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The influence of pressure groups on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq; An analytical study for an Iraqi sample from the province of Wassit .

By:

Lecturer; Ahmed AbdulAmeer Naser, Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management and Economics, University of Wassit.

Dr. Kereim Jaber Dahiy Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management and Economics, University of Wasit.

Dr. Sami Awad Galam Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Management and Economics, University of Wassit.

Assistant lecturer, Ahmed Abd Naeem, Master of statistics, Faculty of Management and Economics, University of Wassit.

Abstract

The present study aims to study the influence of the independent variable; religious, political, economic, and social pressure groups on the dependent variable; the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq through the influencing factors; personal, psychological, social, cultural, and civilizational. The research sample has consisted of 110 Iraqi people in the province of Wassit. The sample has been randomly chosen from various social classes. The data have been analyzed statistically through logistic regression. A set of statistical methods have been used to analyze the data obtained from the scientifically controlled questionnaire using the (SPSS V22) program. The present study has come up with a number of conclusions, including that there are many groups pressing in the Iraqi environment, there is a significant influence for some of the pressure groups through some methods that put pressure on individuals, which is reflected mainly on the electoral decisions of the individuals. The present study has suggested a set of recommendations; these groups should compete through economic, educational, and service programs, the primary purpose should be to serve society, the public interest, and the achievement of social justice. The present study emphasizes the dissemination of electoral awareness of Iraqi electorate for choosing the best, preserving its independence by preventing external interference, and that its work is directed purposefully towards change and reform in the electoral and political system. The present study is divided into four sections; Section one

has been devoted to the research methodology. Section two has been devoted to the theoretical framework. The analytical framework has been presented in section three. The present study ends with section four which includes the results and recommendations.

Introduction

Nowadays, members of society live in a dynamic environment as a result of rapid changes and developments in various spheres of political, economic, social, and other spheres of life. This requires members of the society to be aware of, understand, and think about the nature of this environment and its variables in order to make decisions properly, accurately, and efficiently regarding the future of their countries. This is directly reflected positively on all aspects of economic, educational, health, and service aspects of life. The pressure groups are effective means of influencing the decisions of the Iraqi voter as they lead to the formation and formulation of decisions regarding the choice of a list or a candidate. In this sense, the present study attempts to study the pressure groups (which can play a key role in guiding the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq) to achieve the desired goals of advancement, progress, reform, and change in the Iraqi environment.

Section one: The research methodology.

1.1. The research problem.

The present study is an attempt to answer a major question; Do pressure groups influence the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq? In other words, the present study attempts to provide objective answers for the following questions

1-What are the basic concepts of pressure groups and individual's electoral decisions in Iraq.

2-What are the types of pressure groups and factors that influence the individual's decisions in the Iraqi environment.

3-What is the nature of the influence of pressure groups on the individual's electoral decisions within the context of the Iraqi local environmental privacy.

1.2.The significance of the research.

The significance of the present study is shown in the following points:-

1-The present study is significant as it has dealt with one of the most important contemporary issues in administration, specifically in the political marketing; pressure groups and the individual's electoral decisions in the Iraqi parliamentary elections.

2-The present study is one of the most recent researches as the researchers did not find a previous local or Arab study linking the pressure groups and the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq.

3-The significance of the present study is due to the attempt to introduce the research variables and apply them to the local Iraqi environment.

1.3. The research objectives.

The present study seeks to identify the influence of the pressure groups on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq. The main objectives of the present study are:-

1. Reviewing what was written about the influence of pressure groups and how to develop their work properly and effectively.
2. Identifying the most important factors influencing the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq.
- 3 .Identifying the nature of the influence and the relationship between the pressure groups and the individual's decisions in Iraq.
- 4 .Providing a set of recommendations and suggestions aiming at developing the work of pressure groups in order to direct the Iraqi. individual's decision effectively and correctly towards the optimal selection in the Iraqi parliamentary elections.

1.4.The research hypotheses

The main hypothesis of the present study is that "there is a statistically significant influence of pressure groups on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq."

1.5.The research community and Sample

The research community consists of Iraqi people. The sample has included (110) Iraqi people in the center of the province of Wassit).The total number of questionnaire forms distributed was (110). (106), forms were returned back and 4 forms were excluded for lacking validity for the statistical analysis. Thus, the number of valid forms is (102) forms; 95% of the total distributed forms.

1.6.The limits of the Study.

The present study is Limited to the year 2018, specifically the period starting from 1-3-2018 to 1-10-2018.

Section two; The theoretical part

First;

2.1. The concept of pressure groups.

Most specialists and researchers agree that pressure groups have an influence on the political policy-makers. Those groups do not participate directly in the elections. The major aim of pressure groups is to provide public services. Pressure groups are defined in many different ways.‘

Jean, 2006:10 describes pressure groups as starting from the moment of influencing the government in a way that they achieve their private or public aims. Naji,2007:163 defines pressure groups as a group of people whose mutual values and beliefs that are based on race, religion, or political philosophy. These groups try to achieve the goals of their members through every possible means except authority. They may take certain actions to enhance their aims, following an agenda through which they achieve their goals, or they may adopt more public goals.

Gabriela,2015:357 sees that pressure groups vary from social and political organizations in that they influence the decision makers through coordination between social and political activities and arrangement of priorities to take certain actions for pressure.

Smith, 2017:1 defines pressure groups as a group of individuals that are organized to a great extent and try to create pressure on the government to achieve the benefits of members or public benefits. Accordingly, Wiener sees that pressure groups are those organized groups away from governments, which try to influence appointing authoritative, putting plans, and elections.

According to what has been mentioned above, pressure groups can be defined as those organized groups of members whose mutual principles, beliefs, and certain ideas trying to make pressure on governments, public policy, society, and public opinions through influencing elections and public policies to achieve either private or public benefits.

2.2. Reasons of joining pressure groups.

Individuals can achieve many benefits when joining pressure groups,) July2015www.parliament.gld.au):

1. Purposeful Benefits: Individuals join pressure groups to be part of a movement, and they try to make society a better place and have a good feeling.
2. Material Benefits: Individuals believe that they will receive material benefits as a result of joining pressure groups and as a result of political changes they provide.
3. Interactive Benefits: Individuals join these groups to interact with other individuals and participate in various lobbying activities.

2.3. Functions of pressure groups.

Pressure groups have many different functions and roles including the following (Ungureanu, 2015):

1. Increasing the citizens' awareness of certain issues, and warning them from the issues addressed and their impact.
2. Enhancing discussion and coexistence and assessing public opinion concerning key issues.
3. Encouraging democratic participation, pluralism, and diversity.
4. Demanding justice and equity.
5. Increasing citizens' participation in decision-making processes in elections.
6. Having an important role in political changes.
7. Defending the rights of minorities.
8. Explaining the issues and aspects that are not touched by the political parties because of their sensitivity.
9. Participating in influencing policy from different aspects.
10. Investigating and holding the Government the responsibility for the implementation of programs and policies to ensure that their pledges are fulfilled.

2.4. Types of pressure groups.

There are several classifications of pressure group types (Smith, 2017: 2):

1. Internal groups. This type is directly related to the government, advises and is consulted on the political, economic, and social issues of the state and works to build good professional relations with the government.

2. External Groups. These groups do not want to be close to the government directly. They engage in organizations to strengthen their point of view, and use propaganda to attract citizens to promote their issue.

3. Promotional groups. These groups often promote a certain set of issues, goals, ideas, beliefs, and values, and have an open membership of the public to defend a particular issue. 4. The leading group. A group of self-interest or private, and is specific to specific individuals in order to defend issues of their own.

There is another classification of pressure groups according to the Iraqi environment:

1. Political pressure groups. These groups are allied with the parties to achieve certain goals. Some groups may turn into political parties to influence power directly or indirectly, and may be supported by an outside country. Their work is to support candidates or certain electoral lists and form Public opinion and pressure through a range of concepts and values, and may resort to violence, threats, bribery, or coercion to achieve their interests.

2. Religious pressure groups. The objectives of these groups focus on serving society, achieving social justice, protecting legitimate freedoms and rights, finding solutions to various problems, and maintaining unity in society by disseminating their ideas, values, and principles by using various means of communication to influence feelings and emotions. Such groups do not seek profits and they do not have many tools of political pressure to do their part.

3. Economic pressure groups. These groups have material interests, a particular interest that affects individuals, focusing on the benefits, material or financial aspects through obtaining governmental or non-governmental appointments and obtaining money or gifts.

4. Social and cultural pressure groups. These groups exert pressure through tribal affiliations, assets, social nature or geographical location for achieving specific goals or supporting a specific party by influencing feelings and emotions and directing their behavior by virtue of their inherited relationships, customs, and traditions.

2.5. Pressure ways and techniques.

There are various ways and techniques for managing pressure (Gabriela, 2015: 359):

1. Political pressure, - including demonstrations, strikes, protests, and sit-ins. - it is one of the most popular pressure methods, although it is not the most effective.

2. Direct pressure - through representatives of pressure groups with decision makers in the government (legislators, committees, boards) and it is more efficient than the previous method.

3. Pressure by announcing the goals and values of the group - where they are published openly in an attempt to obtain political capital directly or indirectly, through the dissemination of ideas and influencing public opinion.

4. The fair judicial system. This system is influential, especially in democratic countries.
5. Participating in electoral campaigns before elections - is an important method for providing decision makers with guidance to benefit from them after the elections, ie supporting the participating parties in elections.
6. Influencing through media; Using different media devices.
7. Political downgrading. Publishing fabricated video clips to downgrade competitors and decrease their popularity.

Second. The individual's electoral decisions.

3.1. the concept of the individual's electoral decision.

Looking at many sources and references reveals that there is an agreement that the decision taken by the individual depends on the attractiveness of the option or the availability of the alternative. That attractiveness is directly related to the benefits achieved by the individual from that alternative. The benefit, here, is the ability of the option or the alternative to meet the needs, wishes, goals, and values of the individual; The decision-maker. This decision includes a set of steps and stages taken by the individual before choosing any of these alternatives (candidates for elections), which he/she prefers after evaluating these alternatives and reaches the degree of mental, emotional, and behavioral persuasion and then he/she Makes his/her decision. Elections are defined as practicing the right of choosing in a way that meets the wills which qualify for such practices which are the rights of any citizen (Jennifer, 2011: 14).

3.2. factors influencing the individuals' electoral decisions.

Studies and researches have shown that there are important factors influencing the decisions of individuals, whether internal or external, as explained below:

(Kotler,2006:300-310)-,(Mohammed,1997:25), and (Jerome, 2004: 97).

1. Personal factors: These factors focus on the personal traits and physiological aspects in which the human being is born (such as gender, height, weight, age, life cycle, etc.) and their effect on his/her behavior which is reflected on the individual's electoral behavior.
2. Psychological factors: These factors relate to mental and psychological aspects that are intangible, (such as motivation, intelligence, perception, memory, learning, trust, and needs) and their influence on the individual's decision.
3. Social factors: These factors are classified as external factors. They relate to the degree of social progress, social formation and organization, as well as the influence of the

authoritative groups due to their experiences, the availability of information, and the various persuasions. They transform the behavior and the individual's electoral decision, especially friends, relatives, and others.

4. Civilizational factors: They are also classified as external factors (values, principles, beliefs, knowledge, behaviors, etc.) that prevail in society at certain periods and vary from one country to another and they have an effective influence on the behavior and electoral decision of the individual.

3.3. Characteristics of political market.

The political market is characterized by certain characteristics and the individual expresses his/her electoral decision (Ben Shiha, 2009: 190-192):

1. The ideological dimension: This dimension shows the role of the beliefs and ideas of the individual in the individual's electoral decision as well as party affiliation and its important role in the individual's political decisions.
2. Social and cultural dimension: It shows the values, traditions, and social and cultural values such as identity, language, religious orientation, and ideological bases, which are more important and influential in the voter's decision in most countries.
3. The opposite political consumer: The main objective of the participation of the individual in the elections is to prevent another candidate from winning or to get his/her party to achieve the majority to prevent other parties from winning.
4. Mental image and reputation: The image of the party in the minds of candidates, as well as the influence of this image on the individual's electoral decision for the purpose of survival and the continuation of his/her party as a political leader depending on various media reputation is more related to the performance of the voter through his/her active participation in the elections.

3.4. Kotler's model of candidate marketing map.

Kotler's model (1999) consists of six phases (Wojciech et al., 2015: 38-41):

1. Environmental research: It is the analysis of the social environment, including the economic situation of the candidate and the country, feelings of voters, conflicts between voters and candidates, the psychological situation, voters' participation, trends and tendencies, age, income, education, and lifestyle.
2. Internal and external evaluation: Evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of party candidates (internal evaluation) and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the competing candidates (external evaluation) to determine the candidate.
3. Strategic Marketing: The main objective of marketing is to describe the society as non-homogenous but consists of several parts of voters so voters must be analyzed in different regions and appropriate marketing methods must be used.

4. Determining the goals and strategy of the campaign:

The candidate's image is identified by presenting social and economic issues, adjusting and correcting the campaign if there is any deviation or mistake.

5. Communication, distribution, and the organized plan:

This includes a range of activities; Assessing the electoral staff members, raising funds, liaison with various groups, and involving volunteers.

6. Competitors' and media market: This includes areas of concentration of voters, donors, and competitors as well as media; newspapers, magazines, television, radio, internet, and social media.

3.5. Basic components of voters' behavior.

There are five basic components used to study voters in this model. After identifying voters' motives, they can be divided into segments that correspond to the following five dimensions (Newman, 1994: 70-75):

1. Functional value: The benefit or profit that the voter is expected to receive from the candidate once he/she assumes office by calling for the various issues, policies and programs that may be provided to them in order to attract them. A selection of the most useful alternative by the electorate that achieves the best benefit and the best programs for them.

2. Social value: The establishment of relations and links between the candidate and different segments of the electorate has a positive image in the community. The candidate should focus on the type of voters and get their support in various ways, as well as personal support obtained by a group of people as a result of the philosophy he/she adopts

3. Emotional value: This dimension focuses on the personal characteristics of the candidate to enhance his/her image in the minds of the voter and thus the formation of emotional communication with the voters and include (his/her experiences and successes achieved from aspects of work, confidence, political experience, strength and the ability to change and reform, and get to the street and see their needs).

4. The conditional value: This dimension is used to attract voters in a variety of ways. Opponents use this element to create the illusion that one candidate is better able to deal with certain crises than the other candidates, ie, the ability to convince the voter that he/she is the best to solve the problems of the country in the future under various conditions.

5. Cognitive value: Knowledge represents the strategic dimension possessed by the candidate and addresses the masses of voters, ie the use of knowledge and experience to attract voters, and use them to display change and reform.

Section three: The practical part.

4.1. Presenting, analyzing, interpreting, and testing the hypotheses.

To achieve the objectives of the present study and test the hypotheses, the practical part has included a set of statistical procedures. The hypotheses have been tested through the logistic regression analysis in addition to a set of tests based on the statistical program

(SPSS, vr.22). The logistic regression is a model used to predict the probability of an event by adapting data to a logistic curve. Logistic regression uses several expected variables that can be numerical or factional. Logistic regression begins by defining the logistic function, and is like probability theory taking values between zero and one. $f(z) = e^z / (e^z + 1) = 1 / (1 + e^{-z})$ The logistic function is important because it takes input from infinity to infinity, but outputs are always between zero and one. The variable z represents the independent variables where $f(z)$ represents the probability of a particular output of a set of independent variables, and the variable z measures the total contribution of all the independent variables used in this model known as Z , and z is defined as: $Z = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \dots + \beta_k X_k$ Here β_0 is the point of cutting the axis of the samples, $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, called the regression coefficients, and the point-cutter point β_0 is equal to Z when all the independent variables are zero.

4.2. Results of statistical analysis of the research sample.

The following tables show the nature of the sample size, directions, and accuracy of responses.

Table (1)

		Observed	Predicted		
			The individual's		Percentage Correct
			.00	1.00	
Step 0	The individuals' electoral decisions in Iraq	.00	0	24	.0
		1.00	0	78	100.0
	Overall Percentage				76.5

The results of the analysis in table (1) using the logistic regression model show the nature of the responses; The dependent variable; The individual's decisions. The number of respondents who answered (yes) is (78) out of (102), whereas the number of the respondents who answered (no) is (24). This shows the magnitude of the influence on the decisions of individuals in the Iraqi elections.

Table (2)
Frequencies of maximum possibility

Iteration History^{a,b,c}

Iteration	-2 Log likelihood	Coefficients																		
		x1	x2	x3	x4	x5	x6	x7	x8	x9	x10	x11	x12	x13	x14	x15	x16	x17	x18	
Step 1	1	94.265	.178	-.134	-.957	.176	.449	.064	-.201	.370	.704	.172	-.676	.223	-.619	.001	.976	.132	-.243	.183
	2	89.795	.276	-.104	-1.842	.484	.639	.225	-.222	.528	1.013	.274	-1.043	.363	-1.115	.188	1.439	.238	-.403	.204
	3	89.261	.335	-.043	-2.463	.660	.751	.336	-.176	.591	1.157	.327	-1.169	.418	-1.322	.330	1.624	.276	-.484	.181
	4	89.246	.348	-.027	-2.611	.690	.775	.357	-.159	.605	1.188	.339	-1.186	.425	-1.347	.358	1.656	.284	-.501	.177
	5	89.246	.348	-.026	-2.617	.691	.775	.357	-.159	.606	1.189	.339	-1.186	.425	-1.347	.358	1.657	.284	-.501	.177
	6	89.246	.348	-.026	-2.617	.691	.775	.357	-.159	.606	1.189	.339	-1.186	.425	-1.347	.358	1.657	.284	-.501	.177

a. Method: Enter

b. Initial -2 Log Likelihood: 141.402

c. Estimation terminated at iteration number 6 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

//:

The results of the analysis shown in Table (2) using the logistic regression model show that the maximum potential for parameters for each of the independent variable (pressure groups) x (x₁,, x₂, x₃, x₁₈) shows the accuracy of the parameters in their influence on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq.

4.3. Analyzing the influence and the relationship between the independent variables (X1, X2, ... X18) and the dependent variable (Y).

The logistic regression function has been calculated and the following results have been obtained:

Table (3)
COX (test)

Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
1	89.246 ^a	.800	.834

Table (3) shows the results of COX test, whose a value of (0.800 = Cox), which is a corresponding test to (R^2), i.e., the influence and correlation between the independent variables (x₁,, x₂, x₁₈); (pressure groups) on the dependent variables; (y₁,, y₂, y₁₈); (the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq) indicate that the independent variables have interpreted 80% % from the logistic regression model. The remaining 20% is included within the random error limit, i.e., there are other variables or factors that influence the individual's electoral decisions, but the regression model has not included them.

Table (4)

Frequencies of maximum possibility

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I.for	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 ^a	x1	.348	.729	.228	1	.099	1.416	.339	5.914
	x2	.726	.523	1.606	1	.011	.1612	.630	6.842
	x3	-2.617-	1.538	2.893	1	.422	.073	.004	1.490
	x4	.691	.778	.788	1	.041	1.995	.434	9.169
	x5	.775	.594	1.706	1	.006	2.171	.678	6.951
	x6	.357	.789	.205	1	.095	1.429	.304	6.715
	x7	-.159-	.696	.052	1	.355	.853	.218	3.341
	x8	.606	.655	.855	1	.055	1.833	.507	6.625
	x9	1.189	.640	3.457	1	.007	3.285	.938	11.506
	x10	.339	.666	.260	1	.210	1.404	.381	5.173
	x11	-1.186-	.679	3.055	1	.403	.305	.081	1.155
	x12	.425	.603	.496	1	.087	1.529	.469	4.987
	x13	.560	.670	.301	1	.077	.4611	.398	5.271
	x14	.358	.663	.292	1	.090	1.431	.390	5.249
	x15	1.657	.598	7.681	1	.005	5.246	1.625	16.940
	x16	.284	.625	.206	1	.350	1.328	.390	4.524
	x17	.501	.694	.522	1	.080	.606	.156	2.359
	x18	.345	.643	.281	1	.101	1.399	.385	5.110

Table (4) shows the results of the analysis using the logistic regression model to measure the influence of the independent variables (x-1,, x-2, x-18); (pressure groups) on the dependent variables; (The individual's electoral decisions in Iraq). The results have shown that the rank of the items which influence the individual's electoral decisions is as follows: Political entities bribery, persuasion, coercion and threats to choose a specific electoral list, the influence of the sectarian or national side, and the influence of leaders or parties And the work of religious authorities to achieve goals; including social service, social justice, protection of freedoms and legitimate rights, the role of demonstrations and protests in pressing the government and decision-makers). The influence of tribal affiliation on the choice of a particular candidate, The influence of regional and geographical affiliation on selecting a particular list or candidate, The pressure of political dichotomy through fabricated clips (x-1 x-6, x-14, x-12, x-17, x-13), the influence of religious authorities on feelings, emotions, and behavior, and the supreme religious authority on the election), which also shows an influence on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq. And finally, (x-3, x-11 x-7, x-16, x-10, x-18) Ranked respectively and included The influence of political parties on public opinion through their values and concepts, the influence of the proposed programs of the parties (economic, educational, and health), the use of Religious figures and various means of communication to raise awareness through religious speeches, satellite channels and others) which are the least influential on the individual's electoral decisions.

Section four. Conclusions and recommendations.

5.1. Conclusions:

1. The results have confirmed that there are many groups pressing on the Iraqi environment, which is reflected mainly on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq.
2. The results of the statistical analysis have proved that there is an effective influence of statistical significance for all types of pressure groups on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq of various percentages in addition to the relationship and correlation between them.
3. The results of the statistical analysis have shown that there have been some particular aspects of pressure groups that have had the greatest influence on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq; the role of election campaigns, the practice of some political parties, bribery, persuasion, coercion and threats to choose a specific electoral list, the sectarian or national side, And the work of religious authorities to achieve goals, including community service, social justice and the protection of freedoms and legitimate rights, and the role of demonstrations and protests in the pressure on the government and decision makers).
4. The results of the statistical analysis have shown that the other aspects of pressure groups have had a less influence on the individual's electoral decisions in Iraq; the influence of tribal affiliation on choosing a particular candidate, the influence of regional and geographical affiliation on choosing a particular list or candidate, The influence of customs and traditions, and the influence of religious authorities on feelings, emotions, and behavior, and the supreme religious authority on the election).
5. It has been found that the following aspects of pressure groups have had the least influence on the individual's electoral decisions; (material or financial benefits or promises of appointment, the work of political groups in a purposeful way for political change and reform, the role of personal kinship as a means of pressure, and the influence of political parties on public opinion through their values) And the impact of the proposed programs of the parties (economic, educational and health), and the use of different religious means of communication to raise awareness through religious speeches, satellite channels and others).
6. There is an increasing role of pressure groups in the Iraqi environment as a result of the rapid transition from the presidential system to the democratic parliamentary system as well as the lack of awareness among the Iraqi voters and the difficulty of determining the best choice.
7. The factors influencing the individual's electoral decisions; (personal, psychological, social, cultural, and civilizational) in the Iraqi environment have been exploited by some pressure groups, whether positively or negatively.

5.2. Recommendations and suggestions.

1. Pressure groups should strive to influence the individual's electoral decisions by competing through economic, educational, and service programs, with the main objective

of serving the community, the public interest, achieving social justice and protecting legitimate freedoms and rights.

2. Pressure groups should work to raise awareness of the value of Iraqi voters and guide them towards the best choice for qualified candidates in the elections.

3. Preserving their independence as pressure groups from external interventions and working purposefully for change and reform in the electoral and political system.

4. Ethnic groups and media campaigns. Tribal and regional affiliations, other unethical practices such as bribery, persuasion, coercion and threat to choose a candidate or a specific electoral list should all be avoided by pressure groups.

5. Providing accurate information about candidates (experience, and success in work, integrity and sincerity, sense of responsibility, trust, political experience, power, the ability of change and reform).

6. The electoral decisions should be taken according to criteria and should not be motivated by personal animosity and emotions.

7. The nature and size of achievement and performance is the measurement of choosing a specific candidate or electoral list.

8. The current electoral law should be amended to be fair so as to ensure that qualified individuals who have obtained the highest votes are able to join the parliament using the individual electoral system instead of using the St Lego (1.9) system.

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