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Al-Bayan Center for Planning and Studies

The outcome of the provincial elections. The first foot is for those who master the art of the possible

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Introduction

The simplest concept of politics for a first-stage student in a political science major is that politics in short means “the art of the possible.” Since art means a number of human actors that are expressed visually, audio or kinetically in order to communicate ideas, the art of the possible in politics means human activities that lead to the emergence of visual, audio or kinetic actions to express what is in human minds about political attitudes and developments in his State according to the possibilities available. The recent provincial council elections, which produced winners with the opportunity to take the lead in the post-election phase, as well as losers who were unlucky to win paved this up, but this does not mean that they are outside the political equation in which the first foot possesses the mastery of the art of the possible.

First: the post-election political landscape

The 18 December 2023 provincial council elections produced a new political reality in which the language of numbers will play an important role, as seats represent an important criterion for determining which parties will form local governments. However, political understandings about new administrations in the provinces remain the most important because the democratic system in Iraq is indivisible, what is being done at the Centre after each election will be strongly present when

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talking about the names of the new governors and chairpersons of the provincial councils.

When considering the results announced by the Independent High Electoral Commission, an analysis of the current post-election landscape requires that the following quartet be discontinued:

1. Expected superiority

the “building” alliance is the largest number of seats in the provinces was not unlikely for many reasons, most notably the existence of important and influential political forces in the Alliance, as well as having a stable audience, in addition to its ability to deploy horizontally in Baghdad and the central and southern governorates, So does the State of Law coalition, which is good at dealing with election laws.

And used to be in an advanced position in the order of highest winners, whether in parliamentary or local elections, So are the two alliances of state forces and progress, each of which won seats commensurate with the masses of the two alliances.

2. The Conservatives lead

The governors of Basra, Wasit, and Karbala issued election results in their governorates after receiving 250 thousand votes separately, clearly indicating the emergence of the phenomenon of conservatives who have imposed difficult numbers in their governorates which made it difficult for other political parties to demand that they take into account the results obtained by some conservatives, which showed a new political reality in some provinces that might not affect the equation much but imposed new actors and influencers.

3. Fierce competition

The contest was not limited to the provinces where they topped the Conservative lists the other provinces where some alliances have had close results without having a comfortable majority will also see a frantic contest to elect governors and council presidents, The formation of local governments in these provinces is expected to take longer because some will remain to await political intervention to reach political understandings on important positions to ensure a majority passage of governors and council chairpersons.

Outside the calculations of the St. Lego equation.

As with the modified St. Lego mechanism, which gives more seats to those who form a larger alliance, this mechanism has caused the loss of small, even broad alliances that entered elections in more than one province. Despite this loss to most of the participating alliances, their participation was necessary for many reasons, foremost among which was to fight the electoral fight to benefit from this experience before contesting the upcoming parliamentary elections.

Second: Politics is the art of the possible

Reaching a minimum understanding of politics requires answering the following question: What is politics? The answer is by addressing the most important definitions of this concept, as the Columbia University Encyclopedia of Science defined it as “The science of government study, the study of the process of political practice, the study of political institutions and political behavior” while the French Leitré dictionary defined it as “the art of governing human societies,” one of the most important authors of modern political science, David Easten, viewed politics as “ a science concerned with the compulsory authoritarian distribution of values in society, “while the dictionary of

social sciences prepared under the auspices of UNESCO defined them as” means practices of humanitarian action that settle or follow the conflict between the public interest and the interests of private groups.¹

The preceding suggests that there is more than one understanding of the science of politics in the absence of agreement on a single definition, and this leads to a view of politics from four different perspectives²:

First view: The science of politics is linked to the State and the Government, as it is a science that examines the relationship of individuals with the State, or whatever falls within the interest of the State domestically or externally.

Second view: The science of politics must not be limited to the State or the Government, but must go to other cultural, social, and economic institutions and local formations.

The third view was based on the concept of David Easton, who took a compromise position between the first and second looks. Here, emphasis is placed on the political practice of government and the exclusion of the institutions mentioned in the preceding point, unless they are in the public interest or affect or are influenced by the conduct of the political process, that is, the inclusion of these institutions with the concerns of political science is conditional on their political character.

Fourth view: It believes in the existence of human differences. Proponents of this view believe that politics exists wherever there are human differences, including the existence of more than one race or component, different interests, and other differences in which politics plays an essential role in their settlement.

In addition to the above definitions and classifications, some believe

1. Nizam Barakat et al., *Principles of Political Science*, p. 16,

2. *Ibid.*, p. 17

that politics is the art of the possible that leads to victory for those who persevere, party, and work for its gains. It can turn into the art of the impossible if the opposite happens.

This was used in the 19th century, specifically in the era of political leader and politician von Bismarck, who believed that politics was the art of the possible. That is, to reach what is achievable, or to achieve the best options available this concept was then widely shared from different perspectives, Diplomat and economist Kenneth Galbraith saw politics as the art of the possible that leads to a choice between disaster and less bad conditions. Although there are many opinions about the art of the possible, most politicians use this term in its positive form because they believe it refers to intelligence, maneuverability, and the ability to operate within the political system in its various directions³.

Some also tried to suggest that politics could be the art of the impossible from a philosophical perspective citing the fact that when a person believes that it is impossible to become head of state, Because of his inexperience and his unwillingness to engage in politics or that some are more deserving and more efficient than him. And then time passes, and he becomes president, the impossible has been achieved in this case through politics. The realistic view of this example is that as far as possible some tried to portray it as impossible, As a result, politics is “the art of the difficult possible that some see as impossible.”⁴

Third: Analyzing the results and conditions of provincial council elections according to the concept of political science requires placing them among the four perspectives that govern relations between political forces that have become influential in the post-election scene:

1- Relationship between politics and the State: The first look

3. <https://tinyurl.com/yoou27qx>

4. Abdul Rahman Al-Fadil, *White Ideas: Fragments of Life*, The Modern Rehab Foundation for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2016, p. 36.

resulting from the analysis of definitions of political science links this science to the State and the Government that is, regulating the relationship between individuals and the State, which only imposes itself after council elections, which some view as a natural product of constitutional entitlement. While others believe it has carried many surprises, in both cases the councils will be the link between the masses and the authority, whether local in the province or central in Baghdad. In addition, the presence of provincial councils is essential in this part, as they are concerned with the most precise service details in the governorate. This has been absent over the past years because the work of the House of Representatives is a regulatory legislature unrelated to local services. And even if it does, it is on a very limited scale. As a result, the return of provincial councils represents the restoration of an important link through which the success of the decentralized experiment can be tested as a form of power exercise in Iraq. and this requires proficiency in the political role because the winners here will focus on the entitlements produced by the election results based on the view that the councils are the link between the masses and power, Consequently, it is necessary to draw on the results that reflect the will of the public.

2- Politics is not limited to the State: the understanding of politics as dealing with cultural, social, and economic institutions, and other formations finds itself in local institutions more than anything else. including provincial councils, which will find themselves directly concerned with various aspects of the life of a political nature, What distinguishes the existence of local councils is that they are in direct contact with citizens and their interests all the time. other than legislative assemblies, which are far from these details because their work is censored and legislated, If the councilman deals realistically with the concerns of the local population, that could entrench its work and prompt the masses to demonstrate for its continuation, not demand

its abolition as in the past. This view will be flexible in giving priority to the interest of preserving the importance of all winners receiving benefits in local governments.

3- Political practice: Although provincial councils exist for administrative decentralization, this does not mean that there is no political influence in their subsequent formation or functioning, which means that a combination of advanced political awareness and decentralized action can produce successful and achievable provincial councils. Starting from this understanding can facilitate the process of forming councils and reduce dialogues about entitlements because the interlocutors will look more at the political gains and local achievements than at the understanding enshrined in the consensus in Iraq, which was adopted on the basis that political entitlements are as much as the seats each political entity receives.

4- Resolution of human differences. The fourth view emphasizes that politics is one of the most important tools for resolving human differences between groups of society that have already arisen for political or other reasons. In this case, the test will be clear to discover which side is proficient in politics as the art of the possible. and the formation of councils based on the interest of the governorates, whether through the effective application of electoral entitlements or through political settlements that can satisfy local interests, since politics is concerned with humanitarian practices that settle or follow the conflict between the public interest and the interests of private groups as defined by UNESCO.

Fourth: Win for those who master the art of the possible

The countdown to the selection of governors and new provincial council presidents began after the Independent High Electoral Commission announced the final results of the election on December

28, 2023, after which the skill of mixing the seat balance and accumulated political experience to win as much as possible.

Looking at the findings announced by the Commission reveal the inaccuracy of talk of complexity in the political scene because of the results in some governorates, while acknowledging that there are some difficulties, they do not reach the stage of complexity or blockage as a result of previous experiences in the provincial councils that proved that dialogue should be present when talking about entitlements in the governorates s art, which seeks to achieve the best available options.

It seems settled for the Coordination Framework alliances in Baghdad, where they have more than half the seats, paving the way for them to become governors or any other location they wish. and obtained a comfortable majority in the governorates of Najaf, Qadisiyah, Maysan, Muthanna, Babylon, and Dhi Qar. The scenario in these provinces is expected to be similar to what will happen in Baghdad as a result of the majority required to choose governors.

The need for the “art of the possible” will be present in the governorates of Basra, Wasit, and Karbala, where the alliances of the Coordination Framework ranked second and other ranks in the first place, which went to electoral lists headed by the governors of these provinces. We are expected to see an intensification of dialogues, meetings, and exchanges of views to move towards the formation of local governments because the figures announced do not encourage any party to go towards forming local government alone.

In Diyala, where the Diyala National Alliance is issued with 4 seats, it may be easier than the previous three governorates because of prior understandings, as well as the absence of any suggestion by any party after the results have emerged that it intends or can select the governor or chairman of the provincial council individually. The political scene

is also evident in the provinces of Anbar, Salah al-Din, and Nineveh, in which the leading alliances of understanding with other alliances will take the lead.

The results of the elections in Kirkuk appear to have imposed a reality that drives understanding, as none of the three Arab, Kurd, or Turkmen parties has obtained the comfortable majority that would enable them to proceed alone, meaning that the rapprochement between the number of Arab and Kurdish seats will call for dialogue with the Turkmen to reach a consensual mechanism for the administration of Kirkuk.

Conclusion:

From the foregoing, it can be said that things will lead to the settlement of differences and disparities to bring about the stability of the provinces. The scenario of forming previous governments is expected to be present when talking about the future of the provinces after the elections to prevent a repeat of the complexity of the Iraqi political landscape, which the political forces were only able to leave after they introduced politics along with the number of seats when talking about entitlements.

It is therefore difficult to talk about the formation of provincial councils without political dialogues between winners and influencers, which means that treating the post-election phase as a political file as well as an entitlement linked to the number of seats will impose itself to shorten the way for the interlocutors who will take on the task of bringing the new councils to political stability.