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The Lower House and the Ongoing Decline in Confidence
Public Opinion Poll Evaluating the Performance of the Current
Lower House since its Election
Polling Unit

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May 2009

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Introduction

The Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan conducted a public opinion poll evaluating the performance of the current Lower House since it was elected in November 2009.

The field poll, consisting of face-to-face interviews, was conducted between March 19 and April 1, 2009. The size of the complete national sample was **1764** respondents, originally 1830, with 66 individuals refusing to participate in the poll. The sample was distributed throughout all of the Kingdom's governorates, as shown in Table 1. This sample represents all segments of Jordanian society. The confidence level for the sample was 97% with a 2%+- margin of error.

Table 1: Distribution of the sample with relative weighting by district

	Number	Percentage
Capital	575	32.6
Balqa'	92	5.2
Zarqa	236	13.4
Madaba	39	2.2
Irbid	310	17.6
Mafraq	70	4.0
Jerash	50	2.8
Ajloun	40	2.3
Karak	145	8.2
Tafilah	60	3.4
Ma'an	69	3.9
Aqaba	78	4.4
Total	1764	100.0

This report contains five main sections: the first addresses the Jordanian public's overall evaluation of the performance of the current Lower House. This section includes data about the extent of the public's satisfaction with and evaluation of the performance of the current Lower House in carrying out its fundamental constitutional duties: its monitoring role, questioning role and its control of public spending. In addition, this section presents respondents' assessments of the Lower House in dealing with issues witnessed by Jordan and the Arab region as identified by citizens. The second section identifies citizens' evaluation of the independence of the current Lower House and the key determinants of MPs' performance. The third section aims to identify the extent to which citizens follow the activities of the current Lower House, and to which MPs communicate with citizens. The fourth section is concerned with the women's quota system that was applied, for the second time, in the current Lower House. The fifth and final section reflects the trends in public opinion regarding the privileges normally accorded to the Lower House.

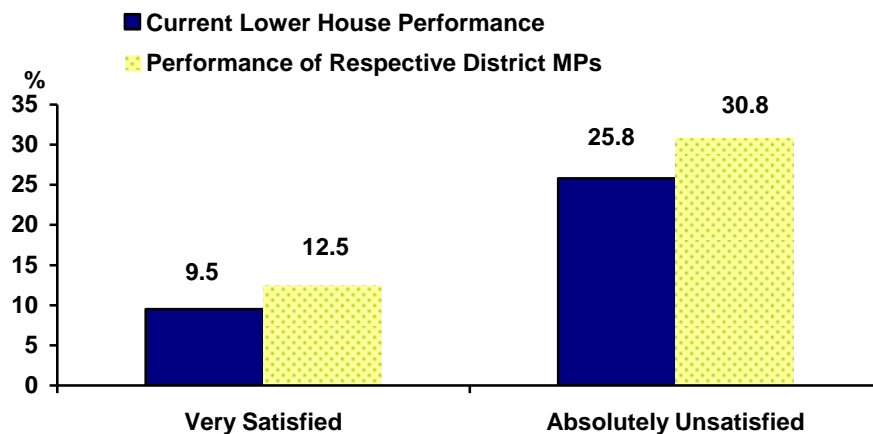
I. Performance evaluation of the 15th Parliament since its election

This section aims to identify the degree of the public's satisfaction with the performance of the Lower House since its election, and to evaluate its performance in carrying out its constitutionally-assigned key functions, as well as the role of the House in dealing with a range of topics that are important to the Jordanian society.

- **Public satisfaction with the Lower House's performance**

The public's evaluation of the performance of the current Lower House was not positive. The results of the poll showed that 9.5% of respondents reported that they were very satisfied with the performance of the current Lower House since its election, while 25.8% said they were absolutely unsatisfied with its performance. As for respondents' evaluations of MPs in their electoral districts, 12.5% of respondents said they were very satisfied with the performance of their respective MPs since they were elected, while 30.8% said they were absolutely unsatisfied with the performance of their MPs.

Figure 1: Respondents who reported that they were very satisfied or absolutely unsatisfied with the performance of the current Lower House and with the performance of their district MPs since the elections



When the arithmetic mean of the respondents' extent of satisfaction with the performance of the current Lower House since its election and their respective MPs is calculated as a percentage, the results show that the majority of the Jordanian public expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of the current Lower House and of the MPs representing their electoral districts. 47% of respondents reported that they were satisfied, to varying degrees, with the

performance of the current Lower House since its election in November 2007, while 44% said they were satisfied with the performance of their respective MPs since their election. In other words, the majority of the Jordanian public is dissatisfied with the performance of the current Lower House and the respondents' respective district MPs.

As for respondents' level of satisfaction with the performance of the current Lower House disaggregated by governorate, the results showed that respondents in the Aqaba Governorate were the most positive in their evaluation of the House's performance, as 50.1% of respondents said they were satisfied, to varying degrees (high, fair, low). Ajloun followed with 49.7%, then the Capital and Ma'an with 47.9% each. The percentage of satisfaction was lower in Tafilah, Karak and Mafraq, with a little over one-third of respondents saying they were satisfied, to varying degrees, with the House's performance. As for respondents' satisfaction with the performance of the MPs representing their electoral districts by governorate, the respondents in the governorate of Ma'an were the most positive, as 50.9% of respondents expressed satisfaction, followed by the Capital with 49.6%, then Ajloun with 48.3%. In contrast, the evaluation of respondents in the governorate of Tafilah was the most negative, as less than one-fifth of the respondents, or 18.8%, said they were satisfied to varying degrees with the performance of their district MPs, followed by Karak with 32.5%, then Irbid with 38.9%.

Table 2: Respondents who said they were satisfied (to varying degrees) with the performance of the Lower House and that of the MPs in their districts by governorate

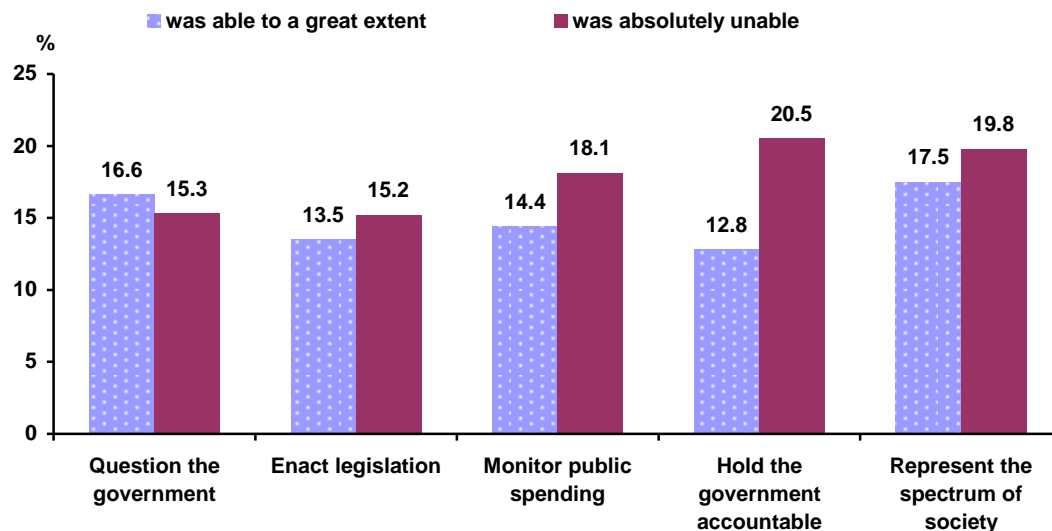
Governorate	Satisfaction with the Lower House's performance	Satisfaction with the performance of MPs from respondents' districts
	%	%
Percent of total respondents	46.6	44.3
Capital	47.9	49.6
Balqa'	46.4	44.5
Zarqa	47.6	43.2
Madaba	40.8	42.1
Irbid	47.6	38.9
Mafraq	38.6	40.1
Jerash	43.6	43.5
Ajloun	49.7	48.3
Karak	38.3	32.5
Tafilah	34.8	18.8
Ma'an	47.9	50.9
Aqaba	50.1	43.3

- **Evaluation of the Lower House’s performance in executing its constitutional duties**

The public’s evaluation of the performance of the current Lower House in terms of its execution of its fundamental constitutional functions was consistent with the degree of the public’s satisfaction with the House’s performance since its election. As shown in Figure 2, about 15% of respondents reported that the Lower House was able, **to a great extent**, to carry out its roles of holding the government accountable, monitoring public spending, enacting legislation, questioning the government, and representing the spectrum of society. In contrast, the percentage of respondents who said the Lower House was **unable** to perform these tasks was about 20%.

It is worth noting that about **20% of respondents reported that they did not know** whether the Lower House was able to assume its roles of enacting legislation, questioning the government, monitoring public spending, and holding the government accountable. The percentage of respondents who reported they did not know whether the Lower House represented the spectrum of society was 7%.

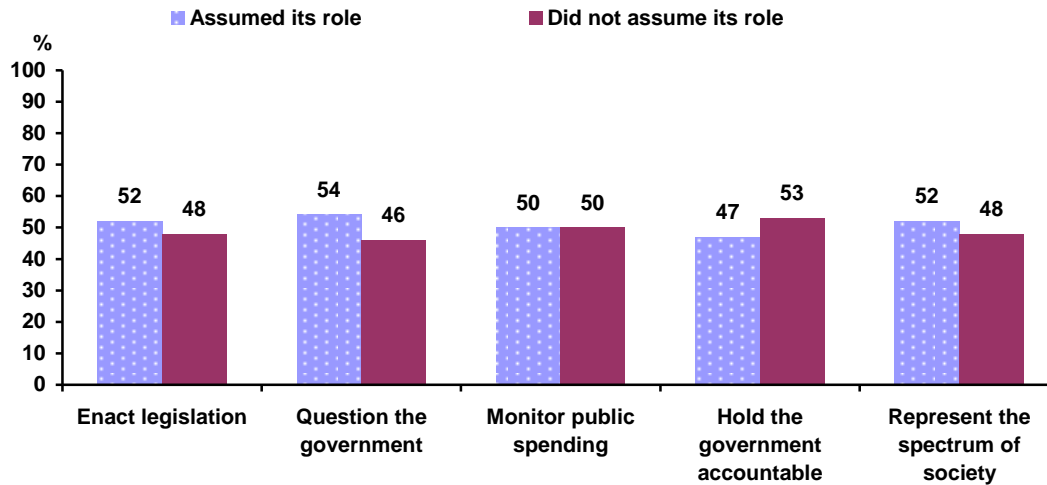
Figure 2: Percentages of respondents who reported that the current Lower House was able to a great extent, or was unable to execute its key constitutional functions



When the arithmetic mean of the respondents’ evaluation of the performance of the current Lower House in terms of executing its constitutional functions is calculated as a percentage, the results show that the public was divided, as 50% of the Jordanian public said the House was **successful**, to varying degrees (high, fair, low), in executing its constitutional functions, while

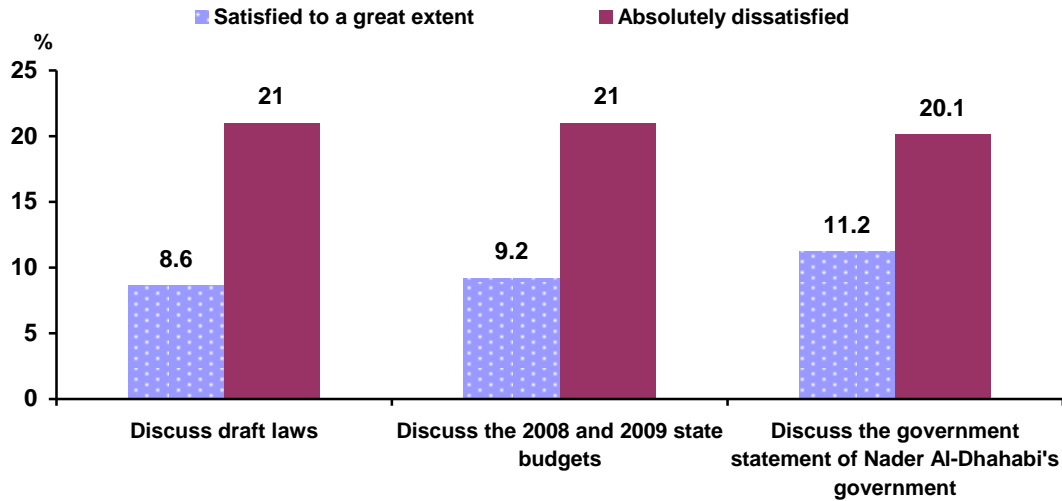
50% said the House was **unsuccessful** in executing these functions. The percentages are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Respondents who reported that the Lower House executed its constitutional functions to varying degrees (high, fair, low) and respondents who reported that the House did not execute its constitutional functions



As for respondents' satisfaction with the performance of their electoral district MPs in discussing draft laws, the 2008 and 2009 state budgets, and the government statement of Nader Al-Dhahabi's government, the results showed that the evaluation was generally not positive. About 10% of respondents said they were satisfied to a great extent with the performance of their electoral district MPs in deliberating draft laws, the 2008 and 2009 state budgets, and the government statement of Nader Al-Dhahabi's government. In contrast, about 20% of respondents said they were absolutely dissatisfied with the performance of their respective MPs in the same matters.

Figure 4: Respondents' evaluation of the performance of their electoral district MPs since their election in discussing draft laws, the 2008 and 2009 state budgets, and the government statement of Nader Al-Dhahabi's government



When the arithmetic mean of the respondents' degree of satisfaction with the performance of their electoral district MPs since their election in discussing draft laws, the 2008 and 2009 state budgets, and the government statement of Nader Al-Dhahabi's government is calculated as a percentage, the results show that the majority of the public is not satisfied with the performance of their respective MPs as demonstrated in Table 3. Less than 50% said they were satisfied, to varying degrees (high, fair, low) with the performance of their MPs in discussing draft laws, the 2008 and 2009 state budgets, and the government statement of Nader Al-Dhahabi's government.

As for respondents' degree of satisfaction with the performance of their electoral district MPs with respect to the three aforementioned matters by governorate, the respondents in all governorates evaluated their respective MPs performance in discussing draft laws as unsuccessful (less than 50% of respondents). Moreover, more than **two thirds of respondents in Karak and Tafilah said they were dissatisfied** with the performance of their respective MPs in discussing draft laws. The respondents also evaluated the performance of their MPs in discussing the 2008 and 2009 state budgets as unsuccessful, as less than 50% of respondents in each governorate expressed satisfaction with the performance of their respective MPs, while more than **two thirds of respondents** in Ajloun and Tafilah said they were dissatisfied with the performance of their MPs in discussing both state budgets.

As for MPs' performance in discussing the government statement of Nader Al-Dhahabi's government, respondents evaluated the performance of their MPs in this regard as unsuccessful

in all governorates except in Mafraq, Balqa and the Capital, where the respondents were divided between satisfied and dissatisfied with the performance of their respective MPs.

Table 3: Respondents' degree of satisfaction with the performance of their electoral district MPs in discussing draft laws, the 2008 and 2009 state budgets and the government statement of Nader Al-Dhahabi's government

	Discussing draft laws	Discussing the 2008 and 2009 state budgets	Discussing the government statement
	%	%	%
Percent of all respondents	45	45	46
Capital	48	48	50
Balqa'	46	48	52
Zarqa	48	48	50
Madaba	45	45	48
Irbid	38	38	38
Mafraq	49	48	53
Jerash	42	39	38
Ajloun	31	30	34
Karak	39	43	45
Tafilah	29	29	28
Ma'an	46	48	49
Aqaba	43	40	39

- **Evaluation of the Lower House's performance regarding public issues**

In addition to evaluating the performance of the current Lower House in executing its constitutional functions, the poll aimed to identify the public's evaluation of the House's performance with regard to certain fundamental issues of foremost importance to the Jordanian public in general. These issues had been the subject of discussions and controversy since the election of the current Lower House. They include: enhancing freedoms, the State's economic policy, the public expenditure policy, government job formations, privatization, foreign policy, and fighting corruption. The poll aimed to identify the extent to which the public believes that the Lower House has a role in addressing these issues. The poll then sought to identify the evaluation of the House's performance by those respondents who said the House had a role in addressing these issues. The results showed that about two thirds of the respondents said the Lower House had no role in addressing these issues, while 25-30% of respondents reported that they did not know whether the current Lower House had a role in addressing them. In other words, the **majority** of respondents (more than 50% of respondents) said they **did not believe**

that or did not know whether the Lower House had that role. A little more than one third of respondents said the Lower House had a role in addressing these issues and evaluated that role positively with respect to the issues of fighting corruption; enhancing freedoms; public expenditure policy; State's economic policy; and foreign policy. The percentage of respondents who said the Lower House had a role and evaluated that role positively with regard to government job formations and privatization was 31% and 24% respectively.

Table 4: Trends in public opinion with regard to whether the Lower House had a role in addressing certain fundamental issues, and the evaluation of this role

The Lower House had a role in...						Total
	The House's role was positive	The House's role was negative	The House's role was neither positive nor negative	The House did not have a role	I do not know whether or not the House had a role	
Fighting corruption	43	5	2	31	19	100
Enhancing freedoms	42	3	2	32	20	100
Public expenditure policy	39	6	3	27	25	100
Economic policy	37	6	3	31	24	100
Foreign policy	34	4	2	32	28	100
Government job formations	31	11	3	31	24	100
Privatization	24	14	2	31	30	100

- **Performance evaluation of the current Lower House since its election regarding the most important domestic issue witnessed by Jordan and the most important issue witnessed by the Arab region**

The poll aimed to identify the most important domestic issue witnessed by Jordan and the most important issue that took place during the term of the current Lower House until now according to the Jordanian public. The most important domestic issue during this period as identified by 41% of respondents was rising prices. 64.4 of respondents said the Lower House had a role in addressing this issue, while 36% said the House had no role or they did not know whether or not it had a role in addressing this issue. 58% of those who said the House had a role in addressing this issue were satisfied, to varying degrees, with the House's performance.

The second most important domestic issue as identified by 15% of respondents was the “Bourse Companies” issue. 49% of respondents who named this issue said the Lower House had a role in addressing it, while 51% said the House did not have a role or they did not know whether or not the House had a role in addressing this issue. 48% of respondents who reported that the House had a role in addressing this issue were satisfied, to varying degrees, with the performance of the House in this regard.

Table 5: The most important domestic issue Jordan witnessed since the election of the current Lower House as identified by respondents, and whether or not the House had a role in addressing that issue according to respondents as well as the extent of their satisfaction with the Lower House’s efforts to address this issue

The most important domestic issue Jordan witnessed since the election of the current Lower House		Percentage of respondents who said the Lower House had a role in addressing the issue out of the total number of respondents who identified that issue				Satisfaction with the performance of the current Lower House regarding the identified issue among the respondents who said the Lower House had a role in addressing the issue
Issue	%	Yes	No	Don’t know	Total	%
Rising prices	41	64	30	6	100	58
Bourse Companies	15	49	38	12	100	48
Unemployment	5	74	46	7	100	50
Poverty	2	49	51	00.0	100	59
Other	17	64	27	9	100	61
Don’t know/Don’t remember	20					

The most important Arab issue that took place since the election of the current Lower House was the war on Gaza as identified by 66% of respondents. 77% of respondents who named this issue said the Lower House had a role in addressing this issue, and 78% of respondents who said the House had a role in addressing it were satisfied, to varying degrees, with that role.

Table 6: The most important political Arab issue that took place since the election of the current Lower House as identified by respondents, and whether the House had a role in addressing that issue according to respondents as well as their evaluation of the House's performance in this regard

The most important political Arab issue that took place since the election of the current Lower House in November 2007		Did the Lower House have a role in addressing this issue?				Satisfaction with the performance of the current Lower House regarding the identified issue among the respondents who said the Lower House had a role in addressing it
Issue	%	Yes	No	Don't know	Total	%
The war on Gaza	66	77	17	6	100	78
The Palestinian cause in general	11	74	23	4	100	66
Other	5	59	30	11	100	55
Don't know/Don't	17					
Total	100					

II. The independence of the current Lower House and the determinants of deputy voting

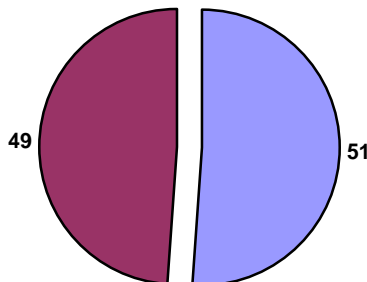
This section aims to identify public opinion trends with regard to the independence of the current Lower House from the executive authority and the influential social, political and economic powers in the Jordanian society. It also aims to identify the factors that influence voting trends in the Lower House and the main determinants affecting the way its members vote.

- **Lower House independence**

In terms of the extent of the independence of the current Lower House from the executive authority, **13% of respondents** said that the Lower House enjoyed a great degree of **independence** from the executive authority, while **19%** said that the House was **absolutely not independent** from the executive authority. In contrast, **23%** said they did not know the extent of the independence of the Lower House from the executive authority. The arithmetic mean of respondents' answers shows that the majority of the Jordanian public, represented by 51 of respondents, believes that the current Lower House is not independent from the executive authority, while 49% of respondents said the House enjoyed independence from the executive authority to varying degrees (high, fair, low).

Figure 5: Public opinion trends vis-à-vis the independence of the current Lower House from the executive authority

■ Does not enjoy independence from the executive authority
■ Enjoys independence from the executive authority



As for the extent to which members of the current Lower House were pressured by political, economic, media and social powers to vote in a particular direction, the results showed that public opinion is divided into three main groups in this respect. The first group believed that MPs were pressured to vote in a particular direction; the second group believed that MPs were not pressured; while the third group said they did not know whether or not MPs were pressured to vote in a particular direction. As Table 7 shows, between 35 and 53% of respondents said MPs were pressured to vote in a particular direction by: the government, a minister, the security apparatus, individuals with political influence from outside of the government, senior economists, tribal leaders, relatives, leaders in their districts, constituencies, or the press.

More than 75% of respondents who said MPs were exposed to pressures to vote in a particular direction believed that MPs responded to such pressures, with more than three quarters of them saying that MPs responded to pressures from: the government, a minister, individuals with political influence, senior economists, leaders in their districts, relatives, and tribal leaders. The public believed that the MPs were less responsive to pressures from their constituencies and the local press, as two thirds of the respondents who reported that MPs were pressured by their constituencies and the local press said that MPs responded to these pressures.

Table 7: The extent to which MPs were pressured by political, social and economic powers, and the extent to which they responded to such pressure

MPs were exposed to pressure from:	Yes %	No %	Don't Know	Percentage who said that MPs responded to these pressures among the group of respondents who said they were exposed to such pressures
Tribal leaders	53	31	16	76
The government in general	49	31	21	84
Community leaders in their electoral districts	49	34	18	76
Their Relatives	47	38	15	74
Ministers	36	39	25	75
Senior economists	36	37	27	77
Security agencies	35	42	24	79
Individuals with political influence from outside the government	35	38	27	79
Local press	35	44	21	66
Their constituencies	34	50	17	66

- **Determinants of the performance of MPs**

As for the trends of Jordanian public opinion regarding the determinants of the performance of MPs in the current Lower House since its election, the results indicated a split regarding whether or not the MPs exhibited courage and bravery in carrying out their activities. 50% of respondents said the MPs were courageous and brave, while 42% said the MPs were not. 48% of respondents reported that MPs did not defend the interests of their constituencies, compared to 42% who said MPs did defend those interests. Less than one third of respondents, or 31%, said MPs held the government accountable, while 52% said MPs did not hold the government accountable. The majority of the public, or more than 60%, agreed that MPs expressed the views of the government rather than those of their constituencies, and that their main concern was to provide services for their friends and relatives. In other words, the Jordanian public believes that MPs in the current Lower House did not express the views of their constituencies, and that their performance was driven by two primary concerns: the relationship with the executive authority, and the attainment of personal gains.

Table 8: The most important factors influencing the performance of MPs in the current Lower House according to public opinion

	Agree	Oppose	Don't know
MPs' main concern is to provide special services for their friends, acquaintances and relatives	64	26	10
MPs' primary concern is to establish their influence in their electoral districts	62	26	12
MPs express the views of the government and not of their constituencies	60	29	11
MPs are courageous and brave in carrying out their activities	50	40	10
MPs' main concern is to defend the interests of their constituencies	42	48	10
MPs are not independent from the influence of the security agencies	41	39	20
MPs' main concern is to hold the government accountable	31	52	17

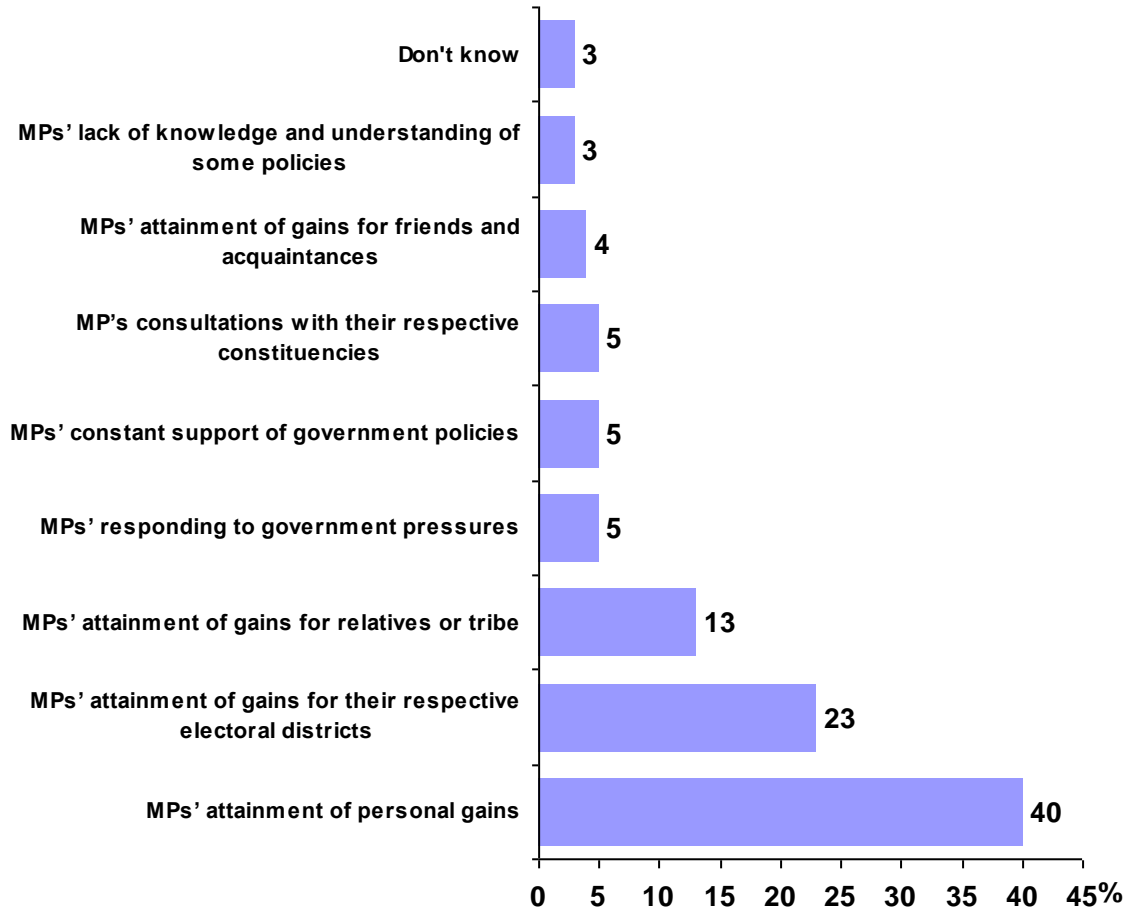
The poll results showed that the majority of the public is virtually in agreement (more than three quarters of respondents) regarding Gender factors that played an integral role in shaping MPs' performance in the current Lower House: MPs' attainment of personal gains, 79%, MPs' attainment of gains for relatives or tribe, 79%, MPs' attainment of gains for friends and acquaintances, 76%, MPs' constant support of government policies, 75%, MPs' responding to government pressures, 71%. In contrast, 65% identified MPs' attainment of gains for their respective electoral districts as a primary factor in shaping their performance, while 55% said MP's consultations with their respective constituencies played a role in shaping their performance.

Table 9: Percentages of respondents who said that the following factors influenced the performance of MPs in the current Lower House

Factor	%
MPs' attainment of personal gains	79
MPs' attainment of gains for relatives or tribe	79
MPs' attainment of gains for friends and acquaintances	76
MPs' constant support of government policies	75
MPs' responding to government pressures	71
MPs' lack of knowledge and understanding of some policies	70
MPs' attainment of gains for their respective electoral districts	65
MP's consultations with their respective constituencies	55

The most important factor influencing MPs' performance in the current Lower House from among the abovementioned factors was MPs' attainment of personal gains according to 40% of respondents, MPs' attainment of gains for their respective electoral districts according to 23%, and MPs' attainment of gains for relatives or tribe according to 13%.

Table 6: The most important factor influencing MPs' performance in the current Lower House



III. Following the current Lower House's activities and MPs' communication with their constituencies

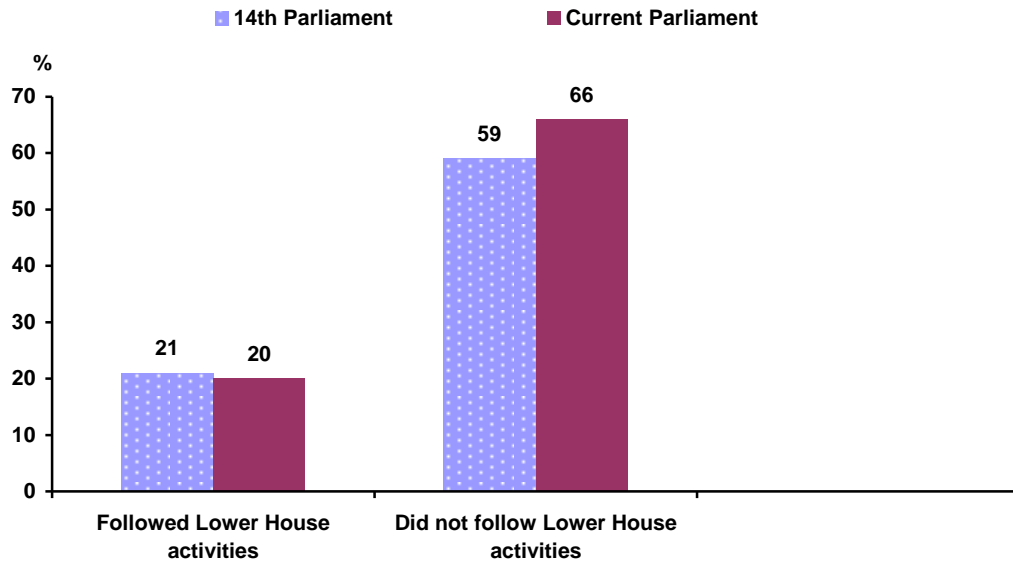
This section aims to identify the extent to which citizens followed the activities of the current Lower House, and to gauge respondents' views about the extent to which MPs of the current Lower House communicated with citizens in general and with citizens in their districts in particular.

- **Following the activities of the current Lower House**

The poll results showed that the majority of respondents did not follow the activities of the current Lower House. **60%** of respondents said they **did not follow** the activities of the Lower House at all, in contrast to 3% who said they followed Lower House activities to a great extent. The arithmetic mean of respondents' answers as a percentage shows that 20% of respondents did follow Lower House activities to varying degrees (high, fair, low).

When comparing the results of this poll with those of the poll evaluating the performance of the former Lower House (14th Parliament), the percentages of those who followed Lower House activities in both polls were almost identical. The results showed that respondents followed Lower House activities more during periods of political controversy in the country and during discussion of state budgets.

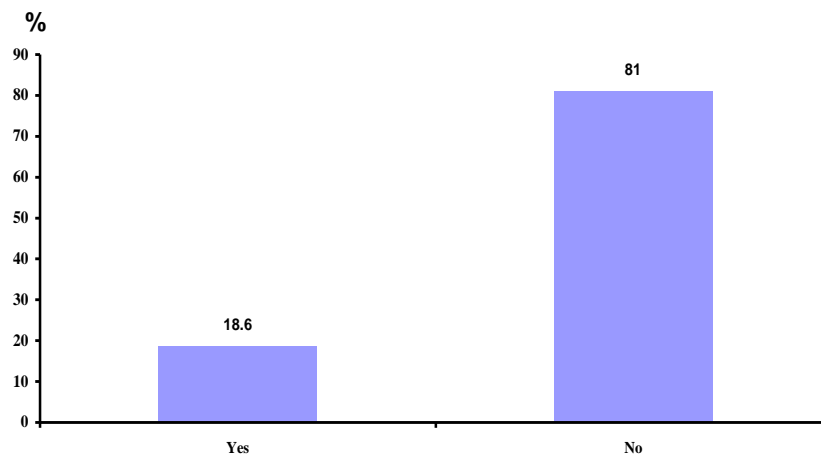
Figure 7: Respondents who said they followed activities of the 14th Parliament and the current Lower House



- **MPs' communication with citizens**

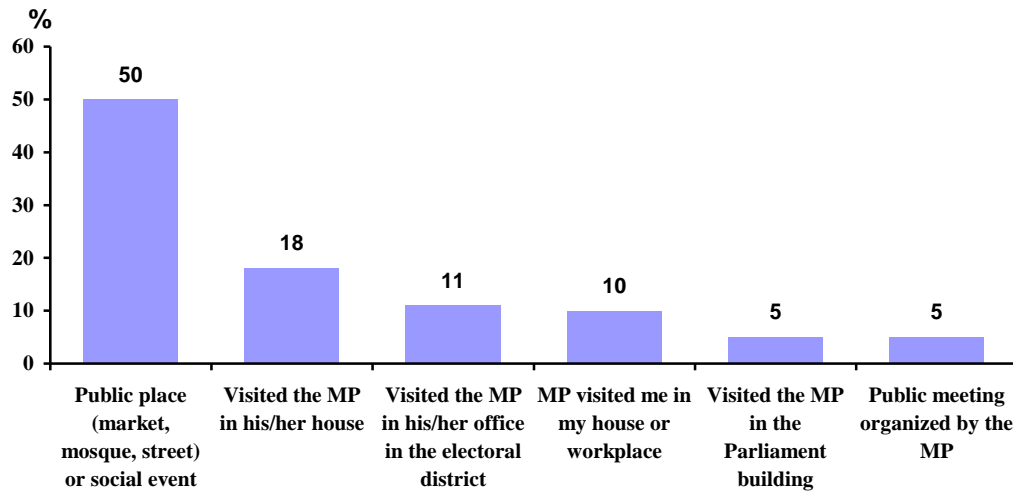
As for communication between the current Lower House and citizens, the results showed that 18.6% said that they had met an MP since he/she was elected, while 81% reported that they had not met any MPs.

Figure 8: Have you met an MP of the current Lower House since he/she was elected (%)?



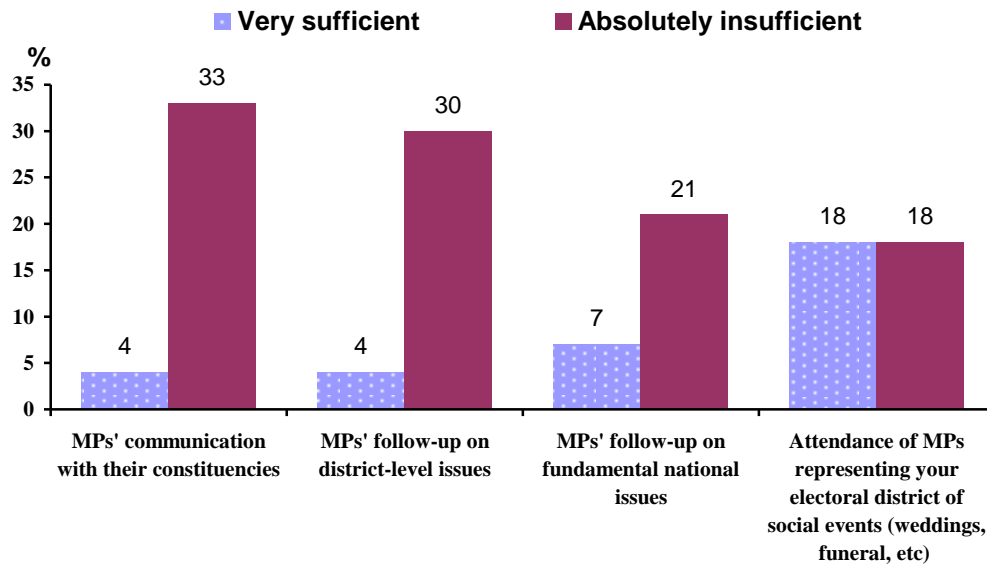
Regarding the place where respondents said they met an MP, the most common answer was in public places such as a market, street or mosque, or in a social event such as a Jaha, wedding, banquet, or funeral. The second most common answer was during a visit to the MP’s house, 18%, a meeting in the Parliament building, 11%, and a meeting organized by the MP, 5%.

Figure 9: Respondents who reported that they met any of the current Lower House members since they were elected by meeting place



Respondents evaluated the performance of the current Lower House in terms of its communication with citizens as negative, as 4% said that MPs’ communication with their constituencies and their follow-up on issues relevant to their electoral districts was very sufficient, while 33% and 30% respectively said it was absolutely insufficient. 18% of respondents said their electoral district MPs’ attendance of social events (weddings, funerals, banquets) was very sufficient, while 18% said it was absolutely insufficient.

Figure 10: Respondents who said that MPs' communication with their constituencies and follow-up on district-level and national issues as well as fulfilling their social obligations was very sufficient or absolutely insufficient



The arithmetic mean of these responses as a percentage shows that the public evaluated MPs' communication with their constituencies as unsuccessful (the level for success being 50% or above). 31% of respondents said that their respective MPs' communication with their constituencies was sufficient, to varying degrees (high, fair, low), 34% said that their respective MPs' follow-up on problems and issues specific to their electoral districts was sufficient, and 42% said that their respective MPs' follow-up on fundamental national issues was sufficient. The public evaluated their respective MPs' fulfillment of their social obligations (attending weddings, funerals, etc.) as successful with 52%.

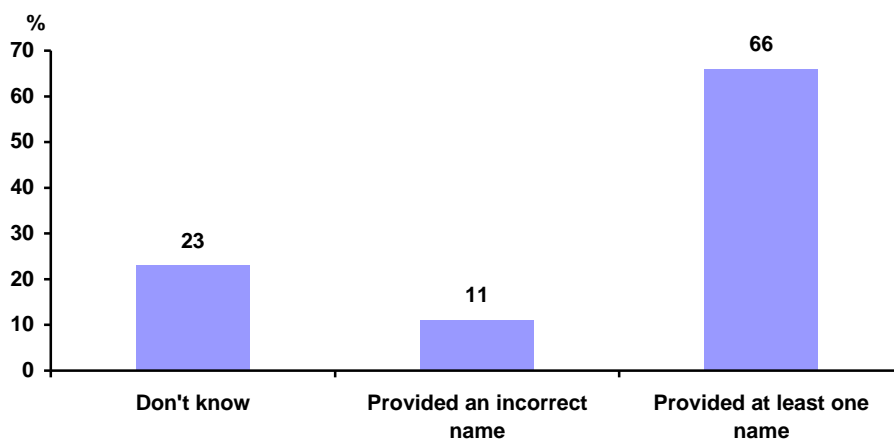
Respondents distributed by governorate evaluated their respective MPs' communication with their constituencies and follow-up on district problems and issues as well as fundamental national issues as unsuccessful. The majority of respondents in each governorate said their respective MPs did not communicate with their constituencies, or follow-up on district or national issues. The sole exception was Mafraq where 51% of respondents said their respective MPs followed-up on fundamental national issues.

Table 10: Respondents who said that MPs' communication with their constituencies and follow-up on district-level and national issues as well as fulfillment of their social obligation was sufficient to varying degrees (arithmetic mean)

	% of all respondents	Governorate											
		Capital	Balqa	Zarqa	Madaba	Irbid	Mafraq	Jerash	Ajloun	Karak	Tafilah	Ma'an	Aqaba
MPs' communication with their constituencies	31	31	24	33	28	32	30	37	31	30	23	37	33
MPs' follow-up on problems and issues specific to their electoral districts	34	34	31	37	31	32	37	39	32	29	27	36	34
MPs' follow-up on fundamental national issues	42	41	38	47	39	41	51	41	32	40	39	45	41
MPs' fulfillment of their social obligations (attending weddings, funerals, etc.)	52	50	52	58	44	53	65	64	43	43	47	52	41

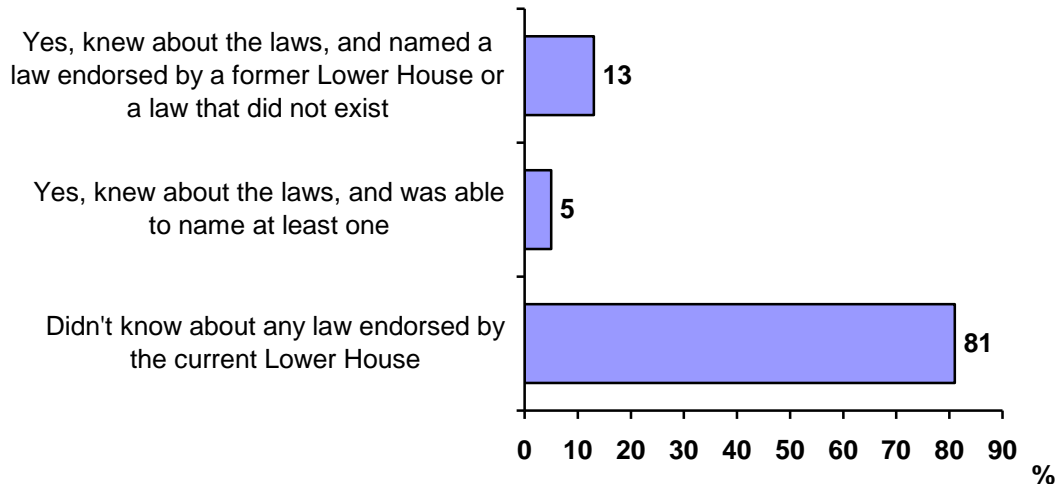
The very limited level of following the activities of the current Lower House is reflected in the citizens' knowledge of the House. 23% of respondents said they did not know their electoral district MPs, while 11% provided names for their respective MPs that did not correspond to any current MPs but were largely names of former MPs. Respondents who were able to name one or more MPs constituted 66%.

Figure 11: Respondents who were not able to name their electoral district MPs



Respondents have limited knowledge of the laws endorsed by the current Lower House since its election, as 81% said they could not identify any law endorsed by the current Lower House, while 19% reported that they knew about the laws endorsed by the current House. Nonetheless, only 5.3% were able to name at least one law.

Figure 12: Respondents according to their knowledge of the laws endorsed by the current Lower House and their ability to name them



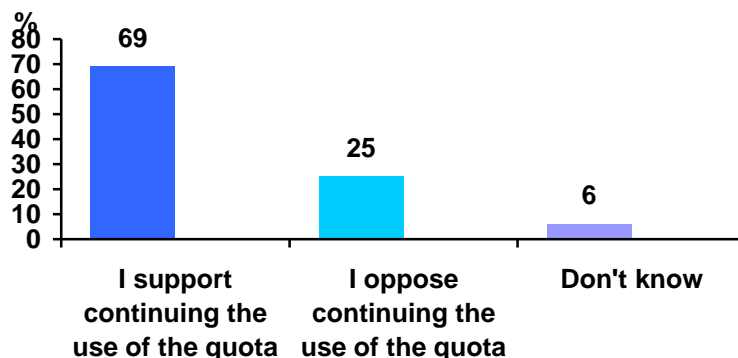
About 50% of respondents said they did not know whether or not their respective MPs directed questions to the government or to one of the ministers, proposed a draft law, or proposed questioning a minister.

IV. Performance evaluation of female MPs in the current Lower House

The elections for the current Lower House were conducted with a “women’s quota”, as were the elections for the previous Lower House. The quota stipulated the election of six female MPs. The current Lower House has six female MPs elected on the basis of the “quota” and a seventh elected through open competition. This poll aimed to assess public opinion regarding the women’s quota system as well as the performance of the women MPs.

The results showed that the majority of the public, 69%, supported continuing the women’s “quota”, while 25% opposed it and 6% stated that they had no opinion about the “quota.” It is important to note that 62% of respondents in the October, 2007 poll supported the quota system.

Figure 13: Respondents supporting and opposing continuing the use of the women’s quota



Comparing the performance of female MPs to that of their male counterparts in the current Lower House, 20% of respondents stated that the performance of female MPs was better than that of male MPs, 39% said their performance was equal to that of the men, and 25% said it was worse than that of the male MPs. 16% of respondents said they did not know.

Comparing the performance evaluation of female MPs in the current Lower House with that of female MPs in the former Lower House (14th Parliament), the results showed a slight improvement in the performance of female MPs in the current House.

Table 11: Performance evaluation of the female MPs in the current Lower House and in the 14th Parliament

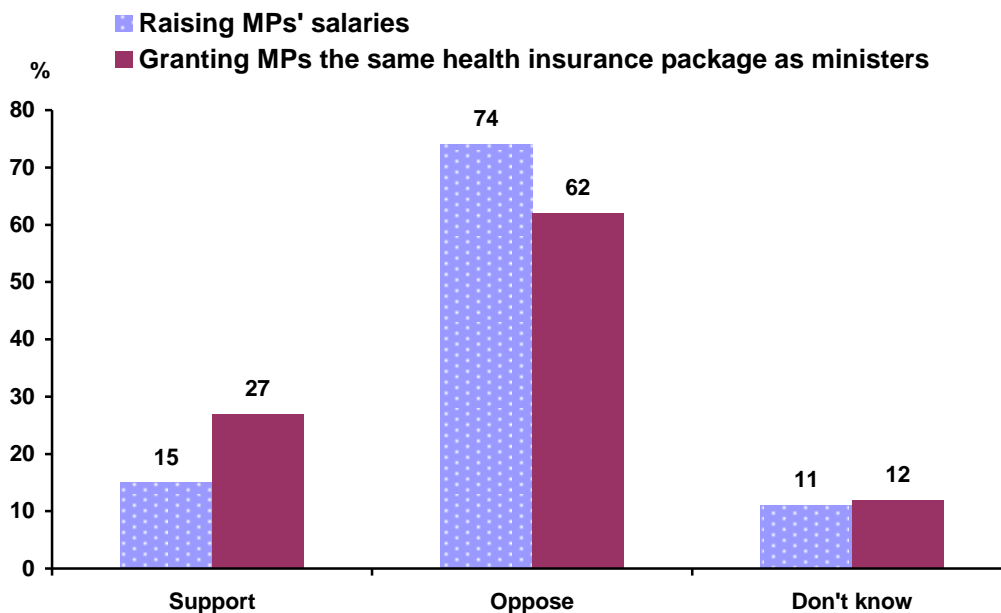
	performance of female MPs in the current Lower House	performance of female MPs in the former Lower House 2007 Poll
The performance of female MPs is better than that of male MPs	20	16
Is equal to that of male MPs	39	36
Is worse than that of male MPs	25	27
Don't know	16	21

V. The Public's evaluation of the privileges accorded to MPs

During the current Lower House's term, MPs' monthly salaries were raised and they were granted health insurance parallel to that accorded to ministers. In addition, governments and some institutions have been accustomed to granting privileges to MPs of the current Lower House and previous Lower Houses. This section of the poll aims to identify the public's views regarding these matters.

In general, there is significant opposition to the raise in MPs' salaries or the amendment to their health insurance packages. 15% of respondents supported the raise in MPs' salaries while 74% opposed, and 11% said they did not have an opinion. 27% of respondents supported granting MPs the same health insurance package as ministers, while 62% opposed and 12% chose not to give an opinion.

Figure 14: The public's views regarding the raise in MPs' salaries and granting them the same health insurance package accorded to ministers



Additionally, the Jordanian public does not support the governments' and some institutions' habit of granting MPs other privileges. While granting each MP financial and in-kind assistance to distribute to the poor, or grants that MPs distribute among needy students were supported by more than half of respondents (56% and 55% respectively), more than one third of respondents opposed them. 56% of the public opposed the allocation of a number of positions to each MP, while 36% supported this practice. Two thirds of the Jordanian public opposed

waiving the customs fees of MPs' vehicles, while 24% of respondents supported this privilege. Three quarters of respondents opposed allowing MPs to sell their vehicle customs fee waivers, while 25% supported this practice. Half of the Jordanian public opposed allocating university seats for MPs or granting a number of visas for the Hajj to each MP for distribution.

Table 15: Governments' and some institutions' practice of granting privileges to MPs: Do you support or oppose the government's or some institutions' granting of...

	Support	Oppose	Don't know
Granting each MP financial and in-kind assistance to distribute to the poor	56	37	7
Allocating grants that MPs distribute among students	55	39	6
Allocating a number of visas for the Hajj to each MP and for distribution	42	50	8
Allocating university seats for MPs	41	51	8
Allocating a number of positions to each MP	36	56	8
Waiving the customs fees of MPs' vehicles	24	66	10
Allowing MPs to sell their vehicle customs fee waivers	15	74	11

Summary: The current Lower House, public opinion and the ongoing decline in confidence

The Lower House represents one of the main pillars in the structure of the Jordanian State, based on its status as a central locus of legislative power and as one of the three authorities stipulated by the Constitution. The House is also extremely important because its members are elected directly by the citizens, representing them and expressing their views as well as acting as their deputies in governing practice. The Lower House, representing the citizens, is the institution that monitors, questions and holds the executive authority accountable. Therefore, the public's evaluation of their constitutionally-founded representative institution is immensely important, as it reflects the extent of citizens' confidence in this institution, the extent to which it represents them and the reflection of these trends on political participation.

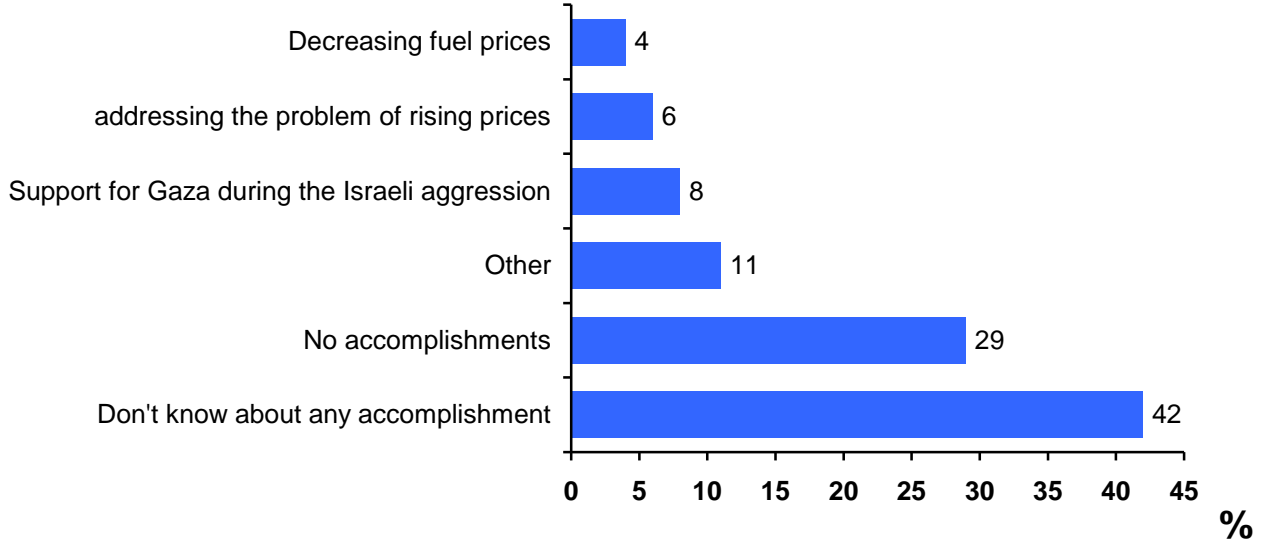
The public's evaluation of the current Lower House since its election was negative, as the majority of the public said that they were unsatisfied with the House's performance in general or with their district MPs. Likewise, the evaluation of the current House with regard to its success in carrying out its constitutional duties was not positive. The same result applied to the evaluation of the House's performance in addressing major and current issues that the Jordanian society is facing, such as: fighting corruption, enhancing freedoms, economic and foreign policy, and privatization. More than half of the Jordanian public agreed that the Lower House did not play any role in addressing these issues.

Similarly, the public's evaluation of the extent of the House's communication with citizens in general and of MPs communication with the citizens in their electoral districts was negative. This evaluation explained the presence of a wide segment of the public that did not follow the activities of the House and did not have any connection with or knowledge of the affairs of the House or the MPs. Likewise, public opinion trends regarding the determinants of MP performance and their voting within the House were negative. The public believed that the most important determinant of the performance of MPs was the **attainment of personal gains**. Meanwhile, the public was divided in its assessment of the Lower House's independence from the executive authority. A considerable percentage of the public believed that the MPs were subject to pressures from social, political and economic powers and that they responded to these pressures. Additionally, the majority of the public stood in opposition to the privileges that MPs can or do obtain. The negative evaluation of the performance of the current Lower House may have impacted the public's limited following and cumulative lack of knowledge of its activities, evidenced by the notable percentage of the public expressing lack of knowledge of the current Lower House, its members and its activities.

This type of evaluation leads to a lack of interest in the House and the decrease in citizens' knowledge of the House and its role in the society and state. Further, it occasions decline in the level of citizens' confidence in the House, contributing to decline in the representative quality of the House as an institution, in addition to increases in the percentage of the public indifferent to political action in its legislative and constitutional framework. There are a number of indications of this situation:

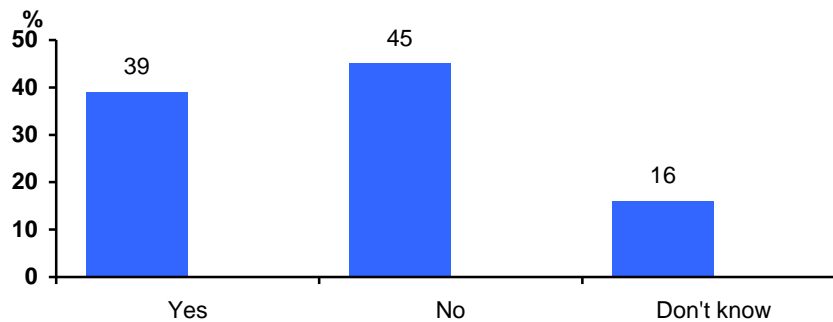
- 42% of the Jordan public stated that they did not know what the most important achievement of the current Lower House was since its election, while 29% of respondents said that this Lower House had not accomplished anything. In other words, about three quarters of the Jordanian public (71%) were unable to name any accomplishment achieved by this House. Meanwhile 8% of the public stated that support for Gaza during the Israeli aggression was the most important accomplishment, while 6% of respondents identified addressing the issue of rising prices as the most important achievement, followed by decreasing fuel prices at 4% of respondents. It may be important to note that the House's role in the accomplishments identified by respondents was limited to discussion and did not involve creating tangible policy. This is especially applicable with regard to the decrease in fuel prices, which was the result of the international decrease in the price of oil.

Figure 15: Public opinion trends with regard to the most important achievement of the current Lower House since its election



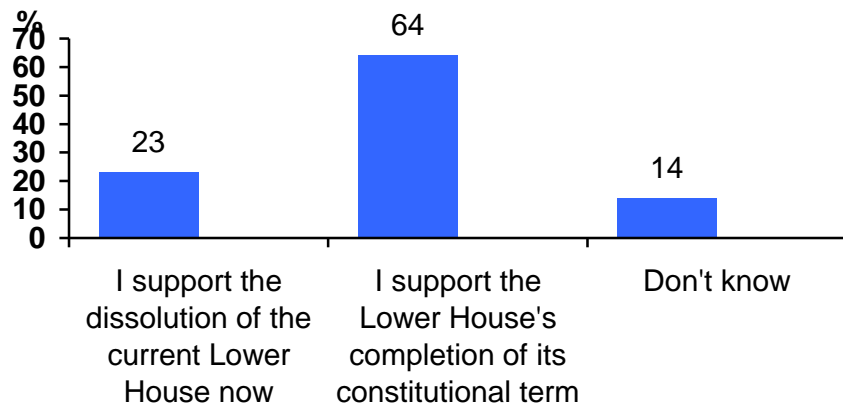
- The majority of the public's inability to name any accomplishment of the current Lower House and their negative evaluation of the House's carrying out of its constitutional tasks or communication with citizens reflects the fact that the public is not optimistic that this House's performance will rise to the level of citizens' aspirations during the remainder of its term. 45% of respondents stated that the House's performance will not rise to the level of citizens' aspirations. In other words, only about one third of the public continues to hope that the performance of the current Lower House will improve.

Figure 16: Respondents according to their expectations regarding whether the Lower House's performance will rise to the level of their aspirations during the remainder of its term



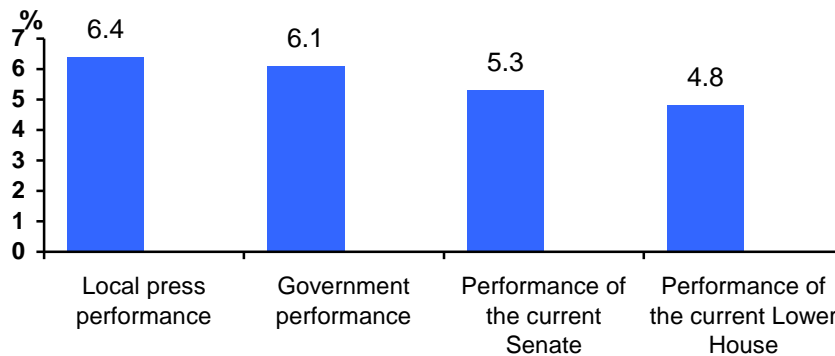
- The evaluation of the House’s overall performance and the lack of hope that this performance will improve during the remainder of the House’s term is reflected in the fact that about one quarter of the public (23%) supports the dissolution of the current House before the completion of its constitutional term.

Figure 17: Respondents according to their support either of the current Lower House’s dissolution or its completion of its term



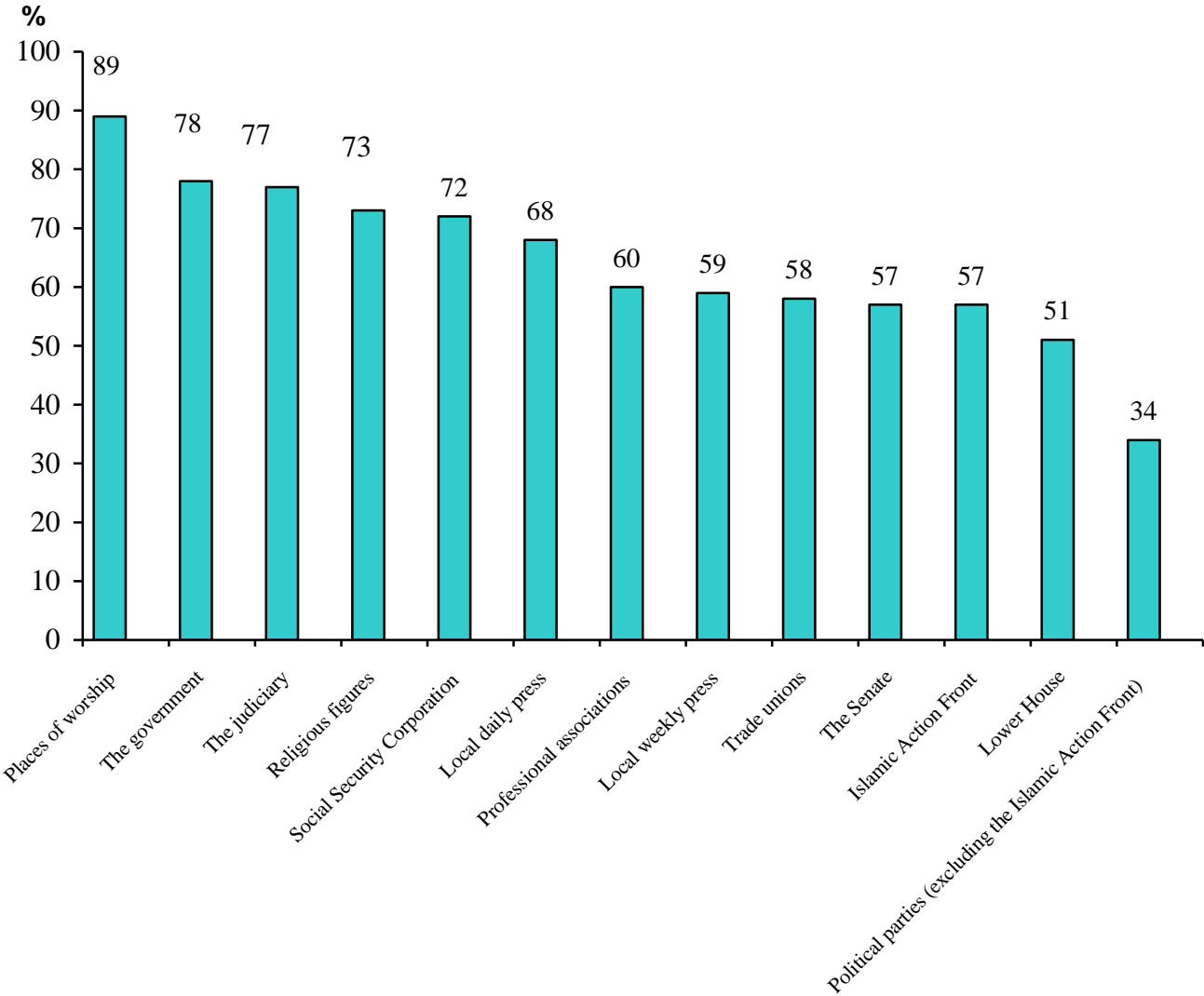
- This generally negative evaluation of the Lower House’s performance explains the extent of its representation of citizens: on a scale of 1-10, with 1 meaning that the performance of the House does not correspond to citizens’ views and 10 meaning that it corresponds exactly to those views, poll results showed that the public stated that the current Lower House’s performance **corresponded with citizens’ views at the level of 4.8** out of 10 points. In other words, the extent of the agreement between the House’s performance and citizens’ aspirations was less than half. When comparing the agreement between the performance of the current government, the current Senate and the local press and citizens’ aspirations, we find that the performance of the press (6.4) was closest to the views of the citizens, followed by the government (6.1), the current Senate (5.3), and the Lower House.

Figure 18: On a scale of 1-10, to what extent did the performance of the Lower House, the Senate, the government and the local press agree with your views?



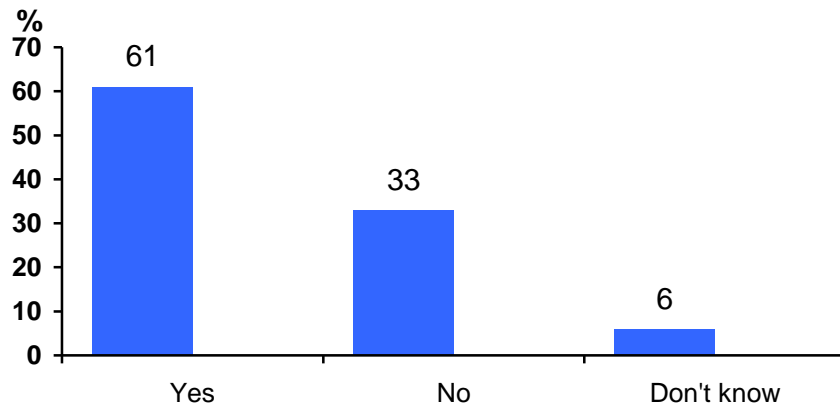
- This negative evaluation of the performance of the current Lower House impacts the extent of citizens' **confidence in the "institution of the Lower House"**, as 51% of respondents said they were confident in the institution to varying degrees (high, fair, low), while 49% said they had no confidence in the institution of the Lower House. This means that the public is divided regarding the extent of its confidence in the Lower House as the institution constitutionally sanctioned to represent the citizens. Moreover, comparing this level of confidence with citizens' confidence in **various institutions** within the framework of the State and Jordanian society revealed that the public had more confidence in the following institutions: the daily and weekly local press, the judiciary, the Social Security Corporation, the Senate, the Islamic Action Front, places of worship, professional associations and trade unions, religious figures, and the government.

Figure 19: The public's trust in official and non-official institutions and entities. The arithmetic mean expressed as a percentage



In addition to the impact of the overall negative evaluation of the current House's performance on citizens' confidence in the institution of the Lower House and its representation of citizens, it also has an effect on the **extent of citizens' involvement in the political process** in general and their participation in the electoral process in particular. When respondents were asked if they would participate if parliamentary elections were to be held tomorrow, 61% of the public in Jordan said that they would vote in parliamentary elections were they to be held tomorrow, while 33% said that they would not participate in such an election and 6% were undecided.

Figure 20: Were parliamentary elections to be held tomorrow, would you vote?



- The majority of respondents (69%) who said that they would not vote were parliamentary elections to be held tomorrow attributed their decision not to participate to their lack of confidence that the Lower House works in the interest of the citizens. In other words, the performance of the House contributes to the rise in reluctance to participate in elections and subsequently contributes to the decline in the number of citizens involved in political participation and activities within the legal framework in general.

Table 16: The reasons provided by respondents who said they would not participate in parliamentary elections were they to be held tomorrow

%	
69	Lack of confidence that the Lower House works in the interest of the citizens
6	Not concerned with the elections
5	Because MPs are only concerned with achieving personal interests rather than citizens' interests
4	Lack of appropriate candidates
2	Because the elections are rigged
1	Because the Lower House represents the government
1	I don't want elections
11	Other
2	Don't know
100	Total

The level of negativity in the public's evaluation of the Lower House's performance indicated by the results of this poll definitely contributes to entrenching the ongoing decline in citizens' confidence in the current House.

A political climate that involves a continuous decline in citizens' confidence in their representatives MPs indicates that the political climate is not healthy and lacks the necessary requirements for balance. Further, this situation contributes to the level of confidence in the institution of the "Lower House" generally and leads to a decrease in citizens' interest in this institution and a decline in public knowledge of this institution and its functions.

The decline in citizens' confidence in the Lower House could negatively impact their confidence in other state institutions. Likewise, this decline in confidence and the House's loss of its representative role are the main reasons for the atmosphere of indifference regarding involvement in political action within constitutional and legal frameworks. These factors also contribute to citizens' reluctance to interact with institutions and constitutional and legal structures and their lack of confidence in the ability of institutional frameworks to express their concerns politically, and therefore to change the realities they face.

If the Lower House and its members do not work to improve their performance with regard to the House's constitutional duties, and to contribute in a serious and tangible manner to the issues with constant presence in the public sphere, as well as to act quickly to establish tools for active and non-traditional communication between the Lower House and its members and the assembly of voters, the decline in trust between the citizens and the House will worsen. Further, the statement that the performance of the House is limited to its members working to obtain personal privileges and gains will be strengthened, and the representative quality of the House will be lost. This eventuality could add to the erosion in citizens' confidence in the state's major institutions.