

form of political education for the people, direct, open, and mass, which is expected to enhance political understanding and increase public awareness of democracy (Heykal et al., 2024).

In the context of the Timor-Leste Presidential Election, public participation is broadly defined as a manifestation of community involvement in political activities in the form of planning (input) and implementation (political process) to achieve community development goals (output). Public participation can be expressed through voting for parties or political actors chosen democratically. Community members who participate in the political process, for example, through voting or other activities, are motivated by the belief that through these activities their interests will be channeled or at least considered, and that they will influence the actions of those in authority to make binding decisions. They believe that their activities have a political impact (Miriam Budiarmo, 2017: 368-369).

The political participation of the Timorese people in the Presidential Election has been implemented in the General Election (hereinafter referred to as the Election) five times, namely in the years 2002, 2007, 2012, 2017, and 2022, counting from the first election in 2002 to the 2022 election. The general election to elect the President of Timor-Leste was held on March 20, 2017. Voter turnout in the 2017 presidential election was higher than in the 2012 election 2012. This indicates that public participation in Timor-Leste has not yet reached the national target of 85%. For more details on the increase in voter participation in Timor-Leste, see the table below:

Table 1. Summary of Public Participation Data in Presidential Elections from 2002 to 2022 in Timor-Leste

No.	Presidential Election Event	Voter Data (DPT)	Voter Rights Users	Participation Rate
1	2002	439.254	378.548	86,18%
2	2007	524.037	424.475	81,00%
3	2012	627.295	458.703	71,12%
4	2017	743.150	516.881	71,16%
5	2022	859.925	640.967	77,26%

Source: CNE Timor-Leste Report, 2023

The table above shows that voter turnout in the 2022 presidential election was higher than in the 2017 election. In the 2022 election, voter turnout was 77.26%. This figure is higher than the 2017 election, which saw 71.26%. In 2012, the presidential election participation rate reached 71.12%. In 2007, the voter turnout rate reached 81.00%. In 2002, the voter turnout rate reached 86.18%. Of the total number of Timor-Leste residents registered on the Permanent Voter List (DPT), this represents 86.18% of the total population of 13 Timor-Leste districts.

Based on the recapitulation of voter turnout data for the 2012, 2017, and 2022 presidential elections, there are fluctuations in voter turnout across each municipality, both domestically and internationally. Voter participation rates fluctuate, increasing or decreasing from one presidential election to the next. This occurs because poor election management, lack of impartiality by officials, and logistical issues can undermine public trust, leading to a decline in participation. People who feel distrustful or that politics has no impact on their daily lives may choose not to participate. Furthermore, current and relevant issues, such as economic, social, or political issues, can increase or decrease voter participation. Fluctuations or minimal public participation can threaten the quality of democracy and the legitimacy of elected leaders, as they are willing to accept the lack of support from the majority. This lack of participation can also reinforce apathy, indifference, and individualism in society.



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Related to this, several factors can generally classify groups of people who do not vote in elections: As a democratic country, mandatory voting is not implied in the RDTL Constitution or election law. People who do not vote are those who are forced to do so due to an element of coercion related to their activities. Such as work that cannot be left, traveling where time is not possible to vote, lack of knowledge about elections and awareness to participate in elections, and polling stations that are far from residential areas, especially those domiciled in rural areas, lack of transportation to the polling stations, students aged 17 years and above mostly study abroad, workers who work abroad who have not re-registered in the country where they continue their studies or reside and also of course those who did not participate in the election because there is no actual data for people who have died.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive research type with a qualitative approach where data is obtained through informant interviews, observation and document research, with the research location being at the central Comissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE) office and 13 branches in 13 Municipalities in Timor Leste. The CNE office was chosen as the research location not only because of its location which is easily accessible by the author, but also because it is a place which, according to the author's observation, is one of the appropriate institutions/agencies to be researched because one of its duties is to be responsible for organizing General Elections every five (5) years. Informants were selected purposively, as many as 26 people, based on their understanding and ability to provide information related to the research problem. Data sources consist of primary data (results of interviews and direct observation) and secondary data (documents, official reports, and academic literature). To ensure the validity of the findings, triangulation techniques were used, both for sources, techniques, and the time of data collection. Data analysis was carried out through the process of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and data verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Acted Role. An acted role is the actual way an individual or group of people fulfill a role. Roles are a dynamic aspect of position/status (Soerjono Soekanto, 2013). If an individual exercises their rights and obligations in accordance with their position, they are fulfilling a role. The efforts that the CNE must undertake through its acted role will be realized through civic education, which is crucial, especially in relation to providing information to the public as voters. This will undoubtedly impact the level of public trust in participating in the Presidential Election. As a task, the Comissão Nacional da Eleições (CNE) believes in the importance of promoting civic education about elections, particularly the Presidential Election (Pilpres) in Timor-Leste. Several outreach activities conducted directly by the CNE through civic education in educating voters about the Presidential Election process include target identification, determining outreach locations, social mobilization, outreach in cities and remote areas, and outreach through electronic media (TV and radio).

Target Identification. In preparation for the 2017 Presidential Election, the National Coordination Committee (CNE) is conducting internal institutional consolidation. The CNE Timor-Leste National Coordination Meeting (Rakornas) aims to foster synergy and strengthen the facilitation of oversight support for the 2017 Presidential Election. Synergy and support from the CNE secretariat are crucial for optimal election implementation and oversight. Without administrative and budgetary support from the secretariat, optimal implementation and oversight are difficult to achieve. The target is success in the implementation, oversight, and successful



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management of the 2017 election budget. Externally, the CNE is required to build synergy and collaboration with all stakeholders to achieve public trust in the 2017 Presidential Election. For this stage, the CNE is also preparing a secretariat, complete with facilities and human resources for the CNE Municipality to handle operational matters, outreach, oversight, factual verification of political parties and honorariums, and Municipality operations. To improve institutional synergy, an understanding of each party's respective roles and functions is necessary, as stipulated in Article 65 paragraph (6) of Election Law Number 16 of 2021 concerning the Role of the National Election Commission.

Timor-Leste's politics continues the tradition of the older generation seizing power, due to the public's continued trust in the older generation to lead the nation. This was demonstrated by the 2017 Presidential Election, where, with both young and older candidates, voters overwhelmingly chose the older generation as the winner. Elections, in a democratic context, are not merely a moment to exercise citizens' rights. Furthermore, elections are also a valuable opportunity to evaluate the state system and the implementation of government. The pattern of power struggles presented to the public is nothing more than a practice of finding and changing coalitions to further their strategies.

Determining the Socialization Venue. Generally, the venues for implementing civic education activities are: village offices, school buildings, sub-district buildings, and universities in each region in Timor Leste. After coordinating and collaborating with various parties, CNE confirmed the location for the civic education socialization meeting and selected a location at the village office, school building, sub-district building/hall, church hall, or university in each region. Of the several planned locations, CNE selected the University Hall provided by the Universidade Oriental Timor Loro Sae (UNITAL). The availability of a campus venue makes it easier for students to participate, as it serves as a daily service center for them, making it easier for them to meet with CNE staff to participate in civic education socialization activities.

Table 2. Civic Education Implementation Locations

No	Munispio Name	Civic Education Realization Location	Target
1	Aileu	Salaun Veteranus Aisirimou Centru Juventudi M.Aileu Posto Lequidoe Remexiu Laulara	Youth Community Student
2	Ainaro	Ainaro Vila Posto Hatubuilico Suco Mulo Sede Suco Maulau Maubisse Salaun Adm. M.Ainaro Sede Suco Foho Hato-Udo Ainaro Vila	Women's groups Community Students Young people Political parties
3	Baucau	Posto Administrativo: Baucau, Baguia, Vemase, Venilale, Laga, Quelicai, Escola Secundaria Baucau Escola Secundaria Wailili	Community, Students, Women's Groups, Local Authority



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No	Munispio Name	Civic Education Realization Location	Target
		Escola Secundaria Catolica ESSA-Baucau Escolar Tekniku Vocasional Fatumaka Sede Suku : Bahu, Buibau, Buruma Caibada,Gariwai, Samalari,	
4	Bobonaro	P.Adm.Atabae Posto Adm.Balibo Posto Adm.Balibo Verbo Devino Palaka Escola Dom Martinho Maliana ETV.Dom Vosco Maumali ES Dom Martinho da C.Lopes	Students, Political Parties
5	Covalima	Posto Adm.Tilomar Posto Adm. Maucatar Posto Adm.Zumalai fatumea Suku Dato Rua Posto Fohorem	Community, Political Party Leaders, GAM Organization Groups
6	Dili	Posto Metinaro Posto Cristu Rei Posto Nain Feto Posto Vera Cruz Posto Dom Aleixo Escolar Tecnico Informatika (Comoro) Escolar Tecnico Vocasional (Bekora) Escola SEcundaria 4 Setembro (Vila Verde) Escola Secundaria 5 de Maio (Bekora) Escola Secundaria 20 Setembro(Metinaro) Escola São Francisco (Dare) Escolar Tecnico Vocacional (Hera) Escolar Vocasional 28 Novembro (Bekora) Escolar Externato Sao Jose (Comoro) Escolar Vocasional Hospitalidade (Bekora) Centro Formasaun Euros (Colmera) Escola Secundaria Canossa (Comoro) Salao Apuramento CNE UNTL UNPAZ UNDIL	Community (Political parties, women, and youth) Young students Political parties, village heads, and staff Students



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No	Munispio Name	Civic Education Realization Location	Target
		UNITAL DIT IOB	
7	Ermera	Posto Eremera Vila Salaun CNE Ermera Railako Gleno	
8	Liquica	Posto Administrativo Liquisa Salao Tokodede Suku Hatuquesi Salao Administrativo Maubara	
9	Lautem	Lospalos Fuiluro Tutuala EBC Salaun Posto Lautem Luro Salaun posto Luro Iliomar Salaun posto Iliomar	Students, Community, Women's Groups, PPS Staff, Persons with Disabilities, Municipal and Local Community Leaders, Potential Women's Community Leaders
10	Manatuto	Escola Secundaria Catolica Dombala- Laklubar Escola Secundaria Catolica Joao Paulo II-Laclo Escola Secundaria Catolica ESSAM Manatuto Vila Escola Secundaria Kay Rala Xanana- Manatuto Vila Escola Tekniku Vocasional Presidente Nicolao Lobato-Soibada Escola Secundaria Kirsty Sword Gusmao-Laleia Escola Ensino Tekniku Vocasional Mauhunu Bucar Karateanu Posto Barique Posto Laclo Posto Laleia Posto Soibada Sede Suku: Orlalan, Cribas, Maabaat, Ailili, Laku Mesak,Cairui, Funar, uma naruk, uma Kaduak	Community, Students, University Students, Political Parties
11	Manufahi	Same/Salaun PNTL Same/Salaun IBTL Same/Salaun DNTP Posto Fatuberliu/Sede Caicasa Alas/Sede Uma Berloic	Community, Students, and College Students



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No	Munispio Name	Civic Education Realization Location	Target
12	RAEOA	Aula Paroki Padiae Suku Bobometo B Suco Abani Sede Suku Lifau Oesilo Aula Paroki Nambei	
13	Viqueque	Posto Adm Uato Carbau Posto Adm.Uatolari Sucu.Uaitame Lacluta Posto Viqueque Posto Ossu	Masyarakat Pelajar dan Mahasiswa

Source: Researcher, 2025.

The CNE Municipal Directors will collaborate with regional heads (sub-district heads), village heads, heads of associations, churches, and schools/ universities to determine locations for outreach activities. This is done to facilitate the implementation of civic education outreach activities for participants throughout Timor-Leste.

Social Mobilization. Mobilization can be described as the development of social relations between two entities, namely individuals and political parties, as explained by Weber (Karp & Banducci, 2007). The concept of mobilization encompasses three stages: the interest stage (cognitive aspect), the community formation stage (affective aspect), and the instrument utilization stage (instrumental aspect). Political mobilization refers to the efforts of actors to influence the distribution of power. To accurately describe the type of relationship formed between political parties and individuals, a directional variable is used. Political mobilization, also known as social mobilization, encompasses various targets for civic education outreach, ranging from first-time voters, voters with disabilities, young men and women, to women voters and people aged 16 and over. In addition to increasing voter participation, outreach is also guaranteed to reduce the potential for invalid ballots during voting. Public participation in a political process does not necessarily mean that people support a decision or policy through a social movement led by their leaders. If this occurs, the correct term is political mobilization (Karp and Banducci, 2007).

Outreach in Cities and Remote Areas. Remote areas are also a focus for the General Elections Commission (CNE) to ensure adequate election information is provided to the public. Voter education for remote communities is expected to raise their awareness and encourage them to vote. The CNE focuses on elections for communities in villages and remote areas. Access to election information is limited. This is a priority for addressing community requests in village groups seeking election information. The CNE and STAE are teams that will continue to conduct outreach. As materials for civic education outreach, STAE and PPS will bring demonstration materials such as ballot specimens and other materials. CNE, as the municipal organizer of the Manufahi election, encourages all residents in the region to update or find out the location of their respective polling stations (TPS) before voting. The hope is that voters will no longer have to worry about finding polling stations on election day. Voters can visit their local village or neighborhood association (RT) to check the location of their polling stations.

At the regional level, where the majority of the country's population resides, attention must be paid to finding and establishing facilities, systems, and mechanisms for implementing civic



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education. Communities in remote areas, without access to information, often face ignorance regarding election-related issues, both pre- and post-election.

Electronic Outreach. Through media coverage, the public will gain a general understanding of the election process. Therefore, the CNE conducts outreach through media, including talk shows, advertisements, and announcements on local radio and newspapers, ensuring the public has the knowledge to choose the presidential candidates they desire. Furthermore, the media, as information providers, must provide civics education to the public, thereby encouraging public participation and encouraging them to exercise their right to vote.

Electronic media, used for civics education outreach during the presidential election process, plays a crucial role. With electronic media, the public can access messages, news, and announcements as materials for civics education outreach regarding the presidential election.

The electronic media listed above actively participate throughout the election process, covering and broadcasting key news related to the presidential election to local communities, both within municipalities, sub-districts, and remote villages, through civic education outreach activities. Each CNE director in each municipality, in coordination with the relevant authorities in each municipality, and based on observations, can determine a methodology relevant to the interests of civic education at the municipality level. This includes the location, format, and mechanism of action, as well as the entities that will act as speakers or disseminators of knowledge. To expand the reach of civic education in each municipality, the commissioners also strive to develop collaborations or mutual agreements with the media, particularly community radio.

Prescribed Role. A prescribed role is the way society expects us to carry out a particular role. The CNE's role in promoting the strengthening of democracy is also rooted in the RDTL Constitution, Article 46 concerning the Right to Political Participation.

Voter Registration Supervision (RE-ABD). Supervision of election registration and database updates is carried out in accordance with Article 65, Number 6, of the RDTL Constitution, which states that an independent body carries out registration and election supervision. The Implementation Mechanism of the Presidential Election Supervision Policy in Timor Leste in 2022, and supervised by the Comissão Nacional da Eleições (CNE), includes procedures and work procedures and has its main duties based on the contents of the RDTL Constitution, Article 65 paragraph 6 of 2002 and Law No. 16/2021 concerning the General Election Supervisory Body (Pemilu) and existing regulations and codes of ethics. The Comissão Nacional de Eleições (CNE) has a vision and mission in implementing the parliamentary election supervision policy democratically.

Election Process Supervision. Election supervision is an activity expected to raise awareness among political actors, the public, and stakeholders involved so that they can act in accordance with applicable regulations in the implementation of elections, thus resulting in quality and democratic elections. Ideally, supervision is community-based, involving broad participation from various supervisory levels and segments of society.

Presidential election supervision is conducted in accordance with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as rules and guidelines for employees in carrying out their work. The SOPs for presidential election supervision include: (1) confirming the total number of polling stations (TPS) and polling stations with the STAE in accordance with government decrees; (2) communicating with the Director of the CNE Municipal-RAEOA to evaluate and identify the locations of the Center and Stations; (3) submitting to the plenary session the operational calendar, job openings, and training for election supervision staff; (4) preparing training materials with the following topics: Election Organizing Body, Official Role of Election Supervisors, Election System, Election Campaign, Voting



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and Counting Process, Remote/Parallel Voting, Complaints and Claims, Election Crimes, Filling Out Supervision Forms, (5) Preparing Election Supervision Forms; (6) Assisting Supervisory Officers in Service; (7) Assisting in Form Completion; (8) Receiving Election Campaign Schedules from Election Participants; (9) Delivering Campaign Schedules in Plenary Sessions; (10) Supervising Election Campaigns; (11) Supervising Election Processes and Vote Counting at Vote Counting Stations; (12) Supervising the Counting/Tabulation Process in Municipalities; (13) Collecting Election Supervision Results; (14) Preparing National Counting/Tabulation Mechanisms; (15) Data Entry of Election Supervision Results; (16) Preparing Press Conferences; (17) Organizing the Submission of Election Results to the Election Supervisory Board; (18) Preparing Election Supervision Reports; (19) Printing Supervision Reports.

The CNE regulations serve as the legal basis for overseeing the registration and presidential election process in Timor-Leste. Supervision aims to ensure that elections are held directly, universally, freely, confidentially, honestly, fairly, and of high quality, as well as the comprehensive implementation of election laws and regulations, realizing democratic elections and upholding integrity, credibility, and independence.

Role Model. A role model is someone whose behavior we emulate, imitate, and follow. The current political process also captures the attention of the general public. All members of society, directly or indirectly, learn about and understand electoral politics through the socialization of civic education. Every citizen has the right and obligation to contribute to the development of the Timor-Leste nation, one of which is active participation in elections as an instrument of democracy. The Role Model in comparison between 2016, 2017 and 2018 shows the phenomenon of fluctuation in community participation due to the low level of community participation in civic education and changes in several municipalities caused by factors such as lack of political awareness, as well as changes in party leadership or the emergence of new parties can attract voters who were previously not interested in the party. Alternatively, also because of other things such as: the absence of mandatory voting in the constitution of the RDTL State or the election law, people prefer personal interests rather than participating in elections, polling stations far from residential areas, no transportation to polling stations, students aged 17 years and above mostly study abroad, workers who work abroad who have not re-registered in the country to continue their studies or reside and also of course those who do not participate in the election because there is no actualization data for people who have died, causing a large number of voters but they do not participate in the election.

CONCLUSION

Viewed from the Acted Role, the Comissão Nacional da Eleições (CNE) believes in the importance of election socialization, especially the Presidential Election (Pilpres) in Timor Leste. In several socialization activities carried out directly by the CNE through civic education in voter socialization about the Presidential Election process are target identification, determining the location of socialization, social mobilization, socialization in cities and remote areas, and socialization through electronic media (TV and Radio). CNE targets first-time voters, Timor Leste Politics, young people, people with disabilities, and the general public aged 16 years and over. In remote areas or communities in remote areas, without access to information, they often face situations of ignorance regarding election-related issues, both pre- and post-election. Damaged road access prevents CNE Municipal staff from reaching remote areas to conduct civic education outreach. Public outreach is needed to help the public understand the election process and enable



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them to participate. One factor contributing to low turnout is a lack of outreach from CNE and STAE (Tatoli Ep, 2017).

From a Prescribed Role perspective, civic education outreach is essential to maximize election participation through voter registration monitoring and election process oversight. Technically, during voter registration monitoring and database updates, CNE discovered several irregularities, including: some voters had more than one voter card; voters who had died remained in the voter database; STAE sometimes failed to provide optimal support due to insufficient support from the Ministry of State Administration, such as fuel for STAE transportation, slow internet connections, and inefficient blank voter cards. Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff abroad conducted the census, leading to confusion due to a lack of knowledge about the RE-ABD process. Lack of services in registration, for parents, pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, first-time voters (young people studying at home or abroad) and diaspora (working abroad) can be found hundreds of voters who lost their right to vote, including some people who claimed to have registered on time but their names were not on the voter list, including patients and families of patients in hospitals such as in the Municipality of Baucau, and the Municipality of Covalima. Indeed, patients and their families were unable to vote even though it was published, because the voter list was not updated, and they also had no other mechanism to update and authorize them to vote (La,o Hamutuk, 2022).

Viewed from a Role Model perspective, a Role Model is someone whose behavior we emulate, imitate, and follow. Participating in elections is a public right, as citizens have the responsibility to determine the future direction of the nation by making choices and using their voting rights. This means contributing to the presidential election to manage the future of the nation, which is realized through the responsibility of sovereign citizens by using their rights as citizens through socialization of the election process, registering, and participating in voting on election day. The community's experience, after participating in civic education, the community knows and understands their rights and obligations to register and participate in the presidential election. Using their voting rights, they will be aware of the political rights they have, so that with the existing opportunity, they will participate in using their voting rights, coupled with the conditions of their own regions, making their interest high to participate in coming to the polling stations during the election. People who do not exercise their right to vote are unaware of their political rights as citizens, lack political knowledge, and lack trust, not being familiar with the presidential candidates. A person's assessment of a presidential candidate, whether he or she believes the candidate is trustworthy and influential to lead the country or not, is also affected. This reduces interest and attention in the presidential election process, leading to an attitude of indifference or indifference, known as apathy. This apathy can occur due to their boredom with the frequent election activities that are held, but they do not see any change. So they assume that a presidential election that is held or organized, and also the activity of using their right to vote, is just a mediocre activity and will not have a better impact on them, especially as voters. So, on election day, people are busier with personal matters for the needs of their families.

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