



VOTER TURNOUT IN TURKEY: A CROSS-NATIONAL COMPARISON*

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Abstract

It is often stated that democracy is "the only game in the town", and invention of another more ideal and better regime than democracy seems not feasible. One of the most important elements of democracy is political participation. The quality of the democracy is directly related to the level of engagement of citizens in politics. Voting is also the most common type of political participation with requiring little initiative for most people. The aim of this study is to compare the voter turnout rate in Turkey with global voter turnout. For this purpose, firstly, participation rates for all elections held between 1950-2015 in Turkey (parliamentary, local, referendum and presidential elections) were introduced. Then, the voter turnout rate in the world between 1950-2010 and average voter turnout over 10 years in the thirty-six countries between 1940-2000 were also presented and these are compared with the voter turnout rate in Turkey. This will provide an insight into Turkey's place in the world concerning participation performance in elections. It is believed that this study is distinctive and important in this respect.

Keywords: Democracy, Voting, Voter Turnout, Turkey, World.

Introduction

It is stated that democracy is consolidated enough to be "the only game in town" (Linz & Stepan, 1996: 5). It is possible to say that people have left the thought and search that there can be a better and more ideal regime than democracy. Rather, it can be argued that solving the problems that arise in democracy, is now a fundamental issue. Political participation is the heart of the matter in democracy, particularly in representative democracy. Political participation significantly determines the quality of democracy. This is the why Almond & Verba (1963) defines modern democracies as in which "participant culture" is dominant. Ishama (2010: 231) also points out that political participation is a hallmark of any well-functioning democracy. Lerner (1958: 50-51) claims that what segregating the modern society from traditional society is "political participation."

When it comes to classifying political participation, voting is the basic conventional mode of political participation. It is perhaps the only activity concerning political participation for many people living in modern societies.

However, currently low voter turnout is a nearly universal phenomenon in modern democracies. Many of the major democracies recently arrived at their lowest voter turnout rates ever. This situation is perceived by many ordinary people, politicians and scholars as negative and bad. Because it is believed that democracy is not possible without the political participation of people, and to make democracy work, people have to choose at least their representatives in free regularly held elections.

This study focuses on voter turnout in Turkey with a cross-national comparison. Likewise, the voter turnout rate in the world and Turkey will be analyzed. Then, by conducting a cross-national comparison, voter turnout rate in Turkey will be compared with average voter turnout over 10 years in the thirty-five countries.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. Democracy, Political Participation and Voting

Two Greek words, "demos" and "kratos", combine together and make "democracy". *Demos* means "mob", "many", "people"; while "kratos" means "rule", "power". By this combination, democracy refers to "rule of people", "rule of many". To get a more insight into term, the definition of Abraham Lincoln is very useful. He defined democracy as 'government of the people, by the people, and for the people'. There are some basic criteria for modern democratic regimes or to label a regime as democratic: 1) open, free, and fair elections; 2) Essentially all adults have the right to vote; 3) political rights and civil liberties such as freedom

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of the press, freedom of association, and freedom to criticize decisions of the government, are broadly protected; and 4) absence of the tutelary control of military or other authorities over elected people (Arblaster, 2002; Anthony, 2007; Crick, 2003; Cunningham, 2001; Çaylak, 2008: 118; Heywood, 2013).

Political participation is the heart of the matter in democracy, particularly in representative democracy. The quantity and quality of political participation significantly determine the "quality" of democracy. This is the why Almond & Verba (1963) defines modern democracies as in which "participant culture" is dominant. Ishama (2010: 231) also points out that political participation is a hallmark of any well-functioning democracy. Lerner (1958: 50-51) claims that what segregating the modern society from traditional society is "political participation."

As declared in the article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the right to take part in government and decision-making process is a basic human right (United Nations General Assembly, 1948). Under this framework, rights such as right to hold meetings and demonstration marches, right to vote, to be elected and to engage in political activity, forming parties, membership and withdrawal from membership in a party, right of petition are regulated in the national laws as basic fundamental political rights.

Conventional and unconventional political participation is one of the oldest and most-used categorization in the studies of political participation and behavior. Conventional political participation consists of actions that take place through institutionalized means, such as voting, party campaigning, communal activity and contacting a representative or official about a particular personal issue. Unconventional political participation is political activities such as legal demonstrations, boycotts, illegal strikes damage to property and personal violence (Melo & Stockemer, 2014: 34-35, Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978: 51-54, Sabucedo & Arce, 1991: 94).

The old concepts and terms inevitably face new challenges in the field of political participation. This condition is strongly and closely related to the amazing change in the form and content in technique and technology. Only just a photo or 140-character "tweet" or six-second Vine can force a prime minister to make a statement.

This new case makes scholars to conceptualize new modes of political participation. The distinction between offline and online political participation is a such outcome of this endeavor. Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, Youtube have important impact on the emergence and development of large-scale mass political participation such as Occupy protests in USA, the Gezi park protests in Turkey and Arab Spring (Vissers .& Stolle, 2014).

Voting is the basic conventional mode of political participation. Voting is also the most frequent citizen activity and although it differs from other political acts in that it requires relatively little initiative, the range of its outcome is very broad (Verba, Nie and Kim, 1978: 53). Voting is the only form of political participation for most people, whilst it is just one of the modes of political participation (Wolfinger & Rosenstone, 1980: 1).

Evans (2004: 148-149) defines voting as symbolic of our belonging to democratic society which allows each competent citizen input into the political process and as equal a choice in who governs as any other citizen. Dalton (2008: 39) also defines voting in this sense, as an activity that binds the individual to the political system and legitimize the rest of the democratic process. A variety of reasons lead people to vote: to sustain and protect democracy; as a sense of citizen's duty; possibility and risk of their candidate loss by one vote; decisiveness of their vote in case of other people's abstention; encourage and facilitate to vote by group leaders and politicians; the zero cost of voting (Blais, 2000: 3).

Every regime in which voting is conducted is not democratic; however voting is sine qua non of democracy. In this respect, voting is at the core of democracy. Some authoritarian regimes conduct elections, in spite of huge cost and time, in order to provide an artificial image of legitimacy against national and international actors (Geddes, 2005).

1.2. Electoral System in Turkey

The first election in the Ottoman Empire was experienced with the transition to a constitutional monarchy in 1876. The Ottoman Constitution of 1876 foresaw a bicameral system consists of an the Chamber of Representatives and the Ottoman Senate. The members of the Ottoman Senate were appointed by the Sultan, while the members of the Chamber of Representatives were elected by the people. There was restricted franchise and simple majority voting in these elections, which held in two stages (Koçak, 2005: 3).

After the foundation of the Republic in 1923, The Constitution of 1924 regulated the elections. While bicameral system of Ottoman period was removed, the elections were held in two stages until 1946. Restricted franchise was replaced by universal suffrage in 1934. This period was single party regime and there wasn't any party to join in elections.



The transition to democracy was done de jure in 1946 and The electoral system was experienced significant changes. A majority system with multimember constituencies was conducted in the elections of 1946, 1950, 1954, and 1957 (Kalaycıoğlu, 2002: 64).

After the military coup of 1960, a bicameral system was established and many variations of proportional representation was conducted until 1980 following as: d'Hondt system with constituency thresholds for the National assembly elections (1961-1964) and for senate elections (1964-1965); national remainder system for both chambers between 1965 and 1969, D'Hondt system with constituency thresholds (1969-1980) (Özbudun, 2013: 108).

The Constitution of 1982, following the military coup of 1980 changed the electoral system again. D'Hondt system with national and constituency thresholds was conducted between 1983 and 1987, while D'Hondt system with national and constituency thresholds, combined with the simple-majority simple between 1987 and 1995 (Özbudun, 2013: 108).

Currently, the D'Hondt method with national threshold (ten percent of the vote, which the highest in Europe) a party-list proportional representation system is carried out in general elections. There are 85 districts and each one is represented by members, in proportion to the population of districts.

Turkey has undergone significant structural changes in electoral system with constitutional referendum of 2017. First of all, the parliamentary system has replaced by presidential system. Secondly, the number of members of parliament has increased from 550 to 600 and the minimum age of candidacy lowered from 25 to 18.

Voting is recognized as a right in the constitutions of 1924, 1961 and 1982 in Turkey. Despite being recognized a right in the Article 67 of the Constitution of 1982, voting is considered as compulsory activity.

2. Research

2.1. Aim and Scope

The aim of this study is to compare the voter turnout rate in Turkey with global voter turnout. For this purpose, firstly, participation rates for all elections held between 1950-2015 in Turkey (parliamentary, local, referendum and presidential elections) were introduced. Then, the voter turnout rate in the world between 1950-2010 and average voter turnout over 10 years in the thirty-six countries between 1940-2000 were also presented and these are compared with the voter turnout rate in Turkey.

2.2. Method

In this study, a short introduction of literature review will be conducted on issues such as democracy, political participation, voting, electoral system of Turkey.

Data of Supreme Election Council and Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) will be used to determine the participation rates of the elections held in Turkey, including general elections (1950-2015), local (1963-2014), referendum and presidential elections.

A cross-national comparison will be conducted in this study as voter turnout rate in Turkey will be compared with global voter turnout rate and average voter turnout over 10 years in the thirty-six countries between 1940-2000. I adopted the data of thirty-six countries, except Turkey's, from Delwit, 2013), and global voter turnout from IDEA, I prepared the voter turnout rates of Turkey by using of data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) and Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey.

2.3. Limitations

Due to the scope and volume of this study, it does not question why voter turnout rate is so high, although compulsory voting is not enforced in Turkey, and dynamics behind the low turnout rate in some Western democracies. The socio-cultural, psychological and political causes behind these, are not questioned.

3. Results

3.1. Voter Turnout in Turkey

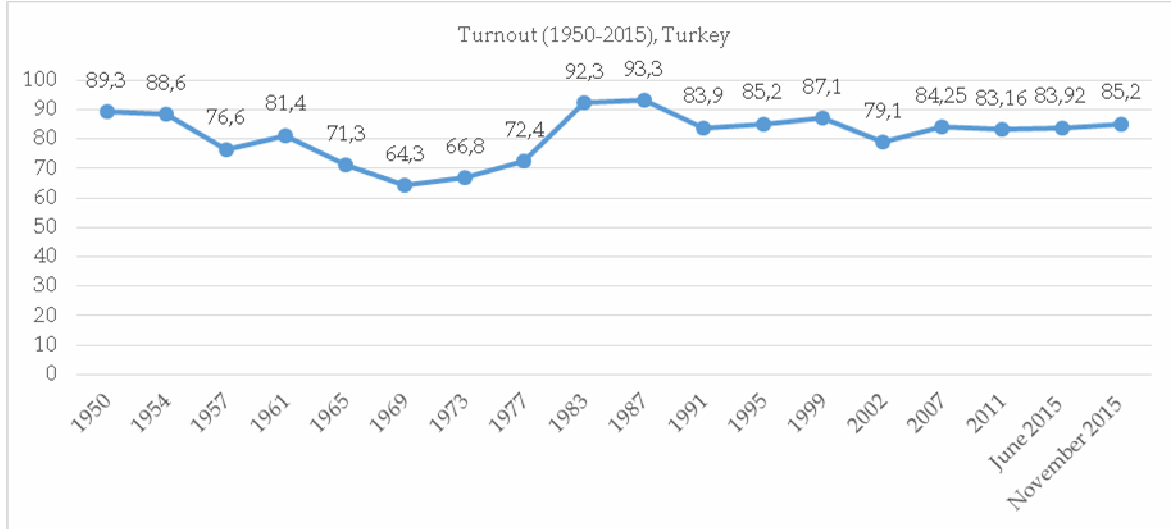
In this section, the participation rate in the elections in Turkey will be discussed. In this context, the participation rates in the general elections (parliamentary elections), local elections, referendums and presidential elections will be taken into account using Supreme Election Council and Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) data.

3.1.1. Parliamentary Elections

The first truly democratic elections in Turkey, established in 1923, took place in 1950. Since then, 18 parliamentary elections have been held. Turnout in these elections in Turkey is shown in Graph 1.



Graphic 1: Voter Turnout in Parliamentary Elections



Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat)

The Graph 1 shows that although Turkey has a relatively low participation rate in the elections between 1965 and 1977, it has a relatively high participation rate compared to today's Western modern democracies.

In 1983, when voting was mandatory for the first time, the turnout rate is 92.3%. It can be argued that this high rate was eventuated due to the fear atmosphere that was emerged around 1980 military coup, as well as because of compulsory voting. However, after 1983, when voting is mandatory, it appears that all elections, excluding the 2002 elections, are above turnout rate of 80%. Actually, the 2002 elections are already 79.1 and are relatively high.

In the parliamentary elections held between 1950 and 2015, the lowest turnout rate was in the elections of 1963 by 64.3%; and the highest turnout rate was in the elections of 1983 by 92.3% . The average turnout rate of these 18 parliamentary elections is 81.44% (see Graph 1).

3.1.2. Local Elections

In Art. 127 of the Turkish Constitution local governments are defined as "public corporate bodies established to meet the common local needs of the inhabitants of provinces, municipal districts and villages, whose principles of constitution and decision-making organs elected by the electorate are determined by law. Local governments are divided into three separate units which are special provincial administration, municipalities and towns. Municipalities have a dual and fragmented structure in the local government system since 1984, as metropolitan municipalities and provincial municipalities. In this section, turnout rate in the election of municipalities and special provincial administration will be analyzed.

Since 1963, when the mayors were directly elected by people, there have been 11 local elections to date. After 1984, when participation in local elections became mandatory, the turnout rate rose from 50-60% to over 80%.

In general, the lowest turnout rate in the elections of provincial municipalities held between 1963 and 2014 was in the elections of 1997 by 55,5%; The highest participation rate was in the elections of 1994 by 90.62%. The average voter turnout rate in these elections is 75.44%.

In the 7 elections held since 1984, when the metropolitan municipalities were first established, the lowest turnout rate was in the elections of 2004 elections by 70.6% and the highest turnout rate was in the elections of 2014 by 89.5%. The average turnout rate in these elections is 82.04%.

The lowest turnout rate in the elections of special provincial administration held between 1963 and 2014 was in the elections of 1977 by 60,4%; The highest participation rate was in the elections of 2014 by 89.4%. The average participation rate in these elections is 78.7%.



Table 1: Turnout in Local Elections, Turkey

Turnout in Local Elections	1963	1968	1973	1977	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014	Average
Provincial municipality	69,3	59,5	56,1	55,5	88,6	78,1	90,6	85,4	73,3	84,2	89,2	75,44
Metropolitan municipality	-	-	-	-	85,4	72,1	89,3	84,2	70,6	83,2	89,5	82,04
Provincial council election	77,6	65,7	61,7	60,4	91	81,5	92,2	86,9	75,3	84	89,4	78,7
Average	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	--	-	-	78,7

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat)

3.1.3. Referendums

The first referendum was held in 1961 with the introduction of the constitution of the military coup in Turkey, and seven referendums have been conducted so far. The last referendum was held in 2017.

The lowest turnout rate of these referendums was the referendum that conducted in 2007 by 67,5%. The issue of this referendum was the proposal of election of the president by popular vote.

The highest turnout rate of these referendums was the referendum that conducted in 1987 by 93,6%. The issue of this referendum was the proposal of the removal of political restrictions on political actors of the pre-coup period.

The turnout rate in the referendum of 2017 was 85,5%. The issue of this referendum was the proposal of the 18-point Constitutional Amendment. The average turnout rate of these referendums is 83,05%.

The issue and turnout rate in these elections are seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Referendums in Turkey

Year	Issue	Turnout (%)
1961	New Constitution	81
1982	New Constitution	91,3
1987	Removal of political bans	93,6
1988	Date of Local Election	88,8
2007	Presidential Election	67,5
2010	Judicial Changes	73,71
2017	the 18-point Constitutional Amendment	85,5
Average		83,05

Source: BBC Türkçe, <http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-39614996>

3.1.4. Presidential Elections

The president was elected by parliament in Turkey until the constitution of 2007. The direct election of the President by popular vote for the first time took place in 2014. The participation rate in this election is 73.72%. Then-prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the first president elected by people in the new political and constitutional system.

3.2. Global Voter Turnout and Voter Turnout in Turkey

As seen in Figure 2, in 1950, the global voter turnout was realized below 80%, while it was close to 90% in Turkey. The underlying reason for this rise may be the excitement among society created by the end of the one-party period and free and democratic elections in the real sense. After 1950, voter turnout rate

began to fall sharply until 1970 in Turkey. The global voter turnout, however, has fallen to very small proportions until the mid-1980s. After the mid-1980s, the global voter turnout began to decline sharply. Voter turnout in Turkey, which fell sharply until 1970, started to rise steadily after 1970. Particularly after the 1980 coup, with the introduction of compulsory voting, voter turnout reached the highest rates ever recorded in 1983. After 1983, however, voter turnout rate has fluctuated until 2000 in Turkey.

After 1983, the falling voter rate started to rise after 1990. After 2000, the voter rate in Turkey started to fall again. It can be said that the depression caused by the coalitions at that time and the weakening of people's expectations from politics played an important role in that case. Since the AK Party's entry into Turkish politics in 2002, the voter rate started to rise again. Given the dynamics underlying this rise, the share of polarization and competition between the left and Kemalists, the Kurds and the right and conservative groups in Turkey is prominent. When we look at the global voter turnout, it can be argued that the decline that started from the mid-1980s continues in a "crisis" dimension as much as the day-to-day. The global voter turnout is around 60% and turnout rate in Turkey is around 80% by 2010. With the exception of 1960-1970, voter turnout rate is above the world average from 1950 to the present in Turkey

Figure 1: Voter Turnout Trends in Turkey and in the World

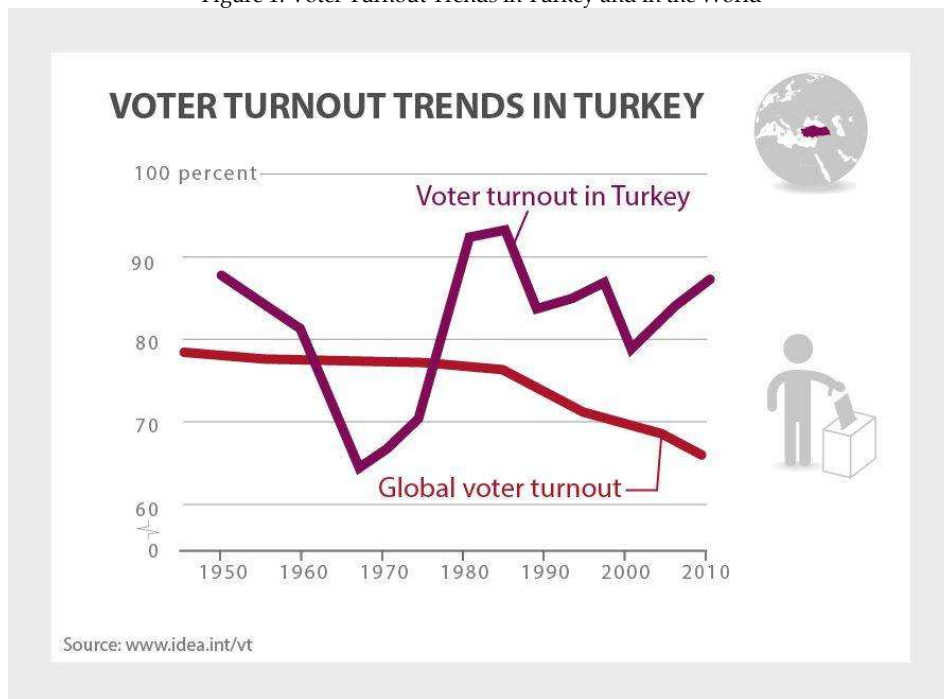


Table 3 shows elections in some countries that held in 2017 by June. As it is seen in the table; the highest voter turnout among them is Turkish constitutional referendum by 85,5%. The lowest voter turnout is the first round of French legislative election by 48,7. This voter turnout rate is the lowest France has seen in modern times. The average is 69,6%. In this elections, turnout of Dutch election (81,9%) is the highest rate since 1986 (86%). Turnout of United Kingdom election (68,7%) is also the highest one since 1997.

Table 3: Elections in some countries held by June 2017.

Elections	2017
Dutch General Election	81,9
French presidential election	67,9
French legislative election	48,7
United Kingdom general election	68,7
Iranian presidential election	73,3
Bulgarian parliamentary election	54,07
South Korean presidential election	77,2



Turkish constitutional referendum	85,5
Average	69,6

3.3. Voter Turnout in Thirty-six Countries

Average voter turnout over 10 years in the thirty-six states is shown in Table 4. According to this table, Average voter turnout in the thirty-six states is 82,6%. in 1940s; 84,1% in 1950s, 84,5% in 1960s, 82,9% in 1970s, 82,8% in 1980s, 76,5% in 1990s and 69,5% in 2000s. It is clear that the turnout rate fell sharply after the 1990s

At the beginning of the 1940s, the number of democratic regimes, nine in the world, rose to twenty-three towards the end of the 1940s (Roser, 2016). The average turnout rate of the 16 countries that are seen in Table 4 is 82,6 in this period. At the end of this period, Turkey has truly experienced transition to democracy.

The number of democratic regimes was twenty-four at the beginning and became thirty towards the end of the 1950s (Roser, 2016). As seen in the Table, the average turnout rate in 17 countries including Turkey is 84.1% in this period.

In the 1960s, the number of democratic regimes did not increase; it decreased. At the beginning of the 1960s, the number of democratic regimes, 33, dropped to 32 (Roser, 2016). As seen in the table the average turnout rate in seventeen countries including Turkey is %84.5.

Although democratic regimes decreased at the beginning of the 1970s, the number of democratic regimes began to rise again during the period, and it became thirty-eight at the end of the 1970s (Roser, 2016). As seen in the table, the average turnout rate in 21 countries ,including Turkey is 82.9% in this period.

In the early 1980s, the number of democratic regimes was 38, towards the end, this number increased to 52 (Roser, 2016). As seen in the table in this period, the average turnout rate in 21 countries including Turkey is 82.8%. With the collapse of the Soviet Union after 1989, the number of democratic regimes increased, and between 1989 and 1991 the number of democratic regimes rose from 52 to 63. That number increased to 74 in 1999. Thus, as seen in the table, the average turnout rate of 31 countries, including Turkey in the 1990s is 76.4%. The number of democratic regimes was 80 at the beginning of the 2000s and by 2009, it was 87. As seen in the table, the average turnout rate of 31 countries, including Turkey is 69.5% in 2000s.

Table 4: Average voter turnout over 10 years in the thirty-six countries.

	1940s	1950s	1960s	1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s	Average
Austria	95,7	95,32	93,79	92,34	91,51	83,59	80,46	90,4
Belgium	93,07	93,15	91,31	92,97	95,62	91,47	91,35	93
Denmark	86,03	81,77	87,37	87,51	86,04	84,35	86,09	85,5
Finland	76,61	76,49	85,01	77,84	73,89	67,4	67,28	75
France	79,92	80	76,62	82,35	71,83	68,43	62,36	74,5
Germany	78,49	86,91	87,05	90,93	87,3	79,65	75,83	84
Iceland	88,3	90,75	91,26	90,34	89,4	87,17	85,42	89
Ireland	70,98	74,34	74,26	76,45	72,88	68,45	64,84	72
Italy	90,68	93,79	92,83	92,25	89,77	85,38	79,36	89,1
Luxemburg	91,63	92,15	89,56	89,49	88,1	87,39	91,24	90
Malta	75,44	78,05	90,25	94,07	95,29	96,19	95,06	89,1
Norway	79,33	78,82	82,83	81,59	83,07	77,1	76,43	79,9
Sweden	77,56	78,7	86,42	90,42	89,06	84,96	82,6	84,2
Switzerland	71,69	68,98	64,11	52,3	47,67	43,85	46,78	56,5
The Netherlands	93,4	95,36	95,04	84,73	83,45	76,04	79,82	87
United Kingdom	72,55	80,24	76,56	75,02	74,13	74,61	60,63	73,3
Turkey	-	85	72,3	70	93	85,4	83,1	81,4
Cyprus				80,65	95,15	91,94	90,33	89,5



Greece				81,11	80,79	77,9	74,12	78,48
Portugal				87,44	77,82	65,69	61,79	73,1
Spain				72,8	73,2	76,92	72,77	74
Bulgaria						76,94	61,1	69
Czech Republic						82,79	61,25	72
Estonia						64,39	60,11	62,2
Hungary						63,38	69,18	66,2
Latvia						77,9	68,15	73
Lithuania						63,97	51,05	57,5
Poland						48,4	47,04	48
Romania						79,55	53,08	66,3
Slovakia						79,98	62,27	71,1
Slovenia						79,57	64,26	72
Albania							49,7	50
Croatia							59,31	59,3
Macedonia							61,87	62
Montenegro							66,19	66,1
Serbia							60,86	61

Source: Adopted from Delwit, P. (2013). The End of Voters in Europe? Electoral Turnout in Europe since WWII. Open journal of political science, Delwit, P. (2013). The End of Voters in Europe? Electoral Turnout in Europe since WWII. Open journal of political science, p.48; The data of Turkey were compiled by the author by using data of Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) and Supreme Election Council

4. Research Findings

There are four main findings of these figures: The first and foremost one is that turnout rate is strikingly high in Turkey. Turkey officially experienced transition to democracy in 1946; however, it is 1950 that transition of Turkey occurred in true and real sense. Since that time, Turkey has conducted many parliamentary and elections, referendums and one presidential election. The average of 18 parliamentary election is 81.44%; of the local elections is 78,7%, of the referendums is 83,05%. Reaching a level of 80% of the average in all elections is a very important indicator for democracy and democratic habits.

The second finding is that there is no association between compulsory voting and high voter turnout rate in Turkey. Compulsory voting is not effective in this condition. Because compulsory voting is not enforced. Thus, in case of non-voting, there is no sanctions that envisaged. Citizens are aware of this fact; and they know that they will not pay fines, if they do not vote. While compulsory voting is a strong institutional factor and tool, in order to increase voter turnout rate, it does not affect the implications of electoral participation. In some countries it is proved empirically that if compulsory voting is removed, voter turnout rate would be significantly lower. Considering the current rates in Turkey in this condition, it can be said that voter turnout will not change in rates in case of the removal of compulsory voting.

The third finding is that Turkey relatively has a high voter turnout rate comparing modern democracies. The voter turnout rate in Turkey seems to be twice as high in some elections as in some countries where there is no compulsory voting. The participation rate in Turkey is also higher than the participation rates in countries where compulsory voting is loosely applied. The participation rate in Turkey is also close to the participation rates in countries where compulsory voting is strongly implemented. With the exception of 1960-1970, voter turnout rate in Turkey is above the world average from 1950 to the present in Turkey.

The fourth one is that voter turnout rate is low in many modern democracies. Due to this fact that the low levels of electoral participation denote to "a rising electoral crisis" in these countries. In election of June, 2017, the turnout rate in French legislative election is 48,7 and this the lowest France has seen in modern times. Owing to these low participation rates, compulsory voting is being discussed in some countries. For example in Britain and the United States, both politicians and writers are interested in the



implementation of compulsory voting. The remarks by former US president Barack Obama to the City Club of Cleveland in 2015 are important in this regard. Obama (2015) points out that compulsory voting can be transformative by reducing political inequalities. Besides, it would be an important strategy to reduce political inequalities in the short run.

Conclusions, and Recommendations

It is often stated that democracy is "the only game in the town", and invention of another more ideal and better regime than democracy seems not feasible. One of the most important elements of democracy is political participation. The quality of the democracy is directly determined by the level of engagement of citizens in politics. Voting is also the most conventional mode of political participation with requiring little initiative for most people.

Turkey officially experienced transition to democracy in 1946; however, it is 1950 that transition of Turkey occurred in true and real sense. Since that time, Turkey has conducted many parliamentary and elections, referendums and one presidential election. Participation in election is obligatory in parliamentary elections since 1983, in local elections since 1984. When the turnout rate in these elections is evaluated, it is concluded as follows: the turnout rate is strikingly high in Turkey. It is difficult to say that compulsory voting is effective in this condition. Because compulsory voting is not enforced. Thus, in case of non-voting, there is no sanctions that envisaged. Turkey also relatively has a high voter turnout rate comparing modern democracies. The voter turnout rate in Turkey seems to be twice as high in some elections as in some countries where there is no compulsory voting.

If the countries where compulsory voting is strictly enforced aren't taken into consideration, Turkey has more voter turnout rates than most modern democracies. This gives an important idea about the election and voting culture in the society of Turkey. Due to the scope and volume of this study, it does not question why voter turnout rate is so high, although compulsory voting is not enforced in Turkey. The socio-cultural, psychological and political causes behind it are not questioned. But this situation is very interesting and further studies are recommended to address this phenomenon.

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