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### **The Spatial Analysis of the Participation Rate of the 2021 Elections at Babylon Governorate**

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#### **Abstract**

The study dealt with the four electoral districts of Babylon Governorate, which was concerned with the spatial distribution of electoral participation in Babylon Governorate in the 10/10/2021 elections. Babylon Governorate, i. e. 59.5% of the voters did not vote in the elections for the year 2021, and the participation rates in the electoral districts also varied, as the highest percentage was in the third district at 45.1% of the total voters, while the participation rate in the first district was 40.6%, the second district was 38.3% and the fourth 38.3% of all voters.

#### **Keywords**

Geographical data analysis. Natural and human, Electoral participation, Electoral district

**JEL Classifications:** J11, F43

#### **1. Introduction**

Geographical phenomena are considered a spatial space that represents a focal point for these phenomena, and because man is one of the geographical phenomena closely related to the place, his study within the spatial space that is at the heart of geographical work, and geographical distribution is a necessary point for studying geographical phenomena and an important step for understanding the behavior of different phenomena (Khabar, 1990)

Participation in the elections is one of the most important elements of the electoral process and at the same time it is an indicator of the interaction between the population of society and political leaders and expresses the participation of the people in the decision-making and selection of the ruling elite (Hussein, 2008). Participation in elections is one of the basics of democratic action, as it is not possible to discuss democracy without exposure to the participation of citizens in political life. Electoral participation is of great importance as it reflects the image of the democratic process in its positive and negative states (Mashti, 2010). The political figures who run the rule of the country (Braud, 1998) who are faithful to the electorate and take special decisions and issue their own judgments regarding the interests of their electors (Held, 2006). However, the voters casting their vote was not for the voters' participation in the elections, so there are other forms of participation in the elections such as joining a party and trying Persuading the voters to go to the polling stations and cast their votes at the polling booths (Al-Deeb, 2008). The participation of citizens in the electoral process is a reciprocal process. It is considered a right guaranteed by the law and the constitution, but in return it is a duty stemming from the social and political responsibility entrusted to citizens towards their country (Salih, 2001).

## **2. Problem of The Study**

The problem of the study was whether geographical factors have a role in the spatial variation of electoral participation in the Governorate of Babylon.

## **3. Hypothesis of the Study**

There is a strong relationship between geographical factors and the spatial variation of electoral participation in Babylon Governorate.

## **4. Objectives of the Study**

The study aims to identify the objectives of the voters in electoral participation, and to determine the extent of geographical variation between the districts of Babylon Governorate for electoral behavior according to the influence of geographical factors and the results of this impact on the volume of electoral participation.

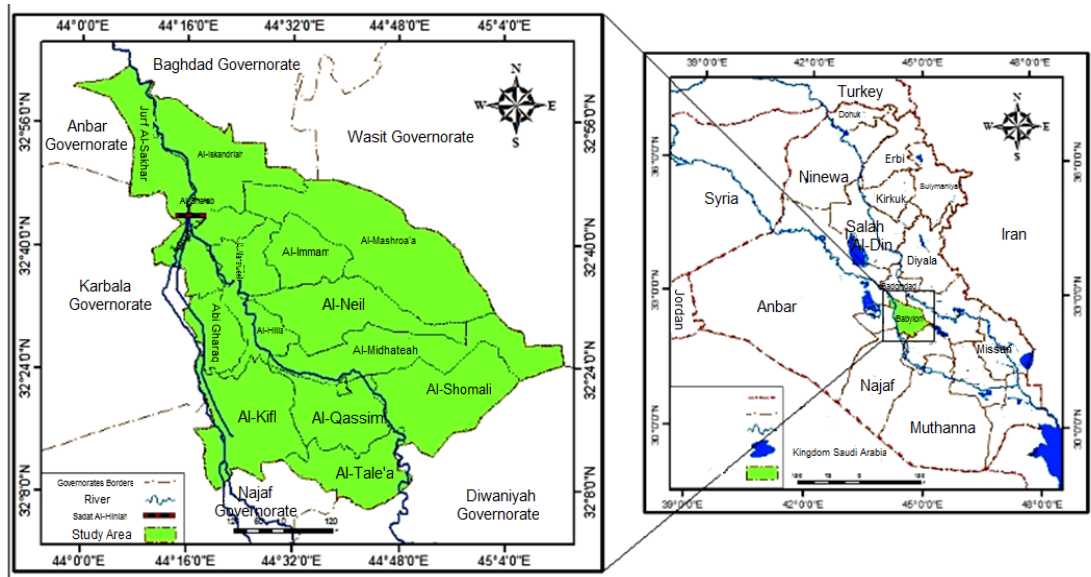
## **5. Methods of the Study**

The survey method adopted in the map style was followed as one of the good means in highlighting and clarifying the spatial variance of the electoral data. It also followed the spatial approach as it focuses on the impact of place in formulating the voting decision of the voters, and these two approaches are from the approaches used in the geography of elections.

## 6. Study Area Boundaries

The boundaries of the study area are divided into:

1- The spatial boundaries include the administrative borders of the Governorate of Babylon, which is also within the administrative borders of the Governorates of the Middle East. Babylon lies between two latitudes ( $33^{\circ} 8' - 32^{\circ} 7'$ ) in the north and between two longitudes ( $45^{\circ} 50' - 43^{\circ} 42'$ ) east as on map No. (1)



Map 1. The location of Babylon Governorate, Iraq

Source: Republic of Iraq, Ministry of Water Resources, Directorate of Public Survey, Map Production Department, Administrative Map of Iraq and Babylon Governorate, at a scale of 1:1000000, 2021.

2- The temporal limits are represented by the parliamentary elections that took place on 10-10-2021 in Babylon.

## 7. Sources of the Study

The study relied on the literature on its subject and available in library sources and official institutions. As for statistical and quantitative data, it was obtained from the Babylon Statistics Department and the High Elections Commission.

## 8. Spatial Distribution of Participation in the 10/10/2021 Elections

Electoral participation is the basis of the political process, whether it is small or large (Salih, 2001) and it has great importance as it is a basic right of citizens to choose who represents them in political life and provides them with an opportunity to discuss public issues and express public opinion (Carver, 2001) voter participation enhances the legitimacy of the ruler and embodies the value of the voter as a human being and a citizen (Boudhief, 2008).

The number of voters in Babylon Governorate reached (516100) voters out of the total number of voters (1272854) with a turnout of 40.5%. Looking at Table No. (1) and Map No. (2), the following becomes clear:

Table 1. The percentage of participants in the elections for the year 2021 according to the four constituencies

Constituency	Number of Electors	Number of Voters	Turnout Percentage %
First	332979	135407	40.6
Second	240738	92333	38.3
Third	297355	134214	45.1
Forth	401782	154146	38.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1272854</b>	<b>516100</b>	<b>40.5</b>

Source: The table is from the researcher's work based on the Independent High Electoral Commission, Babel office, unpublished data, 2021.

1- The voter turnout was 40.5% throughout Babylon Governorate, i.e., 59.5% of the voters did not vote in the 2021 elections.

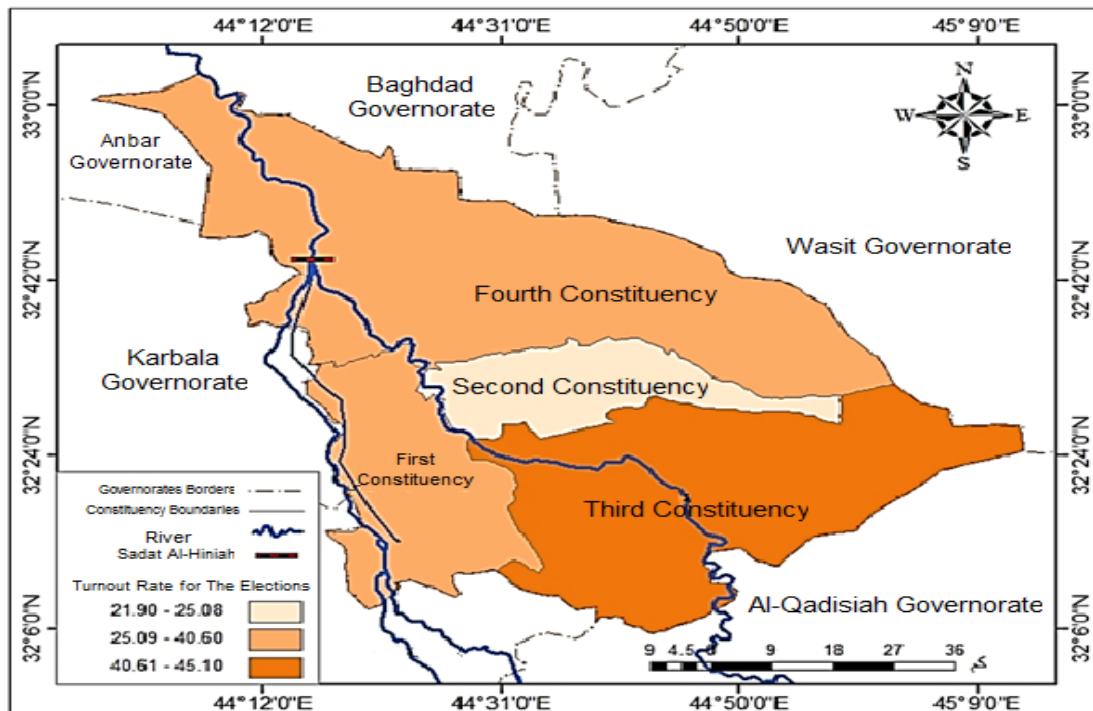
2- The percentage of participation in the electoral districts in the 2021 elections varied, as the highest percentage of participants in the elections was in the third district at 45.1% of the total voters, while the participation rate in the first district was 40.6% and the second district was 38.3% of the total voters and the participation rate was 38.3% in the district fourth of all voters.

This discrepancy can be translated into the percentage of participation between the four districts in Babylon Governorate by dividing them into three categories:

**1- The first category:** a constituency whose participation rate decreased from the general average of the governorate 40.5%. This category includes the second district, i.e., Center (2) and the Neil, where the participation rate reached 38.3%, as the number of voters reached (92,333) voters, i.e., 17% of the total voters of the governorate It included the fourth constituency, i.e. Al-Iskanriah, Al-Sadah, Al-Mahaweel, Al-Musaib, Al-Niel Al-Imam, and Al-Mashra'o (Jableh), where the participation rate reached 38.3%, as the number of voters reached (154146) voters, or 29% of the total number of voters in the governorate.

**2- The second category:** constituencies in which the participation rate averages over the general average of the governorate 40.5%. This category includes the first constituency, i.e., it includes Center (1), Abi Gharq and Al-Kifl, where the participation rate reached 40.6%, as the number of voters reached (135,407) voters/voted 26% of Total County voters.

**3- The third category:** a constituency where the participation rate rose above the general average of the governorate by 40.5%. This category included the third constituency, which included Al-Ibraheemiyah, Al-Shomali, Al-Tali'a, A-Qassem, Al-Medhatiyah and Al-Hashimiya, as the participation rate reached 45.1%, as the number of voters was (134,214) voters/voted 26% of the total voters Governorate.



Map 2. The spatial distribution of voters who actually voted in the 2021 elections according to the four constituencies for the Governorate of Babylon  
 Source: Based on Table No. (1)

### 9. Spatial Distribution of Participation in The Elections 10/10/2021 in Each of The Electoral Districts in the Governorate of Babylon

First: The percentage of participation in the elections in the first constituency

The number of voters in the first constituency reached (135407) voters, which is equivalent to 26% of the total voting voters from the four constituencies, with a turnout of 40.6% of the total voters in the first constituency. In view of Table No. (2) and Map (3), the following becomes clear:

Table 2. The Percentage of Participants in the 10/10/2021 Elections for the First Constituency

First Constituency	Number of Electors	Number of Voters	Turnout Percentage%
Abi Gharaq	59454	27755	46.6
Al-Kifl	89271	43589	48.8
Governorate Center (1)	184254	64063	34.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>332979</b>	<b>135407</b>	<b>40.6</b>

Source: From the researcher's work based on the Independent High Electoral Commission, Babel Office, unpublished data, 2021.

1- The voter turnout in the first constituency was 40.6%, or 59.4% of the voters did not vote in the 2021 elections.

2- The participation rate in the 2021 elections varied in the first constituency, where the highest participation rate was recorded in Al-Kifl, 48.8%, and the participation in Abi Gharq reached 46.6%, and in Center (1), the participation rate was 34.7%.

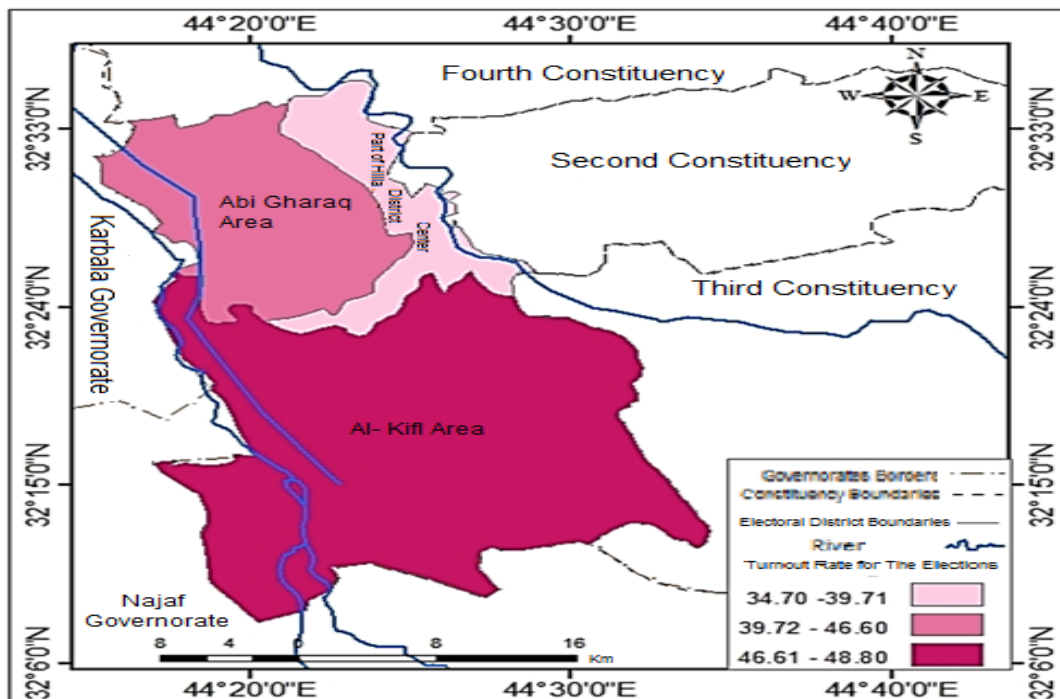
This disparity can be translated by the percentage of participation between the regions of the first circle by dividing them into two categories:

1- The first category: areas where the participation rate decreased from the general average of the first district by 40.6%.

As it included the governorate center, the turnout rate for participation in the elections reached 34.7%, as the number of voters reached (64063) voters, or 37% of the total voters in the first constituency.

2- The second category: regions where the participation rate increased from the general average of the first district by 40.6%.

Where Abi Gharq included a turnout of 46.6%, as the number of its voters reached (27,755) voters/voters, or 20% of the total voters of the constituency. Al-Kifl amounted to 48.8% of its total voters (43589) voters, or 32% of the total voters in the first district.



Map 3. The spatial distribution of voters who actually voted in the 2021 elections for the first district of Babylon Governorate

Source: Based on Table No. (2)

### Second: The Percentage of Participation in The Elections in the Second District

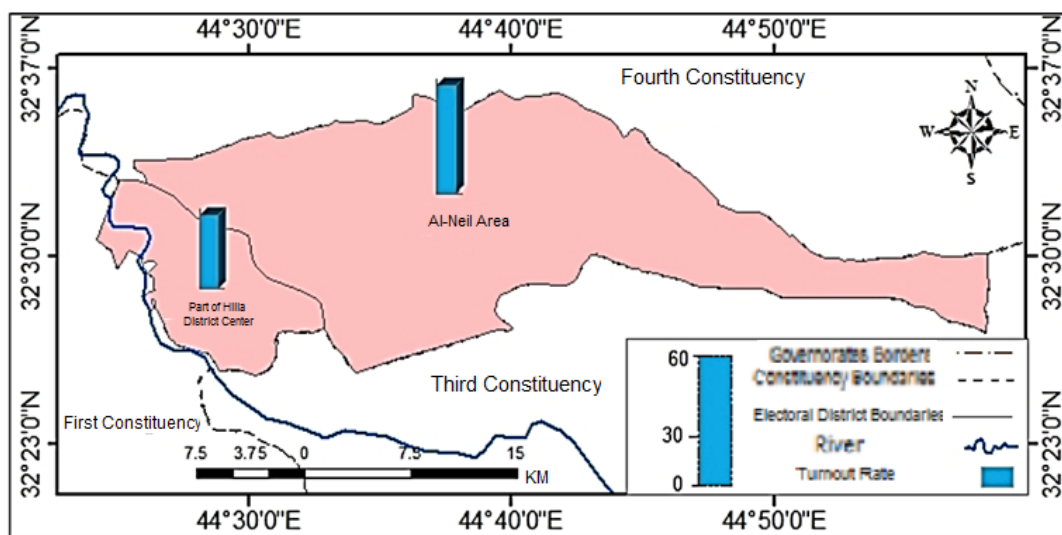
The number of voters in the second constituency reached (92333) voters, which is equivalent to 17% of the total voting voters from the four constituencies,

with a turnout of 38.3% of the total voters in the second constituency. In view of Table No. (3) and Map No. (4), the following becomes clear:

Table 3. The percentage of participants in the 10/10/2021 elections for the second constituency

Second Constituency	Number of Electors	Number of Voters	Turnout Percentage%
Governorate Center (2)	193996	67951	35.0
Al-Neil	46742	24382	52.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>240738</b>	<b>92333</b>	<b>38.3</b>

Source: From the researcher's work based on the Independent High Electoral Commission, Babel Office, unpublished data, 2021.



Map 4. The spatial distribution of voters who actually voted in the 2021 elections for the second district of Babylon Governorate

Source: Based on Table No. (3)

1- The voter turnout in the second district was 38.3%, or 61.7% of the voters did not vote in the 2021 elections.

2- The variation in the participation rates in the 2021 elections in the second constituency, where the highest participation rate in the Neil (Al-Immam) was 52.1% and the participation rate in the governorate center (2) was 35.0%.

1- The first category: areas where the participation rate decreased from the general average of the second district by 38.3%.

As it included the governorate center (2), the turnout rate to participate in the elections was 35.0%, as the number of voters reached (67951) voters, or 74% of the total voters in the second district.

2- The second category: the areas where the participation rate increased from the general average of the second district by 38.3%.

As it included the Neil (Al-Immam), the turnout to participate in the elections was 52.1%, as the number of voters was (24382) voters, or 26.4% of the total voters in the second district.

Third: The percentage of participation in the elections in the third district  
 The number of voters in the third constituency reached (134214) voters, which is equivalent to 26% of the total voters in the four constituencies, with a turnout of 45.1% of the total voters in the third constituency. In view of Table No. (4) and Map No. (5), the following becomes clear:

Table 4. The Percentage of Participants in the 10/10/2021 Elections for the Third District

Third Constituency	Number of Electors	Number of Voters	Turnout Percentage%
Al-Ibraheemiah and Al-Qassim	96700	42769	%44.2
Al-Shomali	54588	24950	%45.7
Al-Tale'a	20893	10679	%51.1
Al-Midhateah	96003	42250	%44
Al-Hashmiah	29171	13566	%46.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>297355</b>	<b>134214</b>	<b>%45.1</b>

Source: From the researcher's work based on the Independent High Electoral Commission, Babel Office, unpublished data, 2021.

1- The voter turnout in the third constituency was 45.1%, or 54.9% of the voters did not vote in the 2021 elections.

2- The percentage of participation in the 2021 elections varied in the third constituency, where the highest participation was recorded in the vanguard, reaching 51.1%, and the percentage of participation in Al-Ibraheemiah and Al-Qassim was 42.2%, Al-Shomali 45.7%, Al-Midhateah 44%, and Al-Hashmiah 46.5%.

This discrepancy can be translated into the percentage of participation in the third circle by dividing it into two categories:

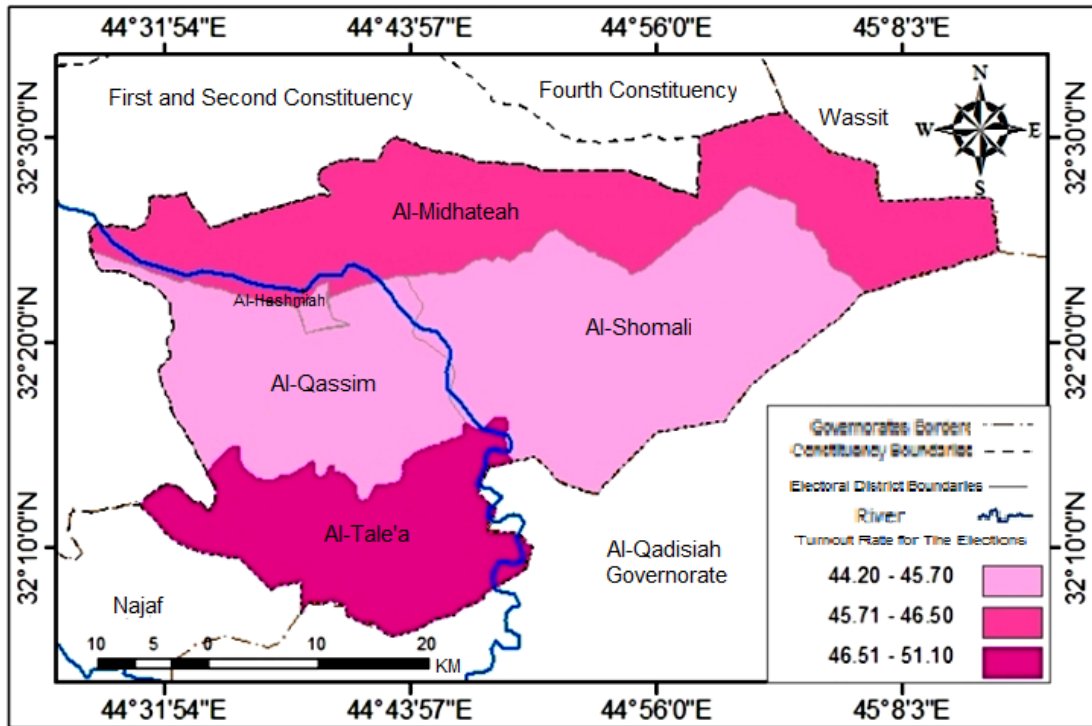
**1- The first category:** regions where the participation rate in the elections decreased by 45.1%.

Al-Ibraheemiah and Al-Qassim included a turnout of 44.2% to participate in the elections, where the number of its voters was 42,769 voters/voters, or 31% of the total voters of the district and Al-Midhateah, where the turnout was 44%, and the number of its voters was (42250) voters/voted, or 31% of the constituency voters.

**2- The second category:** regions where the participation rate increased from the general average of the third district by 45.1%.

Where the turnout of Al-Shomali included 45.7% to participate in the elections, as the number of its voters reached (24,950) voters / voters, or 18% of the total voters of the constituency and Al-Tale'a. The turnout was 51.1%, as its voters reached (1,679) voters / voters, i. e. 7% of the total voters of the constituency and Al-Hashmiah turnout rate is 46.5%, as the number of its voters reached (13566) voters, or 10% of the total voters in the constituency.





Map 5. The Spatial Distribution of Voters who Actually Voted in the 2021 Elections for the Third District of Babylon Governorate

Source: Based on Table No. (4)

**Fourth: The Percentage of Participation in the Elections in the Fourth Constituency**

The number of voters in the fourth constituency reached (154146) voters, which is equivalent to 29% of the total voters voting in the fourth constituency, with a turnout of 38.3% of the total voters in the fourth constituency. In view of Table No. (5) and Map No. (6), the following becomes clear:

Table 5. The Percentage of Participants in the 2021 Elections for the Fourth Constituency

Fourth Constituency	Number of Electors	Number of Voters	Turnout Percentage%
Al-Iskandriah	81598	27841	%34.1
Al-Sadah	61549	24027	%39
Al-Mahaweel	52207	22177	%42.4
Al-Musaib	80541	23865	%29.6
Al-Neil- Al-Immam	25725	12561	%48.8
Al-Warka'a(Kuthah)	100162	43675	%43.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>401782</b>	<b>154146</b>	<b>%38.3</b>

Source: From the researcher's work based on the Independent High Electoral Commission, Babel Office, unpublished data, 2021.

1- The voter turnout in the fourth constituency was 38.3%, or 61.7% of the voters did not vote in the 2021 elections.

2- The participation rate in the 2021 elections varied in the fourth constituency, where the highest participation rate was recorded in the Neil (Al-Immam) 48.8% and the participation rate in Alexandria was 34.1%, in Al-Sadah 39%, in Mahaweel 42.4%, in Al-Musaib 29.6% and in Warka'a (Kuthajh) 43.6% .

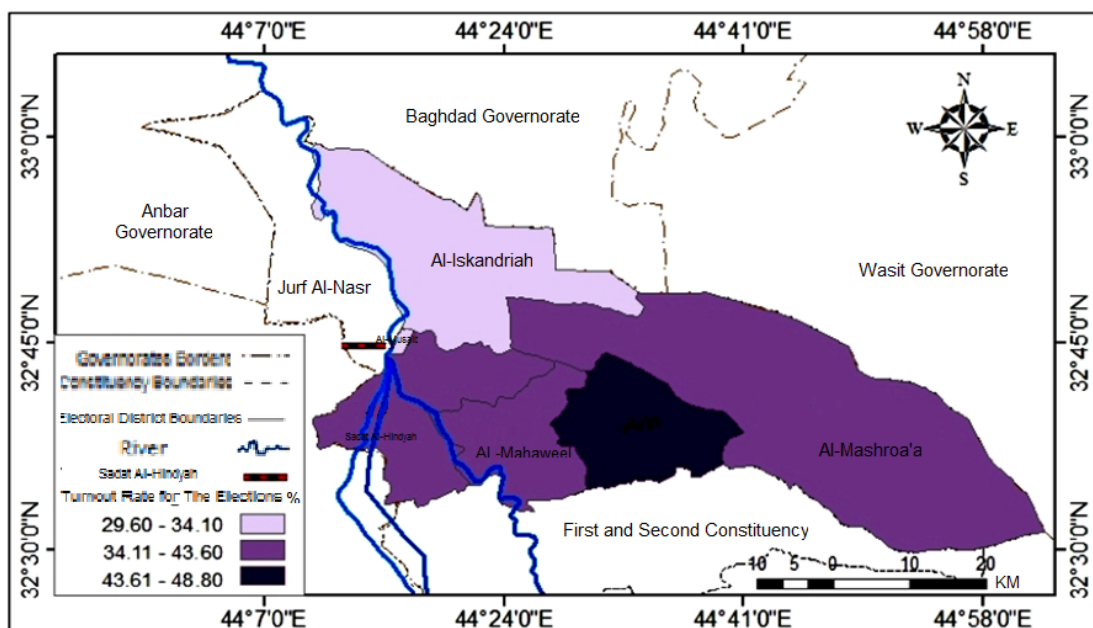
This disparity can be translated by the percentage of participants in the fourth circle by dividing it into two categories:

1- The first category: areas where the participation rate decreased from the general average of the fourth district by 38.3%.

It included Al- Iskandriah, where the turnout rate for participation in the elections was 34.1%, where the number of its voters reached (27841) voters / voters, or 8% of the total voters of the district and Al-Musaib. The turnout rate was 29.6%, which means that the number of its voters reached (23865) voters / voters, or 15% of the voters. Total Voters Constituency.

2- The second category: areas where the participation rate increased 38.3% from the general average of the fourth district.

Al-Sadah included a turnout of 39% of the number of its voters (24027) electors / voters, i.e. 15% of the total voters of the constituency and Al-Mahaweel, a turnout of 42.4% of the number of its voters (22,177) electors / voters, i.e. 14% of the total voters of the constituency and the Al-Neil Al-Imam, the turnout rate 48.8% of the number of its voters (12561) voters/voters, i.e. 8% of the total number of voters in the district and Al-Warka'a (Kuthah) turnout of 43.6% of the number of its voters (43675) Electors/voters, i.e. 28% of the total voters of the district.



Source: Based on Table No. (5)

## 10. Conclusions

The study reached a number of conclusions:

1- Despite the low level of education and the spread of poverty and unemployment, this did not affect participation in the 2021 elections.

2- The study confirmed that most of the voters (participants) in the study area were greatly affected by the independent candidates because they did not succumb to any political bloc or party that would affect them in the future in the freedom to vote on decisions and legislation in their parliamentary work to change the reality of Iraq in general and Babylon Governorate in particular.

3- The non-interference of the supreme religious authority, as in the previous elections, in issuing a fatwa on participation in the elections, which led to the abstention of a large number of voters from participating in the 2021 parliamentary elections.

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