevented them from achieving social justice: "There are certain facts in my consciousness, such as that I will be the same as my mother, so why should I seek social justice?" (Sahar). The extremely oppressive aspect

of the social structure slows down the accomplishment of social justice in Jordan: "I have been born to be a woman; I have been compelled to be like this since I was a child. I have been taught how to value my father and brothers more; where is justice?" (Raiaa). Another respondent said, "Social justice is an essential requirement, so why should I have to ask for equality with a male if I am used to this life and how a woman should be?" (Diaa).

Discussion

The main objectives of this research study were to examine the perspectives of Jordanian women in their fight for social justice and to identify the factors that inspire or discourage women from seeking justice in Jordan, considering their perceptions of the opportunities and obstacles they have experienced and how they have responded to them. As expected, cultural influence—mainly represented by traditions and patriarchal power—and education have a huge impact on women's quest for social justice in Jordan. The findings of this study show that gender inequalities remain present in Jordan's cultural context, contributing to a mandatory social system for women that has a greater emphasis on and appreciation of the role of men in the public sphere and an emphasis on the role of women in unpaid family work and care. The majority of participants indicated that women should accept their roles and duties as women because they were born for this purpose; certain women endorse this view. This finding supports the *doing-gender* perspective, which describes what it is like to be male or female (Carter, 2014, p. 246).

Inequality in socialization contributes to the perpetuation of the status quo among women. This inequality implies that women are restricted and excluded from having access to their rights and equal opportunities compared to men in Jordan.

According to research conducted by Johnstone (2015), men hold dominion over the social framework in Jordan, encompassing the dynamics of socialization. Consequently, women tend to evaluate matters through the lens of this ingrained cultural context, often accepting it without opposition unless they develop awareness and motivation for change.

The participants believed that education is the key to equality and justice in Jordan. An equal percentage of men and women have degrees from higher education (6.18%), according to the latest education statistics (Department of Statistics, Jordan, 2018). This percentage and respondents' answers lead us to the understanding that a curriculum is not what empowers women and provides them with their rights; educating people to reform their mentality and social structures instead can generate systemic transformation to help women and guarantee them justice. The reform of a social system in a traditional, tribal society is not easy; however, the education system also needs reform. This understanding is consistent with the ARDD (2015) study, which reinforced the need for social reform in Jordan that would lead to social change by empowering Jordanian women.

Participants concentrated on legal awareness to reduce violence against women and encourage them to obtain the benefits of their given rights. However, the intensity of social traditions creates obstacles to women's power and allocates power to males; this observation agrees with Pettygrove's (2006) results, which showed that norms and patriarchal values prohibit Jordanian women from enjoying their rights. Some participants believed in the domination of males and that they should have more opportunities, and the reason behind this is that they believed that women should stand second in line—though nowadays, women are participating in different ways just like men. Some respondents agreed with the study by Zubaidi et al. (2011), which indicated that women's personalities harm their status in society; additionally, some

women do not trust others, and this causes a lack of women's representation and encouragement to seek social justice.

Social media in Jordan, according to the participants, has a weak role in social change because it is mainly used to share life events rather than cause serious change. Moreover, social justice as a concept was not clear enough for women; this corresponds to the findings of Alkafawin's (2018) study. Jordanian women think change and justice are against religion; moreover, women have many duties that may hinder them from thinking or requesting social reform and achieving justice in Jordan.

It is evident from the results that the search for social justice and the implementation of reform in Jordan is difficult due to numerous challenges. It is necessary to raise awareness among individuals in society to empower and educate them more about social justice and how it affects them. It must be understood that justice is not against religion and freedom and is not just about legal rights, but instead is about the enjoyment of those rights. Moreover, without cooperation between stakeholders and people and a clear understanding of the philosophy of social transformation, women and others will not be able to achieve social justice and their rights.

To achieve social justice in Jordan, the formula for success should include the re-examination of inherited culture and curricula as well as the extension of the empowerment of different groups of women rather than a limitation to specific groups. It is also necessary to reform the social system with the current era while at the same time maintaining good principles and traditions; experts involved in the reform of the social system should believe in change and equality of opportunity and human rights. Based on our findings, we can say that Jordanian women perceive social justice as a system that grants equal access to women and men for opportunities and resources—education, work, freedom of speech, and so on.

Concluding Remarks: Contributions of the Study to the Community

This study could be referred to as a platform for increasing consciousness of social rights and social reform for women in Jordan. In addition, the results of the analysis could contribute to social change. This research adds value to studies on women's issues, as studies discuss social change and social justice from women's perspectives in Jordan. Moreover, new studies could build on the results of this study and lead to solutions for women's difficulties in Jordan.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Questions	Gender
	What is gender equity in your opinion?
	Do practising rights link to gender?
	How do social statutes affect women in society?
	Do women and men have the same rights in society?
	What kind of feeling do you feel when people call women offensive descriptions?
	Culture
	How do you define culture?
	How does culture influence women's image in society?
	In your opinion, how does culture support violence against women?
	Describe how culture affects social justice in society.
	In what way does culture challenge social change?
	Social change
	What does social change mean to you?
	What resources do you need to access social change?
	How can you use media for positive social change?
	What are the contributions of Jordanian women to social change?
	Overall, how will social justice affect women and society?
	Social justice
	How do you define social justice?
	How is social justice important to you?
	What are women's reasons for questioning social justice?
	What evidence can be used to prove social injustice?
	How can women's awareness of social justice lead to social change?