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INTRA-PARLAMENTARY POLITICAL PARTIES' BEHAVIOR IN THE CANDIDATION PROCESS FOR MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT IN THE 2018-2023 GENERAL ELECTIONS IN TIMOR-LESTE

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to understand the behavior of intra-parliamentary political parties in the process of nominating parliamentary candidates in Timor-Leste in the 2018-2023 parliamentary elections. The research method is qualitative with informants from the CNE, political party members, parliamentary candidates, academics, the press, independent institutions, and the public. The results of the study indicate competition within political parties, so that it does not focus on the interests of the community. The regulations for submitting female parliamentary candidates are placed in spaces numbered between 2-3; one woman must be, and so on, each space up to 95 prospective parliamentary candidates. However, women are placed in the last numbered space and so on. It is necessary to make changes to suit the times because the system is not a dogma to continue to exist. However, remaining on the legal path, one must be honest that revisions are necessary. Recruitment of parliamentary candidates that are oriented towards three (3) main modalities, such as (broad insight, having a large mass/influence and being economically independent), of course the political elites must also make proportional decisions in the representative composition of candidates from mass organizations (youth & women) in the party, representatives from tribes, districts, party intellectuals and also independent people who have high political electability and are excellent in thematic areas.

Keywords: Political Party Behavior, Intra-Parliamentary, Timor Leste

INTRODUCTION

Democracy, as the foundation of social and national life, implies that the people determine matters concerning their lives, including assessing the policies of the nation's leaders, as these policies will determine the lives of the people and the future of the nation (Wahyudu, 2019). Democracy provides the understanding that power comes from the people. With this understanding, the people will create rules that benefit and protect their rights.

Timor-Leste's political system is a democratic republic with a semi-presidential system of government. The head of state is the president, and the head of government is the prime minister. Both the president and the prime minister serve five-year terms. The president of the republic is directly elected by the people through a universal, free, secret, and personal election system based on a majority of valid votes, without counting invalid votes.

Elections in Timor-Leste are governed by three main laws: First, Election Law No. 5/2006, which regulates the Election Supervisory Body. The general election supervisory body in question is the National Election Commission (KNPU) (Comissão Nacional de Eleições CNE), which is divided into thirteen branches at the district level in Timor-Leste. Second, the National Elect



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tion Commission (KNPU/CNE), based on amendments stipulated in Law No. 6/2006 concerning the implementation of Parliamentary General Elections (Pemilu). Third, Law No. 3/2004 regulates the participation of all political parties, which provides support to them as citizens, to actualize the multiparty system (Multipartidarismu) as a key pillar for national security.

In Timor-Leste's democratic system of government, Timor-Leste has three (3) forms of general elections: first, the presidential election of the republic (Eleisaun Jerál Presidente) and second, the parliamentary election (Eleisaun Jerál Parlamentar). Third, the general election of village heads (Eleisaun Lider Komunitaria), this is related to the legal basis in the contents of the Constitution (República Democrática de Timor-Leste RDTL) as stated in Article 65 paragraph 1, all eligible citizens have the right to vote with one vote, and is carried out periodically every 5 years.

Based on the results of initial observations conducted by researchers, in the country of Timor Leste there are 16 political parties, including: Partidu Libertasaun Popular (People's Liberation Party), Timor Leste Independence Revolutionary Front (Frente Revolucionária do Timor Leste Independente), Democratic Party (Partido Democrático), Social Democratic Party (Partido Social Democrata), Timorese Social Democratic Association (Associação Social-Democrata Timorense), Timorese Democratic Union (União Democrática Timorense), Timorese Nationalist Party (Partido Nacionalista Timorense), Timorese Heroes Association (Klibur Oan Timor Asuwain), Timorese People's Party (Partido do Povo de Timor), Christian Democratic Party (Partido Democrata Cristão), Timorese Socialist Party (Partido Socialista de Timor), Liberal Party (Liberal Party), Timorese Christian Democratic Union (União Democrata-Cristã de Timor), The National Congress for Timorese Reconstruction (Conselho Nacional de Reconstrução do Timor), the Mudança Front, and the Timorese Center for Social Democratic Action (Centro Acção Social-Democrata Timorense). The nomination procedure is proposed by political parties in pairs as a single unit and supported by a number of qualified individuals as a single unit.

As a country with a centralized government structure, Timor-Leste frequently faces tensions between the central and regional governments regarding the distribution of political power. This impacts the behavior of political parties in managing their candidates. In the 2018-2023 parliamentary elections, candidates from certain regions often faced obstacles in getting onto candidate lists compiled by party elites in the capital. This phenomenon occurs because Timor-Leste uses a closed-list proportional representation system, in which political parties have complete control over the order of candidates on the election list.

This system can limit political access for individuals outside of political parties, which can be considered a violation of individuals' constitutional rights to participate in the political process (Mutawalli, 2023). Another finding related to political party behavior in the parliamentary candidate nomination process in the 2018-2023 parliamentary elections is that although Timor-Leste has a law mandating a 30% quota for women's representation on legislative candidate lists, its implementation remains challenging. Women are often placed at the bottom of the list, reducing their chances of being elected. Oversight of parliamentary elections is an optional part of the political system in democratic countries, which is then implemented through representatives of the people, both at the executive and legislative levels. The National Election Commission (KNPU) (Comissão Nacional da Eleições CNE) is primarily responsible for overseeing the entire election process. Therefore, the



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National Election Commission (KNPU) organizes all aspects of the election process based on existing laws, regulations, and codes of ethics.

The National Election Commission (KNPU) is the decision-maker regarding policy, oversight, administration, strategic planning, logistics, communication media, and financial operations. The implementation of the Parliamentary Election Supervision Policy in Timor-Leste continues to face various obstacles, particularly in the election supervision process. Some elements or stakeholders influence each other, resulting in conflicts between voters and candidates, both from political parties and party coalitions.

The election process does not always run smoothly. Various problems and obstacles in the election process, both during and before the election, are issues that will undoubtedly have far-reaching consequences if not promptly and effectively resolved. Problems in the election administration related to dissatisfaction with the decisions of election organizers or criminal or administrative violations that influence the results are commonly referred to as election disputes.

METHODS

The method used in this research is a qualitative research method, with a case study approach. Case study research is a qualitative approach in which the researcher explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (case) or multiple bounded systems (multiple cases), through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple or multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, and documents and reports), and reports a description of the case and case themes. The unit of analysis in a case study can be a multiple case (multi-site study) or a single case (within-site study) (Creswell, 2016:135-136) at the research site.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The behavior of intra-parliamentary political parties in the nomination process for parliamentary candidates in the 2018-2023 general elections in Timor-Leste can be measured using several indicators, including:

Political Party Behavior. In elections in Timor-Leste, the government system is semi-presidential, emphasizing democracy as a method of government. Timor-Leste itself is a sovereign state, with executive power held by the president and government, while the government and the National Parliament hold legislative power. There is also a judicial commission, which is an independent executive body. Discussing the political and electoral system in Timor-Leste, we must recognize the multi-party system adopted by Timor-Leste. In terms of representation, the National Parliament has 65 elected members elected by proportional representation for five-year terms. The number of seats can vary from a minimum of 52 to a maximum of 65. A multi-party system is a democratic practice that arises from the freedom to express opinions and express aspirations through political parties.

In the context of Timor Leste, several negative impacts can be concluded as shortcomings or defects in creating unhealthy competition (money politics-lobbying), Patidocrasia rather than meritocrasia, the government is no longer focused on the people but rather focused on how to maintain power, the government will become fatter as a result of the many party interests that must be accommodated, it is difficult to place the "right people in the right place", the very large political costs due to subsidies from the government to parties as a waste of state finances, for example, money invested in "less productive" things to make stickers, billboards, banners, flags and political advertisements. The logic of the "vicious circle" the more parties, the more choices, the more choices



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the more difficult to choose, the more difficult to choose the more people do not vote, and the more abstentions, the more the meaning of democracy is regressed. So the more parties equals the worse the quality of democracy. Furthermore, proper consolidation is needed to review the provisions of the constitution, for example, articles 64, 65, and 75. Election regulations are also needed, as these are merely a product of the parties within parliament.

The mechanism for determining parliamentary candidates is carried out or determined by political party elites (*kuadras no militantes partidu*), taking into account the rules and criteria of the Election Law, the Political Party Law, and internal party regulations (AD/ART). One of the criteria is that 30% of parliamentary candidates must be women. In accordance with Article 12 of the Parliamentary Election Law, the list of parliamentary candidates for each number 1-3 must include a woman, and so on up to number 90. There is a combination of women on the list of parliamentary candidates.

Political Party Actors. Human behavior is the study of how people act, behave, and react to specific environments and situations. Human behavior is influenced by factors such as culture, environment, genetics, and individual experience. In the following paragraphs, we will discuss human behavior further. One of the main aspects in the discussion of human behavior is psychology. Psychology studies various aspects of human behavior, including thoughts, emotions, motivation, and perception. Psychology seeks to understand why people act the way they do, what influences their decisions, and how these factors interact to shape individual behavior (Hidayat, 2020).

The electoral system in Timor-Leste involves the public in selecting candidates through the National Election Commission (CPN) and the Election Preparation Committee and Potential Party Members (*Lere Anan*). The determination of parliamentary candidates is carried out through a meeting that conveys considerations used to determine the candidates (strategy for winning, political strategy). According to the Articles of Association (AD/ART), party leaders have the authority to decide and determine the list of parliamentary candidates based on legal, strategic, and political considerations. There were requests from municipalities to be placed in the lower order, while others refused to be candidates with a higher order. Anger flared, and a consensus was finally reached. All candidates were asked to sign candidate forms and meet several criteria in accordance with parliamentary election regulations. Some candidates rejected their number order, and others rejected their candidacy.

Party leaders and CPN members justified the process of nominating parliamentary candidates to party members and the party's quarters. Some were unhappy and dissatisfied with the order assigned to the candidate list. However, the party justified its position and conveyed its political considerations. Over time, this was accepted by all members of the political party.

The winning strategy is supported by public figures (community leaders, veterans/resistance, activists, academics, professionals, district/municipality coordinators) and financial capacity. According to several political party representatives, the general elections in Timor-Leste are insufficient and ineffective. For example, there is a quota for women, which automatically requires women to be included in the list of parliamentary candidates. The quota lacks balance between women and men, and it does not consider quality. This can determine whether it is fair or unfair. However, there are also women who have the ability but do not have the influence to be selected as candidates.

The regulations for submitting female parliamentary candidates place them in the numbered spaces between 2-3, and so on, up to 95 prospective parliamentary candidates. However, women are placed in the last numbered spaces, and so on. Changes need to be made to adapt to the times



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because the system is not a dogma to remain in existence. However, remaining within the legal pathway, we must be honest about the need for revisions.

Forms of Political Party Behavior. Actors here can be defined as individuals or states that take action to achieve their interests and seek to maximize them. Actors do this by selecting an option they believe will yield results that will achieve their interests. For example, if option 1 is considered more important and meaningful than options 2 and 3, then the actor will choose option 1.

Rational choice theory is a tool for logical, rational thinking in making decisions. Similarly, poor farmers choose an option they consider most rational (in accordance with reason) over other options to maintain their livelihoods and sustain their livelihoods. The strategy or method adopted is something that has been thought through and considered beforehand, ultimately resulting in a decision deemed highly rational (Coleman, 2013).

In the general election in Timor Leste, ideally political parties must carry out their political recruitment function seriously for the benefit of the people by recruiting individuals who have good quality, capability and integrity, likewise political elites must be more professional in giving authority to the party's national political commission to fight in the recruitment process for parliamentary candidates oriented to Three (3) main modalities such as, (Broad Insight, having large masses/influence and being economically Independent) of course political elites must also make proportional decisions in the representative composition of candidates from Mass Organizations (Youth & Women) in the party, representatives from Tribes, districts, party intellectuals and also independent people who have high political electability and are excellent in thematic areas. The party has a single body, the National Political Commission (CPN), comprised of several individuals or small groups authorized to determine the list of candidates. This process, lacking a forum or democratic process, lacks transparency and accountability, particularly for those with the capacity but who are denied the opportunity to run for office.

Party leaders now determine the direction of nominations based on their own desires, rather than on the party's stated goals. This poses a problem in determining legislative candidates. Suppose the law is amended in the future. In that case, the party's membership in parliament will be determined through elections, so that contestants no longer elect individuals who are irresponsible to party militants and sympathizers. Candidate selection is typically conducted by a small group of party officials or leaders, who are almost always men, due to a patriarchal culture and suboptimal financial resources (women are financially weak).

CONCLUSION

Political Party Behavior, In the context of Timor-Leste, several negative impacts can be summarized as shortcomings or defects in creating unhealthy competition (money politics and lobbying), Patidocrasia rather than meritocrasia, the government no longer focuses on the people but rather on maintaining power, the government will become increasingly powerful as a result of the many party interests that must be accommodated, it is difficult to place the "right people in the right places", the very high political costs due to government subsidies to political parties, which waste state funds, for example, money invested in "less productive" things like stickers, billboards, banners, flags, and political advertisements. The logic of a "vicious circle" is that the more parties, the more choices; the more choices, the more difficult it is to choose; the more difficult it is to choose, the more people do not vote, and the more abstentions, the more democracy declines. Therefore, the more parties equals the poorer the quality of democracy. Furthermore, proper consolidation is



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needed to review the provisions of the constitution, for example, Articles 64, 65, and 75. Election regulations are also needed, as these are merely a product of the parties within parliament.

Political Party Actors, Determination of parliamentary candidates through meetings conveying the considerations used to determine parliamentary candidates (strategies for winning, political strategies). According to the Articles of Association (AD/ART), party leaders have the authority to decide and determine the list of parliamentary candidates based on legal, strategic, and political considerations. Requests from municipalities were made based on the election results. Some requested to be placed in the lower order, while others refused to be placed in the higher order. Anger arose, and ultimately a consensus was reached. All candidates were asked to sign candidate forms and fulfill several criteria in accordance with parliamentary election regulations. Some candidates rejected their numbered positions, and others rejected their candidacy. The regulations for nominating female parliamentary candidates place them in spaces numbered 1-3, and so on, up to 95 candidates. However, women are placed in the last space, and so on. Changes need to be made to adapt to the times, as the system is not a dogma, in order to remain viable. However, while remaining within the legal framework, revisions must be made honestly.

Forms of Political Party Behavior, Political recruitment is truly for the benefit of the people by recruiting individuals who have good quality, capability and integrity, likewise the political elite must be more professional in giving authority to the national political commission of the party to fight in the recruitment process of parliamentary candidates oriented to Three (3) main modalities such as, (Broad Insight, having a large mass/influence and Independent economically) of course the political elite must also make proportional decisions in the representative composition of candidates from Mass Organizations (Youth & Women) in the party, representatives from Tribes, districts, party intellectuals and also independent people who have high political electability and are excellent in thematic areas. Party leaders now determine the direction of the nomination according to their wishes rather than according to the party's predetermined goals, this is the problem in determining the direction of legislative candidates, if one day the law changes the party that is a member of parliament is determined through elections so that election contestants no longer choose people who have no responsibility to the militants and sympathizers of the party. Yes, the selection of candidates is usually carried out by a small group of officials or party leaders who are almost always men, patriarchal culture, and with financial resources that are not optimal (women are financially weak).

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