



Senate elections 2020

Fertile environment and non-traditional propaganda

July 2020



introduction

The return of the Egyptian consultative council elections scheduled to be held in 11, 12 August institutes to a new openness stage and to the advocacy of essential values that were missing in the Egyptian political life, such as the separation of power and advocating the state of law, and the most significant aspect of this evolutionary step is that the political regime has acknowledged that the most important state function is to advocate the institutions that leads to the process of restoring the civil state and democratization.

The declaration of the Senate Election Organization Act No. 141 for 2020, which was ratified by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on July 2, and entered into force, is an important development in the official Egyptian level. The senate elections are established for a political and partisan practice that has already begun, which recognizes political pluralism. According to the law, the Senate consists of 300 members, two thirds of those members are elected by direct secret universal suffrage, while the remaining third is appointed by the president, with the remaining 10 per cent of the total number of seats allocated to women. The election of the Senate will occur on 100 seats by the individual system, and 100 seats in the absolute closed lists system. Women have the right to be assigned to the total number of seats. Parties and independents are entitled to run in both systems.

The recollection of the council's name from the consultative council "shura" to the senate "sheikhs" was only an expression of the keenness of the authors of the 2014 constitution to consolidate democratic gains and keep pace with long-standing democracies. As the strengthening of the law for partisan competition, the Egyptian opposition must realize that there is something new has occurred in Egypt, and therefore it must be at the level of responsibility, by devoting its public presence, joining the street, and jumping on traditional and canned party practices that have been the most prominent title of Egyptian political life for the past three decades.

Rebirth A

The creation of a second legislative chamber is not alien in the political traditions of Egypt, the Shura Council was established in Egypt within constitutional amendments in 1980, but the influence of the Council in legislative practices was not present, and the majority of its recommendations and reports were not usually implemented since they were non-binding, which lost the council its value.



On the other hand, the coming elections for the senate Council scheduled for August 11 and 12 are of particular importance, after the articles governing the Senate law have granted new and unprecedented powers to the senate, under Article VII, the new Senate is specialized in studying and proposing what it sees as a means of consolidating the rules of democracy, and deepening the democratic system ,Article 8 also stipulates that the Council's opinion should be taken into the forefront, including proposals to amend one or more articles of the Constitution, treaties of reconciliation and alliance, all treaties affecting the sovereignty of the state, as well as draft laws and drafts complementary to the Constitution.

In a related context, the upcoming Senate elections seem different and exceptional from the previous ones in different aspects, for example, while the old Shura Council had many flaws in its electoral system- the Constitutional Court ruled that its electoral system is unconstitutional in many occasions- the legal structure of the new council elections has constitutional and legal durability.

On the other hand, party participation is expected to be broad in the elections scheduled for the current Senate, most political forces were reluctant to participate in the candidacy for the former Shura Council, and popular participation rates in their members' elections were superficial, even after the power expansion in 2007.

Under successive Egyptian constitutions following the 1952 revolution, there was one council, the National Assembly and then the People's Assembly, and then amendments were made in the 1971 Constitution in 1980, under which the Shura Council was established, and its competence was consulted only, which could be taken or set aside.

the new proposal suggests the return to the Shura Council under another name, the Senate, which has fewer members and on more than a condition required by a member of the House of Representatives, and this will improve the performance and avoid the legislative process acceleration and the issuance of defective laws.

The extraordinary and new features of the new Senate compared to the previous one were not limited to the above, the new council came with more stringent conditions, for example, the law of political rights has obliged every candidate to have a university degree, beside that the law of the senate have created obstacles that prevents members from changing their party membership. according to the fifth article of the law, the senate member who changes his political identity will be discharged of his membership in the senate according to a decision from the senate taken by the two thirds of its members.



particular importance

Practical political practices reveals the importance of having a second legislative chamber , and here, it is possible to understand the direction of the state towards the innovation of the Senate in the constitutional amendments passed by parliament in April 2019, given several governing considerations that led to the importance of his return, which can be explained as follows:

Attracting benefits : The importance of the Senate lies in being an incubator and an attraction to a large number of experiences, which will contribute to the benefit of the state in addition to the fact that these experiences may be a reference for the House of Representatives, especially in the enactment of social and human laws.

Therefore, the purpose of the re-establishment of the Senate is to form a specialized council under the auspices of a specialized advisory council in the study of laws complementary to the Constitution to reach the House of Representatives, and this will be achieved by the high qualification required in those who apply for the nomination, and by the authority given to the President of the Republic to appoint those with experience and scientific competence.

Preventing the abuse of power: The second legislative chamber prohibits the arbitrariness and tyranny of the legislature if the process of enacting and issuing laws is limited to one council, in addition to helping to raise the efficiency of the parliaments as it provides the opportunity to introduce highly qualified elements.

Easing the gap between the legislature and the executive powers: The second chamber contributes to the reduction of the disagreement between the executive and the legislature powers, so that if there is a disagreement between the government and the main legislative council, the second chamber can make the best of between and prevent the crisis from worsening.

Inspiration by international experiences: The Second Legislative Chamber proved to be practically successful within many of the countries that adopted this system, including France, Italy, India, Brazil, Argentina, Canada, South Africa, Australia, Japan and Switzerland. Based on recent constitutional amendments, a referendum was held on the return of the second chamber of the Parliament.



Enriching the legislative process: The Senate contributes to the enrichment of the legislative process in Egypt, which was the main task of the Shura Council previously, and will contribute to the development of basic plans for the state's public policy.

Based on the above, the existence of a second chamber within parliament guarantees the accuracy of the legal drafting of bills, which will guarantee that legislations are not passed without study and that it will not lead to problems concerning law inaccuracy, thereby, certain specifications have been set for the senate candidate, including to have experience, this is why the law has stipulated that the senate must be older than the member of the House of Representatives (older than 35 years).

A different environment

A different environment is being held in the senate elections on August 11 and 12, 2020. The upcoming elections are receiving wide partisan attention, where some parties, including wafd (the delegation), El Haraka el Wataneya (the national movement), El Gil El Dimocracy (the democratic generation), Mostakbal Watan (the future of the homeland) and el Shaab El Gomhory (the Republican people) are preparing to run in the elections of the House of Representatives and the Senate, by announcing dialogues in the coming period on entering into continuous consultations to contest the elections through alliances of a number of national forces. The upcoming senate elections also receive the attention of the Egyptian street, and we could say that the senate elections look different to what was in the past, given the state of political mobility in the country, and the rise of popular interest in the electoral process of the Senate, after expanding the role of the Council and giving it some legislative powers, not to mention that what has been witnessed in the legislative, legal, political and social environment has stimulated interest in these elections.

Hence the Monitoring and analysis of the environment under which the senate elections will be held remains important, and this can be indicated as follows:

Constitutional framework: The constitutional and legal structure of a particular political system represents the formal framework in which things are conducted in this society, and at the same time represents the most stable aspect of the political phenomenon, and from this point of view, the political system was keen to enshrine constitutional and legal reform, which is an important guarantor for promoting democratic development in this context. The decision to amend 12 articles in the constitution and add eight new articles



has qualitatively transformed Egypt's ruling elite's view of political and democratic reform issues.

In fact, the amendment of the constitution and the addition of new articles clearly illustrated the change in the structure of the Egyptian political system, which made its performance governed by broad balances and open to the future.

The most important amendments approved in 2019 were the amendment of the Law on the exercise of political rights: Some provisions of the Law on The Direct Regulation of Rights have been amended "Political" issued by Law No. 45 of 2014, ensuring that it complies with the constitutional amendments approved in April 2019.

The amendments included the right for voting and who is entitled they directly rights Political, voter database, how to register and review it and correct mistakes, identification of the electoral habitat, publicity controls in the election and referendum, the use of state media, controls of both media coverage and opinion polls, the role of civil society organizations, materials to organize the referendum and election processes, how to vote and count votes, voting of Egyptians abroad, announcement of the results, method of the removal of the candidate, voting complains, counting procedures and election crimes.

The House of Representatives Law has also been amended: in accordance with the constitutional amendments in April 2019, the law requires substantial changes in terms of the number of seats reserved for women, which has become at least a quarter of the total number of seats in the House of Representatives. the division of electoral districts, the constitutional amendments 2019 provided for the equitable representation of the population and the provinces and eliminating the equal representation of voters provided by the Constitution of 2014, in addition other amendments of the law.

On the other hand, the constitutional amendments developed the creation of a second chamber of parliament under the name of the Senate, regulated by the law passed in July, which was signed by the head of state, and included the number of members of the Council, its composition, the duration of the membership, its terms of reference and the method of election.

There are positive aspects of the constitutional amendments to the amended and added articles, the first of which is that Egypt has entered a phase of a new constitutional transformation by adopting constitutional amendments, considering that the system of government has become semi-parliamentary and parliament has become involved in the selection of the government and exercises full parliamentary control over it in the



withdrawal of confidence, and the introduction of the necessary amendments to the general budget of the state. Secondly, the amendments adopted the standards in place in the organization of judicial entities to increase their effectiveness and independence, not to mention the keenness of the amendments to grant independence to the military, in order to ensure that its efficiency is increased.

Based on the above, the constitutional amendments have had positive aspects with regard to economic investment in Egypt, due to the close relationship between political stability and attracting foreign direct investment, especially since the amendments maintained the prestige and stability of the vital institutions of the state, especially the judiciary and the military.

The political framework

The Senate elections to be held on August 11 and 12 represent an important milestone in the history of parliamentary life in Egypt, as a result of the atmosphere that precedes the electoral process, given a clear privacy compared to previous elections.

The elections were held in a state of internal political mobility, which has been in the country for nearly five years. In the past short period, the Egyptian political scene has witnessed many important changes, the first of which was the amendment of 12 articles and the addition of 8 more in 2019, including articles related to the return of the senate after its abolition to give it new legislative powers. The second is the emergence of strong trends within the political parties on their differences, to coordinate among them in order to participate in the Senate elections. The convergence and coordination has paid off. Among the parties on the formation of coalitions and party blocs is about to outline its plan in the coming days, especially after the date of the senate vote. The third variable is a remarkable recovery in the role of civil society organizations working indirectly in the political sphere, the changes witnessed in the international system, especially after the outbreak of the Corona pandemic led to the emergence of civil society as a key partner for governments in bearing the political, social and economic burdens. The role of civil society in Egypt has witnessed a remarkable development where charitable activity has begun and then evolved into a development activity that plays a real role in addressing the problems and crises facing society in the provision of social welfare, and finally its political role has emerged as a vessel through which citizens can influence the political process.



social framework

The social environment of the 2007 Shura Council midterm elections has brought together a number of phenomena:

political forces involved:

The August 11-12 Senate elections are expected to see a rise in the number of candidates. The map of the participating forces is also expected to see a rise in women's participation, especially since the recent constitutional amendments ensured better representation of women in parliamentary life, whether nominated or voted, as the law governing the Senate vote stipulated that there should be 3 women on each list if the number of members of the list was 15, and this number would reach 7 if the members of the list reached 35 candidates.

With regard to Copts, the Senate elections come amid Coptic ambitions for a more active role in Egyptian political life, especially as the Egyptian state moves towards a democracy based on citizenship.

large participation

Many new variables in the environment of the senate's electoral process may contribute to activating the voting process, especially with the restoration of confidence for many popular sectors in the electoral process of the senate after decades of non-participation, due to the conviction that the former Shura Council didn't lead to any changes.

In fact, the potential rise in participation in the upcoming senate elections is due to two reasons:

first, the voter's conviction of the importance of the Senate, especially since the recent constitutional amendments gave him more powers, not to mention pushing the executive toward empowerment of the new council. Second: The tendency of the executive authority represented by the President of the Republic to emphasize that the appointment of one third of the council will be composed of competencies without taking into account political affiliations.

the absence of political violence and negative electoral capital

The 2020 Senate election process is expected to see the absence of violence and capital control, which has long been an inherent feature of the electoral processes of previous



decades. On the other hand, the rise of political awareness among voters may contribute to the erosion of the negative phenomena that accompanied previous polls, most notably the purchase of votes (buying voters). The result of these circumstances combined was that the political parties in Egypt decided, with all their directions and orientations, especially "mostakbal watan" and others to participate in the senate vote next August.

Electoral propaganda and the covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed many politicians and ordinary people plans. Cairo is on the verge of the beginning of the Senate election campaign and the Corona case is at the forefront of political issues. And from that, the rules set by the Supreme Electoral Commission on July 4, 2020 on the protection of the voter and the citizen during the publicity and voting process in the Senate elections can be understood

- Sterilization of all electoral headquarters before voting begins.
- To observe safe distances in the polling stations.
- Assigning a competent officer by the National Electoral Commission to organize, monitor these safe distances.
- Imposing the wearing of protective muzzles at all stages of the electoral process.
- All candidates are required to advertise on social media and use loudspeakers within legally prescribed limits and suspension signs in places specified by local authorities in the provinces.
- Reducing the number of voters in each sub-committee, which will result in an increase in the number of polling stations.
- Assigning a competent staff member by the Authority to each sub-committee to identify the voter in case of confusion in his personality due to wearing a muzzle, as well as in the women's committees assigning an employee by the authority to do this work until the elections are conducted as scheduled.

-In this context, the pandemic will inevitably push for the adoption towards new patterns of electoral propaganda in the Senate vote scheduled for August 11 and 12, especially since traditional propaganda such as mass conferences and electoral rallies does not guarantee the achievement of precautionary measures taken by the state to protect its citizens, foremost among them social spacing, and reducing density. In this context,



technological alternatives are more likely to be used in electoral advertising, which can be based primarily on:

Social Media: social Media attracts a wide range of popularity, particularly social media sites " Facebook, Twitter and Instagram ", which are cheap, not to mention its ability to create popular mobilization in large circles, which are difficult to fully cover in normal material conditions.

Creating a web page and an online group: The Senate's election propaganda will be different this contest Given the continuing pandemic, popular fears of the spread of the virus are growing. In this context, the candidate can address the people of his department through a campaign website, advertising his thoughts and opinions as well as the timetable of his movements or offering his services through the website. The candidate can also launch a Facebook page and make a publicity stunt (paid advertisements).

In a related context, every candidate can create a special group (Whats APP Group), to address young people and communicate with them and exchange ideas through this group .It can also be created using a mobile application .Mobile APP, to ensure continuous and effective communication between him and his voters, or by using small propaganda films that will inform voters of the candidate and his cv as well as his political views.

Audio and video propaganda: The significant number of candidates, especially candidates at the national level, will lead to maximization of their electoral propaganda through media spaces in the audio and video media, and the state may play a central role in this context, by allocating its media platforms to different competitors.

Online broadcasting of competitors' programs: In the context of circumventing the pandemic and its potential risks, YouTube and social media sites can be used to broadcast live to the voters which provides the ability to conduct online conferences with a large number of voters, instead of relying on mass conferences.

Traditional propaganda: Some traditional propaganda patterns are indispensable in the electoral process despite the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, as traditional propaganda methods that are not based on social convergence can be used, such as banners, which will not endanger the lives of citizens. In addition to wall stickers containing pictures of the candidate or party and the highlights of his election program..

Although some tend to use electronic propaganda to circumvent the dangers of the pandemic, traditional advertising will remain a key focus, especially since electronic



advertising cannot be relied solely in order to keep up the competition, where approximately 32 per cent of the population suffers from poverty and illiteracy, as well as the inability of many sectors of the Egyptian people to use social media. Electronic advertising is also not suitable for "traditional audiences" in some areas, such as tribes or remote villages and cities, whom the people there are used to personally communicate with candidates through their tours or mass conferences.

conclusion:

The environment for the new Senate elections is undergoing a clear change in the legal, constitutional, political and social frameworks. As for the legal and constitutional environment, the legal framework for organizing the election process has made a number of important adjustments over the past three decades, and they have expressed an escalating line of evolution

As for the changes in the political and social framework, it has contributed to the movement of stagnant water in Egyptian political life, and reduced the effects of negative phenomena such as nervousness and capital interference, but these variables need to be developed in order to support and reach more effective results. For example, the growth of an effective civil society cannot be abbreviated in the role of elections monitoring, but it has another duty to spread awareness of what these elections are, and to play a greater role in making comparisons between party programs, currents and intellectual and political movements on various issues. It also remains necessary to build on the party alliances that emerged in the 2015 parliament.

In a related context, these elections seem exceptional, as they coincide with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, which imposes restrictions on traditional electoral propaganda, in exchange with growing role of social media marketing and propaganda, and despite its importance and efficiency, there is difficulty in reaching poor and illiterate communities.