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Effects of Compulsory Voting on Visible Minority Representation

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The typical image of a European is simple - white and Christian. It has been that way for centuries. However, the face of Europe is changing. The foreign-born population of the European Union (EU) is growing, rising to 7% of the total EU population in 2013, as compared to 6% in 2011. As of 2014, Turkey, Morocco, China, and India are the top four countries contributing non-EU resident immigrants to the EU. Many other contributing countries are from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East (European Commission). This is an indicator that a large influx of immigrants to the EU don't fit the stereotype of a "European." Europe has attracted immigrants for hundreds of years, but only in the last 60 or so have researchers begun to think about the political representation of these immigrants, many of whom eventually become citizens. In some countries, these minorities, who are visibly different than the majority population of their country of residence, find obstacles to proportional representation.

History shows us that those who look different or have different customs sometimes face discrimination. It is arguable that discrimination is less harsh and obvious now, but there are still subtle ways to discriminate. Sometimes, the discrimination is top-down – a government might have mechanisms in place that make it more difficult for a minority to get elected, such as laws that don't allow campaign flyers in non-national languages. Other times, discrimination is bottom-up – when people don't vote for a member of a minority because they are visibly different. Still, other times minorities are disadvantaged because they are immigrants or the children of immigrants, and might not have the same resources or knowledge of the system that

members of the long-established majority may have¹. Whatever the reason, visible minorities often achieve little or no representation (Bird, "Visible Minorities" 425).

Governments should fight against this and implement methods to counterbalance discrimination against visible minority candidates. It is important that visible minorities have representatives in government. A democracy is idealized as a system where every member of the community has a say. In a representative democracy, people elect a person to represent them and present their point of view during decision-making processes. Can a country really be called a democracy if there isn't descriptive representation? I argue not, because not making it possible for all groups to have a voice is a form of oppression. As George Wharton Pepper said, "What you want is to get a reflection of the general opinion of the nation" (qtd. in Pitkin). Some might claim that it does not matter if minorities are represented in a parliament, because their representation will be too small to really affect anything. As Pitkin argues, however, enacting legislation is not the only function of a representative. Legislative members also serve as watchdogs. Minorities need to have members representing them in these legislative bodies so that their voice is at least heard during decision-making processes (63-64). As Professor Bird from McMaster University says: "A parliament should be a microcosm of a nation" ("Women and Ethnic Minorities" 2).

Many researchers have tried to discover which political systems enhance visible minority representation, and why. One thing that has not been discussed is the impact of compulsory voting on minority representation. When people immigrate to a new country, they often feel disenfranchised from political processes, even after achieving the right to vote. For this reason, many immigrants may not choose to vote or be active

¹ This is an issue that faces all immigrants and children of immigrants, not just visible minorities.

in politics. Research has shown that minorities tend to support each other at the polls, engaging in “bloc” voting (Shella). In theory, a minority group could band together in support for one or more candidates and influence their election. By forcing minority members to vote, do compulsory voting laws result in higher representation of minorities? The hypothesis for this study is that they do, because they require minority citizens to vote, even if they feel disconnected from politics. I expect that visible minority representation will be lower in countries without compulsory voting laws because immigrants who feel disenfranchised will not be required to vote and therefore there will be less support for minority candidates. My results show that compulsory voting does have a positive effect on visible minority representation overall, but the difference is very small. It is likely that other factors come into play.

Many researchers claim the type of electoral system to be the largest deciding factor of minority representation. When research on the topic had just begun, it was first believed that a proportional electoral system was the most beneficial. In a proportional electoral system, seats are allocated according to the proportion of votes that a party or candidate gets. Several representatives are elected per constituency. This is supposed to give smaller parties more of a chance of winning seats, for several reasons (Shella). As mentioned above, some visible minorities face discrimination because they look different than the majority. In a proportional voting system, people essentially vote for the party - thus removing emphasis from the candidate. In some cases, the party lists are closed, so that voters do not even really know the individuals they are electing. So, under a proportional system, especially a closed-list one, visible minority candidates are less likely to face discrimination in the election.

Recently, though, scholars and researchers have begun to realize that majoritarian systems might be more beneficial for minorities that are concentrated in one or more constituencies (Bird; Bloemraad; Stoychev; Shella). In a majoritarian system, only one member is elected per constituency, and the winner is determined by which one gets more than 50% of the vote. There is no “closed list” option - everyone knows who is running, and only one is chosen. So, a lot more emphasis is put on the candidate. If, say, a Bangladeshi candidate were to stand in a constituency that is 50% or more Bangladeshi, they would have a high chance of being elected (assuming they had the full support of the Bangladeshi community)². Several recent papers on minority representation seem to agree that the majoritarian system would be preferable in all cases where the minority is concentrated in a particular constituency.

Some researchers claim that it's the nuances of the system that matter more than the system itself (such as open versus closed list, preference voting, or the number of representatives per constituency) (Bird, “Visible Minorities”; Shella; Bloemraad). Bird believes the higher the number of representatives per constituency, the better the chance of a minority member being offered on the ticket. According to this logic, it could be argued that having a closed-list system would be preferable, because the party would choose who is elected, and not the voters. However, I would argue that a closed-list could also produce a negative effect. First because the party might not feel obligated to nominate a visible minority candidate, and second because this would mean that the visible minority community would not be able to support visible minority candidates (since they would not know who was running). Bird also believes that

² . There is evidence that minorities tend to vote for fellow minorities. See Shella.

allowing preferential and cumulative voting would improve visible minority representation.

Reserved seats in the parliament are another point of examination, as they guarantee a minority some representation. However, some political scientists claim that reserved seats can be counterproductive, and that they are not necessary to achieve proportional representation. The Australian Parliament of New South Wales published a document containing arguments for and against having a reserved seat for aboriginals. Arguments against included “may be seen as undemocratic,” that it wouldn’t really afford those in the seats any real power, and that it might make people resentful towards aboriginals (49-54). Reserved seats might also take away motivation from parties to nominate minority candidates, using the reserved seats as an excuse for not putting more minority candidates on the ticket. Stoychev agrees that reserved seats for minorities have their benefits and their drawbacks. On the one hand, they symbolize an extended hand from the government to the minority groups who receive the reserved seats. But on the other hand, often only some minorities receive the seats while others do not (9).

Other researchers have claimed that having party quotas would help aid in visible ethnic minority representation. A quota would require that a certain number or percentage of standing candidates or a percentage of the legislature be from a visible minority. Obviously, implementing a quota for the actual body of parliament would be more effective than requiring a percentage of candidates for each party to be part of a visible minority. It has been implemented on the national level so far to further representation of women, but not for visible minorities. However, as of now, at least two

parties have voluntarily implemented ethnic minority quotas - the Ontario New Democratic Party in Canada and the Welsh Labour Party in the UK (Bird, "Women and Ethnic Minorities").

Still others claim that the size of the minority is an important factor (Bird, "Women and Ethnic Minorities"). Because visible minorities tend to vote in blocs, having a sizeable bloc will better ensure that the candidate they want gets elected. It needs to be large enough that their voting power matters, and this changes for every minority in every country.

This is heavily tied in with other factors. Voting in a bloc or having your own political party is more likely to result in representation (Bird, Stoychev). Stoychev argues that minority groups with cohesive political parties are more likely to have better representation, but I would say this is only true if the electoral system is in favor of the minority's geographical spread, as well as the size of the majority. You can have all members of a minority vote for a candidate, but if the minority is only 0.01% of the population, it is unlikely that they win.

Most of these studies have called for the same thing - more and better cross-country comparisons. The lack of these types of comparisons is mostly due to the lack of information on minorities available in many countries. Cross-country comparisons also require a lot of time, and may be difficult for researchers who do not speak different languages (although current technology, like Google Translate, has made this a smaller issue). When you study an issue across several cases, different patterns start to emerge. You can examine whether one country's case is unique, or if its situation is similar to others. One country might have low visible minority representation, but with

cross-country comparison you can better determine whether this is just the country's issue, or a global issue. I chose to include several different cases in my study so that I could examine the visible minority representation patterns of countries with compulsory voting against countries without compulsory voting.

Four nations in this study employ compulsory voting - Australia, Belgium, Brazil, and Greece. The representation of the visible minorities in their countries will be compared with other countries in the EU that do not have compulsory voting. Furthermore, since the countries all employ compulsory voting in different ways, the effect of their variation will be examined as well.

For the purposes of this study, "visible minority" will be defined as a group that takes up a small percentage of the country's entire population, and which is visibly distinctive (either by appearance or name) from the majority of the population. This is different from non-visible minorities because they, at least members of the second generation, can mask their origins if they choose to do so - they will most likely be able to speak the language fluently, with no accent, and be more adapted to the country and the way it runs. Visible minorities cannot mask their origins, and thus could be at risk of facing discrimination as well as the difficulties of integration which non-visible immigrant minorities may face, which, as discussed on the first page, can also hinder visible minorities from being elected

Case Selection

Most literature regarding representation of minorities has called for more cross-country comparison, so a lot of effort was put into collecting the data to compare across countries. For several reasons, I chose to focus my study primarily on countries in the

European Union. The European Parliament sets immigration rules that every member state must follow - this include policies meant to help immigrants assimilate, rules on admissions of immigrants, rules on the issuance of visas, and more (European Commission, "Immigration in the EU"). There are two reasons why this would make the EU a good area to study for minority representation research. The first is that all countries in the EU are held to a certain standard regarding immigration, democracy, and human rights. This provides an automatic control for extraneous factors. The second reason is that, as evident by the recent rise of anti-immigration parties in Europe³, immigration is currently a hot topic. This made me hopeful that EU countries would be fertile ground for researching the arrival of visible minorities and how they fare politically in their new arenas.

There are 27 countries in the European Union. Ideally, each of the member states would have provided demographic data on the race of all its citizens at the time of the last election. This would have been coupled with racial and origin information for every current member of Parliament in those countries. Therefore, we would be able to know how many visible minority members were present in each country at the time of the last election, and exactly how many visible minority members were elected. None of the EU member states provided such explicit details⁴. The lack of information is probably a large part of the reason why so little cross-country comparison has been done surrounding minority representation. However, previous studies on minority representation provided guidelines for how to conduct a study without the racial information.

³ Some examples are the UK's United Kingdom Independence Party and the Dutch Party for Freedom.

⁴ In fact, Brazil was the only country in this study to provide information about race.

In most studies done on minority representation, demographic information was collected from censuses, which more often than not include not only citizens, but residents as well (who cannot vote in national elections). I therefore decided to do the same. Countries that had no demographic information available, including information on visible minorities, were thus cut out of the study.

As mentioned earlier, the existing literature on minority representation claims that the electoral system is one of the biggest influencers of minority representation. In order to control for electoral system influence, I decided that all countries in the study should have the same electoral system. Because my main focus is to examine the effect of compulsory voting laws, I decided that all countries in the study should have Proportional electoral systems to match the systems of the Parliaments of the two countries with compulsory voting laws - Greece and Belgium⁵. Eliminating all EU countries whose parliaments do not use proportional electoral systems left five (besides Belgium and Greece): Austria, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, and Slovakia.

In order to add more balance to the study between countries with compulsory voting laws and those without, Brazil and Australia were added to the study. Just like all the countries in the European Union, Brazil and Australia have a “free” ranking from the Freedom House, which ensures they reach a certain level of democracy and human rights (much like the countries in the EU must have to be part of the EU). They also

⁵ Luxembourg is the third country in the EU to have compulsory voting laws, and its Chambre de Députés also uses a proportional system. However, it is not included in this study because no demographic information on visible minorities was available. Cyprus also has mandatory voting, but I chose not to include its House of Representatives in the study because of the way members are chosen - the Greek community in Cyprus gets to elect 56 of the seats, while the Turkish community in Cyprus gets to elect 24 of the seats. None of the other Parliaments have reserved seats for minorities. Furthermore, the Turkish community has not elected representatives to those seats since 1963, leaving them empty. This is a unique situation which might skew results, so I chose not to include it.

both have a visible minority presence in the population - Asians and aboriginals in Australia; blacks, aboriginals, and Asians in Brazil.

For this study, I am only examining parliaments elected within a proportional electoral system⁶. Therefore, some legislative houses had to be cut from the study. Denmark, Finland, Greece, and Slovakia are unicameral, and their legislative houses are elected via a proportional system. Australia and Brazil are bicameral, but while both houses in each country are directly elected, only one house in each country is elected with a proportional system. Thus, the Australian Senate was included, but not its House of Representatives. The Brazilian *Câmara dos Deputados* (Chamber of Deputies) was included, but the *Senado Federal* (Federal Senate) was not. It was also important that all the houses have directly elected members, because the study is considering the effects that compulsory voting has on visible minority representation. Compulsory voting laws would not directly affect a legislature that is not elected directly. Therefore, indirectly elected legislatures were not included in the study. Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands are bicameral, and in each case only the directly elected body was considered. Thus, the *Nationalrat* (National Council) of Austria, but not its *Bundesrat* (Federal Council), was included. The *Chambre de Représentants* (House of Representatives) of Belgium, but not its *Senát* (Senate). The *Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal* (House of Representatives) of the Netherlands, but not its *Eerste Kamer der Staten-Generaal* (Senate).

None of these parliaments employ quotas for the minority groups that are being examined. All cases use an open-list proportional electoral system, with three

⁶ All information about parliamentary houses and electoral systems for each country is from the Inter-Parliamentary Union Website <http://www.ipu.org/parline/parlinesearch.asp>

exceptions. Austria and Slovakia use a closed-list system, while the Australian Senate uses the Single-Transferable Vote proportional system.

Compulsory Voting Laws

_____ Compulsory voting laws, or some form of them, are currently implemented in 22 countries around the world. More than half of these countries are located in South America (Santhanam). Not all compulsory voting laws are implemented or enforced the same way. A report published by the Electoral Commission in 2006 claims that some of these countries really have “compulsory attendance,” because citizens are not actually required to vote, just to show up to the voting booth. In fact, the report paraphrases the findings of Researchers Jonathan Louth and Lisa Hill, who claim that Australia and Belgium are two of the only four democratic countries that consistently enforce compulsory voting laws⁷(9). However, whether it is actually compulsory voting or just attendance, the report claims that compulsory voting laws result in higher turnout rates and “reduces the variation in turnout rates among different groups” (33). This is important because it means that compulsory voting can increase the voter turnout of visible minorities, which I hypothesize would, in turn, increase visible minority representation.

Four countries included in this study have some sort of compulsory voting law: Australia, Belgium, Brazil, and Greece. Each employs compulsory voting in different ways, and each enforces these rules to different degrees.

In Belgium, failure to vote will make it harder for you to get a government job, and you might receive a small fine. If you don't vote four years in a row, you won't be allowed to vote for the next ten years (Frankal). I consider Belgium to have the strictest

⁷ The other two are Luxembourg and Cyprus

system of compulsory voting laws in this study, for its consequences and the fact that all citizens must vote regardless of age.

Brazil's case is similar. Brazilians who fail to vote will have to pay a fine equal to a small percentage of the minimum wage in the region. Not only will you find it difficult to get a government job if you don't vote, but you also might be barred from certain government services – like getting a passport or a loan (Electoral Commission). These rules are strictly enforced. Illiterates and those over 70 years old are not required to vote (IDEA, "Compulsory Voting").

In Greece, the compulsory voting law is essentially just on paper. The law has not been repealed, but since 2000, it is no longer legal to penalize anyone for not voting ("Compulsory"). This is still included in the study because even a non-enforced law might still have an effect on citizens. It could especially have an effect on naturalized citizens, who must take an oath stating they will uphold Greece's laws and "fulfill conscientiously [his or her] duties as a Greek citizen" (U.S. Embassy).

Australia does not require citizens to actually vote, but it does require them to sign an attendance sheet at the polling booth. Failure to sign will result in a fine. Failure to pay the fine can result in jail (Frankal). Australia strictly enforces these rules. According to the Electoral Commission Report, Australia is the only country that implemented a compulsory voting system as a way to improve voter turnouts. This means, at the very least, that Australia is concerned with having more representative legislative body.

Data collection

Finding and collecting the demographic and representative data was a large part of this project. In order to be able to do this study, data was collected from a wide range of sources.

The first step in collecting data was to search for demographic information. This was first collected from the CIA World Factbook. Then countries were checked for online census databases, and if the data was more up-to-date than the CIA World Factbook, the database information was used instead. However, for consistency, the minorities mentioned for a specific country in the data from the CIA World Factbook was used to pick which minorities should be looked up in the database of that country. This was helpful, but also limiting – sometimes, the CIA World Factbook data included some minorities, but did not include other, larger minorities⁸. If neither the CIA World Factbook nor the country's statistical database (if any) provided usable information, then I searched for academic papers or reputable news sources containing demographic information.

Data on visible minority representatives in the relevant legislative bodies were collected in several ways as well. Each country provided a website that provided short biographies for each member of the legislature. Every member was examined for visibility, by appearance and by name⁹. Some websites, like the Austrian *Nationalrat*, gave the place of birth for each representative. This was used to confirm the foreign identity of some members who were visibly a part of the minority. However, you can still be part of a visible minority if you were born in the country that you currently reside in,

⁸ Netherlands, as you will see, is an example of this.

⁹ Sometimes, this lead to finding a member who was part of a visible minority that had not been mentioned by the CIA World Factbook or academic papers. If the minority's percentage of the population could be found (like in the case of Afghans in the Netherlands), than they were included in the study. If it could not be found, the member and his or her minority group were not included.

and not all websites provided the place of birth. Therefore, reliable newspaper articles and posts from professional websites were used to verify the foreign background for other members. If a member looked or had a name that sounded like they could be part of a visible minority, but no supporting evidence was found of their foreign background, then they were not included in the study.

The ways in which data were collected for each country are discussed below.

Australia

The CIA World Factbook provided Demographic information for Australia, naming Asians and Aborigines as the visible minorities. However, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) had data that was more up-to-date. Therefore, statistics were drawn from it instead of the Factbook. Information was taken from the 2011 Census “Cultural and Language Diversity” Database. Census respondents were allowed to fill in two types of Ancestry. I followed a specific procedure to determine the percentage of Asians in the population. The number of respondents who had claimed Asian ancestry as their first choice was added to the number of respondents who claimed it as their second choice. It was then possible, using the tools provided by the website, to find out the number of people who had claimed Asian ancestry for both choices. This number was subtracted to avoid overlap. The same was done for Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander ancestry. Then, the percentages for Asian population and Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander population were determined using the total population for 2011. It was thus calculated that 10.92% of the Australian population is Asian, while 0.64% of the population is Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander (“TableBuilder”). However, the ABS had released a press statement in 2011 stating that the Aboriginal/Torres Strait population

was 3% of the total population (“Estimates”). Because of the discrepancy, analysis will have to be done using both numbers. One indigenous member was found in the Senate, her background being confirmed by several newspaper articles (“Senator”, Hodgson). This equals to 1.32% of the Senate, which exceeds proportionality according to my calculations but not according to the press release. Another article written in *The Age* claims there are only 4 Asian members of the Australian Parliament (Fung). The article named two members by name, both of which were confirmed to be in the Senate (“Senator Lisa,” “Senator Penny”). The other two were found because they listed Asian countries as their place of birth on their parliamentary website biographies. Only one of those two is in the Senate (“Senator Zhenya”). Three Asian members make up about 3.95% of the Senate. This is not proportionate to the population. Voter turnout was 93.23% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Austria

The CIA World Factbook website provided demographic data for Austria from its 2001 census. Austrians are 91.1% of the population, former Yugoslavs 4% (includes Croatians, Slovenes, Serbs, and Bosniaks), Turks 1.6%, German 0.9%, and other or unspecified 2.4%. Turks are the visible minority. Austria has two legislative houses, but only one, the *Nationalrat* (National Council) is directly elected. There are 183 members, elected via a proportional system with closed party lists. There are no reserved seats or quotas for ethnicities (IPU Parline). Turkish members of the Nationalrat were identified by going through the profiles of every member listed on the official website (Austria). Those that identified Turkey as their place of birth were counted. Further research was done on members who were born in Austria but had names suggesting Muslim

ethnicity, however, no proof was found that any of them had Turkish origins. One member was found to have Moroccan ancestry (Anzeige), but because Moroccans were not included in the demographic information, and no definitive information on Moroccans in Austria was found, he is not included in the study. A total of 3 members were identified as Turkish, which accounts for about 1.64% of the *Nationalrat*. This matches the percentage of Turks in the population, which means they have proportional representation. Voter turnout was 74.91% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Belgium

Finding demographic information for Belgium was not easy. All official statistics only identified the Flemish and Walloon population. Every other population was lumped together as “other,” which according to the CIA World Factbook, accounts for about 11% of the population. Further research had to be conducted. One source, questionable in its reliability, hinted that there were Moroccan and Turkish minorities living in Belgium, so research was narrowed to finding their population. Finally, one credible article from 2011 cited that the Moroccan population was estimated to be about 300,000, and the Turkish population about 200,000 (Waters). The World Bank claims that the Belgian population in 2011 was 11,047,744. This means that the Moroccan population is about 2.72%, and the Turkish population is about 1.81%. There are 150 members in the Belgian Chambre des Représentants (House of Representatives). Members of Turkish origin were first investigated using newspaper articles about recent elections which named Turkish members or Turkish candidates (Batalla; Demir). Names were then checked against the official list of current members ("Les Députés"). Then, as with Austria, members with names suggesting Muslim ethnicity were further researched for

foreign roots (“Qui”; Laaouej; Snoeys; Knack). In total, 7 members of Turkish origins were identified, as well as 5 members of Moroccan origin¹⁰. Turkish representation is more than proportional: they are 1.81% of the population, but 4.66% of the House of Representatives. Moroccan representation is also more than proportional, with 2.72% of the population but 3.33% of the legislature. Voter turnout was 89.37% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Brazil

Demographic information was obtained from CIA World Factbook: Brazil is 47.7% white, 43.1% mulatto, 7.6% black, 1.1% Asian, and 0.4% indigenous. Because the mulatto and white population are almost the same size, I labelled them both as majority groups. This makes the black, Asian, and indigenous the visible minority groups. All Asian members of the *Câmara de Deputados* (Chamber of Deputies) were identified via news articles and by searching through the member list on the official parliamentary website (“Conheça”) and then finding articles which identified them as Asian (Shiguti). The number of black members was found via an article published in Brazil’s *Folha de S. Paulo* six days after the most recent election (Magalhaes, et al.). The article said that, for the first time, candidates had to identify their skin color on the electoral register. Thus, the numbers of black politicians in this study is based on the number of politicians who identify themselves as such, much like in a population census. This is an important distinction in Brazil, where race lines are not as clear-cut as in the U.S. Some Brazilians will self-identify as “mulatto” or “moreno” if they are of mixed heritage - whereas in the U.S., they would typically be identified as black.

¹⁰ One member was proved to have both Moroccan and Turkish heritage - he was counted once for each.

Furthermore, some people are identified differently by others than they are by themselves (Telles). Before I found the *Folha* article, I was going through the Parliamentary website and aggregating a list of representatives whom different articles and websites had identified as black or of African descent. I ended up with more representatives than mentioned in the article, probably because people were identifying these representatives on their own, without actual knowledge of the person's background. Thus, it made sense to use the number of self-identifying black members of parliament - at least, if the politicians identified themselves as black, it means they feel some sort of connection to the community and feel that they represent them. Using these sources, it was discovered that 0.97% of the Chamber of Deputies is Asian, while 4.3% are black. This does not give either minority group representation proportional to their presence in the population (although the Asian population is just short). Furthermore, a newspaper article verified that there is in fact no representation for the indigenous community in the Federal Parliament (Gomes). Voter turnout was 80.60% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Denmark

The CIA World Factbook names the ethnicities of different populations in Denmark, but did not provide percentages. The populations it named were: Scandinavian, Inuit, Faroese, German, Turkish, Iranian, and Somali. These were used as the populations to focus on. All Danish population information was taken from the Statistics Denmark website. People who responded as Turkish, Iranian, or Somali immigrants or descendants were counted, and then their percentage out of the total population was calculated. This was also done for the Pakistani and Indian populations,

since they were found to have representatives in the government. The calculations show that Turkish people are 1.09% of the population, Pakistanis are 0.42%, Somalis are 0.35%, Iranis are 0.33%, and Indians are 0.16% of the population. The *Folketinget* (Danish Parliament) does not have reserved seats for visible ethnic minorities, but you only need to win 2% of the vote to be guaranteed a seat in parliament. Member profiles on the official *Folketinget* website include place of birth. By looking at this, two Turkish and one Indian member were identified (Folketinget). Other people who could be perceived as a visible minority by their appearance or name were further investigated. This resulted in finding one member of Pakistani background, and another member of Turkish Background (“Besøg”; Ritzau). In total, the Turkish members make up 1.68% of the Parliament, exceeding their presence in the population. The one member each of Pakistani and Indian background also exceeds their respective minorities’ presence in the population. There were no members of Iranian or Somali background. Voter turnout was 87.74% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Finland

Demographic information was taken for the Roma people from CIA World Factbook, which took its estimates from 2006. However, because one Kenyan member of Parliament was found, it was necessary to look up the number of Kenyans living in Finland. This was found using the Statistics Finland website. The number of Kenyans and the total population used were from 2013 estimates. However, the website did not

have an option to tabulate data for Roma in 2013, so their data remains from 2006¹¹.

Therefore, Roma are 0.1% of the population. According to the 2013 data, Kenyans are 0.02% of the population. There is no representation for the Roma (Roman). There is one Kenyan member of Parliament (Talvitie), which is equal to 0.5% of the elected body. Because there one representative for such a small minority group, it's proportionality is more than twice as large as the proportionality of all the other countries. If that one representative were removed from power, Finland's proportionality would drastically drop. It has been removed from the analysis. Voter turnout was 67.37% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Greece

There was very little demographic information available for Greece. However, one article talked about three Turkish candidates from the Thracian community that were elected to the the Hellenic Parliament in the last election ("Syriza's"). This is equal to 1% of the Hellenic Parliament. Further research showed that most of the Turkish population living was living in Thrace. The US State Department issued some information in 2006 that estimated that the Muslim Population in Thrace was between 0.89% and 1.28% of the total population ("Greece"). This has been used as the statistics for the Turkish population in Greece, since most Turkish people are Muslim and most Greeks are not. With three Turkish/Muslim members of Parliament, the minority may have achieved proportional representation. It must be acknowledged that

¹¹ The Sami population in Finland could have been included, but they were left out because they have their own special parliament in Finland, with some devolved powers. This is a special situation that might have skewed results.

the data for Greece is simply not as reliable as the data for most of the other countries. The turnout rate for the last election was 63.87% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Netherlands

Demographic information for the Netherlands was found using the Statistics Netherlands website. Dutch population was tabulated, as well as the non-dutch EU population. The minorities included in the study were those mentioned in CIA World Factbook's demographic data for the Netherlands (which was from 2008) and then Afghanistan was added because an Afghan member of Parliament was found. The resulting demographics are: 78.64% Dutch, 5.76% is from other countries in the EU, 2.35% is Turkish, 2.23% Moroccan, 2.21% Indonesian, 2.07% Surinamese, 0.% (former) Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, 0.26% Afghan, and 7.38% other. Minority members of *Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal* (House of Representatives) were found in a few ways. First of all, the biographies for each member on the official parliamentary website include place of birth. Three Turkish members and two Moroccan members of Parliament were identified simply by looking at every member's place of birth (Netherlands Staten-Generaal). Second, it is easy to identify visible minorities in the Netherlands because the majority population has very similar characteristics. Therefore, the photos and names of the members of parliament were used to identify minority members. Their backgrounds were researched and proved by their own statements or by newspaper articles (Çegerek; DutchNews; Corner; Captein) . In total, 5 Turkish members and 3 Moroccan members of Parliament were identified. Representing 3.3% and 2% of the parliament, respectively, both minorities reached proportional representation. There was also one member identified as having both

Caribbean and Surinamese heritage (Netherlands Parlement, “Jadnanansing”); She was counted once for both, giving the Surinamese and Caribbean minority 0.67% of representation in the House. This is disproportionate to their presence in the population. One member of Afghan origin was found, equaling 0.67% of the parliament and exceeding proportional representation. Voter turnout was 74.56% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Slovakia

Slovakia’s visible minority is the Romani people. Though perhaps less visible than minorities in other countries, the Romani still face the same disadvantages and prejudices that a visible population may face. Roma make up 2% of the population, according to 2012 official estimates. Because the website biographies for each member do not include information on ethnic background, information on Romani representation was obtained via an article published on the European Roma Rights Centre website (Hrustič). According to the article, there is only one Romani member of the *Národná Rada*, which is about 0.67% of the Council. Thus, there is representation of Roma, but not proportional representation. Voter turnout was 59.11% (IDEA Voter Turnout).

Analysis

The Proportionality for each visible minority in each country was calculated using the following formula¹²:

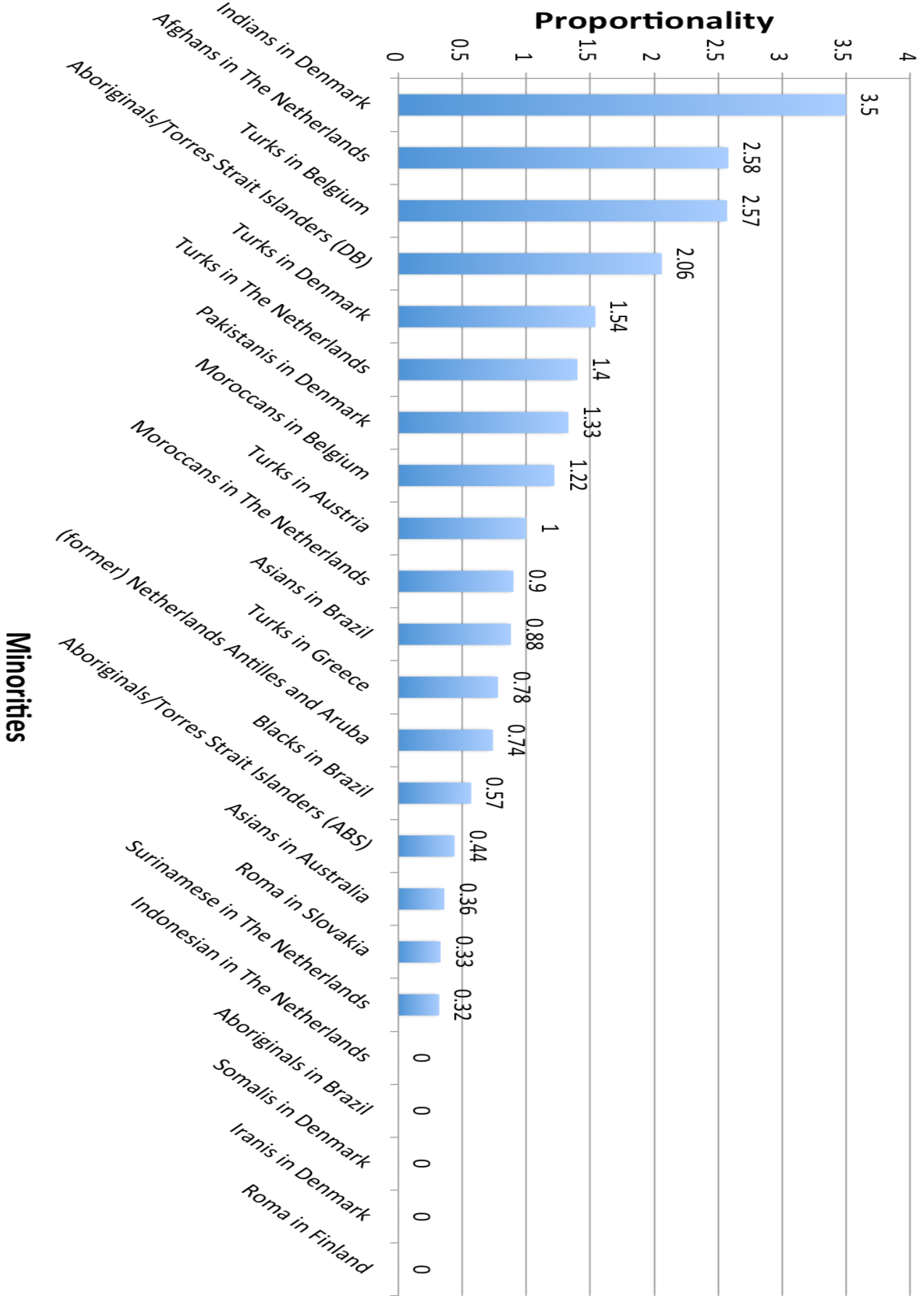
$$Proportionality = \frac{\% \text{ of minority in parliament}}{\% \text{ of minority in population}}$$

¹² Used in the Shell article (2)

A minority group with no representation in the national government will have a proportionality of zero. A minority group with perfect proportionality (percentage of minority in parliament equals percentage of minority in population) will have a proportionality of one. The following graph represents each minority group by country, in order from highest proportionality to lowest proportionality¹³.

¹³ The Turks of Greece are calculated using the upper limit of the percentage of the population.

Visible Minorities by Proportionality

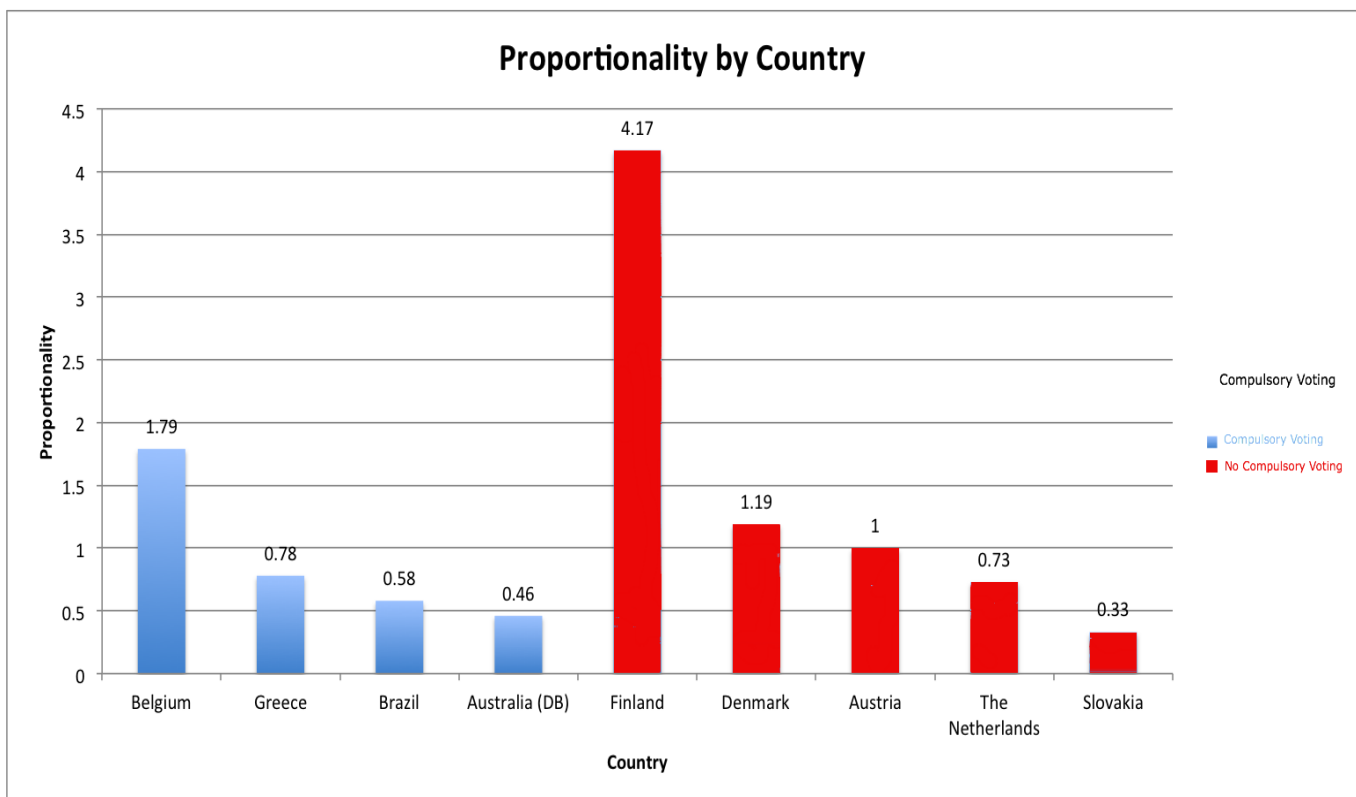


The Kenyans of Finland have been left out of this graph. The percentage of Kenyans in Finland is only 0.02% of the population, yet there is still one Kenyan member of the *Eduskunta-Riksdagen*. This comes out to a proportionality of 25, which is seven times larger than the next-highest proportionality. Besides indicating a unique situation which should be considered carefully, it also makes the chart very difficult to read.

As shown above, the proportionality of different minorities within a country can vary greatly, from more than proportional to no representation at all. To get a sense of the overall visible minority of each country, proportionality was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Proportionality} = \frac{\% \text{ of all minorities in parliament}}{\% \text{ of all minorities in population}}$$

The chart below displays the calculation results.



From a first glance, it seems that Finland has achieved the highest proportionality, but, as mentioned above, the results for Finland should not be given much weight. There are only two minority groups represented here: the Kenyans and the Roma. The high proportionality of the Kenyan minority is brought down severely by the non-existent representation of the Roma minority. If this one representative was not elected, Finland's proportionality would drop to zero, which is likely more representative of the actual proportionality in Finland. Because my research was limited to those minorities mentioned by the CIA World Factbook Data, several larger visible minority populations in Finland were left out of the study. For example, there are 71,694 Asians and 35,410 other Africans (excluding Kenyans) living in Finland, equal to 2.12% of the population (Statistics Finland). This would mean they would need about 4 representatives in Parliament for representation to be proportional, but none were found. If they were included in the study, the proportionality for Finland would be much lower. Because of the misrepresentation of data and the huge disparity this has caused, Finland will not be included in further analyses in this paper.

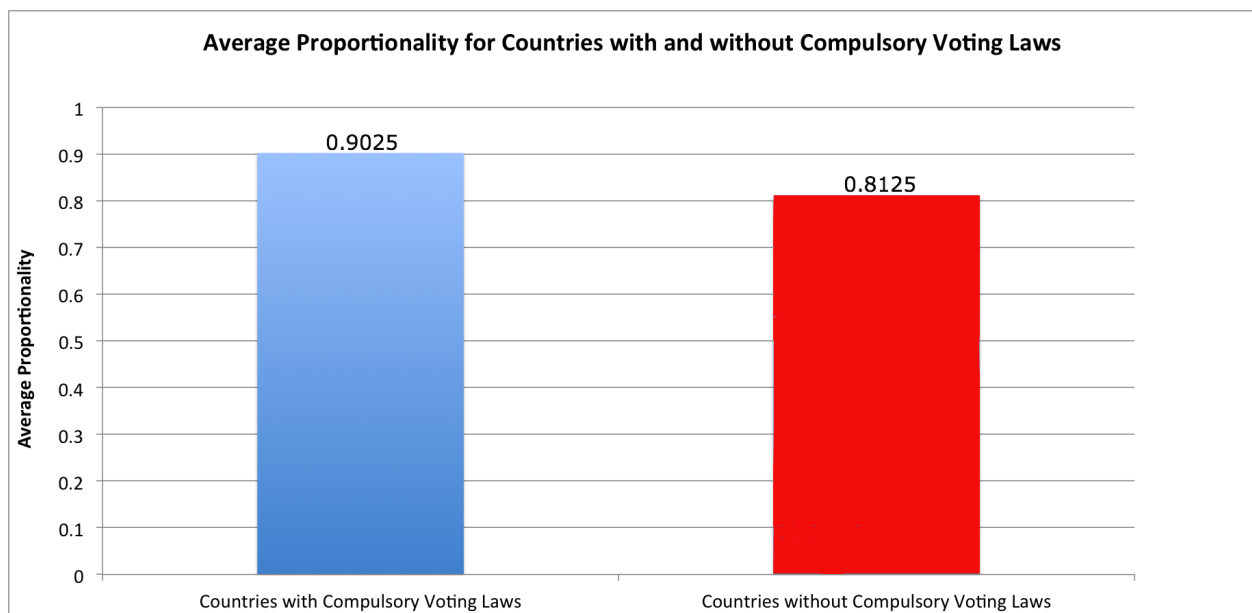
This graph seems to show some evidence that compulsory voting laws have a positive effect on visible minority representation. For starters - the country with the highest proportionality (excluding Finland) is Belgium, which has compulsory voting. The country with the lowest proportionality is Slovakia, which does not have compulsory voting. However, a quick glance at the other countries seems to show that compulsory voting does not have a positive effect: only one country with compulsory voting achieved proportionality, compared with two countries that do not have compulsory voting.

It is also interesting to note that one of my expectations – that the stricter a country's compulsory voting law, the better the visible minority representation – is incorrect. Yes, one of the stricter countries, Belgium, has the highest proportionality. Following this pattern, the next-strictest country, Brazil, should have had the next-highest proportionality. I would have then expected Brazil to be followed by Australia, and then Greece. Instead, Belgium is followed by Greece – whose compulsory voting law has no consequences. Greece is followed by Brazil, and then Australia. Yes, the graph is book-ended by a country with strict mandatory voting laws and a country with more lax mandatory voting laws, but it is clear that how strictly the law is enforced is not a major influencer of visible minority representation.

Perhaps the most influential component is that citizens be required to vote, even if the law is just for show. Requiring citizens just to show up to the voting booth, without requiring them to actually vote (like in Australia), may not have as strong an effect.

It is certainly interesting that Greece has achieved this level of representation through a proportional electoral system. Greece's proportionality is based in part on the three Thracian Turks who were elected to the Hellenic Parliament. Most of the Turks in Greece live in Thrace. As discussed before, recent literature on minority representation claims that a majoritarian system would be most beneficial for a minority concentrated in one constituency. Yet, the Thracian Turks were still able to elect three representatives to Parliament under a proportional electoral system. With one more candidate, they would be just over represented. It would be interesting to do further research into how the election would have fared in a majoritarian system. Perhaps the type of electoral system is not as important as it is thought to be in electing minority representatives.

So far, my analysis seems to show mixed results on whether or not compulsory voting has a positive or negative effect on visible minority representation. It seems, by just glancing at the graph, that mandatory voting may in fact have a negative effect on visible minority representation. However, if you average the proportionality of all the countries with mandatory voting and compare it to the averaged proportionality of all the countries without mandatory voting, it becomes clear that, in general, compulsory voting laws do have a positive effect on the representation of visible minorities in national parliaments. This is seen in the graph below¹⁴.

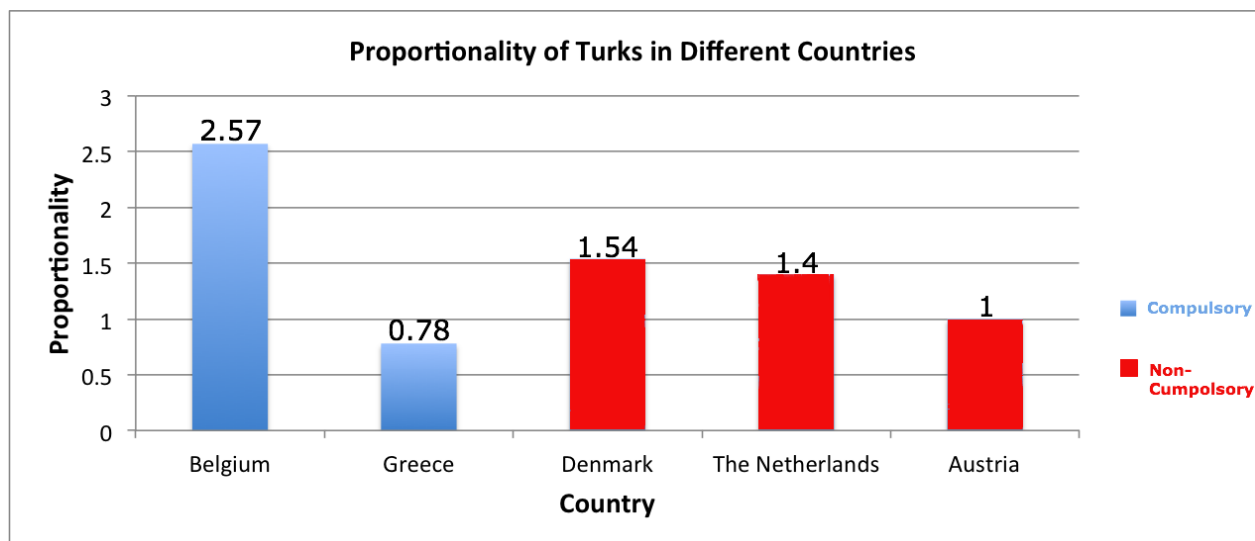


While this graph shows that compulsory voting laws have a positive effect on visible minority representation, the difference is small. There are a lot more factors that could be affecting the results. These are discussed further.

Perhaps the country of origin has an effect on voter participation or election. There are several reasons why this could be a factor. Perhaps their former

¹⁴ For the purposes of this graph, Finland was left out as well. The demographic information I calculated from the Australian Statistics Database was used for the calculation in this graph. However, even if the average was calculated using the demographic information printed by the website's report, it would still be higher than the average proportionality of countries without mandatory voting.

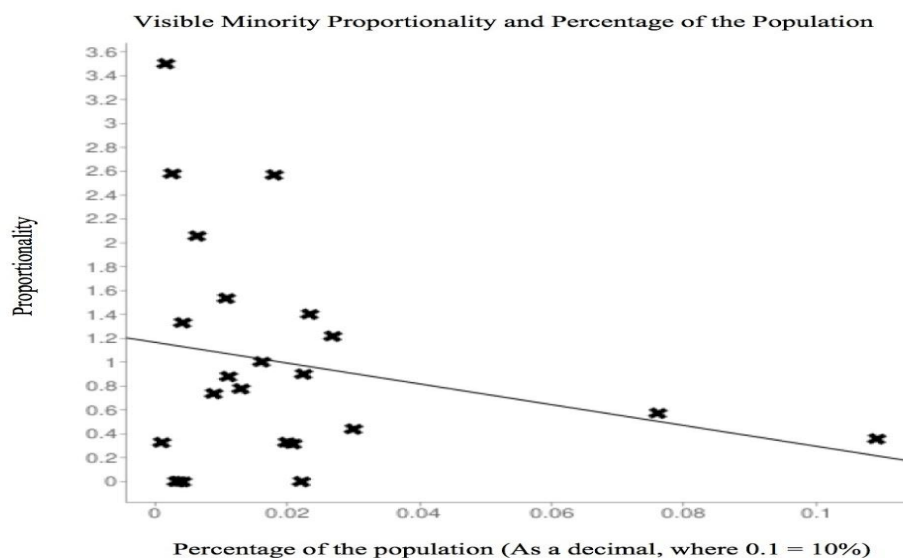
country did not have a strong tradition of political involvement. It could even be that there was a stigma attached to women voting, and the women still do not feel comfortable doing so in their new country and are passing down the stigma to their children. Whatever the reason, controlling for country of origin might bring about different results. Turkish immigrants are an interesting subset of this study because they were found in several of the countries included in this study. Examining their representation separately would provide an extra control by allowing all the minority groups to have the same background. The following chart shows the proportionality of the Turkish minorities in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Greece, and the Netherlands:



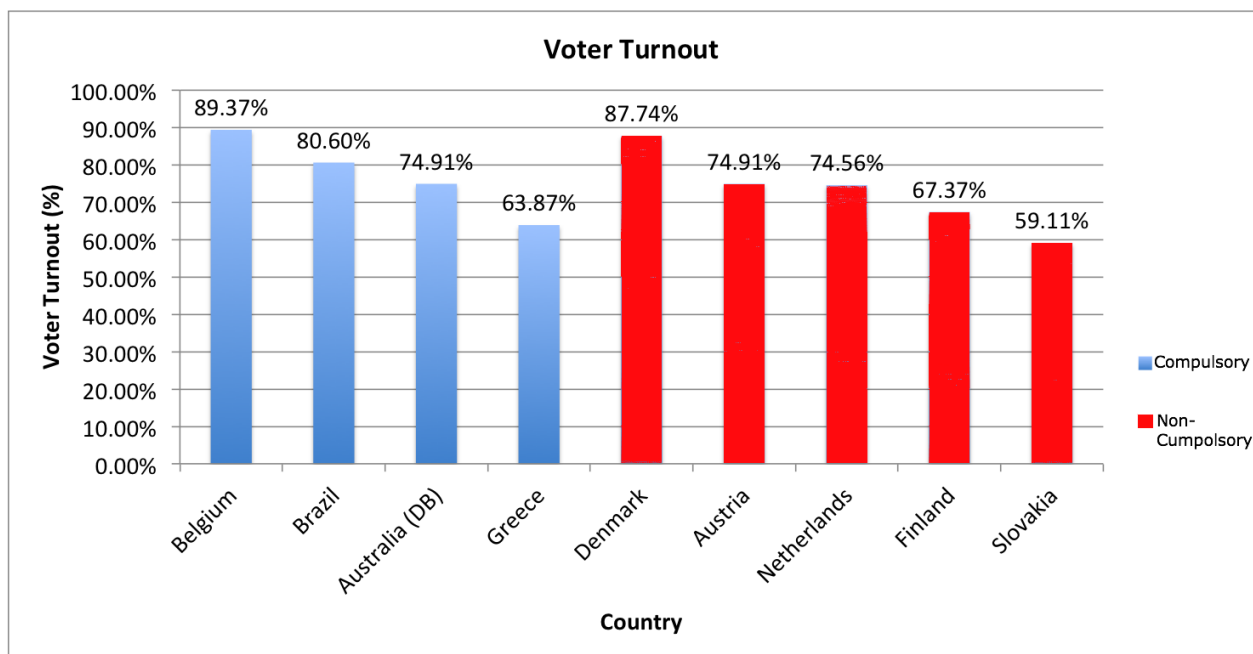
Belgium still ranks best, with 2.57 proportionality for Turks. Austria and Greece remain the same because Turks are the only population being studied in those countries. Denmark has a higher proportionality for Turks than in general. The same goes for the Netherlands. When you average the proportionality of Turks in Belgium and Greece, you get 2.96. When you average the proportionality of Denmark, the Netherlands, and Austria, you get 3.27. So, in this case, proportionality is generally better in countries without compulsory voting laws. It is possible that country of origin has some effect on

proportionality of representation of visible minorities. Further research should be pursued.

Size of minority population could have been a contributing factor. You'd expect that a larger minority group would mean more voting power, which in turn would mean more minority representatives. Three of the minorities that achieved no representation were under 0.5% of the population - the aboriginals in Brazil and the Somalis and Iranians in Denmark. However, there were minority groups with much smaller shares of the population that were still able to get a spot in parliament, like the Kenyans in Finland. Furthermore, there are minorities with larger shares of the population that were not able to gain any representation, like the Dutch Indonesians, who are 2.21% of the population. Population size is therefore not likely to be one of the major explanations of variation of proportionality. When the data is put into a scatterplot like the one below, it appears that there is a negative relationship between the size of the minority and the proportionality. This is probably skewed by the fact that several smaller minorities were able to elect representatives. The scatterplot is shown below.

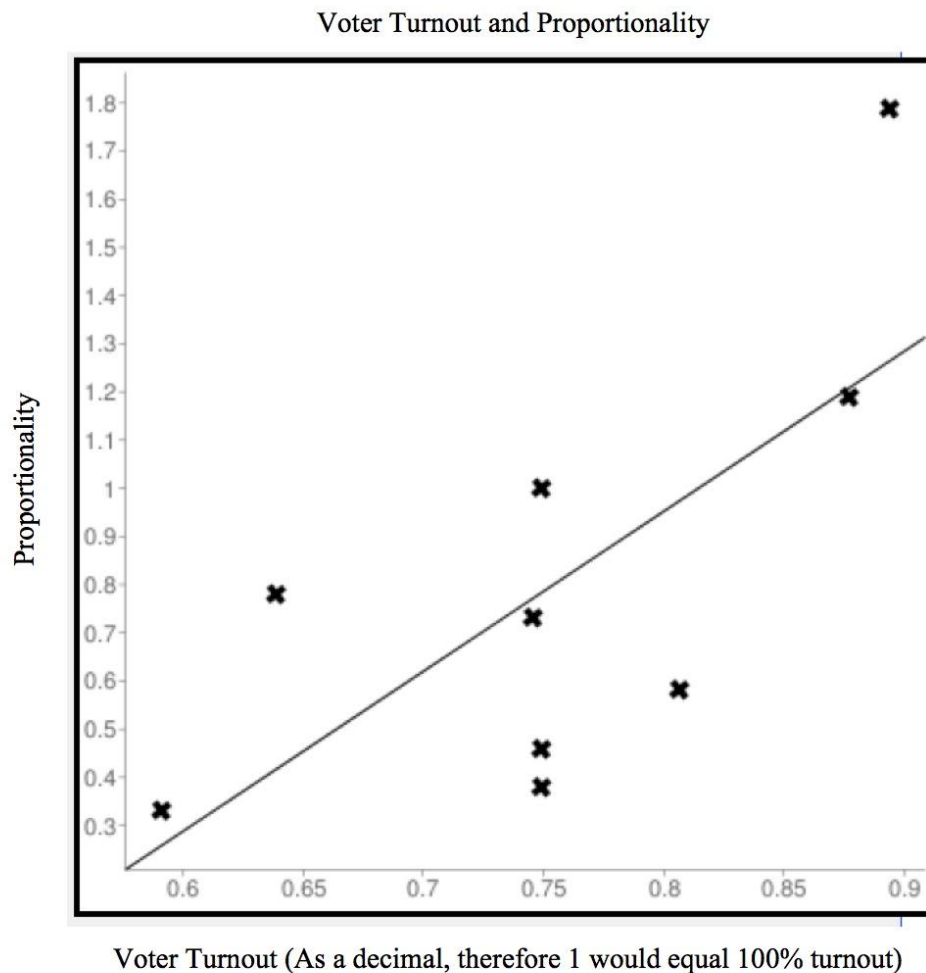


Perhaps voter turnout rates are the cause of the variance. I assumed the presence of compulsory voter laws would enhance visible minority representation because it would, in effect, force members of visible minorities to participate in elections. However, countries can have high voter turnout without compulsory voting laws. This may explain why so many non-compulsory countries have high rates of minority representation. Analyzing proportionality by voter turnout comes up with some interesting results, as seen below.



Belgium has the highest voter turnout (89.37%), which coincides with having the highest proportionality (excluding Finland). Slovakia has the lowest voter turnout (59.11%) and also the lowest proportionality. It is interesting that Denmark has the second highest voter turnout (87.74%) out of all the countries in the study, despite not having compulsory voter laws. Voter turnout might be the reason for Denmark's high proportionality of 1.19.

Brazil's has the third highest voter turnout, but only the sixth highest proportionality. Brazil's proportionality is brought down by its lack of aboriginal representatives in the Chamber of Deputies. It would be interesting to conduct further research on the literacy rates of the indigenous people of Brazil to determine if the lack of representation might be due to the fact that illiterates are not required to vote. As expected, Belgium and Brazil have a higher turnout than Australia and Greece because they have stricter compulsory voting laws. Australia's strict enforcement of requiring citizens to show up at the polls lends it to a higher voter turnout than Greece's "just for show" compulsory voting law. It's possible that Greece's higher proportionality is due to the demographic information, which may not be the most accurate representation of Turks in Greece. The number of Turks in the country could be a lot higher, and therefore the proportionality might actually be smaller. In the scatter plot below you will see that there is a positive relationship between voter turnout and proportionality in this study.

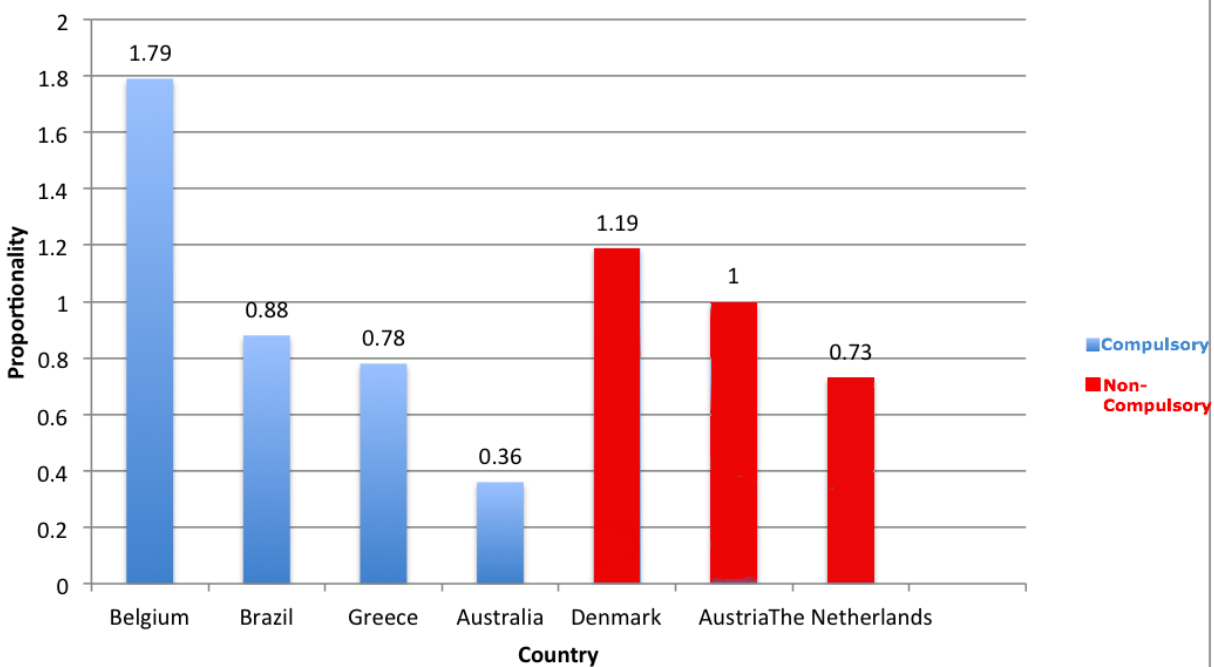


For this study, I chose to research visible minorities. I made the distinction between visible minorities and non-visible minorities, because visible minorities face more challenges in reaching political participation than non-visible minorities. Karen Bird, a professor at McMaster University in Ontario, has extensively studied minority representation. She chose to define visible minorities in a different way than I did:

“...non-aboriginal persons who are non-Caucasian in race and non-European in origin. Such people may be recent immigrants, or their ancestors may have lived in the country in question for several generations. To simplify the study, I have excluded from this definition other ethnic groups (e.g., Jews, Eastern Europeans) whose contemporary visibility, as well as their history of exclusion and

discrimination, varies widely from country to country. Nor do I include territorial or linguistic minorities, or indigenous groups. In many cases, these latter groups have obtained some type of collective representational rights as part of a historical bargain to assure the viability of the state, and studying their political representation requires a different theoretical model than that presented here” (“Visible Minorities” 458).

If I were to adhere to Bird’s definition by not including the minorities who might have a “historical bargain,” then aboriginals would be taken out of the Australian and Brazilian case. Blacks in Brazil would also be taken out of the analysis because the delineation between blacks and mulattos is complicated, and blacks have been in Brazil for a lot longer than Asians. The Roma would also be excluded. The results of removing these minorities from the study are as follows:



Proportionality for Brazil and Australia is now only dependent on the representation of the Asian minorities in those two countries. Slovakia has been removed because the only minority being examined in the country is the Roma. Belgium still has the best representation. When you average the proportionality of countries with compulsory voting laws, you get 0.95. When you average the proportionality of countries without compulsory voting laws, you get 0.97. A small difference, but perhaps indicative that the details of the visible minority groups are important - such as the minority group's political positioning or the length of time it has been present in the country.

Overall, it seems that my hypothesis was correct. Compulsory voting has a mostly positive effect on the representation of visible minorities. This is evident in the higher average proportionality of countries with compulsory voting laws. However, more research must be done. Minorities should be controlled for income - it is possible that this affects their representation, especially because running campaigns are expensive¹⁵.

Countries need to provide more detailed demographic information in order to better study these topics. Much of the relevant literature complains about there not being enough cross-country comparisons regarding the mechanisms of representation. I argue that, before that is done, there needs to be several in-depth analyses of countries, individually. This can involve statistical analysis, but should also be combined with qualitative analysis. Researchers could even conduct in-person interviews with immigrants and visible minorities in different countries to examine their voting habits and the reasons behind them. The researcher should be familiar with the country and its language. Ideally, all these in-depth individual country examinations would occur within the same year, and then one group of researchers could aggregate

¹⁵ Special thanks to Professor Einstein for this suggestion

all the information and conduct a cross-country comparison. The number of countries will be large enough to have a statistically significant analysis. In this way, a set of “best practices” can be determined for several different kinds of situations, and countries can implement these to make sure that the political voice of visible minorities are not suppressed.

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