YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY
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POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: DECREASING TRENDS AND RELATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

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Political Participation in the European Countries: Decreasing Trends and Relations of Conventional Political Participation

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ABSTRACT

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES: DECREASING TRENDS AND RELATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

This thesis aims to determine whether political participation levels show decreasing trends, and examines the relationship between conventional political participation and confidence in institutions, along with the relationship between conventional and unconventional political participation. By also taking the previous studies into consideration, positive correlation between conventional political participation and confidence in institutions, and negative correlation between conventional and unconventional political participation are expected and argued in this thesis. In order to analyze these, the data were obtained from International IDEA, World Values Survey and European Values Study for the period between 1981 and 2022 for various European countries. First, decreasing trends tested by examining voter turnout in presidential, parliamentary and European Parliament elections, party membership, voluntary work for parties, and decreasing trends in political participation in Europe are observed while 5 different unconventional participation methods have an increasing trend. Later, decreasing trends in confidence in institutions were observed and its relationship with conventional participation was analyzed. The thesis reached an outcome that while both conventional participation and level of confidence in institutions have decreasing trends, there is no strong relationship among them. The study also showed that conventional and unconventional participation have opposite trend direction, and a weak relation was observed again. The thesis also showed two interesting points: Confidence in civil services and labor unions diverges positively from other institutions, and while the decreasing trend in participation continues, there is a sign of a stable or increasing trend in the last decade.

Keywords: Conventional Political Participation, Unconventional Political Participation, Confidence in Institutions, Trends of Political Participation, Relationships of Conventional Political Participation

ÖZET

AVRUPA ÜLKELERİNDE SİYASAL KATILIM: GELENEKSEL SİYASAL KATILIMIN DÜŞÜŞ TRENDİ VE İLİŞKİLERİ

Siyasal katılım düzeylerinin azalma eğilimi gösterip göstermediğini belirlemeyi amaçlayan bu tez, geleneksel siyasal katılım ile kurumlara duyulan güven arasındaki ilişkinin yanı sıra geleneksel ve geleneksel olmayan siyasal katılım arasındaki ilişkiyi de incelemektedir. Önceki çalışmalar da göz önünde bulundurularak, geleneksel siyasal katılım ile kurumlara güven arasında pozitif, geleneksel ve geleneksel olmayan siyasal katılım arasında ise negatif bir ilişki beklenmekte ve bu ilişki tezde tartışılmaktadır. Bunları analiz etmek için Uluslararası IDEA, Dünya Değerler Araştırması ve Avrupa Değerler Araştırmasından çeşitli Avrupa ülkeleri için 1981-2022 yılları arasındaki döneme ait veriler elde edilmiştir. İlk olarak, başkanlık, parlamento ve Avrupa Parlamentosu seçimlerinde seçmen katılımı, parti üyeliği, partiler için gönüllü çalışma incelenerek test edilen azalan eğilimler ile Avrupa'da siyasi katılımda azalan eğilimler gözlemlenirken, 5 farklı geleneksel olmayan katılım yönteminde artış eğilimi görülmektedir. Daha sonra da kurumlara duyulan güvende azalma eğilimleri gözlemlenmiş ve bunun geleneksel katılımla ilişkisi analiz edilmiştir. Tezde, hem geleneksel katılımın hem de kurumlara duyulan güven düzeyinin azalma eğiliminde olduğu ancak aralarında güçlü bir ilişki olmadığı sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Çalışma ayrıca geleneksel ve geleneksel olmayan katılımın zıt trend yönüne sahip olduğunu göstermiş ve yine aralarında zayıf bir ilişki gözlemlenmiştir. Tez ayrıca iki ilginç noktayı da ortaya koymuştur: Kamu hizmetlerine ve sendikalara duyulan güven diğer kurumlardan olumlu yönde ayrışmaktadır ve katılımdaki düşüş eğilimi devam ederken, son on yılda istikrarlı veya artan bir eğilimin işareti vardır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Geleneksel Siyasal Katılım, Geleneksel Olmayan Siyasal Katılım, Kurumlara Güven, Siyasal Katılım Eğilimleri, Geleneksel Siyasal Katılım İlişkileri

DEDICATION

To my family and my beloved fiance

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESS	European Social Survey
EU	European Union
EVS	European Values Study
EVSSG	European Value Systems Study Group
International IDEA	The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
LIS	Luxembourg Income Study
WVS	World Value Survey

CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy occurs from political freedom and political equality, with an extended concept that also points out government decision-making and the social environment of politics (Munck, 2014). To be a part of the government decision making process, citizens must participate in politics one way or another. It is the key for a common citizen to effect or influence government decisions, actions or such (Bernhagen & Vetter, 2020; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). This is why political participation is vital for democracies and it is also described as an active part of citizenship (Downs, 1957; Bauböck, 2006). However, like everything gets affected or changed with the changing world, political participation also passes through some changes with time especially after the 1970s (Solijonov, 2016). With the change, some concerns arise. The increasing number of studies on political participation and its decreasing trends is an indicator of these changes and rising concerns (Gray & Caul,2000; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Cancela & Geys, 2016).

With rising numbers of studies, lots of details are discussed about political participation including what can be counted as political participation and what can't (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Kaim, 2021; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). While the discussions ongoing, all participation methods are discussed under two main categories in general and these two categories are conventional and unconventional political participation along with many other: traditional/elite-challenging institutionalized/non-institutionalized, orthodox/unorthodox, institutional/extra institutional or conventional/less conventional political participation, classic/innovative, traditional/alternative, conventional/alternative (Bernhagen & Vetter, 2020; Bülbül, 2020; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015; Kaim, 2021; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). Many argue the categories as fluid so they or their definitions may change by time; there is a common distinction to categorize a political participation way as conventional or unconventional which if a participation method directly related with elections or aiming to effect the elections with legal ways it can be count as conventional while any other participation method which are

outside of electoral process can be count as unconventional method (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Bülbül, 2020, Kaim, 2021).

This thesis aims to answer if political participation is really decreasing, by mostly focusing on conventional political participation and its relations with confidence in state institutions and unconventional political participation. Existing literature mostly focuses on the factors that influence political participation and they generally do that by focusing on stable data or limited period while this thesis will cover 1945 to 2023 for voter turnout and 1981 to 2022 for survey data. Also, it is hard to find a study that mentions the change of political participation in a long period of time and their relations with each other by using multiple variables. The study also aims to fill the vacuum of lack of European wide examination of political participation and determine its trends and relations.

In order to have a European wide dataset and determine European wide propensities and trends, this thesis includes 46 European countries (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022) into its area of study only excluding the Vatican which does not hold democratic elections and add Cyprus as a whole since it is an EU member and the surveys merged both sides of the island. For the study, the data were collected from The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), World Values Survey (WVS) and European Values Study (EVS). The data merged into decades to see the change with time along with avoiding momentarily dramatic changes and later correlations between conventional political participation and confidence in institutions, and conventional and unconventional political participation calculated and analyzed.

This thesis starts with the literature review in the second chapter by dividing it into two subheadings as conventional and unconventional political participation after a brief background. Later, the study deepens the literature on chapter three and investigates the factors affecting political participation on individual, state and system levels. Then, presents its hypotheses and methodology in the fourth chapter just before examining the decreasing trends in political participation with the data in the fifth chapter. After these, the correlation between the above mentioned variables is analyzed, and overall results are discussed. The last chapter provides the conclusion section, and the thesis also gives room for limitations of the study and further discussions.

CHAPTER 2

2. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND BACKGROUND

This chapter will present a comprehensive literature review about political participation and its subcategories. The section is also going to mention theoretical background details of political participation.

Since the 1970s, political participation has undergone significant changes and developments (Solijonov, 2016). The rise of new technologies and forms of communication, as well as shifts in societal attitudes towards political engagement, have all influenced the ways in which individuals and groups participate in the political process. Studies over political participation and especially about voter turnout are increasing significantly which means concerns over decreasing conventional political participation are increasing. Moreover, many studies conclude a decrease in conventional political participation (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Cancela & Geys, 2016 Gray & Caul, 2000). Nevertheless, the question of what should be considered as political participation is still in the center of political participation studies (Kaim, 2021). Thus, it would be helpful to examine the conceptualization of and explanations about political participation first.

To examine political participation in democratic context some key points need to be mentioned. Political participation is the key for an ordinary citizen to effect or influence government decisions, actions and so on (Bernhagen & Vetter, 2020; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). That is why it is something crucial for democracies all over the world (Downs, 1957). At this point with a clear definition it can be said that “Political participation is understood as the active dimension of citizenship.” (Bauböck, 2006, 84). Actively engaging, voluntarily participating politics are key elements for a healthy functioning democracy. Not only participation but also the balance of participating groups also has an important role for democracies. If only certain groups attend political events then it would be hard to create a political institution where every citizen's voice is heard which can lead the governments to unjust implementations (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). While citizens participating in political

instances are described as active citizens it is hard to draw a sharp line between active and passive citizens since there are many ways of participation.

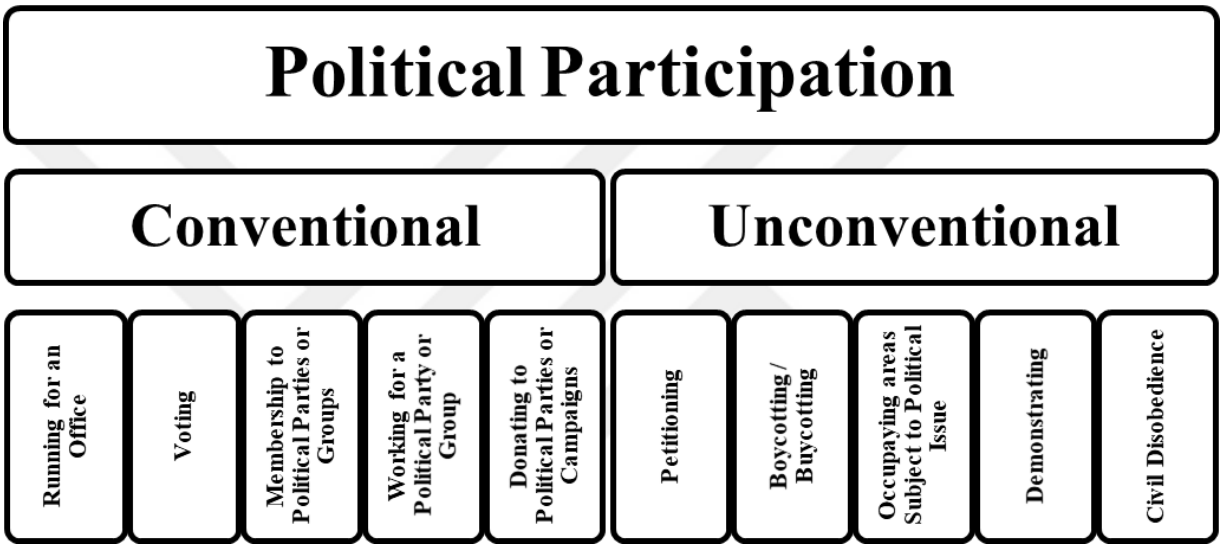
While answering what should be considered as political participation, answers for that question can be divided into two categories which are conventional and unconventional political participation (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Kaim, 2021; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). These two categories are also known with some other names such as; traditional/elite-challenging institutionalized/non-institutionalized, orthodox/unorthodox, institutional/extra institutional or conventional/less conventional political participation, classic/innovative, traditional/alternative, conventional/alternative (Bernhagen & Vetter, 2020; Bülbül, 2020; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015; Kaim, 2021; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). Even though these two categories should go together, sometimes in electoral oriented policies the two might be perceived as opposites and it can cause restrictions or be seen as unwanted to unconventional ways of political participation. Unconventional methods mentioned with negative adjectives in general and the dualism create an uneven relationship between the two. It is discussed by the scholars what is conventional and what is unconventional. Many claim that conventional and unconventional political participations may change in time and unconventional participation methods can count as conventional so change between categories might happen (Kaim, 2021). Kaim (2021) finds these dichotomous categories problematic and suggests a third category as alternative participation. The study offers alternative participations as a category to create space for the participation methods that do not fit either conventional or unconventional political participation explanation. By this way, political recognition may be provided for the ones that do not fit regularly used dualist categories. While conventional methods are put forward as stabilizers and supporters of the existing system, unconventional political participation methods are pushed back as destabilizers and a kind of threat to existing systems (Kaim, 2021).

This literature review aims to provide an overview of the key developments and trends in political participation in general and specifically since the 1970s, as well as discussing some of the key challenges and issues faced by political actors in the European Union (EU) and in the world. As I mentioned earlier, studies on political participation are increasing (Cancela & Geys, 2016). However, they all investigate limited time periods and generally in one aspect of participation method. Besides, there is new data that needs to be considered. In this study I

will try to present a broader overview of the existing literature and later on this thesis I will try to analyze political participation data from various sources with a wider aspect.

Figure 1

Conventional and Unconventional Political Participation Methods



Prepared based on (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Linssen et al., 2015; Bülbül, 2020)

2.1. Conventional Political Participation

The first category/type which is conventional political participation means a way to participate within the electoral process. The aim in this category is to influence the electoral process for the intended outcome by using legally given opportunities such as running for office as candidate, voting in legislative process for national or local elections, being a member to a political party or other associations like trade unions, working for a political party, donating money to parties or candidates you support and so on which are shown in the figure 1 (Barnes & Kaase, 1979). Linssen at al. (2015) have a study based on EVS and European Social Survey (ESS) data between 1981 and 2008. The study shows that except for a few exemptions the most popular conventional political participation methods are voting, being a member to a political party and working for a political party. When they are put in an order, the most popular one is voting, then comes being a member and among the three the

least popular one working for a party (Linssen et al., 2015). There are some features of conventional political participation, well known main ones are legality and institutionalization (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Kaim, 2021). They are legal because all forms of conventional political participation are regulated and guaranteed by laws of the democracies. And they are institutionalized because all of the forms mentioned under the conventional political participation headline are strictly regulated with their all processes and they are under control of institutions in every step (Kaim, 2021). In conventional political participation all forms of participation are used as a tool for accumulating support and with this support gaining control on the government so that they can implement their policies supported by the citizens. Conventional political participation methods present a peaceful way of managing politics (Kaim, 2021). Even when the political party citizens supported loses the elections they have various powers to affect government politics and they always have another chance to be elected in the next elections so that it does not eliminate the opposition (Kaim, 2021). Another characteristic of conventional political participation is it takes place in designated areas with designated ways. It is all planned and obvious. Conventional political participation forms are collective rather than individualistic. Majority has the authority. These methods promote unity and majority in essence even though they are designed to cultivate plurality (Kaim, 2021). To expand our view with examples; one vote as an individual citizen but their vote is worthless by itself, if enough majority did not vote for same candidate; one can be seen as candidate by himself but he need to convince others that he is a good candidate and convince others to vote for him; one can be a member of a political party individualistically but the situation is same as voting one single member is not enough themself unless he act collectively with other members and so on. And to be successful all need a collective support in every step.

Running for an office is the highest form of conventionally participating in politics and it requires a lot of risk taking (Fox & Lawless, 2005). All other conventional political participation types are somewhat related to this method. The core is being a candidate and aiming to be elected to implement the desired local or national government policies. Being a candidate requires a lot of courage since by becoming a candidate candidates open themselves for strict scrutiny, examination and open to public harsh critics (Fox & Lawless, 2005). All other kinds of political participation methods are there for supporting or affecting the elected

candidates to make them implement the desired local or national government policies (Fox & Lawless, 2005; Logan, 2017).

Voting is the most conversant way of conventional political participation. "Voting makes democracy possible and democracy is the reward of voting" (Downs, 1957: 270). On the way back only privileged groups had the right to vote. However, with the development of democracy it expanded to all citizens with limited restrictions like age and citizenship. Voting is the way of citizens interacting with their government (Logan, 2017). To measure votings as participation one of the most important and obvious methods is looking at voter turnout rates. Voter turnout is essentially calculated by two different methods; the first and most commonly used method is including all of the population who are over the legal voting age which is commonly mentioned as voting age population (VAP), the second method is only counting registered votes (Anderson & Beramendi, 2012). However, there are some studies using some other methods by including all of the population into ratio, using eligible voters or giving no detail about their numerators or ratio calculation (Geys, 2006). In this thesis, I will mostly use the first method because some countries do not have registration to vote and the ones that have registration differ in the registration processes so that it would cause a wrong comparison, another reason is by this way the registration process' effect on voter turnout can be also observed. So to calculate a country's voter turnout this thesis accepts the total population above voting age (X) as 100% and the ones casted their votes (Y) is the ratio to 100%. Thus, the formula is (100Y/X)%.

Membership to a political party or other kind of political associations like labor unions, trade unions is one of the most common conventional political participation methods (Linssen et al., 2015). Political parties have a critical role in modern democracies that is why membership to political parties are vital to function the parties so the democracies (Whiteley, 2011). With being a member of one of these groups citizens work to increase awareness and information about the topic or political agenda they are supporting. To lead politics or citizens to intended political outcomes people use these organizations as tools. It helps them to be active in their community and effect the policy of governments not just with vote but with other ways like gathering people for the same goals, creating pressure on politicians, creating interest groups to fulfill their goals and such (Biezen et al., 2012). By this method people have a chance to work for the problems that matter for them. To measure party membership as a

political participation indicator two methods are used. The first one is total party membership which gives us the data of how many citizens are members of a political party. To measure a country's longitudinal development it is a good indicator. However, to compare countries, the second indicator is more appropriate, which is total party membership as percentage of electorate. With this data country's membership levels can be compared and some conclusions about their conventional political participation status can be interpreted (Whiteley, 2011; Biezen et al., 2012; Logan, 2017).

Donating to a political party or other political association is another way of conventional participation. There is a link between policy and donating money and some research shows donors might be better represented than traditional constituencies (Jordan, 2019). On the other hand, small money donations are also increasing and they have an important share in the donations. Small money donations seen democratically legitimate political participation by the criticizing of big money donations. Small money donations are also seen as healthy for democracies (Rubenstein, 2021). Citizens who do not have time or energy to participate in political associations but support their goals can donate money for them to support their campaigns. Except for the lack of time or interest to be part of a political association, some might not want to be involved in politics with some concerns. These concerns might be unwanted attention and exclusion from their social surroundings, damaging their interests by opposition and so on. Contribution to the political associations might not just be in money form but donating real estate or other kinds of financial support can be a way to support. The donations made to the parties or election campaigns are redistributed by the party leadership according to the party's strategies (Jordan, 2019). Other than donating, people can also volunteer for that kind of political campaign. Aside from those with today's world, citizens can use social media to engage in politics too. They can support political associations by sharing their campaigns or use other engagement methods on social media to help their campaign reach wider target groups (Logan, 2017).

2.2. Unconventional Political Participation

The second category/type which is unconventional political participation, means a way to participate without interfering with the electoral process. The aim is to influence the

decision makers for the intended outcome by using opportunities other than the electoral system. For example, signing petitions, attending boycotts, occupying areas subject to the political issue, demonstrating, civil disobedience and so on which are shown in the figure 1. The aim of these kinds of protest movements is to be heard without requiring any mediation of a formal political body (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Bülbül, 2020; Linssen et al., 2015). This kind of political engagement is far from institutionalized. They are occasional, issue based, instantaneous, proactive and necessitates citizen engagement (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). The dichotomous categorization directs us to locate unconventional to the opposite of conventional. Even though it is not always the intention in reality dualism has this feature in core. One needs conventional to describe unconventional. With that logic one can assume unconventional political participation methods have opposite characteristics of conventional political participation (Kaim, 2021). However, this is not always the situation. In this work, instead of locating unconventional and conventional participation methods on the opposite sides, this thesis adopts the view that they are complementing each other as indicated in some studies (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Kaim, 2021). In this case some of the characteristics may be opposite and some may have been similar. For example one can say that institutionalized characteristic of conventional political participation is the opposite of unconventional political participation characteristic. Since conventional political participation methods are strictly regulated and subject to scrutiny by the officials they are highly institutionalized. However, legality is a similar characteristic for most of the unconventional methods and unconventional political participation methods generally mentioned in the legal documents as rights but not strictly regulated, planned or audited by the authorities. Some unconventional ways to participate like protesting, striking are legal civil rights in democracies. Unconventional political participation promotes plurality against conventional political participation's promotion to unity. Unconventional political participation does not always occur in the designated areas and they are not planned and organized by the institution most of the time. They are more likely to be random and unpredictable for the officials. There is general categorization understanding about locating every participation method under unconventional if it is not fit to conventional, so unconventional political participation is used as a common catch-all category and is not described with strict characteristics (Kaim, 2021).

Earlier mentioned study of Linssen et al. (2015) based on the EVS and ESS also shows that except for a few exemptions the most popular unconventional political participation amongst petitioning, demonstration and boycotting is petitioning, second one is demonstration and least popular one is boycotting between 1981 - 2008. However, the study also saw a shift. After 2000 boycotting and demonstration shifted places and the que became petitioning, boycotting and demonstrating (Linssen et al., 2015). This means amongst the unconventional political participation methods there are more preferable ones for the citizens and these preferences can change with time. Also the study mentions that association between the two categories is positive and against many studies there is no ongoing trend of decline in political participation (Linssen et al., 2015).

One of the most preferred unconventional political participation methods is petitioning (Linssen et al., 2015). Even though some have started to argue if petitioning counts as conventional or unconventional they are depending their argument to their frequencies and still mentions them as elite challenging. The arguments more seem like the naming of the category more than their classification since they still call petitioning an elite challenging participation method which this thesis uses as another name of conventional political participation (Inglehart & Catterberg, 2002). However, this thesis made a clear classification in this study as election related participation methods conventional and outside election attempts are unconventional political participation as generally mentioned in most studies (Barnes & Kaase, 1979; Linssen et al., 2015; Bülbül, 2020). Petitioning can be done in different ways. People can sign present petitions prepared by political associations or their social groups to show that they are in favor of that campaign and supporting the desired policy change mentioned in the petition. Another option is to be heard as an individual. This method is generally used by citizens to explain themselves or their problems to the authorities. Individuals use this form generally for local authorities rather than national ones. It is used for hundreds of years for lots of causes and in lots of forms (Zaret, 2019). Petitioning can be used to demand information about public services or policies along with expressing their thoughts about public policies or services and looking for help to solve their problems about public services so they can pursue various objectives (Zaret, 2019). It can work in very hard situations. For example, in early modern Japan it was seen disrespectful to criticize a prerogative decision or policy but citizens manage to change conditions of the policy by

petitioning (Zaret, 2019). As technology emerged and developed, online petitioning and campaigning is also available now. As mentioned above, collective petitioning can be online. In recent years political associations use online petitioning to reach a wider mass of people and find supporters among many others with lower fiscal resources (Böttcher et al., 2017). Since the internet is in every part of our lives and most of the citizens interact via it, policy makers take account of online petition campaigns too. With online petition campaigns more national or even international political agenda can be pursued along with local ones (Böttcher et al., 2017). New platforms emerged to organize online petitions and help citizens organize, sustain and deliver their petitions to related authorities. As a result, thousands of petitions succeeded to reach their goals world wide (change.org, 2024).

Protesting is one of the most striking, influential and common political participation methods (Linssen et al., 2015; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). This method was mostly used after the Second World War and since then its impact and popularity has not undergone. It was adopted by various civil movements; women's rights movements, labor movements, environmental movements and in the last decades among various movements or groups it is a popular method to be heard by the authorities and raising awareness. Even though it is one of the most preferred unconventional methods, it causes controversy many times (Kaim, 2021). Due to its nature, demonstrations or protests can go out of control of the organizing groups. Protesters can cause property damage, image damage of the country and even loss of lives. Sometimes when protests expand and transform extreme forms in case they can lead to riots, civil wars and other kinds of unwanted outcomes as happened in the Arab Spring. However, protests are essential civil rights and protected by many countries' laws. In democracies protesting is a rightful and lawful act but can be restricted or regulated by the laws to ensure public safety. Protests can be efficient and help the movements heard by the authorities and public. Protesting is one of the most important tools for powerless groups. Its popularity increases in the US and many other countries especially among minority and low income groups (Lipsky, 1968). It can help them to reach intended political outcomes such as policy change, providing a public service, canceling a legislation attempt and so on. It is an unconventional political participation because it aims to make a change in the political conjecture outside of the electoral system (Lipsky, 1968; Logan, 2017).

Civil disobedience is another form of unconventional political participation. Citizens individually or as a political association member can choose to not obey the rules deliberately to show their reaction to a political situation (Delmas, 2014). This method is generally used to react against unlawful implementation of governments or local authorities as a reaction. It is common to prefer this form of participation when the decision of a court is found unjust by the public (Logan, 2017). Civil disobedience can be expanded to include "official disrespect" and "deliberative ignorance" contexts (Delmas, 2014). Citizens can also choose to use this method of unconventional political participation when they cannot change disturbed policy by protesting it, without obeying its necessities. Even though there are some discussions if there is room for civil disobedience in democracies most of the philosophers usually agree that democracies have room for civil disobedience. However, many still argue the disobedience potential to attract political anarchists and vandals like it did in the 1999 anti globalization protests in Seattle which ended up costing half of the city's budget to recover the effects (Delmas, 2014). Civil disobedience also might include some other ways like sit-ins, marching, occupying and so on (Delmas, 2014; Logan, 2017).

Political consumerism is also a form of unconventional political participation and it dividends two sub categories as boycotting and buycotting. While boycotting is more likely associated with dutiful citizenship norms, the buycotting is more likely associated with engaged citizenship norms, emphasizing the importance of changing citizenship norms in understanding contemporary political participation (Forno & Ceccarini, 2006; Copeland, 2014). Boycotts using a political tool by the citizens for many years. Boycotts may target a country or a company by citizens to refuse to use its products thus causing economic damage to make them step back about the issue (Forno & Ceccarini, 2006; Logan, 2017). Reasons leading citizens to boycott a country or a company may be unjust or unlawful implementations, their lawful but unethical acts, companies production methods and so on. On the other hand, buycotting is reward oriented and it aims to buy or use a product or a companies, countries products to reward the desirable behavior (Copeland, 2014). This method is mostly preferred by environmentalists and human right activists to give a lesson to those countries or companies so that they must change their actions or they will lose money. Especially on a company when this kind of boycott reaches a wider supporter group can have catastrophic results. Due to the fact that companies' main goal is to profit and many times the

reason they are acting in a disturbing way which leads to boycott is to make more profit, the boycott causing loss of profit is forcing them to fix their acts about the situation. For example, when they cannot profit more by implementing anti environmentalist policies the reason to do it at the beginning disappears so if using anti environmentalist methods do not make them more money there is no reason to implement it anymore for the companies (Copeland, 2014). Another target of boycotts as mentioned earlier is countries. The reason behind targeting a country with a boycott includes human rights concerns in general. For example a country's policies in the international arena, a country's violent act against minority groups or another country can make it a target for boycotts. While boycotting countries, every company, especially government originated companies are targeted to give the country a loss of profit in general to create economic damage on the government and make them stop their implementations against human rights. When a country is targeted, pressure on the government increases by the companies losing money and citizens of the country who are being affected by the boycotts economically (Copeland, 2014; Logan, 2017).

Following this differentiation and comparison of conventional and unconventional political participation methods, as a further review of the literature, the next chapter provides details of the factors affecting political participation.

CHAPTER 3

3. FACTORS AFFECTING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

With the advanced and widespread technology forms it is hard to distinguish political participation since some behaviors which were not political can easily and rapidly become one with the help of technology like posting something in social media (van Deth, 2016). People who participate in politics are named active citizens in many sources (Magnette, 2003, 150-151; Bauböck, 2006, 84; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). However, active citizens are a very limited amount of the population but still all of the citizens benefit from that. Even when a small group of people is completely active; by voting, being members to political parties or groups, attending courts and so on, this makes governments accountable and all of the citizens benefit from that (Magnette, 2003, 150-151). On the other hand, some scholars question the role of active citizenship and the implementations to increase political participation: "What is needed is legitimate and responsible leadership, rather than the active participation of the demos to policy-making" (Palumbo, 2009, 337). Palumbo (2009) also mentions that attempts to create fully active citizens in international or supranational institutions political issues without considering their ethnicity and their loyalty to their nation has failed. Citizens object to this kind of globalization due to the fact that their perspective on this was; they needed to preserve their culture, ethnicity, nationality so basically their identity against globalization. That is why this attempt was unsound and politically unfeasible. It led populist movements based upon the elements that created their identity like ethnicity and culture to rise (Palumbo, 2009). However, low voter turnout leads to an unbalanced and socioeconomically biased turnout (Lijphart, 1997). So that political participation and democracy have both been inseparable for a long time. Political or civic participation is indispensable for democracies to legitimize their governance; it is also indispensable for citizens to make sure that the government represents them and manage the country as they would like to. For all of these, political participation should be provided for a healthy democratic management. To ensure political participation, institutional reform is vital (Warleigh-Lack, 2001, 620). For that reason, governments, supranational organizations and other political organisms should constantly deliver public

goods which are valued by the citizens. The EU tried different implementations to do so. One implementation for that purpose was *The Spitzenkandidaten* initiative which raised awareness of European citizens significantly about the election of commission president[1] (Hobolt, 2014; Schmitt et al., 2015). However, due to lack of an EU wide common media, language and so on, the attempt stayed limited (Hobolt, 2014). There are some institutional remedies to increase voter turnout. Should not be missed that there is no just one way of governance to deal with decreasing political participation. To fix all of that or work in every government a magical one true way cannot be expected (Eberlein & Kerwer, 2004). So in this case every nation or supranational actor needs to find their efficient way to increase political participation in their area to make their democratic wheel roll on. To start, there should be bottom-up participation and top-down guidance for a wholesome democracy. Without proper guidance and incentives people are less likely to mobilize for political issues (Eberlein & Kerwer, 2004). The strongest way of increasing political participation is compulsory voting. Compulsory voting also makes participation more equal. However, there is also some disadvantage of this implementation because it also increases participation of apolitical citizens which have no or little interest in politics and their votes are thoughtless and it can be dangerous (Lijphart, 1997; Gray & Caul, 2000). Besides, many scholars defend that political participation is and should be voluntary (van Deth, 2016).

3.1. Political Participation in the Changing World

While the place of civic participation remains crucial in a vastly changing world, the changes form the modern world. Urbanization is expanding. People have been migrating from rural areas to urban areas vastly since the Industrial Revolution. As a result of the urbanization process, peoples' social ties are weakening and their ability to have consensus over some ideas is getting harder (Wirth, 1938). Urbanization also increases population density which leads to some sociological changes too. With densely populated cities individualism increases and decreases social pressure (Riker & Ordeshook, 1968). All set new rules and change the world

[1] The President is the head of the European Commission. According to the treaties, the Commission President decides on the organization of the Commission and allocates portfolios to individual Commissioners. The President also sets the Commission's policy agenda.

we live in and ways of political participation. With today's way of living, citizens are attracted by many other things other than policy in modern societies. The citizens' way of participation into politics defines the type of democracies, political institutions of the countries and so on. While they all interact with the modern societies' chores, some even do not want to be informed by political issues which they are not directly affected or they can not directly affect. Whereas others still want to be informed and attend to the way their country is managed no matter what (Magnette, 2003). That situation with many others changed the world of politics. New types of participation are constantly adding to existing ones. With new social norms and new kinds of social movements, new kinds of participation are increasing. The Internet made the cost of campaigning very affordable for all kinds of people which gave an opportunity to all kinds of people to boost their political opinions and gather a large number of people to affect politics. Things that are not political choices become political if they are organized to prevent or provide some specific actions like refusals to buy a specific brand of coffee, volunteering in a hospital, being a member of a sports club, or posting a blog on whales (van Deth, 2016).

3.2. Individual Level Effects On Political Participation

There are many individual level effects on citizens' participation in politics. Among them, two of the most important ones are the education level and political experience of the citizens. Many argue that education increases the quality of democracies. It appears that the higher the education level and political experience the higher the political participation (Almond & Verba, 2015; Milligan et al., 2004; Lijphart, 1997; Gray & Caul, 2000). However, when aggregate level for decades looked at, education levels increase with the fast industrialization but voter turnouts decrease in the same period (Gray & Caul, 2000). Experience and political participation provide people clearer understanding of the complicated policy systems and thus they feel empowered and understand how and why to participate in politics.

Also age and political participation has correlation. Citizens tend to attend the voting process more by time. It appears that conventional participation rate and unconventional participation rates diverge when citizens are older and divergence increases with age

(Bernhagen & Vetter, 2020; Gray & Caul, 2000). However, this situation is valid for conventional political participation. Younger citizens follow the politics but they find political institutions non-responsive and that is why they tend to prefer unconventional political participation more. Protest participations are more direct and individualistic so that they attract young citizens more (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013).

Economic factors like income and well-being status have an important place on individual level effects of political participation (Anderson & Beramendi, 2012; Gray & Caul, 2000). Some of these factors are resources of the people like time, money and civic skills. There are different resources people have, have but not enough, or don't have. These situations of possessing the necessary resources also affect people's participation behavior. Moreover, possession of different resources determines their way of participation in politics (Brady et al., 1995). One possession type affecting political participation is home ownership. According to the study of Geys (2006) home owners' propensity to participate in elections is higher. This might be caused by the economic factors or people living in the constituency for a long time and plans to live there in the future has more interest in the outcome of the elections (Geys, 2006).

Studies show that during unemployment raises, unconventional political participation rates escalate quickly (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). Also another economic indicator, public deficit has an effect over conventional political participation. Studies suggest that when the public deficit is lower, propensity to conventional political participation is higher (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). Studies of Frey and Stutzer (2000) and Anderson and Beramendi (2012) show that well-being and active political participation has positive correlation (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). Additionally, it seems that higher levels of socioeconomic status is associated with higher levels of participation. Citizens who are in socioeconomically better conditions have more resources to understand politics due to their higher level education and resources in result participate accordingly. This correlation may change according to countries. While in some countries this is an important effect in others it is negligible (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Gray & Caul, 2000). Another aspect also indicates that economic fluctuations individually do not have significant effect on participation decision but as a whole the country feels the economic situation then citizens collective action will be affecting the participation levels (Gray & Caul, 2000). However, it is hard to decide whether high well-being status people

participate more or more politically involved people generally have more well-being status (Frey & Stutzer, 2000). On the other hand, even though income has increased steadily in the last decades, voter turnout shows an opposite tendency (Gray & Caul, 2000). This situation creates another position. When lower-income individuals vote less frequently, their participation becomes more critical due to the greatness of their impact on the overall outcome. Another aspect is relation with political party target and the voter subgroup. Anderson and Beramendi (2012) suggest that in terms of voter turnout, political parties' target subgroups are also important. So, if a party focuses on a group with high well-being, the probability of high well-being status people to vote is higher. On the contrary if a party focuses on a subgroup with low well-being status, the probability of low well-being status people to vote is higher. It can be caused by a party's political stance or their election campaign strategy. Basically while voters' individualistic status is related with their voting behavior, the political actors' strategies about that individualistic status is also a variable on that issue. However, in general it can be said that income inequality is one of the effects for voter turnouts in a bad way (Anderson & Beramendi, 2012).

Membership to a political organization or a trade union also has correlation with voter turnout. According to Dahl, if citizens are members of political organizations or trade unions their propensity of casting their vote is higher (Dahl, 1971, 299). Being active in the social surroundings is also effective for electors mobilization. To be more revealing, if a citizen is active in their social life like they are a member of any social group, religious organization and so on their propensity to vote is also higher (Bernhagen & Vetter, 2020).

One other effect on people's participation behavior is their suffering. Bauer et al. (2016) had profound research about the correlation; they collected individual level data with surveys. They mentioned in their study that if citizens or their kins experienced violence of war directly, they tend to engage in political events much higher than ones who did not suffer directly or at all (Bauer et al., 2016, 254). Bateson (2012) also agrees and verifies Bauer et al. (2016), and also adds that crime victimization also has a positive effect on political participation. According to her, crime victimization is one the most influential predictors of political participation (Bateson, 2012). Bateson prepared empirical research and examined survey data from 70 countries. Thus she presented strong evidence of a link between crime victimization and political participation (Bateson, 2012, 571).

Peoples' interpersonal trust is also affecting their participation choice (Brehm & Rahn, 1997). In addition to that Gerber et al. (2008)'s experimental research about neighbors effects on voter turnout showed that neighbors' pressure and making citizens see the voting process as civic duty are increasing the voter turnout significantly. To sum up, the stronger a person feels a sense of obligation to discharge his civic duties, the more likely he is to be politically active" (Campbell, Gurin, and Miller 1954, 199). In densely populated urban areas this effect loses power. These kinds of areas lead people to more individualistic views and decrease social pressure because civic duty responsibility loses power on individuals (Riker & Ordeshook, 1968). Depending on that situation many studies suggest that population density has a significant impact on political participation. Because voters in densely populated areas are less familiar with the candidates and their probability to affect the election outcome is lower. On the other hand, Geys (2006) claims otherwise. According to Geys' (2006) study, population density has no effect over voter turnout.

Gender is also an effect of political participation. It appeared that women participated in conventional ways less than men but they participated more in unconventional methods of political participation (Vassallo, 2007). On the other hand, Eder and Katsanidou (2015) mention in their study to the contrary and also add that findings are mixed. They mention that while women participate less in political parties and protest, they tend to attend more in petitioning (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). The longitudinal studies showed that women in the EU countries show less interest in politics than men (Vassallo, 2007). The survey also showed that women participate less in political discussions in their lives and when they asked about the importance of politics men see politics more important for their life than the women see, except some negligible amount of countries (Vassallo, 2007; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). When membership in political parties and associations was examined, similar results of men's dominance can be observed and it does not change when the respondents asked if they did any duty for free for any political association. Females' party engagement rates considerably less than men (Biezen et al., 2012). However, in recent studies some claim that gender difference on political participation is diminished or even some say it is reversed in some ways of participation (Vassallo, 2007; Biezen et al., 2012; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015).

Political view of a citizen also has an effect on his political participation method. If a citizen sees himself on the left side of the political spectrum, then he is more likely to use unconventional political participation methods. Being leftist especially has an effect on petitioning. Leftists, high level educated citizens and citizens with high political interest have more chances to use protesting as their participation method than opposite sides of their political views (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015).

Previous actions of a citizen also affect political participation. In general, people who used a political participation method once are more likely to use it again. Geys (2006) investigates it in terms of voter turnout and finds data supporting this argument. His study shows that if an individual participated in elections previously, his/her propensity to participate in the next election is higher. Another study also verifies and adds that previous political participation has more effect on subnational elections than nationals (Cancela & Geys, 2016).

3.3. State Level Effects Over Political Participation

Along with individual level factors affecting political participation, state level factors also have influence on citizens' political participation choices. Countries' background is affecting the political participation methods preferred by the citizens of that country and political participation levels. Different kinds of backgrounds like historical, political and systemic, may lead to different outcomes. For example, political party membership rates are a lot lower in post communist democracies than in other European countries (Biezen et al., 2012). Another example is socio economic effect on political participation. Generally citizens in socio economically developed countries have higher rates of political participation. However, it appears that while this has a significant effect on political participation in established democracies, it has very limited effect on new democracies like post communist countries (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013).

As all are aware and accept that bureaucracy is an indispensable part of modern democratic countries. However, it appears that if the bureaucracy increases in voting procedures, the civic participation decreases. One of the reasons for that is when the costs of voting decrease or benefits of voting increase voter participation increases (Mattila, 2003,

454). The cost mentioned is not just the financial cost but also time and energy people spend to participate in politics. People tend to procrastinate when there is a bureaucratic process involved in the voting process like registering before the election. It also increases the burden of voting so citizens avoid voting instead of dealing with the process and spending time and energy to be eligible to vote. Another reason for that is the capacity of the people to deal with this process. For the scholars reading this might think that how come basic registering or voting process might be related with the capacity of people. However, studies conducted by Miligan et al. (2004) show that educated or undereducated people find it difficult to deal with this process or even difficult for some to understand the process (Milligan et al., 2004). Even some educated intellectuals might find the process inefficient or unnecessary to deal with and avoid participation. Sometimes the processes needed to cast a vote like enrolling, having appointments or such might seem from a government view a necessary step but it appears it is the opposite for the average citizens and this process might give them an excuse to not cast their vote. So if the government wants higher participation, they should minimize the bureaucratic process to participate as much as possible (Mattila, 2003, 454; Milligan et al., 2004).

People's trust for their community and their trust for the governments also affect their participation decision. If people don't trust their politicians, if they think or feel politicians prioritize their own interest over public interest. Trust, interest and support for the institutions are declining. It indirectly affects participation. It seems that the higher they participate in local or national political instruments, the higher their trust in those institutions. It works both ways so also the higher their trust for the institutions the higher they show interest and participate in the conventional political incidents (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). However, while decreasing political trust leads to decrease in conventional political participation it also appears that it leads to increase in unconventional political participation so it basically means that losing political trust does not cause a decrease in overall political participation but the political participation method changes (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). On the other hand, Levi and Stoker (2000) state in their paper that on the contrary of common belief trust in governments does not increase political participation. Along with mentioning there is no direct link between trust in political institutions and political participation, they also

mention that there is a correlation that people tend to participate politically more when they feel distrust to the government (Levi & Stoker, 2000).

Another effect on political participation mentioned by the scholars is candidates' affect and mobilization power. One other effect of *Spitzenkandidaten* implementation (mentioned earlier in this chapter) was to see the effect of candidates (Schmitt et al., 2015). The empirical data scholars gathered showed that if citizens know the candidates instead of voting just for the seat, their mobilization probability is substantively higher (Schmitt et al., 2015). Also the smaller the constituency the higher the participation. People tend to participate more in politics when they feel or see that they can vote for someone from their constituency (Mattila, 2003, 455). Unlike Mattila (2003), Anderson and Beramendi (2012) suggest that larger constituencies lead to higher voter turnout.

Another effect is clarity. The provided options to citizens should be clear to attract citizens. Average citizens should be competent to fulfill their duty to participate in that specific political action. If the duty or the choice asked in the ballot would be higher than peoples competence it decreases the mobilization of citizens for that action (Hobolt, 2007).

Institutional variables also have an effect on political participation. Some of these variables are compulsory voting, electoral system, synchronous elections, registration process and so on (Geys, 2006; Cancela & Geys, 2016; Gray & Caul, 2000). Many studies suggest that for conventional political participation, the election system also has an important effect. The assumption is that in a proportional electoral system, participation in elections is higher than in a majoritarian electoral system. Due to the fact that proportional representation provides more access to the policy making process for citizens by presenting more accurate and fair representation to different groups in societies like political and racial minorities (fairvote.org, 2024). Another reason why proportional representation electoral systems have more participation is because of less wasting of votes (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015; Geys, 2006; Klingemann, 2009; Gray & Caul, 2000). Eder and Katsanidou (2015) also mention that in majoritarian electoral systems, citizens' propensity to prefer unconventional participation methods over conventional ones are higher. However, the aftermath of Eder and Katsanidou (2015)'s study says that the electoral system does not have a significant effect on institutionalized political participation even though federalism seems to have a significant effect on petitioning (Cancela & Geys, 2016). On the other hand, Gray and Caul (2000) also

mentioned that institutional variables have limited power to explain the decline in voter turnout because while voter turnout keeps decreasing, institutions stay constant in the countries where a decreasing trend is observed.

Compulsory voting also has a great effect over conventional political participation. Many studies suggest that there is a direct link between compulsory voting and voter turnout. In the compulsory voting elections citizens' cost to not voting is increasing. Along with getting caught and having a fine there is another disadvantage of seeming as disobedient to law and not trustworthy which ends up as citizens casting their votes rather they are interested in politics or not (Geys, 2006; Lijphart, 1997; Gray & Caul, 2000). On the other hand, Gray and Caul (2000) also mention that the effect of compulsory voting over voter turnout is not sustainable and not lasting long but it has a short term significant effect. Concurrent elections increase voter turnout too. Due to different political actors doing their electoral campaign at the same time, citizens' awareness and information about the policy topics they are campaigning are increasing. It results with citizens casting their votes at the individual level. Hence, concurrent elections present more opportunities at the same time. Cost (bureaucratic, time, money) of each election decreases for the citizens by this way (Geys, 2006). Last of the institutional variables this thesis will investigate is the registration process. It is commonly known and believed that the harder the registration process the lower the voter turnout. People do not want to burden the time, money and such to be eligible to vote. Besides for the registration process voters need to have necessary information about bureaucratic processes needed and they need to follow the process closely to not miss the registration dates and learn the registration place. For all that, state level and individual level data clearly show that registration processes decrease voter turnout. On the other hand, implications like automatic registration, voting day registration and such increases the propensity of voter turnouts (Geys, 2006).

A country's economic situation has a significant impact on political participation, studies suggest. Citizens in socio economically developed countries have higher rates of political participation (Gray & Caul, 2000). However, it appears that while this has a significant effect on political participation in established democracies, it has very limited effect on new democracies like post communist countries (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013). Even though most of the studies emphasize the effect of economic factors over political

participation, some study suggests that economic factors are not effective or have negligible effect over political participation (Gray & Caul, 2000). Nevertheless, economic inequality is an illness in democracies like all other types of democracies and it also affects democratic quality by affecting political participation (Anderson & Beramendi, 2012). Studies also suggest that socioeconomic factors are more influential in the subnational elections than national elections (Cancela & Geys, 2016). If unemployment rises, protest movements, which is an unconventional political participation method, may also rise. On the other hand, if the public deficit is high, party engagement means conventional political participation is also high (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). Gray and Caul (2000) mention that if economic growth appears in the year before elections then voter turnout increases, so that if there is an expectation in the citizens that the economy will be better next year their propensity to vote is higher.

Political parties' election strategies are also important factors on political participation. As many studies suggest, constituencies with lower income status are less likely to participate in elections (Anderson & Beramendi, 2012; Gray & Caul, 2000). That is why generally parties focus on the groups that are already participating in the elections. It creates a vicious circle. People do not vote because parties ignore them, parties ignore them because they are not voting. On the other hand, the general assumption that poor constituencies are birth assigned target groups for the left parties. Due to mobilization problems most parties are skeptical to create a low income group driven political agenda, nevertheless others (most likely left parties) manage to mobilize lower income groups to vote for them with an agenda that serves for their interests (Anderson & Beramendi, 2012). Anderson and Beramendi (2012) show with data collected from the International IDEA and the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) that if there is a partisan left party in a county, aggregate votes increases so turnout is increasing. However, if there is no party focusing on mobilizing low income constituencies then the voter turnout significantly lower (Anderson & Beramendi, 2012; Gray & Caul, 2000).

Population size is also an effect on political participation. It appears that when the electoral constituency expands, political participation decreases (Biezen et al., 2012; Geys, 2006; Gray & Caul, 2000). Geys (2006) hypothesis in his study specifically on the voter turnout population size and voter turnout has negative correlation. Another case is Biezen et al. (2012)'s study which suggests that when the polity size of a country increases then the political party membership rates, which is another method of conventional political

participation, decrease. As this thesis is also going to be mentioned in the next section when the voters see a direct link between their votes and the outcome their propensity to cast their votes is higher. So, in smaller constituencies voter effect is relatively higher over the election results and the outcome will more directly affect the voters so they are more likely to vote for their desired candidate. One can basically say that bigger the population size of the election, lower the voter turnout (Geys, 2006; Gray & Caul, 2000). Another aspect of population is its stability. Studies suggest that population stability also has an effect on political participation. Geys (2006) uses data from 24 studies and to look for the population stability he takes home ownership and population mobility/growth as independent variables. Because the areas with higher home ownership rates have more population stability. People own home stays in the same location a lot more than renters as average. Also population growth and mobility are another indicator of population stability because if the population grows then there is high mobilization and people move to those areas if the birth rates are not higher than death rates, and in developed countries the situation is generally like that. In results it seems that these two variables have an effect on voter turnout. With his study he claims that when the population stability is higher participation in elections is higher too even though there are some exceptions (Geys, 2006; Gray & Caul, 2000). The reason behind it is that if people stay in a region for a long time, and if they plan to stay for a longer period, then the outcome of the elections is going to affect them more, so that those citizens' propensity to cast their vote is higher. On the other hand, if people reside in the country or in the region for a temporary period they will not be affected a lot from the results of the elections because they might be gone till the outcome has started to show its effects. Another reason is when people stay in the same area for a long time it makes them more familiar with the problems of that constituency and the candidates (Geys, 2006). Population homogeneity is also affecting political participation. General assumption is that constituencies with more homogeneous demographic structure have more participation. However, Geys (2006) shows in his study that population homogeneity is an insignificant effect because it has little effect on voter turnout and this little effect on behalf of homogeneity lowers the voter turnout. According to his study, heterogeneity causes higher voter turnout but with a small effect (Geys, 2006). It appears that most of the effects of population are affected on local elections while their effects on general elections are limited. Population size, density, stability and homogeneity is explanatory for the

subnational elections while they are not directly related with the national elections (Cancela & Geys, 2016).

Competition in elections affects citizens who are responsible for voting. It appears that if the candidate's success probability is close to each other then its mobilization power on citizens is higher. Closeness of the election campaign is one of the most studied variables for voter turnout. And a significant amount of those studies result in the favor of a positive relationship between closeness of votes the candidates or parties got and voter turnout rates. Even though different studies used different methods to measure this correlation the generalizability of the outcome did not change (Geys, 2006; Gray & Caul, 2000). Depending on those studies one can assume that if people think they have a chance to win they are more mobilized. In result, fair and strong competition increases voter turnout.

Campaign expenditures and political participation have correlation. Political campaigns increase awareness and the feeling of must do something to reach their political goals in citizens so it leads people to participate in politics. In the section on the individual level factors affecting political participation, I mentioned that these effects lead citizens to participate in politics more. Since campaign expenditures increase these effects it is not surprising to see that when the campaign expenditures increase people's propensity to vote increases. However, if the campaign tone is negative it might lead to decrease in turnout rates. Some claim that only extreme negative campaigning leads to a decrease in voter turnout. Even though extreme/negative campaigning decreases the voter turnout, campaign expenditures and voter turnout rates' positive correlation can still be generalized. When the campaign expenditure increases, the political agenda reaches more citizens and mobilizes more citizens into elections. However, campaign expenditure affects national elections more than the local ones (Geys, 2006; Cancela & Geys, 2016).

One other effect on political participation is political fragmentation. General idea is that if the fragmentation is higher, then political participation is higher. This idea depends on some empirical information (Geys, 2006). One supporting information is that with more fragmentation there is fierce competition which leads to higher participation in elections and as mentioned earlier competition increases the participation. Another piece of information supporting the idea is if there is more fragmentation probability for any citizen to find the political party they feel useful/truthful/sincere is higher (Geys, 2006). Thus they can be

mobilized by the party they feel close to. However, Geys (2006) suggests in his study that there is no significant effect of high political fragmentation on voter turnout. The study mentions why their result might show the fragmentation insignificant is big differences in the electoral rules. He mentions that in the high fragmentation situation small party votes can count as wasted votes in majoritarian electoral systems but the fragmentation might be effected in some electoral rules he also mentions. However, due to lack of enough studies about electoral fragmentation on different electoral systems prevents him from making a conclusion about this situation he claims. In conclusion mostly believed that political fragmentation contributes to voter turnout, however some claim it does not have a significant effect and its effect on participation levels is decreasing while other studies explains fragmentation is effected on national elections and it does not have that much power on subnational elections (Geys, 2006; Gray & Caul, 2000; Cancela & Geys, 2016).

Participation related to mobilization of citizens in the constituencies. If citizens of a country are interested in politics but there is no incentive for them to mobilize then they are not participating. So without mobilization there is no participation because if they are not mobilized then they cannot participate. In other words, participation means to participate, so it contains any kind of movement. In this case, even if a party attracts many citizens but they are not willing to move and vote, donate or volunteer for them, then they are not participating so they are not mobilized. The existence of mobilization tools or mechanisms are must for political participation and effects the participation. Some of the strongest of these are unions and labor parties. Gray and Caul (2000) investigate the relationship between unionization, labor party vote share and voter turnout in their study and with no surprise to their hypothesis they find correlation between union density - voter turnout, labor party - voter turnout which is as a result of a study with 18 countries in which 13 of them are European and 5 of them are other developed countries around the world. The study showed that when union density decreases voter turnout also decreases, when labor parties weaken voter turnouts weakens. The combined effect of a strong labor party, strong union gives us the most incentives and effectiveness to mobilize the working class, so increasing voter turnout also means political participation. Even though unions and labor parties mostly target and effect the mobilization of the working class and left wing, the strength of this ideology creates the opposite and also helps to mobilize the citizens who have opposite ideology (Gray & Caul, 2000).

3.4. System Level Effects Over Political Participation

Besides all of the factors mentioned in the previous sections, systemic level factors may also play a role in political participation. For example, there are some additional actors in the EU that affect political participation more in the union than in the rest of the world. Börzel (2006) argues that supranational rules and regulations create opportunities for citizens to participate in politics. These rules and regulations generally offer participation through law enforcement, rights claiming, and expanded protection. Citizens have the right to use these international or supranational rules and regulations to raise against their local or national authorities which creates a way of participation to effect their policies. There are many example cases to prove that people use these instruments and after the penetration of international law and national law/supranational government and national government it results with change in the national law, governance or implementations (Börzel, 2006). By giving citizens power to change something critical in the system they managed to take their attention and make them feel effective. However, this effect on the EU case cannot be seen if conventional political participation is considered. As a supranational government the EU makes bounding deals with countries which give little chance to implement their own policies in some cases. For example, in the economic crises some countries needed help from the EU and they got their bailout with the cost of strict austerity policies. When an opposition says they will not impose austerity, the existing government can easily make their dream invalid by explaining how even if they lose the election the country will need to implement these conditions because of the agreements made with the union (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2020). That situation of giving future governments little options to implement takes the power of voting citizens in the upcoming elections and makes them feel their votes useless which decreases voter turnout (Turnbull-Dugarte, 2020). Another negative effect of the EU over political participation is integration with the global market and being a part of a globalized world converges the right and left wings and it gives less area of movement for original policies which also reduces the conventional political participation. In the European integration process it seems that citizens of new member states participate in local and national politics more than at the EU level. EU level politics seems irrelevant to some people and they lose interest. With time when the EU creates policies affecting their lives directly they seem to

show more interest and their participation increases. By time when the people mobilize to act in EU politics it unites and integrates the Union (Tillman, 2004).

There are two main effect of the EU's voter turnout over the union: One is people participating less because they have another choice of election, the other one is the EU membership decreasing the political participation because citizens believe that national assemblies are not authorized enough due to European Parliament and vice versa (European Parliament is not authorized enough due to National assemblies). These two arguments are why voter turnout is depressed in the EU members (Franklin & Hobolt, 2011, 69). If citizens believe their vote will matter and their elected representative will and can work for citizens expectations they tend to participate more. So the higher the authority citizens vote for the higher the voter turnout is (Lijphart, 1997). It is also found out that if the way of political participation is more direct the participation rates increase (Frey & Stutzer, 2000). When the compatriots see a direct link between their votes and outcome of the election they feel more empowered and effective thus they participate more in the elections. That is also the reason that issue based elections have more political participation (Hobolt, 2016). If the directness decreases and link between the vote and outcome becomes blurry, probability of citizens preferring another way (unconventional ways) to politically participate is increasing according to the mentioned studies of Eder & Katsanidou (2015). However, the study reaches a conclusion that direct democracy does not have a clear effect on conventional political participation (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015).

There are two main types of countries in the EU: One is beneficiary and the other is contributor which also seems to affect political participation in the EU. If a country is a net contributor in the EU the participation in EU elections is higher and vice versa. People think more pragmatic while they are voting for the EU, not emotional. Knowing the fact that their country is not benefiting from the EU is a reason for citizens to lose their interest in EU elections (Mattila, 2003). However, it changes when taking into account the education level. Study of Hobolt (2016) shows more educated ones support the EU and Europeanization more and the less educated ones against fully integrating.

When the literature was investigated to find out reasons of "Why have conventional political participation levels decreased in European countries since the 1970s?" a lot of effects are faced. While some of the effects are highly valuable, some proved to be insignificant. In

the area there is a lot of survey, research and investigation of existing results. There are lots of studies to show correlations but there are few to show strong connections and cause effects relation. The main problem of all is that every scholar investigated an effect but most of them are not created groups with them so it is not easy to perceive general ideas and determine the trends. Another problem is studies that use samples from different regions of the world with different political systems but as it is aware of there are significant political, historical, systemic and so on differences between the regions. When the literature was searched for this study's literature review, no study was found to have a European wide sample and they have limited time periods due to some limitations. In this thesis, broader and most current data will be used to see long term trends and as a sample all of the European countries will be included to see trends Europe wide.

CHAPTER 4

4. HYPOTHESES AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Hypotheses of the Thesis

So far the thesis examined political participation and its different methods under two main subcategories as conventional political participation and unconventional political participation. Later on, the thesis searched and discussed political participation on the current world and effects on political participation. Depending on the literature, the study was reviewed in detail, an obvious decrease in conventional participation and still decreasing trend is expected to be seen (Gray & Caul, 2000). Along with this, by analyzing the data collected from multiple sources the thesis expects to understand the relations of conventional political participation and levels of confidence in institutions. So far this study have interpreted some effects and hypothesize them as follows:

As parallel to Eder and Katsanidou (2015)' hypothesis, this thesis also expects to see a positive relationship between trust in institutions and conventional political participation. So that the first hypothesis is:

H1: As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of conventional political participation decreases.

Along with the thesis' first main hypothesis, three sub-hypotheses were created to investigate relations of confidence in institutions and voter turnout, political party membership and voluntary work for political parties or groups. There are some other forms of conventional political participation methods too, but these three are the most common ones (Linssen et al., 2015). Besides, the dataset compiled for this thesis contains the information for these methods for a long period of time. So, the three sub-hypotheses of the first main hypothesis are as follows:

H1.1: As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of voter turnout decreases.

H1.2: As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of political party membership decreases.

H1.3: As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of voluntary work for political parties decreases.

While Gray and Caul (2000) and many others argues in their studies conventional political participation decreases so future of political participation is at risk, other studies argues that unconventional political participation increases or stays stable in some cases and thus total political participation is not at risk (Forno & Ceccarini, 2006; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; DiGrazia, 2014; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). In this equation, the thesis expects to see a negative relation between conventional and unconventional political participation. For that reason, the second main hypothesis of the thesis formulated as follows:

H2: As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of conventional political participation decreases.

Along with the second main hypothesis of the thesis, three sub-hypotheses were created to investigate relationships between conventional and unconventional political participation. There are some other forms of conventional political participation methods too but these three are most common ones (Linssen et al., 2015). Besides, the thesis' dataset contains the information for these methods for a long period of time. So the three sub-hypotheses of the second main hypothesis are as follows:

H2.1: As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of voter turnout decreases.

H2.2: As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of political party membership decreases.

H2.3: As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of voluntary work for political parties decreases.

4.2. Methodology of the Thesis

In this study, quantitative data will be used and analyzed then correlations between dependent and independent variables will be sought. For the data, I use various databases to obtain reliable data and test the hypotheses with utmost acuity. I collected data on different

levels to avoid misconception and test the hypotheses on different levels. To test the hypotheses, I also need to investigate the data about different forms of political participation. This thesis will have a close look on voter turnout and political parties or groups memberships and voluntary work for political parties or groups for measuring conventional political participation. This thesis will also have to look at unconventional forms which are petitioning, protesting, boycotting, demonstrating, striking. Then confidence in state institutions which are labor unions, parliament, civil services, government, political parties, justice system and the EU, will be examined. For the investigation, the thesis will only consider European countries. In this case, I included all of the continental European countries and Cyprus. Another exception is made for the Vatican to exclude it, since it does not hold democratic elections because of its exclusive position in world politics. In this case, I included 46 countries into the analysis. These countries are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

European countries included to the research

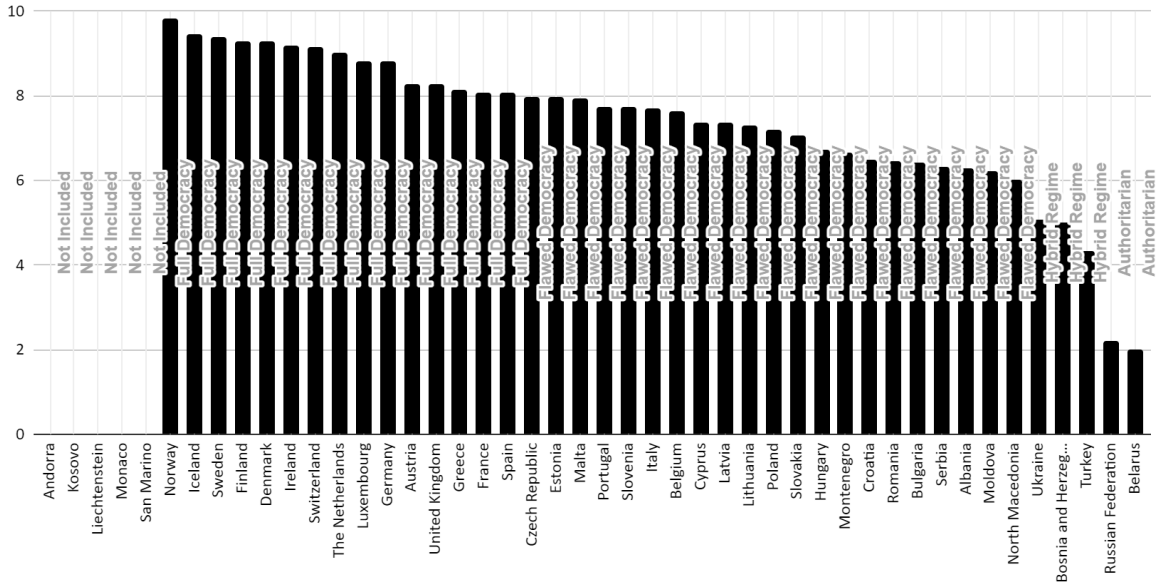
1	Albania	16	Greece	31	The Netherlands
2	Andorra	17	Hungary	32	Norway
3	Austria	18	Iceland	33	Poland
4	Belarus	19	Ireland	34	Portugal
5	Belgium	20	Italy	35	Romania
6	Bosnia and Herzegovina	21	Kosovo	36	Russian Federation
7	Bulgaria	22	Latvia	37	San Marino
8	Croatia	23	Liechtenstein	38	Serbia
9	Cyprus	24	Lithuania	39	Slovakia

10	Czech Republic	25	Luxembourg	40	Slovenia
11	Denmark	26	North Macedonia	41	Spain
12	Estonia	27	Malta	42	Sweden
13	Finland	28	Moldova	43	Switzerland
14	France	29	Monaco	44	Türkiye
15	Germany	30	Montenegro	45	Ukraine
				46	United Kingdom

To have a better understanding of the countries, "The Democracy Index" of the countries prepared by The Economist (2023) is used. "The Democracy Index" is an index measuring countries' democratic position according to quantitative data prepared in 60 different sub categories and allocated under 5 main categories which are electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, functioning of government, political participation, political culture. The index categorizes the countries into four regime types which are full democracies, flawed democracies, hybrid regimes, and authoritarian regimes. This classification of the countries provides us with a better understanding of the relationship between their backgrounds and political participation behaviors. The details can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2

European countries included into the thesis sorted by "The Economist Democracy Index (2023)"



4.2.1. Data

For the analysis, I will use data from various sources. One of the sources (and the one which will be mostly used) is International IDEA[2] which is an intergovernmental organization that aims to support democracy worldwide by supporting the building, strengthening and safeguarding of democratic political institutions and processes at all levels. The institution develops, shares and enables the use of comparative knowledge, assists in democratic reforms, and influences policies and politics, focusing on six workstreams: Electoral Processes, Constitution-Building, Democracy Assessment, Political Participation and Representation, Climate Change and Democracy, Digitalization and Democracy. They also address the following issues as they relate to democracy: Gender Equality and Inclusion, Money in Politics (International IDEA, 2024). I obtained voter turnout data from this institution. Dataset starts from 1945 and ends in 2024 (2024 is not included in the thesis' database because by the

[2] See the link https://www.idea.int/

time this thesis was studied 2024 was still ongoing). However, it is not starting in the same year for every country because of various reasons. Table 2 shows how many elections counted in this dataset according to VAP method collected data, and Table 3 shows how many elections counted in this dataset according to voter turnout calculated as registered votes in different levels (presidential, parliamentary and European Parliament (only for the EU members)).

Table 2

Elections counted based on the VAP system between 1945 - 2023

Countries	EU Parliament	Parliamentary	Presidential	Total
Albania	*	10	**	10
Andorra	*	9	**	9
Austria	6	23	19	48
Belarus	*	8	7	15
Belgium	9	23	**	32
Bosnia and Herzegovina	*	9	8	17
Bulgaria	4	14	13	31
Croatia	3	9	12	24
Cyprus	4	11	13	28
Czech Republic	4	10	6	20
Denmark	9	28	**	37

Estonia	4	10	1	15
Finland	6	22	17	45
France	6	35	22	63
Germany	6	20	**	26
Greece	9	25	**	34
Hungary	4	9	**	13
Iceland	*	23	9	32
Ireland	9	20	7	36
Italy	9	20	**	29
Kosovo	*	7	**	7
Latvia	4	11	**	15
Liechtenstein	*	21	**	21
Lithuania	4	8	12	24
Luxembourg	9	17	**	26
Malta	4	19	**	23
Moldova	*	9	6	15
Monaco	*	12	**	12
Montenegro	*	6	6	12

The Netherlands	9	24	**	33
North Macedonia	*	9	11	20
Norway	*	20	**	20
Poland	4	11	13	28
Portugal	8	17	11	36
Romania	4	8	12	24
Russian Federation	*	8	8	16
San Marino	*	11	**	11
Serbia	*	8	8	16
Slovakia	4	11	10	25
Slovenia	4	9	14	27
Spain	8	15	**	23
Sweden	6	23	**	29
Switzerland	*	20	**	20
Türkiye	*	16	4	20
Ukraine	*	8	12	20
United Kingdom	9	20	**	29

Total	169	686	261	1116

* Not member of the EU

**Do not hold presidential elections

Source: (International IDEA, 2024)

As seen in Table 2, the EU parliamentary elections which are held every 5 years and in total 169 times countries that have attended those elections have been counted, 686 national parliamentary elections and 261 presidential elections in total 1116 elections belonging to 46 countries are included. While International IDEA calculates voter turnouts they use two methods VAP and number of registered voters (REG) in that VAP method they include an estimated number of all those citizens over the legal voting age, while the registration rate comprises the actual number of people on the voters' roll. In this case sometimes registered voters may exceed the estimated voting age population. For that reason, and also to show the registration processes' effect on voter turnout, I will also use REG data. In Table 3 the included elections can be seen.

Table 3

Elections counted based on the REG system between 1945 - 2023

Countries	EU Parliament	Parliamentary	Presidential	Total
Albania	*	10	**	10
Andorra	*	9	**	9
Austria	6	23	19	48
Belarus	*	7	7	14
Belgium	9	23	**	32
Bosnia and Herzegovina	*	9	8	17

Bulgaria	4	14	13	31
Croatia	3	10	12	25
Cyprus	4	11	13	28
Czech Republic	4	10	6	20
Denmark	9	28	**	37
Estonia	4	10	1	15
Finland	6	22	17	45
France	9	35	22	66
Germany	8	20	**	28
Greece	9	23	**	32
Hungary	4	9	**	13
Iceland	*	23	9	32
Ireland	9	20	8	37
Italy	9	20	**	29
Kosovo	*	7	**	7
Latvia	4	11	**	15
Liechtenstein	*	21	**	21
Lithuania	4	9	12	25

Luxembourg	9	17	**	26
Malta	4	19	**	23
Moldova	*	9	6	15
Monaco	*	12	**	12
Montenegro	*	6	6	12
The Netherlands	9	24	**	33
North Macedonia	*	10	11	21
Norway	*	20	**	20
Poland	4	20	13	37
Portugal	8	17	11	36
Romania	4	9	12	25
Russian Federation	*	8	8	16
San Marino	*	12	**	12
Serbia	*	8	8	16
Slovakia	4	11	10	25
Slovenia	4	9	14	27
Spain	8	15	**	23

Sweden	6	23	**	29
Switzerland	*	20	**	20
Türkiye	*	16	4	20
Ukraine	*	8	12	20
United Kingdom	9	20	**	29
Total	174	697	262	1133

* Not member of the EU

**Presidents elected by the parliament or with another way other than public elections

Source: (International IDEA, 2024)

As seen, Table 3 has included the EU parliamentary elections which are held every 5 years and in total 174 times countries that have attended those elections have been counted with the REG system, 697 parliamentary elections and 261 presidential elections in total 1133 elections belong to 46 countries.

Another database the thesis uses is World Values Survey (WVS) which is an international research program devoted to the scientific and academic study of social, political, economic, religious and cultural values of citizens in the world. The project aims to assess which impact values stability or change over time has on the social, political and economic development of countries and societies. The project grew out of the EVS and was started in 1981 by its Founder and first President (1981-2013) Professor Ronald Inglehart from the University of Michigan (USA) and his team, since then has been operating in more than 120 countries. The main research instrument of the project is a representative comparative social survey which is conducted globally every 5 years. Every survey includes hundreds of variables and different scales specified for that variable. Extensive geographical and thematic scope, availability of survey data and project findings for the broad public made the WVS into one of the most authoritative and commonly-used cross-national surveys in the social and political

sciences. To read and interpret data effectively it also includes demographic features of the respondents. At the moment, WVS is the largest non-commercial cross-national empirical time-series investigation of human beliefs and values ever executed. In this thesis, data about the countries obtained in thesis' scope from WVS's time series which contains WVSs completed in waves 1 (1981-1983); 2 (1990-1992); 3 (1995-1998); 4 (2000-2004); 5 (2005-2008); 6 (2010-2014), and 7 (2017-2022) (WVS, 2017). Appendix A shows the information this thesis has collected from the time series data of the WVS and which countries for which years.

The EVS is also an important database for political and social studies. The EVS was initiated by the European Value Systems Study Group (EVSSG) at the end of 1970s, at the time with the initiation of a grouping of academics. Now, it is carried on in the setting of a foundation which uses the (abbreviated) name of the group: EVS (EVS)[3].

The EVSSG researchers' goal is exploring the moral and social values underlying European political and social institutions and governing conducts. At the time of the first survey, the first elections for the European Parliament were approaching, a bishops conference was organized, and questions were raised such as:

- If "Europeans share common values?"
- If "values are changing in Europe and, if so, in what directions?"
- If "Christian values continue to permeate European culture and life?"
- "Is a coherent alternative meaning system replacing that of Christianity?"
- "What are the implementations for European unity?"

To answer those questions, the survey was planned and in 1981 interviews were conducted in ten European countries and expanded to 16 (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany West, Great-Britain, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Malta, The Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, USA (also including Northern Ireland which was investigated separately from Great Britain)). It contained hundreds of variables and specified scales for each variable. To make them even more valuable they included the demographic features of the respondents. The research project raised interest in North and South America, the Middle and Far East, Australia, and South Africa where affiliated groups were set up to

[3] https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/about-evs/

administer the same questionnaire to understand different regions/countries social, political and such propensities and its change over time. Agreements were negotiated with regard to the exchange of data for intercontinental and inter-cultural comparisons. As a result, a unique dataset became available, covering 26 nations. Since then, the EVS has organized 4 waves of surveys. Even though the last fieldwork covers no less than 47 European countries/regions, from Iceland to Azerbaijan and from Portugal to Norway the thesis will only use data available for the countries in the scope mentioned in Table 1 (EVS, 2024). Appendix B shows the respondent numbers from countries in the survey waves I have collected from the time series of WVS and which countries for which years. The EVS were completed in waves 1 (1981-1984); 2 (1989-1993); 3 (1999-2001); 4 (2008-2010).

The WVS and the EVS have published an integrated dataset which covers all of their research up to date. As the WVS mentioned in its time series page they can be combined which I did (WVS, 2017). The WVS covers the date between 1981 to 2022 and the EVS covers 1981 to 2008. Since EVS does not include the 5th Wave (2017-2021) to its time series dataset I also took 5th Wave dataset separately and merged them to have a broader timeline to see propensities more obvious. Also as both institutions collaborate to publish integrated datasets, I will merge all of the EVS and WVS waves to enrich the source. At the end, the thesis' dataset includes WVS Wave 1 (1981-1983), Wave 2 (1990-1992), Wave 3 (1995-1998), Wave 4 (2000-2004), Wave 5 (2005-2008), Wave 6 (2010-2014) and Wave 7 (2017-2022), and EVS Wave 1 (1981-1984), Wave 2 (1989-1993), Wave 3 (1999-2001), Wave 4 (2008-2010) and Wave 5 (2017-2021). The study's final merged dataset is shown in Table 4 below. I have merged time periods to decades according to survey years so that the thesis can use the limited area more efficiently and also can see the propensities more clearly.

Table 4

Respondent numbers according to survey years merged in decades published by the EVS and the WVS countries between 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981	1992	2002	2012	Total
	1991	2001	2011	2022	

Albania	*	999	2534	1435	4968
Andorra	*	*	1003	1004	2007
Austria	1460	1522	1510	1644	6136
Belarus	1015	3092	3035	1548	8690
Belgium	3937	1912	1509	*	7358
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2400	1512	1724	5636
Bulgaria	1034	2072	2501	1558	7165
Croatia	*	2199	1525	1487	5211
Cyprus	*	*	3550	1000	4550
Czech Republic	3033	3055	1821	3011	10920
Denmark	2212	1023	1507	3362	8104
Estonia	1008	2026	3051	1304	7389
Finland	1591	2025	2148	1199	6963
France	2202	1615	2502	1870	8189
Germany	4742	4062	4139	5744	18687
United Kingdom	3267	3093	3102	4397	13859
Greece	*	1142	1500	1200	3842
Hungary	2463	1650	2520	1514	8147

Iceland	1629	968	808	1624	5029
Ireland	2217	1012	1013	*	4242
Italy	3366	2000	2531	2277	10174
Kosovo	*	*	1601	*	1601
Latvia	903	2213	1506	1335	5957
Lithuania	1000	2027	1500	1448	5975
Luxembourg	*	1211	1610	*	2821
Malta	860	1002	1500	*	3362
Moldova	*	984	3605	*	4589
Montenegro	*	1300	1516	1003	3819
The Netherlands	2238	1003	2604	6451	12296
North Macedonia	*	2050	1500	1117	4467
Norway	2290	1127	2115	1122	6654
Poland	1920	2248	2510	2318	8996
Portugal	1185	1000	1553	1215	4953
Romania	*	3488	3265	4373	11126
Russian Federation	1961	4540	6037	3635	16173
Serbia	*	2480	2732	2545	7757

Slovakia	1602	2426	1509	2632	8169
Slovenia	*	3048	3472	1075	7595
Spain	6450	3620	3889	1209	15168
Sweden	4002	3039	4570	1194	12805
Switzerland	1400	1212	2513	3174	8299
Türkiye	1030	6514	5335	2415	15294
Ukraine	*	4006	4007	2901	10914
Total	62017	88405	105770	80064	336256

***** Not included in that time period

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

In this chapter (Chapter 4) I have covered the thesis' hypotheses, methodology and data used to present a better understanding of the study. The next chapter (Chapter 5) presents trends in political participation and the levels of confidence in institutions, later sharing the data shows relationships between conventional political participation and confidence in institutions, and conventional and unconventional political participation. At the end of Chapter 5,the findings are analyzed and discussed.

CHAPTER 5

5. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TRENDS IN THE CURRENT WORLD

5.1. Is Decreasing Conventional Political Participation Fact or Dogma?

While discussions and concerns about political participation and especially conventional political participation proceeds increasingly, there are still discussions about if there is a concerning decrease in political participation or not (Cancela & Geys, 2016). Even though most of the studies conclude that there is a decrease in participation (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Cancela & Geys, 2016; Gray & Caul, 2000) some of the studies claims the decrease is insignificant or not valid for some of the effects (Eder & Katsanidou, 2015; Gray & Caul, 2000). Some even claim there is no decrease in real life scenarios, it is coming out of the misleading data (Linssen et al., 2015). Linssen et al. (2015) think there is no need to worry. Conventional political participation is stable. Unconventional political participation has been stable since the 2000s (Linssen et al., 2015). The studies showing a decrease in political participation are focused on the USA and Linssen et al. (2015) argues that it is not valid for the EU. On the other hand, Gray and Caul (2000) and many others insist that the decrease in political participation, especially in conventional political participation, is a fact. As a first step of the research, I will try to determine, depending on the dataset, if there is a decrease or not, and if there is, is it a concerning decrease. In the dataset, first the thesis will look into voter turnout. In this examination, the study will use a similar method to Gray and Caul (2000)'s. Gray and Caul (2000) use the first two elections' average, and the last two elections', so that decline can be shown and temporary fluctuations can be eliminated. For this study, I will use merge decades e.g. 1945-1954, 1955-1964, …, 2015-2023 and take average of the elections held into that time period to see the propensity.

Table 5

Average voter turnout in Parliamentary Elections as percentages held in the time periods mentioned between 1945-2023

Countries	1945 1954 %	1955 1964 %	1965 1974 %	1975 1984 %	1985 1994 %	1995 2004 %	2005 2014 %	2015 2023 %
Albania	*	*	*	*	95,21	72,20	50,94	46,54
Andorra	*	*	*	*	80,92	81,62	76,61	66,96
Austria	95,64	94,64	92,67	92,58	86,35	83,56	78,65	77,80
Belarus	*	*	*	*	*	69,21	75,47	76,00
Belgium	92,63	92,98	90,88	94,83	93,23	91,12	89,89	88,38
Bosnia and Herzegovina	*	*	*	*	*	58,99	55,32	52,74
Bulgaria	*	*	*	*	79,55	62,75	54,99	43,62
Croatia	*	*	*	*	80,08	69,00	56,88	53,44
Cyprus	*	*	75,85	90,52	94,47	90,94	83,85	66,23
Czech Republic	*	*	*	*	90,51	69,41	62,18	63,12
Denmark	83,63	85,03	88,44	87,75	84,89	86,55	86,29	84,88
Estonia	*	*	*	*	73,02	61,53	62,72	63,81
Finland	76,90	80,04	82,86	74,95	70,23	66,85	66,20	68,03

France	80,62	74,32	78,69	78,23	70,11	65,93	58,26	46,27
Germany	82,24	87,76	88,18	89,47	80,35	80,64	73,32	76,37
Greece	76,29	79,41	79,58	81,31	82,55	75,98	69,18	59,14
Hungary	*	*	*	*	67,01	63,77	64,60	69,63
Iceland	88,78	91,28	91,08	89,40	88,86	86,38	83,39	80,16
Ireland	75,32	70,93	76,23	75,13	70,11	64,25	68,47	63,93
Italy	91,73	93,30	92,99	90,91	87,48	82,18	79,78	68,36
Kosovo	*	*	*	*	*	49,52	43,83	44,45
Latvia	*	*	*	*	85,54	71,66	61,00	57,01
Liechtenstein	92,04	94,87	95,39	95,56	90,58	86,83	83,63	77,92
Lithuania	*	*	*	*	73,47	52,38	50,76	49,22
Luxembourg	91,78	91,45	89,35	88,83	87,85	89,10	91,04	88,42
Malta	76,61	85,97	91,32	94,82	96,08	96,09	93,13	88,85
Moldova	*	*	*	*	79,31	69,54	60,70	50,25
Monaco	*	*	72,30	74,80	68,46	72,57	75,70	63,81
Montenegro	*	*	*	*	*	*	69,60	68,77
The Netherlands	93,92	95,40	85,84	85,34	81,59	77,44	76,77	79,46

North Macedonia	*	*	*	*	79,24	73,74	60,11	59,41
Norway	79,24	78,70	83,17	82,44	81,01	76,91	77,35	77,69
Poland	95,03	94,49	97,39	98,57	59,06	47,06	47,79	62,35
Portugal	*	*	*	85,33	72,06	63,40	60,66	54,12
Romania	*	*	*	*	77,99	66,61	40,48	34,87
Russian Federation	*	*	*	*	50,00	60,91	61,91	49,73
San Marino	*	*	79,70	79,26	80,72	74,54	68,06	57,70
Serbia	*	*	*	*	*	*	58,20	55,58
Slovakia	*	*	*	*	85,47	77,16	57,54	64,72
Slovenia	*	*	*	*	85,90	68,22	60,14	61,81
Spain	*	*	*	74,97	72,48	74,14	72,13	70,35
Sweden	80,93	81,76	89,47	91,31	87,34	80,75	84,14	85,70
Switzerland	71,82	68,22	61,29	49,77	46,26	43,58	48,89	46,76
Türkiye	87,75	81,41	65,59	81,34	88,60	83,81	83,71	86,17
Ukraine	*	*	*	*	75,81	69,95	59,48	49,20
United Kingdom	79,35	77,55	73,68	74,41	76,63	65,42	63,57	67,73
Total Average of all Countries	84,61	84,97	83,56	84,07	78,98	71,91	67,55	64,51

*Not held parliamentary elections at the time period or the International IDEA database did not include that country for that time period.
Source: (International IDEA, 2024)

In Table 5 above, average voter turnout in parliamentary elections as percentages are seen. Among 46 countries, the voter turnout average of 15 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 25 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 2 of them have fluctuations but there is no noticeable increase or decrease and one can say they are stable. 4 of them have fluctuations but they tend to increase. Those countries are Belarus, Hungary, Malta and Sweden. In this case, one can clearly see that 40 out of 46 countries face a decrease in voter turnout rates in their parliamentary elections. And when looking at the total average voter turnout of all 46 countries, I see a decrease with fluctuations. However, there is a certain decrease in the last 5 of the total 8 periods.

Table 6

Average voter turnout in Presidential Elections as percentages held in the time periods mentioned between 1945-2023

Countries	1945 1954 %	1955 1964 %	1965 1974 %	1975 1984 %	1985 1994 %	1995 2004 %	2005 2014 %	2015 2023 %
Austria	96,86	96,37	95,11	91,63	85,51	73,00	53,57	70,14
Belarus	*	*	*	*	74,79	83,86	91,80	85,75
Bosnia and Herzegovina	*	*	*	*	*	62,17	53,84	52,74
Bulgaria	*	*	*	*	75,17	55,29	46,82	44,95
Croatia	*	*	*	*	74,90	59,49	48,56	55,08

Cyprus	*	*	*	*	92,85	91,88	86,30	72,59
Czech Republic	*	*	*	*	*	*	60,18	66,74
Estonia	*	*	*	*	67,95	*	*	*
Finland	63,76	77,41	69,91	72,79	78,31	75,22	70,15	66,76
France	*	*	81,18	83,47	82,72	77,34	81,89	74,50
Iceland	82,03	*	92,16	90,50	72,80	74,41	69,32	71,30
Ireland	60,24	58,40	56,48	*	64,10	46,71	56,11	43,87
Lithuania	*	*	*	*	78,62	58,76	50,45	55,63
Moldova	*	*	*	*	*	69,89	*	52,35
Montenegro	*	*	*	*	*	48,38	66,30	65,69
North Macedonia	*	*	*	*	77,76	60,88	50,69	44,16
Poland	*	*	*	*	57,02	64,68	52,74	59,25
Portugal	*	*	*	79,80	71,76	58,00	54,03	43,96
Romania	*	*	*	*	*	64,59	57,42	53,02
Russian Federation	*	*	*	*	74,66	67,90	67,49	67,50
Serbia	*	*	*	*	*	48,05	58,42	56,38
Slovakia	*	*	*	*	*	60,20	47,30	45,27

Slovenia	*	*	*	*	81,91	68,64	51,74	47,93
Türkiye	*	*	*	*	*	*	74,13	85,81
Ukraine	*	*	*	*	71,00	75,60	65,37	61,44
Total Average of all Countries	75,72	77,39	78,97	83,64	75,40	65,68	61,50	60,12

*Does not have a presidential election at the time period.

**Countries which do not hold presidential elections exempted from the table.

Source: (International IDEA, 2024)

In Table 6 above, the average voter turnout in presidential elections as percentages are seen. Among 46 countries, 20 of them do not have presidential elections in the time periods created. Among other 26 countries, the voter turnout average of 10 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 7 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 1 of them have fluctuations but there is no noticeable increase or decrease and one can say they are stable. 7 of them have fluctuations but they tend to increase and Belarus is again among those countries which have increased. In this case, one can clearly see that 17 out of 26 countries face a decrease in voter turnout rates in their presidential elections. And when looking at total average voter turnout of all 26 countries, I see a decrease with fluctuations again and there is a certain decrease in the last 5 of the total 8 periods again.

Table 7

Average voter turnout in European Parliament Elections as percentages held in the time periods mentioned between 1979-2023

Countries	1979 1984 %	1985 1994 %	1995 2004 %	2005 2014 %	2015 2023 %

Austria	*	*	53,06	45,68	59,77
Belgium	91,73	90,70	90,93	90,02	88,47
Bulgaria	*	*	*	34,64	32,85
Croatia	*	*	*	23,04	29,85
Cyprus	*	*	72,50	51,69	44,99
Czech Republic	*	*	28,30	23,21	28,72
Denmark	50,10	49,56	49,14	57,93	66,08
Estonia	*	*	26,83	40,21	37,59
Finland	*	*	42,39	39,81	40,76
France	58,70	50,73	44,76	41,53	50,12
Germany	61,25	61,16	44,11	48,14	61,38
Greece	77,90	76,54	67,36	56,30	58,69
Hungary	*	*	38,50	32,64	43,56
Ireland	55,60	56,14	54,40	55,01	49,68
Italy	84,15	77,30	70,74	61,14	54,50
Latvia	*	*	41,34	41,97	33,53
Lithuania	*	*	48,38	34,17	53,48

Luxembourg	88,85	87,98	89,31	88,16	84,10
Malta	*	*	82,39	76,80	72,66
The Netherlands	54,35	41,45	34,64	37,04	41,93
Poland	*	*	20,87	24,18	45,69
Portugal	*	53,05	39,27	35,23	30,75
Romania	*	*	*	29,86	51,20
Slovakia	*	*	16,97	16,35	22,74
Slovenia	*	*	28,35	26,44	28,89
Spain	*	60,88	54,10	44,36	64,30
Sweden	*	*	39,44	48,30	55,27
United Kingdom	32,46	36,32	31,62	34,94	36,90
Total Average of all Countries	65,51	61,82	48,19	44,19	48,47

*Did not participate in the EU Parliamentary elections at the time period.

**Countries which did not participate in the EU Parliamentary elections exempted from the table.

Source: (International IDEA, 2024)

In Table 7 above, average voter turnout in European Parliament elections as percentages are seen. Among 46 countries, 18 of them are not or had not been an EU member, so they do not have European Parliament elections in the time periods created or the database of International IDEA did not include that country for that time period. Among other 28

countries the voter turnout average of 6 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 7 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 3 of them have fluctuations but there is no noticeable increase or decrease and one can say they are stable. 12 of them have fluctuations but they tend to increase. Hungary and Sweden are among those again as in the parliamentary elections. In this case, one can clearly see that 13 out of 28 countries face a decrease in voter turnout rates in their European Parliament elections. And when looking at total average voter turnout of all 28 countries, I see a decrease with fluctuations again and in spite of the former two election types there is a certain decrease in the first 4 of the total 5 periods again.

In Appendix C, the average voter turnout of Presidential, Parliamentary and European Parliament elections as percentages can be seen. For that table, I included all three election types into one table to have a clear view. Since countries with decreasing and increasing voter turnout in different types of elections change according to the election type, it would be more intelligible to see overall propensity in voter turnout. Taking those averages into consideration, among 46 countries, the voter turnout average of 12 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. Albania, Andorra, Bulgaria, Moldova, North Macedonia and Portugal's voter turnout decreased steadily according to four of the examined election types. 29 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. Among those countries Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Moldova, Monaco, The Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, San Marino, Switzerland and Ukraine shows a decrease in all of the datasets. 1 of them have fluctuations but there is no noticeable increase or decrease and one can say they are stable. 4 of them have fluctuations but they tend to increase. Among those Belarus steps forward as it noticeably increased in all of 4 datasets and other three are Malta, Montenegro and Serbia. In this case, one can clearly see that 41 out of 46 countries face a decrease in voter turnout rates in their elections in general. And when I look at total average voter turnout of all 46 countries with all elections held included, I see a certain decrease especially in Albania, Andorra, Bulgaria, Moldova, North Macedonia and Portugal. Still, the type of the elections may be important for the voters, and citizens may tend to participate more in general elections or presidential elections compared to European Parliament elections. Thus, analyzing these types of elections separately and all together

would provide important insights to better understand such trends. It is because as mentioned in the literature review some effects may be more effective in national elections than local elections or vice versa (Geys, 2006; Gray & Caul, 2000; Cancela & Geys, 2016).

A lot of countries have seen an increase in voter turnout rates in the last period (2015-2023) compared to the previous one (2005-2014). I find it strange to decrease gradually but increase in the last period. However, it is an investigation area for future research to be analyzed in-depth manner.

Overall, for the indispensable political participation method of the modern day democracies, voter turnout, I can clearly see a decrease in the European countries. Now, the thesis will look into other types of political participation methods.

In Table 8, the average of answers to "Member: Belong to political parties" is seen and as 0 means the respondent is not a member of a political party, 1 means the respondent is a member of a political party. I calculated the average of answers in the 10 years periods instead of waves because since I merged all of the EVS and WVS waves and their waves are not simultaneous in every wave I merged them according to survey years and used similar method to Gray and Caul (2000)'s method again and created 10 year long periods as 1981 - 1990, 1991 - 2000, 2001 - 2010, 2011 - 2022. In Table 8, 0 means none of the respondents are members of a political party and 1 means all of the respondents are members of political parties.

Table 8

Average of answers to "Member: Belong to political parties" in EVS and WVS (0=Not a Member, 1=Member) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	*	0,12	0,02
Andorra	*	*	*	0,03
Austria	0,12	0,12	0,06	0,07

Belarus	*	0,01	0,01	0,01
Belgium	0,05	0,07	0,04	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	*	0,06	0,05
Bulgaria	*	0,08	0,04	0,05
Croatia	*	0,05	0,07	0,08
Cyprus	*	*	0,07	0,22
Czech Republic	*	0,05	0,03	0,04
Denmark	0,07	0,07	0,07	0,06
Estonia	0,08	0,02	0,04	0,02
Finland	0,14	0,06	0,08	0,08
France	0,03	0,02	0,03	0,02
Germany	0,09	0,03	0,03	0,05
United Kingdom	0,04	0,02	0,02	0,10
Greece	*	0,08	0,05	0,05
Hungary	*	0,02	0,01	0,02
Iceland	0,13	0,19	0,24	0,19
Ireland	0,04	0,04	0,06	*
Italy	0,06	0,04	0,04	0,02

Kosovo	*	*	0,07	*
Latvia	0,18	0,02	0,02	0,02
Lithuania	0,07	0,02	0,04	0,03
Luxembourg	*	0,05	0,05	*
Malta	0,09	0,07	0,02	*
Moldova	*	*	0,03	*
Montenegro	*	*	0,11	0,05
The Netherlands	0,08	0,09	0,12	0,06
North Macedonia	*	*	0,12	0,14
Norway	0,14	*	0,08	0,09
Poland	0,02	0,01	0,01	0,01
Portugal	0,04	0,02	0,03	0,00
Romania	*	0,02	0,04	0,06
Russian Federation	0,11	0,01	0,02	0,02
Serbia	*	*	0,06	0,13
Slovakia	*	0,05	0,01	0,05
Slovenia	*	0,03	0,04	0,04
Spain	0,02	0,02	0,02	0,04

Sweden	0,11	0,10	0,05	0,08
Switzerland	0,09	*	0,05	0,08
Türkiye	0,00	*	0,03	0,09
Ukraine	*	0,02	0,03	0,06
Total Average	0,07	0,05	0,05	0,06

*Not included in the surveys for that period

**Due to decimal numbers, some values may not be showing the details.

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

In Table 8 above, average political party membership rates are seen. Among 43 countries, the membership average of 9 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 20 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 3 of them have data available for only one period so I am not able to compare to decide if it is decreasing or increasing. 11 of them have fluctuations but they seem to increase. In this case, I can see that in 29 out of 43 countries a decrease is seen in membership to political parties. And when I look at the total average membership of all 43 countries, I see a decrease with fluctuations. Moreover, there is a more obvious decrease in the first 3 of the total 4 periods. However, it should not be forgotten that these numbers do not depend on the official party membership numbers and depend on the interviews which are systematically designed and implemented by the professionals (WVS, 2017; EVS, 2024) and the respondents' own answers to the interview questions. Even though I do not see as sharp a decline as in voter turnout I still see a decrease. However, also party membership levels are very low in general, so, even a small decrease might mean a serious effect should be kept in mind. In the dataset the highest political party membership rate is in Iceland by 24,38% in the 2001-2010 period and the lowest is Türkiye by 0% in the 1981 - 1990 period (according to the WVS results in that period, none of the respondents said that they are a member of a political party), and the second lowest is Portugal by 0,42% in the

2011 - 2022 period (due to decimal numbers in the table, some of the details may not be available). In addition, averages of all are between 4,59% and 6,94%.

In Appendix D, the average of answers to "Voluntary work: Unpaid work political parties or groups" is shown, and as 0 means the respondents have not done any voluntary work for political parties or groups, 1 means the respondents have done voluntary work for political parties or groups can be seen. I calculated the average of answers in the 10 years periods instead of waves because since I merged all of the EVS and WVS waves and their waves are not simultaneous in every wave I merged them according to survey years and used similar method to Gray and Caul (2000) method again and created 10 year long periods as 1981 - 1990, 1991 - 200, 2001 - 2010, 2011 - 2022.

As the Appendix D shows, in 14 countries among 43 countries, the average of voluntary work for political parties decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 8 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over time. 13 of them do not have available data to compare or have very slight differences among the periods. 8 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 22 out of 43 countries, a decrease is seen in voluntary work for political parties or groups. And when I look at the total average of all 43 countries, I see a slight decline with fluctuations. Moreover, there is a more obvious decrease in the first 3 of the total 4 periods. However, again, it should not be forgotten that these numbers do not depend on the actual voluntary work for the parties and depend on the interviews which are systematically designed and implemented by the professionals (WVS, 2017; EVS, 2024), and the answers coming from the respondents. Even though as sharp a decline as in the previous examinations in this section cannot be seen, there is still a decrease.

This thesis has examined 6 indicators and shows the details of 3 conventional political participation methods which are voter turnout, party membership and voluntary work for political parties or groups to understand if decreasing trend in conventional political participation is a fact or dogma. As a summary out of 6 indicators, every one of them shows that overall, conventional political participation has decreasing trends in European countries included in this thesis. While some of the indicators show a strong declining trend some of them have slight decreasing trends. According to the investigation the study clearly shows that the decreasing trend in conventional political participation in European countries is a fact. The

results seem to be in line with the previous studies by supporting the previous findings in the literature (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Cancela & Geys, 2016 Gray & Caul, 2000).

In this section, when the study investigated political participation behaviors in the included countries some critical points attract attention. In voter turnout when I look at total average voter turnout of all 46 countries with all elections held included, there is a certain decrease especially in Albania, Andorra, Bulgaria, Moldova, North Macedonia and Portugal which are all flawed democracies according to the Democracy Index (2023). In addition to that, in total, average voter turnout of full democracies when all periods taken into account is higher with the exception of Belarus which also has high voter turnout. The situation does not change when the same applies to political party membership rates, besides Belarus is not an exception for this one in fact it is in the last position when considering political party membership rates. When voluntary work for party membership is considered even though full democracies or flawed democracies do not show a certain way of participation behavior in general, authoritarian and hybrid regimes are at the bottom side of the list. In general, one can say by looking at the study that conventional political participation methods are more preferred in the democracies than the hybrid and authoritarian regimes when average of all the periods investigated. This difference is more obvious in political party membership and voluntary work for political parties than voter turnout. An interesting finding of this investigation is Poland. Even though Poland is in the category of flawed democracies it is always in the bottom of the list when we consider those three conventional political participation rates. Poland even shows worse performance in participation than hybrid or authoritarian regimes most of the time. However, the country shows a recovery pace in the last period of voter turnout but still in the bottom of the list for other two conventional political participation.

To sum up, the study shows that in terms of conventional political participation methods, democracies have higher participation rates in general. However, while in conventional ways, full democracies tend to be a lot higher than others, hybrid regimes are giving mixed signals. These findings give an idea that one cannot say conventional political participation is less preferred by authoritarian regimes except the voter turnout. In voter turnout it changes in every period.

5.2. Unconventional Political Participation Trends

In tables 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13, the average of answers to different questions about political action (as 1 means the respondent have done, 2 means the respondent might do and 3 means the respondent would never do the specific political action mentioned) can be seen. I calculated the average of answers in 10 years periods instead of waves because since I merged all of the EVS and WVS waves and their waves are not simultaneous in every wave I merged them according to survey years and used similar method to Gray and Caul (2000) method again and created 10 year long periods as 1981 - 1990, 1991 - 2000, 2001 - 2010, 2011 - 2022. In Table 9, 1 means respondents have petitioned before, 2 means the respondents might petition and 3 means the respondents claim they would never petition. However, I had an average of the answers to see the tendencies. If the average is closer to 1 one can say that most of the respondents petitioned. If it is closer to 2 it means they have not but might do and if it is closer to 3 that means the respondents believe they would never petition. If the numbers go up by time that means participation to that political action is decreasing and if the number goes down by time that means participation to that political action is increasing.

Table 9

Average of answers to "Political action: signing a petition" (1=Have Done, 2=Might Do, 3=Would Never Do) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2,12	2,17	2,25
Andorra	*	*	1,51	1,65
Austria	1,74	1,64	1,71	1,60
Belarus	1,94	2,53	2,66	2,58
Belgium	1,87	1,38	1,53	*

Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2,03	2,03	1,87
Bulgaria	*	2,32	2,50	2,35
Croatia	*	1,70	1,65	1,55
Cyprus	*	*	2,20	2,07
Czech Republic	*	1,71	2,00	1,94
Denmark	1,76	1,59	1,46	1,59
Estonia	1,84	2,28	2,27	2,31
Finland	1,91	1,72	1,60	1,63
France	1,71	1,41	1,43	1,43
Germany	1,53	1,51	1,65	1,55
United Kingdom	1,44	1,46	1,49	1,32
Greece	*	1,62	2,28	2,24
Hungary	*	2,26	2,45	2,41
Iceland	1,74	1,57	1,53	1,47
Ireland	1,86	1,54	1,62	*
Italy	1,75	1,60	1,62	1,81
Kosovo	*	*	1,73	*
Latvia	1,47	2,12	2,27	2,18

Lithuania	1,55	2,02	2,27	2,19
Luxembourg	*	1,61	1,54	*
Malta	2,28	2,01	1,99	*
Moldova	*	2,45	2,44	*
Montenegro	*	2,29	2,11	1,70
The Netherlands	1,78	1,49	1,70	1,61
North Macedonia	*	2,13	1,88	2,14
Norway	1,56	1,45	1,36	1,43
Poland	2,22	2,24	2,13	1,97
Portugal	1,97	2,08	2,26	2,30
Romania	*	2,31	2,58	2,42
Russian Federation	1,97	2,44	2,59	2,48
Serbia	*	2,23	2,04	1,97
Slovakia	*	1,74	1,96	1,83
Slovenia	*	2,06	1,98	2,01
Spain	2,15	2,12	1,95	2,03
Sweden	1,43	1,21	1,23	1,36
Switzerland	1,56	1,47	1,37	1,35

Türkiye	2,32	2,18	2,35	2,42
Ukraine	*	2,39	2,55	2,45
Total Average	1,77	1,92	1,98	1,93

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

**Due to survey coding, increases in figures means there is decrease in petitioning as political action and vice versa.

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

Table 9 above shows the averages of the respondents' answers about petitioning as political action. Among 43 countries, the average of participation in 4 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 15 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 2 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 22 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 19 out of 43 countries there is a decrease which means a decrease in petitioning. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a decline. However, again, it should not be forgotten that these numbers do not depend on the actual petition numbers and depend on the respondents' answers to the survey questions which are systematically designed and implemented by the professionals (WVS, 2017; EVS, 2024). Even though there is no sharp change like the voter turnout, one can say that petition rates are increasing in more than half of the countries examined according to the surveys' results. Furthermore, according to the Inglehart and Catterberg (2002)'s study, which covers between 1981 and 2000, while in rich democracies petitioning rates are around 5 percent and has increasing trend, in ex-communist nations it is 2,5 percent and in developing nations it is about 2 percent and it has decreasing trend. The results have similar outcomes with Inglehart and Catterberg (2002)'s, since countries with increasing petitioning in the thesis are mostly full democracies such Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Iceland, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. However, there are

also some other countries which have increasing petitioning rates and do not fit under full democracies such as Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Ireland, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Türkiye. According to the Inglehart and Catterberg (2002)'s study, ex-communist countries have decreasing trend for petitioning and this thesis also finds similar results since Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine have decreasing trend for petitioning in this study. The study shows that in Europe the petitioning is the most common in Sweden in 2001 - 2010 by 1,22 average and the least common in Belarus in the same time period by 2,66 it should not be forgotten that due to survey coding, increases in figures means there is decrease in petitioning as political action and vice versa.

In Table 10, 1 means respondents have joined boycotts before, 2 means the respondents might join boycotts and 3 means the respondents claim they would never join any boycotts. The study presents an average of the answers to see the tendencies in different countries. If the average is closer to 1 one can say that most of the respondents joined boycotts. If it is closer to 2 it means most of them have not but might join and if it is closer to 3 that means the respondents believe they would never join a boycott.

Table 10

Average of answers to "Political action: Joining in boycotts" (1=Have Done, 2=Might Do, 3=Would Never Do) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2,58	2,58	2,60
Andorra	*	*	2,51	2,57
Austria	2,65	2,47	2,44	2,36
Belarus	2,53	2,73	2,83	2,84
Belgium	2,58	2,43	2,43	*

Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2,30	2,37	2,30
Bulgaria	*	2,65	2,77	2,74
Croatia	*	2,30	2,27	2,20
Cyprus	*	*	2,61	2,50
Czech Republic	*	2,46	2,61	2,55
Denmark	2,47	2,13	2,23	2,10
Estonia	2,53	2,64	2,64	2,69
Finland	2,27	2,18	2,08	2,08
France	2,37	2,30	2,24	2,17
Germany	2,50	2,31	2,44	2,35
United Kingdom	2,46	2,35	2,37	2,17
Greece	*	2,69	2,67	2,37
Hungary	*	2,72	2,81	2,78
Iceland	2,18	2,05	1,82	1,72
Ireland	2,52	2,50	2,42	*
Italy	2,41	2,36	2,26	2,47
Kosovo	*	*	1,99	*
Latvia	2,55	2,53	2,62	2,62

Lithuania	2,25	2,51	2,60	2,41
Luxembourg	*	2,41	2,34	*
Malta	2,57	2,51	2,52	*
Moldova	*	2,84	2,70	*
Montenegro	*	2,48	2,34	2,16
The Netherlands	2,53	2,17	2,42	2,27
North Macedonia	*	2,32	2,13	2,26
Norway	2,35	2,08	2,12	2,22
Poland	2,59	2,67	2,61	2,62
Portugal	2,63	2,54	2,63	2,71
Romania	*	2,78	2,83	2,79
Russian Federation	2,55	2,74	2,78	2,79
Serbia	*	2,52	2,30	2,30
Slovakia	*	2,51	2,73	2,51
Slovenia	*	2,36	2,40	2,44
Spain	2,59	2,66	2,54	2,58
Sweden	2,18	1,80	1,93	2,00
Switzerland	*	2,42	2,24	2,21

Türkiye	2,66	2,59	2,60	2,58
Ukraine	*	2,71	2,75	2,76
Total Average	2,47	2,48	2,47	2,44

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

**Due to survey coding, increases in figures means there is decrease in boycotting as political action and vice versa.

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

In Table 10 above respondents' answers about joining in boycotts as political action as seen on average. Among 43 countries, the average of participation in 7 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 8 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 5 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 23 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 15 out of 43 countries, there is a decrease and in 23 of them there is an increase. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a slight increase but can call it stable since there is minor change. However, again, it should not be forgotten that these numbers do not depend on the actual boycotting numbers and depend on the participants' responses to the survey questions which are systematically designed and implemented by the professionals (WVS, 2017; EVS, 2024). Even though a sharp change like the voter turnout is not seen, one can say that joining in boycotts are increasing according to the surveys.

In Table 11 below, 1 means respondents have attended lawful demonstrations before, 2 means the respondents might attend lawful demonstrations and 3 means the respondents claim they would never attend lawful demonstrations. In order to see the tendencies in different countries, the averages of the answers were calculated. If the average is closer to 1, one can say that most of the respondents attended lawful demonstrations. If it is closer to 2, it means

most of them have not but might attend and if it is closer to 3, that means the respondents believe they would never attend lawful demonstrations.

Table 11

Average of answers to "Political action: attending lawful demonstrations" (1=Have Done, 2=Might Do, 3=Would Never Do) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2,02	2,25	2,48
Andorra	*	*	1,78	2,05
Austria	2,46	2,33	2,31	2,30
Belarus	2,09	2,32	2,55	2,65
Belgium	2,28	1,90	2,06	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2,24	2,34	2,26
Bulgaria	*	2,29	2,46	2,44
Croatia	*	2,23	2,22	2,18
Cyprus	*	*	2,20	2,13
Czech Republic	*	2,00	2,36	2,31
Denmark	2,19	2,02	1,97	1,92
Estonia	2,06	2,32	2,53	2,47
Finland	2,29	2,27	2,30	2,21

France	2,09	1,87	1,84	1,81
Germany	2,05	1,98	2,02	1,93
United Kingdom	2,39	2,31	2,34	2,15
Greece	*	1,67	2,26	2,13
Hungary	*	2,57	2,72	2,60
Iceland	2,04	1,99	1,88	1,77
Ireland	2,30	2,13	2,31	*
Italy	2,03	1,91	1,90	1,96
Kosovo	*	*	1,81	*
Latvia	1,87	2,16	2,23	2,45
Lithuania	1,81	2,22	2,32	2,35
Luxembourg	*	1,95	1,88	*
Malta	2,56	2,31	2,41	*
Moldova	*	2,40	2,39	*
Montenegro	*	2,30	2,29	2,31
The Netherlands	2,27	1,99	2,25	2,23
North Macedonia	*	2,27	2,10	2,24
Norway	2,11	1,95	1,92	1,88

Poland	2,25	2,49	2,42	2,34
Portugal	2,06	2,27	2,47	2,46
Romania	*	2,19	2,59	2,44
Russian Federation	1,92	2,22	2,47	2,50
Serbia	*	2,46	2,22	2,27
Slovakia	2,02	2,21	2,62	2,44
Slovenia	*	2,27	2,25	2,33
Spain	2,14	2,14	1,91	2,01
Sweden	2,07	1,81	1,92	1,97
Switzerland	2,46	2,28	2,09	2,03
Türkiye	2,57	2,48	2,54	2,48
Ukraine	*	2,30	2,41	2,52
Total Average	2,17	2,18	2,26	2,25

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

**Due to survey coding, increases in figures means there is decrease in demonstrating as political action and vice versa.

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

In Table 11 above, respondents' answers about attending lawful demonstrations as political action as average is seen. Among 43 countries, the average of participation in 7 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 11 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time.

4 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so they can be counted as stable. 21 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 18 out of 43 countries there is a decrease compared to 21 increase. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, I see a slight decrease. Please note that these numbers do not depend on the actual petition numbers and depend on the respondents' own answers to the survey questions which are systematically designed and implemented by the professionals (WVS, 2017; EVS, 2024). According to the surveys, there is no sharp change, one can say that the rate of attending lawful demonstrations is increasing in more than half of the countries even though the total average seems to be decreasing.

In Table 12, 1 means respondents have joined unofficial strikes before, 2 means the respondents might join unofficial strikes and 3 means the respondents claim they would never join unofficial strikes. However, the study had an average of the answers to see the tendencies. If the average is closer to 1 one can say that most of the respondents joined unofficial strikes. If it is closer to 2 it means most of them have not but might join and if it is closer to 3 that means the respondents believe they would never join unofficial strikes.

Table 12

Average of answers to "Political action: joining unofficial strikes" (1=Have Done, 2=Might Do, 3=Would Never Do) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2,96	2,86	2,96
Andorra	*	*	*	2,35
Austria	2,90	2,79	2,67	2,71
Belarus	2,67	2,82	2,91	2,89
Belgium	2,72	2,62	2,62	*

Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2,41	2,57	2,51
Bulgaria	*	2,65	2,77	2,73
Croatia	*	2,48	2,45	2,37
Cyprus	*	*	2,90	2,26
Czech Republic	*	2,48	2,67	2,52
Denmark	2,48	2,25	2,29	2,15
Estonia	2,73	2,80	2,84	2,71
Finland	2,65	2,68	2,58	2,66
France	2,54	2,43	2,43	2,53
Germany	2,81	2,77	2,78	2,51
United Kingdom	2,65	2,58	2,67	2,37
Greece	*	2,48	2,81	2,16
Hungary	*	2,77	2,93	2,86
Iceland	2,68	2,64	2,59	2,59
Ireland	2,68	2,58	2,66	*
Italy	2,75	2,74	2,68	2,56
Kosovo	*	*	2,56	*
Latvia	2,58	2,80	2,78	2,79

Lithuania	2,45	2,68	2,82	2,66
Luxembourg	*	2,61	2,60	*
Malta	2,78	2,75	2,78	*
Moldova	*	2,85	2,68	*
Montenegro	*	2,61	2,65	2,47
The Netherlands	2,79	2,62	2,75	2,43
North Macedonia	*	2,71	2,46	2,60
Norway	2,34	2,62	2,70	2,76
Poland	2,69	2,77	2,71	2,70
Portugal	2,75	2,73	2,82	2,83
Romania	*	2,77	2,91	2,69
Russian Federation	2,65	2,82	2,86	2,80
Serbia	*	2,65	2,60	2,39
Slovakia	*	2,63	2,91	2,60
Slovenia	*	2,70	2,64	2,44
Spain	2,65	2,67	2,57	2,36
Sweden	2,62	2,47	2,71	2,37
Switzerland	2,73	2,78	2,73	2,69

Türkiye	2,91	2,87	2,84	2,60
Ukraine	*	2,84	2,84	2,78
Total Average	2,67	2,68	2,71	2,57

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

**Due to survey coding, increases in figures means there is decrease in striking as political action and vice versa.

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

In Table 12 above, respondents' answers about joining unofficial strikes as political action as average is seen. Among 43 countries, the average of participation in 1 country decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 11 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 7 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 24 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 12 out of 43 countries there is an decrease compared to 24 increasing. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a slight increase with some waves. However, again should not be forgotten that these numbers do not depend on the actual petition numbers and depend on the answers of the respondents participating in the surveys (WVS, 2017; EVS, 2024). Based on the study, one can say that the rate of joining unofficial strikes is increasing by almost doubling the number of countries which face decrease according to the surveys which shows an increase in this a political participation method.

In Table 13, 1 means respondents have occupied buildings or factories before, 2 means the respondents might occupy buildings or factories and 3 means the respondents claim they would never occupy buildings or factories as political action. Average of the answers calculated to see the tendencies. If the average is closer to 1, one can say that most of the respondents occupied buildings or factories. If it is closer to 2 it means most of them have not but might occupy buildings or factories and if it is closer to 3 that means the respondents

believe they would never occupy buildings or factories. In Table 13, the surveys did not include the “Political action: occupying buildings or factories” question in the last survey for the scope countries so that only the dates between 1981 - 2010 can be observed.

Table 13

Average of answers to “Political action: occupying buildings or factories” (1=Have Done, 2=Might Do, 3=Would Never Do) in 1981 - 2010

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010
Albania	*	2,97	2,90
Andorra	*	*	*
Austria	2,93	2,89	2,80
Belarus	2,87	2,95	2,97
Belgium	2,73	2,60	2,72
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2,78	2,78
Bulgaria	*	2,80	2,90
Croatia	*	2,79	2,80
Cyprus	*	*	2,94
Czech Republic	*	2,84	2,86
Denmark	2,86	2,82	2,91
Estonia	2,91	2,93	2,94

Finland	2,85	2,85	2,82
France	2,60	2,46	2,49
Germany	2,86	2,78	2,85
United Kingdom	2,85	2,83	2,87
Greece	*	2,19	2,76
Hungary	*	2,94	2,96
Iceland	2,89	2,86	2,86
Ireland	2,79	2,80	2,81
Italy	2,69	2,66	2,61
Kosovo	*	*	2,81
Latvia	2,92	2,94	2,94
Lithuania	2,79	2,85	2,92
Luxembourg	*	2,76	2,76
Malta	2,90	2,84	2,89
Moldova	*	2,95	2,85
Montenegro	*	2,87	2,83
The Netherlands	2,73	2,66	2,83
North Macedonia	*	2,84	2,71

Norway	2,91	2,86	2,89
Poland	2,77	2,81	2,73
Portugal	2,85	2,76	2,87
Romania	*	2,90	2,92
Russian Federation	2,86	2,92	2,93
Serbia	*	2,87	2,83
Slovakia	*	2,81	2,95
Slovenia	*	2,77	2,82
Spain	2,76	2,80	2,82
Sweden	2,84	2,78	2,86
Switzerland	*	2,81	2,81
Türkiye	2,95	2,96	2,93
Ukraine	*	2,94	2,94
Total Average	2,81	2,82	2,85

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

**Due to survey coding, increases in figures means there is decrease in occupying as political action and vice versa.

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

In Table 13 above respondents' answers about occupying buildings or factories as political action as average is seen. Among 43 countries, the average of participation in 11

countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 1 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 17 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 14 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 12 out of 43 countries there is a decrease. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a steady decrease in every time period. Similarly to the previous numbers, these do not necessarily depend on the actual occupying numbers, instead, they show the survey results coming from the respondents' own answers. Even though there is no dramatic change in the number of countries, one can say that the rate of occupying buildings or factories is increasing in most of the countries observed. However, in the total average there is a decreasing trend and when we keep in mind that there is no data for the last period we can say that for occupying buildings it is not possible to mention a certain decrease or increase trend.

In total, 43 countries were examined in terms of 5 different unconventional political participation methods. To sum up, and see the overview in this examination, out of 215 scenarios there are 76 decrease, 104 increase and 35 stable or lack of data situation. Also, when we look at the average of every wave for every unconventional political participation method they are also in an increasing trend but with fluctuations.

When unconventional political participation methods are examined, some interesting findings were found too. In petitioning, all of the hybrid and authoritarian regimes which are 5 among the 46 countries, are at the very bottom of the list which means petitioning is preferred less in these 5 countries. In boycotting, the situation does not change except Bosnia and Herzegovina which has pretty higher participation rates than most countries so boycotting is a preferred political action in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In demonstrating there are similar cases as in petitioning but not as strong as that. For striking there is almost the same condition as in boycotting which is except Bosnia and Herzegovina other four are at the very bottom of the list. Occupying has a similar position with boycotting and striking.

To sum up, unconventional political participation methods are on the rise in general. Also hybrid and authoritarian regimes are always at the bottom of the list with some exceptions of Bosnia and Herzegovina which has higher rates than most countries in 3 out of 5 unconventional political participation indicators. One can clearly say that unconventional

political participation is preferred a lot less in hybrid and authoritarian regimes while they are noticeably more preferred by the full democracies.

In addition, when decreasing trend countries are examined, one can see that countries have decreasing trend in every unconventional political participation indicator or only have one exception are Albania, Andorra, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine. There are no full democracies in the list of countries that face a decreasing trend in unconventional political participation. Both of the authoritarian regimes are in this group.

On the other hand, when the countries with increasing trends are examined, one can see that there countries have increasing trend in every unconventional political participation indicator or only have one exception (such as Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Sweden and Switzerland). From the perspective of the Democracy Index (2023), while most of those countries are full democracies, there are some flawed democracies among them. Nevertheless, there are no hybrid regimes or authoritarian countries among them.

To conclude, while in full democracies unconventional political participation rises to a larger extent, it faces decrease in hybrid regimes and authoritarian countries. Even though there are some differences, in total, unconventional political participation rates are increasing in most of Europe.

5.3. Trends of the Level of Confidence in Institutions

In this section, the answers to different questions about levels of confidence in institutions are analyzed. According to the survey questions, 1 means the respondent has very much confidence, 2 means the respondent has quite a lot confidence, 3 means the respondent has not very much confidence and 4 means the respondents has not at all confidence in the specific institution they have asked about. Relying on this data, in order to see the overall tendencies in different countries, I calculated the average of the answers in the 10 years periods instead of waves because since I merged all of the EVS and WVS waves and their

waves are not simultaneous in every wave I merged them according to survey years and used similar method to Gray and Caul (2000) method again and created 10 year long periods as 1981 - 1990, 1991 - 2000, 2001 - 2010, 2011 - 2022. If the average is closer to 1, one can say that most of the respondents in the country have very much confidence in state institutions. If it is closer to 2, it means they have quite a lot of confidence, if it is closer to 3 it means they do not have very much confidence in that institution and if it is closer to 4 that means the respondents do not have confidence in the institution at all. So in this case as in the previous section, if the numbers on the table go up by periods, that means confidence in that institution is decreasing and if the number on table goes down by periods that means confidence in that institution is increasing. Table 14 below shows the average levels of confidence in different institutions in different time periods. The next paragraphs discuss these as well as more specific information for each institution on the country level. Detailed tables are available in Appendix E. Please note that numbers illustrated in the tables are based on the respondents answers of the surveys (WVS, 2017; EVS, 2024).

Table 14

Total averages of confidence in institutions in all countries examined (1981-2022)

Institutions	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Labor Unions	2,73	2,77	2,74	2,80
Parliament	2,52	2,73	2,77	2,87
Civil Services	2,58	2,66	2,61	2,60
Government	2,72	2,68	2,80	2,85
Political Parties	2,75	3,05	3,06	3,12
Justice System	2,41	2,53	2,56	2,54
The EU	2,47	2,60	2,57	2,65
TOTAL AVERAGES	2,60	2,72	2,73	2,77

*Due to survey coding, increases in figures means there is decrease in level of confidence and vice versa (1 means the respondent has very much confidence, 2 means the respondent has quite a lot confidence, 3 means the respondent has not very much confidence and 4 means the respondents has not at all confidence in the specific institution)

Source: (EVS, 2022; WVS, 2022)

I will start examining the levels of confidence in institutions with the confidence in labor unions. Accordingly, the respondents' answers about confidence in labor unions as average are examined. Among 43 countries, the average confidence level in institutions in 7 different countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 10 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 1 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 25 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 17 out of 43 countries there is an increase in confidence in labor unions. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a decreasing trend. Even though there is no dramatic difference in the number of countries that experience an increase, one can say that the levels of confidence in labor unions are increasing in most of the countries observed. However, the total average does not support the increasing trend. In this case, the study concluded that confidence in labor unions has increased in Europe since 1981, even though there is no strong trend.

The next confidence level I will examine is the confidence in parliaments. When the respondents' answers about their confidence levels in the parliaments as average are examined, it is observed that among 43 countries, the average level of confidence in parliaments in 7 countries decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 21 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 7 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 8 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 28 out of 43 countries there is an decrease. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a decreasing trend. There is a very dramatic difference in the number of countries that see a decrease, one can say that the levels of confidence in parliaments are decreasing in most of the countries observed. Moreover, the total average supports the decreasing trend. In this case, the study concluded that confidence in the parliament has decreased and in a strong decreasing trend in Europe since 1981.

The third confidence indicator I will examine is the confidence in the civil services. When the respondents' answers about confidence levels in the civil services as average are examined, among 43 countries, the average levels of confidence in civil services in 7 countries

decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 7 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 2 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 27 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 14 out of 43 countries there is a decrease compared to 27 countries with increasing trends. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a slightly decreasing trend or stable overall. There is a very dramatic difference in the number of countries that experience an increase, one can say that the levels of confidence in the civil services are increasing in most of the countries observed. However, the total average does not support the increasing trend. In this case the study concluded that confidence in the civil services has increased in most of Europe since 1981 and it is in increasing trend.

The next confidence indicator I will examine is the confidence in governments. When the respondents' answers about confidence levels in governments as average are examined, it is observed that among 43 countries, in 13 countries, the average levels of confidence in governments decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 10 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 8 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 16 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 23 out of 43 countries there is a decrease compared to 16 countries in increasing trend. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a decreasing trend. There is a very dramatic difference in the number of countries that see a decrease, one can say that the levels of confidence in governments are decreasing in most of the countries observed. Moreover, the total average supports the decreasing trend. In this case the study concluded that confidence in the government has decreased in Europe since 1981 and it is in a strong decreasing trend.

The next confidence indicator I will examine is the confidence in political parties. When the respondents' answers about confidence levels in the political parties as average are examined; Among 43 countries, the average levels of confidence in political parties decreases steadily in 12 countries in every single period I have created depending on the database. 10 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 5 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods

so one can count them as stable. 16 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 22 out of 43 countries there is a decrease compared to 16 increase. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a decreasing trend. There is a very dramatic difference in the number of countries that see a decrease, one can say that the levels of confidence in the political parties are decreasing in most of the countries observed. Moreover, the total average supports the decreasing trend very strongly. In this case the study concluded that confidence in the government has decreased in Europe since 1981 and it is in a very strong decreasing trend.

The next confidence indicator I will examine is the confidence in the justice system. When the respondents' answers about confidence levels in the justice system as average are examined, in 10 countries among 43 countries, the average levels of confidence in the justice system decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 11 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 3 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 19 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 21 out of 43 countries there is a decrease compared to 19 countries with increasing levels of confidence in the justice system. And when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a decreasing trend. There is no dramatic difference in the number of countries that see a decrease, though one can say that the levels of confidence in the political parties are decreasing in most of the countries observed. Moreover, the total average supports the decreasing trend. In this case the study concluded that confidence in the justice system has decreased in Europe since 1981 and it is in a decreasing trend.

The last confidence indicator I will examine is the confidence in the EU. When the respondents' answers about their confidence in the EU as average are examined, among 43 countries, in 10 of them, the average levels of confidence in the EU decreases steadily in every single period I have created depending on the database. 14 of them have fluctuations in the periods but still keep noticeably decreasing over the time. 2 of them do not have data available to compare or have very slight differences among the periods so one can count them as stable. 17 of them have fluctuations but they seem to be increasing. In this case, one can see that in 24 out of 43 countries there is a decrease compared to 17 countries with increasing levels. And

when looking at the total average of all 43 countries, one can see a strong decreasing trend. There is a dramatic difference in the number of countries that see a decrease, one can say that the levels of confidence in the EU are decreasing in most of the countries observed. Moreover, the total average strongly supports the decreasing trend. In this case the study concluded that confidence in the EU has decreased in Europe since 1981 and it is in a strong decreasing trend.

To sum up, when the thesis focuses on the level of confidence in state institutions, the data shows that in 5 indicators out of 7, there is a decreasing confidence level trend. Only two indicators which are confidence in the labor unions and confidence in civil services show an increasing level. Besides, the increasing trend in labor unions is not supported with the average and the number of countries is not that much higher than the number of countries facing a decreasing confidence trend. On the other hand, the data showed that decreasing confidence in the parliaments, governments, political parties, justice system, and the EU is obvious. In total, when we gathered all of the countries in every indicator together out of 301 scenarios, there are 149 countries that have decreasing confidence in state institutions while there are 124 countries that have increasing confidence in state institutions and in 28 situations there is not enough data to determine the decreasing or increasing trend or stability.

When the countries with decreasing trends examined, it is seen that Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, France, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, The Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine are the countries which are facing decrease on every confidence indicator or only have one or two exceptions which are generally the confidence in labor unions and the civil services. As it seems even though there are exceptions, most of the countries which have decreasing trend in the levels of confidence in institutions are Balkan countries, and also they are not full democracies except France, Spain and The Netherlands. They are mostly flawed democracies. So one can say that confidence in state institutions tends to decrease in flawed and hybrid regime countries a lot more than in full democracies. On the other hand, when countries with increasing trends of level of confidence in institutions, examined, it is seen that Andora, Austria, Belarus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Luxembourg, North Macedonia, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland and Türkiye are the countries which are facing increase in every confidence indicator or only have one or two exceptions. As it seems even though there are exceptions, most of the countries

which have an increasing trend in confidence levels are full democracies. However, it is interesting to find that Belarus as an authoritarian country and Türkiye as a hybrid regime country is in this category even though most of the countries in this category are full democracies.

In this section, the levels of confidence in institutions are examined, and the decreasing trend determined to check if the reality collides with the hypotheses. In the next section the thesis will investigate the relationship between confidence in institutions and conventional political participation.

5.4. Relationship between Confidence in Institutions and Conventional Political Participation

To test the first hypothesis "As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of conventional political participation decreases." levels of conventional political participation and levels of confidence in institutions examined and trends are determined. As it can be observed in section 5.1, conventional political participation is generally decreasing in the sample of countries analyzed in this thesis. Conventional political participation is examined under three methods which are voter turnout, political party membership and voluntary work for political parties, and these three are most common conventional political participation methods (Linssen et al., 2015). In all three of them, a certain decreasing trend is observed as indicated in the previous sections. Later in section 5.3, levels of confidence in state institutions are examined. In that examination, the levels of confidence in 7 different institutions were observed. According to the results, 5 out of 7 institutions face a decreasing trend in confidence levels which are confidence in parliaments, governments, political parties, justice system and the EU. The two exceptions which tend to have increasing levels of confidence are confidence in the labor unions and the civil services. In this case, we can conclude that, overall, the levels of confidence in state institutions are decreasing. In the previous sections, it was also observed that the levels of participation in conventional political participation methods show a decreasing trend in general. Considering both, a further analysis to understand whether these decreasing trends have a relationship between each other, the

thesis also provides the correlation analysis in the following part. The proposed hypotheses will be tested with the help of that analysis as well.

To check the relationship between these two findings, the study will seek correlation among conventional political participation (voter turnout, party membership and voluntary work for political parties) and confidence levels in state institutions (labor unions, parliament, civil services, government, political parties, justice system and the EU). To have a correlation analysis every country's averages calculated for every single wave and missing data waves are excluded (when the question was not asked in that country for that wave). In the correlation analysis -1 means there is perfect negative association, 1 means there is perfect positive association, 0 means there is no meaningful association, between -0.4 and 0.4 is weak association so the study will seek associations above 0.4 and under -0.4 between the values to claim that there is correlation between the datasets I created (LaMorte, 2021; Fernando et al., 2024). In Table 14 the study seeks correlation between the conventional political participation and level of confidence in institutions taken from the surveys (EVS and WVS).

Table 14

Correlation between conventional political participation and level of confidence in institutions

Correlation Matrix								
Conventional Political Participation Methods	**Data**	**Confidence in:**						
		Labour Unions	**Parliament**	**Civil Services**	**Government**	**Justice System**	**Political Parties**	**The EU**
Voter Turnout	C	-0,34	-0,49	-0,21	-0,33	-0,47	-0,47	0,04
	N	196	192	193	128	192	128	174
Party Membership	C	-0,18	-0,22	-0,07	-0,04	-0,27	-0,15	0,09
	N	158	155	155	91	152	91	140
Voluntary Work	C	-0,06	-0,10	-0,05	-0,06	-0,10	-0,12	-0,16
	N	121	118	118	54	115	54	103

*Voter turnout data represents voter turnout in parliamentary elections.

**C means correlation coefficient value.

***N means number of observations used to calculate the correlation.

****Due to the survey coding, coefficient values means the opposite as negative correlation means a positive relationship and vice versa.

As mentioned earlier, parallel to H1, both confidence levels and conventional political participation tend to decrease. In this case, positive correlation was expected. So to check the relation between the two, I have examined the correlation between conventional political participation methods and confidence in different institutions. As a result, as seen in table 14 I found a positive correlation between every indicator of the confidence in institutions and every indicator of conventional political participation except 2 out of 21. The two exceptions are the correlation between voter turnout and confidence in the EU, and the correlation between party membership and confidence in the EU. However, even though positive correlation is observed in 19 scenarios out of 21, only in 3 scenarios there is meaningful correlation. Only in 3 scenarios that have coefficients higher than 0.4 are correlation between voter turnout and confidence in the parliament, justice system and the political parties. Even though most of the correlation coefficients show weak correlation, it is safe to say that there is positive correlation between conventional political participation and confidence in state institutions.

So, I can say that I tested *H1: As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of conventional political participation decreases,* and it is supported by the findings. However, when going into details for testing my sub-hypotheses for the first hypothesis, I observed some differences. While voter turnout shows stronger correlation with confidence in institutions,, party membership rates show weaker and voluntary work for parties shows even weaker correlation with confidence in institutions. Even though correlation coefficients seem weak for political party membership and voluntary work for political parties, in sections 5.1 and 5.3 decrease in these two conventional political participation and decrease in confidence levels were determined. Based on the findings, it seems that H1.1, H1.2 and H1.3 are also supported by the data

5.5. Relationship between Unconventional and Conventional Political Participation

To test the second hypothesis "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of conventional political participation decreases." levels of conventional political participation and levels of unconventional political participation were examined and trends were determined. As it can be observed in section 5.2, conventional political participation is decreasing in general. Conventional political participation is examined under three methods which are voter turnout, political party membership and voluntary work for political parties and these three are most common conventional political participation methods (Linssen et al., 2015). In all three of them, a certain decreasing trend is observed. Later in section 5.2, unconventional political participation levels were examined. In that examination, 5 different unconventional political participation methods were observed. According to the results, in 5 out of 5 unconventional political participation methods, the total number of countries with increasing trends is higher than the number of countries with decreasing trends. In this case, it can be concluded that unconventional political participation is increasing in most of the countries in Europe. Both of the findings seem to be as expected. Later with the correlation analysis details will be determined.

In order to check the relationship between these two findings, the study will also seek correlation among conventional political participation (voter turnout, party membership and voluntary work for political parties) and unconventional political participation (petitioning, boycotting, demonstrating, striking and occupying). To have a correlation analysis every country's averages calculated for every single wave and missing data waves excluded (when the question was not asked in that country for that wave). In the correlation analysis -1 means there is perfect negative association, 1 means there is perfect positive association, 0 means there is no meaningful association, between -0.4 and 0.4 is weak association so the study will seek associations above 0.4 and under -0.4 between the values to claim that there is correlation between the datasets I created (LaMorte, 2021; Fernando et al., 2024). In Table 15 the study seeks correlation between the conventional political participation and unconventional political participation taken from the surveys (EVS and WVS).

Table 15

Correlation between conventional and unconventional political participation

Correlation Matrix						
Conventional Political Participation Methods	**Data**	**Political Action:**				
		Petitioning	**Boycotting**	**Demonstrating**	**Striking**	**Occupying**
Voter Turnout	C	-0,31	-0,24	-0,28	-0,06	-0,06
	N	196	194	195	194	144
Party Membership	C	-0,37	-0,52	-0,36	-0,29	0,02
	N	158	157	158	158	120
Voluntary Work	C	-0,18	-0,20	-0,24	-0,18	-0,10
	N	120	120	120	120	120

*Voter turnout data represents voter turnout in parliamentary elections.

**C means correlation coefficient value.

***N means number of observations used to calculate the correlation.

****Due to the survey coding, coefficient values means the opposite as negative correlation means a positive relationship and vice versa.

As mentioned earlier, parallel to H2, it is expected to see while conventional political participation decreases, unconventional political participation increases. In this case, negative correlation was expected. So to check the relation between the two, I have examined the correlation between conventional and unconventional political participation methods. As a result, as seen in table 15 on the contrary of the study's expectations, I found a positive correlation with every unconventional indicator and every conventional political participation indicator except 1 out of 15. The only exception is the correlation between political party membership and occupying buildings or factories. However, even though positive correlation is observed in 14 scenarios out of 15 only, in 1 scenario there is meaningful correlation: The correlation between political party membership and joining in boycotts. Even though almost

every correlation coefficient shows a weak relationship, it is safe to say that there is a positive correlation between conventional and unconventional political participation.

So, I can say that, I tested *H2: As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of conventional political participation decreases,* and the data presented in 5.1 and 5.2 seems to support since while unconventional political participation indicators shows an increase and conventional ones shows a decrease but it appears that they do not correlate negatively. Moreover, when going into details for testing my sub-hypotheses for the second hypothesis, I observed that all have similar tendencies. Even though correlation coefficients seem weak for all three conventional methods, in sections 5.1 and 5.2 decrease in these three conventional political participation and increase in unconventional political participation was determined. Based on this information, I can say that assumptions in H2.1, H2.2 and H2.3 are supported with data presented in the 5.1 and 5.2 but it is not possible to mention a correlation between these variables. Moreover, in this case I can say that unconventional political participation and voluntary work for political parties or groups' relations have a similar propensity in Europe according to correlation analysis but it is a very weak association. So, I conclude that unconventional political participation has weak or very weak positive correlation with conventional political participation methods. One outlier of this is the correlation between joining in boycotts and political party membership since it is the only scenario which has meaningful correlation with 0.52. In this case it appears that when political party membership rates decrease, joining in boycotts also decreases parallel to that.

5.6. Arguments and further Interpretation of the Analyses and Results

To test my first hypothesis "As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of conventional political participation decreases." I created a dataset from WVS and EVS to create indicators about confidence levels and created 10 year periods between 1981 to 2022 by including every wave published so far for my determined countries to see European wide trends. And to seek relation I also created a dataset from International IDEA containing voter turnout with the same format. Later again from the surveys, I created a dataset about party membership and voluntary work for political parties. In section 5.1 in this thesis, details of conventional political participation were examined to determine if there is a decrease or

increase trend on conventional political participation. In that detailed examination it is observed that every conventional political participation method examined (voter turnout, political party membership, voluntary work for political parties) is in decreasing trend in most of the countries in the thesis' scope. Then in section 5.3 of this thesis, details of confidence levels in state institutions were examined to determine if there is a decrease or increase trend on confidence levels in state institutions. In that detailed examination it is observed that 5 out of 7 confidence indicators examined (labor unions, parliament, civil services, government, political parties, justice system and the EU) are in decreasing trend in most of the countries in the thesis' scope. While confidence is decreasing in parliament, government, political parties, the justice system and the EU, it is only increasing in labor unions and civil services.

Later in section 5.4, In order to to see whether these two sets of variables have relationship, I analyzed the correlation between conventional political participation (voter turnout, party membership, voluntary work for political parties or groups) and confidence levels in institutions (confidence in labor unions, parliament, civil services, government, political parties, justice system and the EU). Please see the details in Table 14.

First of all, I have observed that trust or confidence in institutions is decreasing in parallel to my literature review (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). When I analyzed the correlation between voter turnout and levels of confidence in institutions, I observed positive correlation as I expected which also supports my hypothesis H1.1 "As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of voter turnout decreases." as similar findings of the earlier studies (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). It appears that when confidence in institutions levels decrease, voter turnout decreases too. It does not refer to a cause and effect relation though. Among 7 different institutions, stronger correlations are observed between voter turnout and confidence in (a) parliament, (b) the justice system, (c) the political parties. Even though positive correlation is observed in every scenario except the confidence in the EU, it should not be forgotten that strong or very strong correlation could not be observed in any match.

When I analyzed the correlation between party membership and confidence levels in institutions, I observed positive correlation again, but in a weak manner. None of the correlation coefficients are higher than 0.4. Even though in section 5.1 the decrease in political party membership and in section 5.3 the decrease of confidence in institutions observed, it

seems that there is no strong relationship between them. Under these conditions, I can say that my studies partly support my hypothesis H1.2: "As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of political party membership decreases." However, it is not possible to present a strong relation between them. Even though I expected a strong positive correlation, the findings were not surprising since in the literature there are different studies while some of them (Levi and Stoker, 2000) argues to find negative correlation, some support my hypothesis as Brehm and Rahn (1997), and Eder and Katsanidou (2015)'s studies mention. Other than those studies, Paul (2011) argues in his study that strict state regulation, 'state capture' and closer relationship between the state and political parties leading to a decrease in both membership and voluntary work for political parties.

Later, to test another part of my hypothesis H1.3: "As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of voluntary work for political parties decreases." I analyzed the relation between voluntary work for political parties or groups and confidence levels to institutions. Even though in section 5.1 the decrease in voluntary work for political parties and in section 5.3 The decrease of confidence in institutions observed, there is no strong relationship between them. Because at this point, even though I observed positive correlation between voluntary work and confidence in institutions, they are all weak or very weak coefficients. So, I can say that the H1.3 is partly supported in a similar fashion with some earlier studies(Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015); however, it is not possible to mention a strong relation between them even though Brehm and Rahn (1997), Eder and Katsanidou (2015) mention in their studies that trust in institutions and political participation moves parallel to each other when one increases and other increases too and work both ways. Eder and Katsanidou (2015) also mentions that while this applies for conventional methods as investigated in this paragraph, it is opposite for the unconventional political participation.

Overall, my first hypothesis "As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of conventional political participation decreases." mostly supported by the analysis of the data and results. These findings are mostly in line with the existing studies (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). However, even though most of them are weak efficiencies, almost in every scenario positive correlation is observed. So even though my hypothesis is partly supported to determine the general trend over Europe, there is no strong relation among them as Levi and Stoker (2000) mentions in their study. Also, since I used correlation method,

this thesis does not present cause and effect relationship between the confidence in institutions and conventional political participation to support or challenge Levi and Stoker (2000)'s claim of there is no direct link of trust in institutions and political participation.

To test my second hypothesis "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of conventional political participation decreases." I created a dataset from WVS and EVS to create indicators about unconventional political participation levels and merged them into 10 year periods between 1981 to 2022 by including every wave published so far for my determined countries to see Europe wide trends. And to seek their relation, I also created a dataset from International IDEA containing voter turnout with the same format. Later, again from the surveys, I created a dataset about party membership and voluntary work for political parties. In section 5.1 in this thesis, details of conventional political participation were examined to determine if there is a decrease or increase in conventional political participation. In that detailed examination, it is observed that every conventional political participation method examined (voter turnout, political party membership, voluntary work for political parties) is in decreasing trend in most of the countries in the thesis' scope. Then in section 5.2 of this thesis, details of unconventional political participation were examined to determine if there is a decrease or increase trend on unconventional political participation. In that detailed examination it is observed that all of the unconventional political participation indicators (petitioning, boycotting, demonstrating, striking and occupying) are in increasing trend in most of the countries in the thesis' scope.

To begin with, I have first examined the unconventional political participation levels and their change over time. As a result of this examination, an increase in unconventional political participation is determined. Then to check their relation with conventional political participation, I sought correlation between unconventional political participation methods and voter turnout to test my hypothesis H2.1: "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the voter turnout decreases.". As Eder and Katsanidou (2015) mention, I expected to see a strong negative correlation between conventional and unconventional political participation. However, when I analyzed correlation between voter turnout and unconventional political participation indicators, I saw that it is not possible to mention a strong trend of positive or negative correlation in Europe. Unlike my expectation, there is no strong negative correlation. Even though in every match except one there is positive

correlation, every match's coefficient represents weak or very weak association with conventional political participation. In the end, I can conclude that my hypothesis H2.1: "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the voter turnout decreases." has solid ground depending on the data presented in 5.1. and 5.2. It seems that there is nor relationship between voter turnout and unconventional political participation even though their trends are towards negative directions.

To test another hypothesis of mine, which is H2.2: "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of political party membership decreases." I analyzed the correlation of political party membership and unconventional political participation. The situation for political party membership and unconventional political participation is similar to voter turnout but with an important difference. The correlation analysis showed that boycotting has the highest coefficient among the ones I examined with 0,52. However, it is a positive correlation which is opposite of my expectation since while political party memberships decrease, boycotting increases. Even though their trends are in the opposite directions it appears that the fluctuations directions are similar. As a result, while H2.1: "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of political party membership decreases." has solid ground depending on the data presented in sections 5.1 and 5.2 they do not have strong relationships except boycotting. Boycotting seems to have positive correlation with political party membership on the contrary of the thesis expectation.

As my last hypothesis H2.3: "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the voluntary work for political parties decreases." I examined the data that shows correlation between the voluntary work for political parties or groups and unconventional political participation. The study showed similar results with voter turnout. While all variables show a positive correlation, unlike the expectations of the hypothesis they are all weak or very weak coefficients. The results in sections 5.1 and 5.2 provide some insights about the expected relationship in the hypothesis, but just like the other two conventional political participation methods, voluntary work for political parties also does not have a strong relationship with unconventional political participation.

Overall, when I test my H2: "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, conventional political participation decreases." data presented in section 5.1. and 5.2. Shows that the thesis has solid ground, since every unconventional political participation

indicator is in an increasing trend while every conventional political participation indicator is in a decreasing trend. However, when I examined their relationship, I found mostly the opposite outcome as there is a positive correlation between conventional political participation and unconventional political participation method but it presents weak or very weak correlation except the correlation between party membership and boycotting.

Depending on the results, I argue that the reason behind the positive relationship between the confidence in institutions and conventional political participation is when people do not trust the institutions which are established, regulated and proceeding the institutionalized (conventional) political participation, they also do not use their instruments to change or proceed with it. When citizens use the instruments of the institutions they do not have confidence in, they are normalizing and validating the behavior they do not appreciate. To avoid this situation, and not contradict with themself, citizens may avoid the political participation tools which are already in the institutions' control which they do not trust.

CHAPTER 6

6. CONCLUSION

The thesis has started with a brief introduction to clear the path of the study. Just after that, the literature review was presented. As mentioned in the literature review, there is an increasing popularity of political participation studies and it is a basic indicator of existing concerns about political participation and its future (Gray & Caul, 2000; Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Cancela & Geys, 2016). Under the concept of political participation, there are two main categories which are conventional and unconventional political participation even though there are many other terms most used and well known are those two (Kirbiš & Krajnc, 2013; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015; Bernhagen & Vetter, 2020; Bülbül, 2020; Kaim, 2021). Moreover, there are many effects directly or indirectly affecting political participation at individual, state and system level like fragmentation, gender, age, population structure and density, historical background, confidence in institutions and many others as mentioned in Chapter 3.

While investigating the decreasing trends in political participation, the thesis formulated two main hypotheses which are *H1: As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of conventional political participation decreases.* and *H2: As the level of unconventional political participation increases, the level of conventional political participation decreases.* For both of the hypotheses three types of conventional political participation indicators are used which are voter turnout, political party membership and voluntary work for political parties and groups. Because those are the most common conventional political participation methods (Linssen et al., 2015). Through the study, first, each of the three methods was examined and their trends were determined from 1981 to 2022. After that, the relationship of those three conventional political participation methods were sought with confidence in 7 different institutions (confidence in labor unions, parliament, civil services, government, political parties, justice system and the EU) and 5 different unconventional political participation (political action: signing a petition, joining in boycotts, attending lawful demonstrations, joining unofficial strikes, occupying buildings or factories) methods.

With the data gathered from International IDEA, EVS and WVS, a rich dataset was created to test the thesis' hypotheses. In this examination the study reached a similar outcome with my first hypothesis which is "As the level of confidence in institutions decreases, the level of conventional political participation decreases." mostly supported by the dataset compiled for the thesis along with the findings of the previous studies (Brehm & Rahn, 1997; Eder & Katsanidou, 2015). Decrease in confidence levels and conventional political participation determined. Then, in the correlation analysis, positive correlation between confidence in institutions, especially for voter turnout, were observed. On the other hand, coefficients of the correlations were weak in general, even though almost every matrix of confidence indicators and conventional political participation methods showed positive correlation. So, even though my hypothesis is verified and valid to determine the general trend over Europe, some countries can present their relation the other way around as Levi and Stoker (2000) mention in their study. Also, since I used correlation method, this thesis does not present a cause and effect relationship between the confidence in institutions and conventional political participation to support or challenge Levi and Stoker (2000)'s claim of there is no direct link of trust in institutions and political participation; however, weak correlation results might be interpreted as supporting points for Levi and Stoker (2000)'s claim. Later, when I tested my hypothesis H2: "As the level of unconventional political participation increases, conventional political participation decreases." Unconventional political participation methods from 1981 to 2022 were examined and the results showed that there is an increasing trend, while decrease in conventional political participation trend was already determined earlier in the thesis. Then, the relationship is examined but I found mostly the opposite outcome as there is a positive correlation between conventional political participation and unconventional political participation methods even though generally they are very weak except the correlation between political party membership and boycotting.

The results show that even though data indicates positive relationship between conventional political participation and confidence in state institutions, whereas negative relations between conventional political participation and unconventional political participation are observed, it is hard to mention a strong correlation among them. This leads me to think that even though in the long period of time they seem to flow in harmony with each other, they are probably getting affected by different factors since there is no strong

correlation between them. However, the results may also be the outcome of the method I used and the relation might be sought with different methods.

In this section summary of all the thesis and findings of the thesis briefly provided. The next two sections will be explaining the limitations of this study and will suggest some areas to study for further research depending on the thesis' findings.

6.1. Limitations

In this thesis, I faced some limitations while trying to create a database and extracting a meaningful dataset to analyze and bring an intelligible study out of them. First and foremost limitations were about statistical data. Since this thesis aimed to measure the propensities for long term periods, I needed longitudinal data that covers as long a period as it can. At this point, about voter turnout, I had not any challenge since the International IDEA covered all of the elections from 1945 to 2024. However, the survey data I gathered covers the time period from 1981 to 2022. To create a comparable dataset, International IDEA data were also limited by the same period.

Second limitation was about the geography I include. To determine European wide trends in political participation, I wanted to include all of the European countries mentioned which are 46. However, the surveys included a limited number of countries and all questions I used to determine the correlations were not asked in every country or they were asked but not in every wave, and surveys did not occur in the same year in every country for any wave. Thus, I created a dataset depending on the survey years that occurred and merged two surveys (WVS, EVS) for decades.

Last but not least, most of the dataset relies on surveys, and depending on the survey results it may be sometimes difficult to reach exact/actual numbers, e.g. with regard to party membership and voluntary work for parties, since there could be a possibility that socially desired responses may be provided by some participants. Additionally, in some cases, samples might not represent exact demographic conditions of the country in case of different aspects like gender, education level, age, political position and so on. In addition, surveys capability of representation of a country vary from country to country and survey to survey. These

situations limit the capability of long term healthy correlation studies for some of the variables.

6.2. Discussions

Even though there were some limitations and setbacks for this thesis, I believe it presents some contributions to literature about the status of political participation over time. The thesis examined political participation from various aspects. It focused on the characteristics of as well as the relationship between conventional political participation and confidence in state institutions. Moreover, this thesis presents a broader aspect by giving place to multiple variables. For each hypothesis I created and studied multiple cross sectional datasets to present wider aspects and avoid misconceptions.

Furthermore, conventional political participation and unconventional political participation relations are also examined thoroughly. For each situation, I used multiple dependent and independent variables to show relations of different actors with the same variables. It provides generability and different aspects about the relationship among political participation, confidence in institutions, unconventional political participation and conventional political participation.

By examining longitudinal data instead of focusing on stable data, the thesis projected movements of the variables over time. They can be associated with other things to make some other assumptions. By including almost all European countries and having a broad timeline with 41 years, the thesis used all existing current data available about the topic published by the surveys. The thesis not only has the capability to give some ideas about changing trends and situations in European countries in general, but also provides detailed information at the country level to see the differences between countries. In addition, most of the literature creates an area of study that occurs from various countries with various historical, geographical and political situations while this thesis only focuses on European countries.

While studying the hypotheses, I also come up with some interesting situations which can be enlightened by further research. One of them is the trend of decreasing political participation. It appears that even though political participation decreases in general and European trends keep decreasing, in the last decade some countries showed increases and they

might be creating another trend. To observe that for sure, waiting for another decade and also searching for the reasons for these fluctuations are needed. Another interesting outcome the thesis reached is that while 5 out of 7 confidence in institutions indicators show a decreasing trend, confidence in civil services and confidence in labor unions shows an increasing trend. These can be further analyzed in future studies in an in-depth manner as well. Also, while analyzing the correlation between unconventional and conventional political participation, political party membership and boycotting were distinctively higher than the others which is also an area of study to investigate why. In addition, some of the countries can be examined deeper and to have comparative case studies the same study might be applied to different regions of the world. Moreover, the countries the study examined can be separated into groups based on different indicators and can be compared to see the effect of different backgrounds like historical, economic or political.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Respondent numbers according to all waves published by WVS and countries between 1981 - 2022

Countries	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	Total
Albania	*	*	999	1000	*	*	*	1999
Andorra	*	*	*	*	1003	*	1004	2007
Belarus	*	1015	2092	*	*	1535	*	4642
Bosnia Herzegovina	*	*	1200	1200	*	*	*	2400
Bulgaria	*	*	1072	*	1001	*	*	2073
Croatia	*	*	1196	*	*	*	*	1196
Cyprus	*	*	*	*	1050	1000	1000	3050
Czech Republic	*	924	1147	*	*	*	1200	3271
Estonia	*	*	1021	*	*	1533	*	2554
Finland	1003	*	987	*	1014	*	*	3004
France	*	*	*	*	1001	*	*	1001
Germany	*	*	2026	*	2064	2046	1528	7664

United Kingdom	*	*	1093	*	1041	*	2609	4743
Greece	*	*	*	*	*	*	1200	1200
Hungary	1464	*	650	*	1007	*	*	3121
Italy	*	*	*	*	1012	*	*	1012
Latvia	*	*	1200	*	*	*	*	1200
Lithuania	*	*	1009	*	*	*	*	1009
Moldova	*	*	984	1008	1046	*	*	3038
Montenegro	*	*	240	1060	*	*	*	1300
The Netherlands	*	*	*	*	1050	1902	2145	5097
North Macedonia	*	*	995	1055	*	*	*	2050
Norway	*	*	1127	*	1025	*	*	2152
Poland	*	938	1153	*	1000	966	*	4057
Romania	*	*	1239	*	1776	1503	1257	5775
Russian Federation	*	1961	2040	*	2033	2500	1810	10344
Serbia	*	*	1280	1200	1220	*	1046	4746
Slovakia	*	466	1095	*	*	*	1200	2761

Slovenia	*	*	1007	*	1037	1069	*	3113
Spain	*	1510	1211	1209	1200	1189	*	6319
Sweden	954	1047	1009	1015	2177	1206	*	7408
Switzerland	*	1400	1212	*	1241	*	*	3853
Türkiye	*	1030	1907	3401	1346	1605	2415	11704
Ukraine	*	*	2811	*	1000	1500	1289	6600
Total	3421	10291	35002	12148	27344	19554	19703	127463

***** *Not included in that wave*

APPENDIX B:

Respondent numbers according to first 4 waves published by the EVS and countries between 1981 - 2010

Countries	1 st Wave	2 nd Wave	3 rd Wave	4 th Wave	Total
Albania	*	*	*	1534	1534
Austria	*	1460	1522	1510	4492
Belarus	*	*	1000	1500	2500
Belgium	1145	2792	1912	1509	7358
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	*	*	1512	1512
Bulgaria	*	1034	1000	1500	3534
Croatia	*	*	1003	1525	2528
Cyprus	*	*	*	1500	1500
Czech Republic	*	2109	1908	1821	5838
Denmark	1182	1030	1023	1507	4742
Estonia	*	1008	1005	1518	3531
Finland	*	588	1038	1134	2760
France	1200	1002	1615	1501	5318
Germany	1305	3437	2036	2075	8853

United Kingdom	1479	1788	2000	2061	7328
Greece	*	*	1142	1500	2642
Hungary	*	999	1000	1513	3512
Iceland	927	702	968	808	3405
Ireland	1217	1000	1012	1013	4242
Italy	1348	2018	2000	1519	6885
Kosovo	*	*	*	1601	1601
Latvia	*	903	1013	1506	3422
Lithuania	*	1000	1018	1500	3518
Luxembourg	*	*	1211	1610	2821
North Macedonia	*	*	*	1500	1500
Malta	467	393	1002	1500	3362
Moldova	*	*	*	1551	1551
Montenegro	*	*	*	1516	1516
The Netherlands	1221	1017	1003	1554	4795
Norway	1051	1239	*	1090	3380
Poland	*	982	1095	1510	3587
Portugal	*	1185	1000	1553	3738

Romania	*	1103	1146	1489	3738
Russian Federation	*	*	2500	1504	4004
Serbia	*	*	*	1512	1512
Slovakia	*	1136	1331	1509	3976
Slovenia	*	1035	1006	1366	3407
Spain	2303	2637	1200	1500	7640
Sweden	954	1047	1015	1187	4203
Switzerland	*	*	*	1272	1272
Türkiye	*	*	1206	2384	3590
Ukraine	*	*	1195	1507	2702
Total	15799	34644	41125	63281	154849

***** *Not included in that wave*

APPENDIX C

Average voter turnout of Presidential, Parliamentary and European Parliament Elections as percentages held in the time periods mentioned between 1945-2023

Countries	1945 1954 %	1955 1964 %	1965 1974 %	1975 1984 %	1985 1994 %	1995 2004 %	2005 2014 %	2015 2023 %
Albania	*	*	*	*	95,21	2,20	50,94	6,54
Andorra	*	*	*	*	80,92	1,62	76,61	6,96
Austria	96,13	5,33	93,89	2,34	85,87	9,48	62,86	0,84
Belarus	*	*	*	*	74,79	2,87	83,63	0,87
Belgium	92,63	2,98	90,88	3,59	92,21	1,04	89,94	8,43
Bosnia and Herzegovina	*	*	*	*	*	0,35	54,58	2,74
Bulgaria	*	*	*	*	78,09	7,77	46,47	3,13
Croatia	*	*	*	*	78,35	4,25	44,73	0,77
Cyprus	*	*	75,85	0,52	93,66	8,34	77,03	6,83
Czech Republic	*	*	*	*	90,51	9,14	50,47	0,27
Denmark	83,63	5,03	88,44	6,99	73,11	7,85	74,95	0,18
Estonia	*	*	*	*	71,33	2,85	51,47	7,26
Finland	74,27	8,72	79,62	4,08	75,08	9,77	61,58	2,32

France	80,62	4,32	79,93	4,66	68,61	6,26	64,37	9,25
Germany	82,24	7,76	88,18	8,18	72,68	2,37	67,03	1,37
Greece	76,29	9,41	79,58	9,60	80,14	2,53	64,03	9,05
Hungary	*	*	*	*	67,01	5,34	51,81	0,94
Iceland	87,09	1,28	91,35	9,68	83,51	1,59	79,87	6,61
Ireland	71,55	6,75	68,33	7,32	64,45	6,80	60,61	5,35
Italy	91,73	3,30	92,99	8,21	83,41	6,46	72,32	3,74
Kosovo	*	*	*	*	*	9,52	43,83	4,45
Latvia	*	*	*	*	85,54	4,08	54,65	9,18
Liechtenstein	92,04	4,87	95,39	5,56	90,58	6,83	83,63	7,92
Lithuania	*	*	*	*	75,19	5,81	45,89	2,63
Luxembourg	91,78	1,45	89,35	8,84	87,91	9,20	89,60	6,98
Malta	76,61	5,97	91,32	4,82	96,08	2,66	84,96	3,45
Moldova	*	*	*	*	79,31	9,71	60,70	1,65
Monaco	*	*	72,30	4,80	68,46	2,57	75,70	3,81
Montenegro	*	*	*	*	*	8,38	68,28	7,23
The Netherlands	93,92	5,40	85,84	2,94	65,53	0,32	60,88	0,08

North Macedonia	*	*	*	*	78,74	5,16	55,40	1,78
Norway	79,24	8,70	83,17	2,44	81,01	6,91	77,35	7,69
Poland	95,03	4,49	97,39	8,57	58,38	1,51	44,74	8,72
Portugal	*	*	*	3,75	65,62	4,96	51,50	6,84
Romania	*	*	*	*	77,99	5,26	44,47	5,40
Russian Federation	*	*	*	*	62,33	4,90	64,70	5,65
San Marino	*	*	79,70	9,26	80,72	4,54	68,06	7,70
Serbia	*	*	*	*	*	8,05	58,31	5,84
Slovakia	*	*	*	*	85,47	8,87	43,83	1,24
Slovenia	*	*	*	*	82,91	2,71	48,92	9,17
Spain	*	*	*	4,97	66,68	6,12	58,24	9,14
Sweden	80,93	1,76	89,47	1,31	87,34	5,96	69,81	5,55
Switzerland	71,82	8,22	61,29	9,77	46,26	3,58	48,89	6,76
Türkiye	87,75	1,41	65,59	1,34	88,60	3,81	80,51	5,99
Ukraine	*	*	*	*	72,60	3,99	62,00	7,36
United Kingdom	79,35	7,55	73,68	3,43	56,47	8,52	49,25	0,03
Total Average of all Countries	84,23	84,73	83,20	81,08	77,35	66,37	62,59	62,30

*Not held elections at the time period or the database International IDEA did not include that country for that time period.

APPENDIX D:

Average of answers to "Voluntary work: Unpaid work political parties or groups" (0=Not Mentioned, 1=Mentioned) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010
Albania	*	*	0,10
Andorra	*	*	*
Austria	0,03	0,03	0,03
Belarus	*	0,01	0,00
Belgium	0,02	0,03	0,02
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	*	0,02
Bulgaria	*	0,04	0,03
Croatia	*	0,02	0,02
Cyprus	*	*	0,04
Czech Republic	*	0,02	0,02
Denmark	0,02	0,03	0,39
Estonia	0,04	0,01	0,02
Finland	0,07	0,03	0,04
France	0,02	0,01	0,01

Germany	0,04	0,01	0,01
United Kingdom	0,01	0,01	0,01
Greece	*	0,05	0,02
Hungary	*	0,01	0,00
Iceland	0,03	0,03	0,03
Ireland	0,02	0,02	0,06
Italy	0,04	0,02	0,47
Kosovo	*	*	0,06
Latvia	0,06	0,01	0,02
Lithuania	0,04	0,02	0,02
Luxembourg	*	0,02	0,03
Malta	0,03	0,04	0,01
Moldova	*	*	0,03
Montenegro	*	*	0,02
The Netherlands	0,02	0,03	0,03
North Macedonia	*	*	0,08
Norway	0,04	*	0,02
Poland	0,01	0,01	0,00

Portugal	0,03	0,01	0,02
Romania	*	0,02	0,02
Russian Federation	0,05	0,00	0,00
Serbia	*	*	0,02
Slovakia	*	0,03	0,01
Slovenia	*	0,01	0,02
Spain	0,02	0,01	0,01
Sweden	0,03	0,04	0,02
Switzerland	*	*	0,02
Türkiye	0,00	*	0,02
Ukraine	*	0,01	0,02
Total Average	0,03	0,02	0,03

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

APPENDIX E:

E.1.

Average of answers to "Confidence in: labor unions" (1=Has very much confidence, 2=Has quite a lot confidence, 3=Has not very much confidence, 4=Has not at all confidence) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	3.18	3.00	3.44
Andorra	*	*	2.94	3.12
Austria	2.76	2.85	2.82	2.51
Belarus	2.96	2.75	2.47	2.57
Belgium	2.79	2.78	2.59	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2.38	2.85	3.03
Bulgaria	*	2.96	3.29	3.14
Croatia	*	2.92	3.05	3.20
Cyprus	*	*	2.69	2.67
Czech Republic	*	2.93	2.92	2.79
Denmark	2.52	2.55	2.39	2.36
Estonia	2.89	2.77	2.64	2.48
Finland	2.56	2.49	2.47	2.52
France	2.84	2.87	2.77	2.87
Germany	2.78	2.73	2.81	2.54
United Kingdom	2.90	2.85	2.86	2.73
Greece	*	3.22	3.09	3.15
Hungary	2.18	3.03	2.99	3.05
Iceland	2.53	2.51	2.40	2.44
Ireland	2.65	2.53	2.44	*
Italy	2.90	2.91	2.86	2.96
Kosovo	*	*	2.23	*
Latvia	3.00	2.86	2.55	2.64
Lithuania	2.86	2.74	2.49	2.56
Luxembourg	*	2.51	2.45	*
Malta	2.60	2.61	2.66	*
Moldova	*	2.85	2.86	*
Montenegro	*	2.76	3.01	2.95
The Netherlands	2.62	2.44	2.58	2.62
North Macedonia	*	3.21	3.05	3.08

Norway	2.41	2.33	2.33	2.19
Poland	3.07	2.87	2.86	2.93
Portugal	2.82	2.60	2.69	2.71
Romania	*	2.87	2.86	3.08
Russian Federation	2.62	2.85	2.79	2.82
Serbia	*	3.02	3.14	3.18
Slovakia	2.98	2.77	2.75	2.58
Slovenia	*	2.90	2.66	3.06
Spain	2.75	2.86	2.81	3.02
Sweden	2.61	2.64	2.69	2.49
Switzerland	*	2.77	2.63	2.65
Türkiye	2.65	2.53	2.61	2.64
Ukraine	*	2.79	2.80	2.85
Total Average	2.73	2.77	2.74	2.80

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

E.2.

Average of answers to "Confidence in: parliament" (1=Has very much confidence, 2=Has quite a lot confidence, 3=Has not very much confidence, 4=Has not at all confidence) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2.39	2.80	3.61
Andorra	*	*	*	2.76
Austria	2.63	2.62	2.86	2.58
Belarus	2.82	2.90	2.40	2.56
Belgium	2.70	2.77	2.70	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2.40	2.96	3.23
Bulgaria	*	2.69	3.29	3.19
Croatia	*	2.81	3.26	3.52
Cyprus	*	*	2.44	2.72
Czech Republic	*	2.88	3.17	3.05
Denmark	2.68	2.53	2.21	2.51
Estonia	*	2.78	2.89	2.76
Finland	2.47	2.71	2.56	2.56
France	2.58	2.80	2.68	2.83

Germany	2.54	2.85	2.92	2.66
United Kingdom	2.58	2.73	2.88	2.92
Greece	*	3.01	2.88	3.30
Hungary	1.56	2.79	3.13	2.81
Iceland	2.43	2.16	2.65	2.69
Ireland	2.44	2.78	2.57	*
Italy	2.89	2.78	2.82	2.91
Kosovo	*	*	2.19	*
Latvia	*	2.99	3.13	3.01
Lithuania	*	3.01	3.07	2.93
Luxembourg	*	2.39	2.25	*
Malta	2.53	2.55	2.38	*
Moldova	*	2.77	2.86	*
Montenegro	*	2.61	2.87	2.80
The Netherlands	2.56	2.46	2.71	2.73
North Macedonia	*	3.24	2.99	2.99
Norway	2.23	2.26	2.34	2.17
Poland	2.09	2.79	3.15	3.12
Portugal	2.76	2.58	2.80	2.81
Romania	*	3.12	3.10	3.27
Russian Federation	2.61	3.13	2.84	2.77
Serbia	*	2.88	3.14	3.17
Slovakia	2.79	2.83	2.57	2.91
Slovenia	*	2.87	2.80	3.21
Spain	2.68	2.64	2.55	2.81
Sweden	2.56	2.53	2.42	2.31
Switzerland	*	2.64	2.39	2.40
Türkiye	2.33	2.65	2.62	2.40
Ukraine	*	2.88	3.27	3.17
Total Average	2.52	2.73	2.77	2.87

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

E.3.

Average of answers to "Confidence in: civil services" (1=Has very much confidence, 2=Has quite a lot confidence, 3=Has not very much confidence, 4=Has not at all confidence) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	3.01	2.71	2.84
Andorra	*	*	2.73	2.49
Austria	2.60	2.58	2.65	2.39
Belarus	3.06	2.69	2.73	2.55
Belgium	2.66	2.65	2.46	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2.35	2.79	2.88
Bulgaria	*	2.81	2.97	2.97
Croatia	*	2.72	2.86	2.99
Cyprus	*	*	2.43	2.54
Czech Republic	*	2.79	2.79	2.65
Denmark	2.52	2.46	2.28	2.41
Estonia	*	2.53	2.41	2.27
Finland	2.57	2.70	2.51	2.42
France	2.58	2.67	2.46	2.51
Germany	2.80	2.67	2.80	2.42
United Kingdom	2.50	2.54	2.59	2.49
Greece	*	3.22	2.95	2.65
Hungary	2.02	2.55	2.70	2.43
Iceland	2.55	2.42	2.37	2.36
Ireland	2.38	2.30	2.37	*
Italy	2.99	2.78	2.72	2.74
Kosovo	*	*	2.13	*
Latvia	*	2.62	2.45	2.36
Lithuania	*	2.83	2.74	2.57
Luxembourg	*	2.42	2.22	*
Malta	2.27	2.60	2.39	*
Moldova	*	2.49	2.81	*
Montenegro	*	2.54	2.67	2.73
The Netherlands	2.58	2.68	2.74	2.70
North Macedonia	*	3.09	2.83	2.78
Norway	2.50	2.52	2.41	2.22
Poland	2.33	2.77	2.91	2.80
Portugal	2.74	2.50	2.66	2.53
Romania	*	2.90	2.89	2.96
Russian Federation	2.57	2.70	2.52	2.47
Serbia	*	2.84	2.96	2.99

Slovakia	2.82	2.72	2.47	2.52
Slovenia	*	2.79	2.73	3.08
Spain	2.76	2.67	2.64	2.63
Sweden	2.59	2.56	2.49	2.37
Switzerland	*	2.59	2.25	2.30
Türkiye	2.44	2.32	2.39	2.35
Ukraine	*	2.70	2.77	2.73
Total Average	2.58	2.66	2.61	2.60

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

E.4.

Average of answers to "Confidence in: government" (1=Has very much confidence, 2=Has quite a lot confidence, 3=Has not very much confidence, 4=Has not at all confidence) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2.61	2.77	3.39
Andorra	*	*	2.78	2.56
Austria	*	*	3.08	2.71
Belarus	*	2.51	2.33	2.44
Belgium	*	*	2.87	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2.12	2.97	3.25
Bulgaria	*	2.38	3.14	3.02
Croatia	*	2.47	3.19	3.39
Cyprus	*	*	2.43	2.66
Czech Republic	*	2.72	3.09	3.00
Denmark	*	*	2.46	2.69
Estonia	*	2.57	2.80	2.57
Finland	*	2.80	2.53	2.63
France	*	*	2.94	2.97
Germany	*	3.04	2.96	2.67
United Kingdom	*	*	3.00	2.97
Greece	*	*	3.13	3.35
Hungary	*	2.67	3.24	2.80
Iceland	*	*	2.83	2.85
Ireland	*	*	2.77	*
Italy	*	*	2.97	2.99

Kosovo	*	*	2.18	*
Latvia	*	2.80	3.10	2.94
Lithuania	*	2.69	2.95	2.66
Luxembourg	*	*	2.29	*
Malta	*	*	2.52	*
Moldova	*	2.71	2.84	*
Montenegro	*	2.54	2.84	2.79
The Netherlands	*	*	2.73	2.72
North Macedonia	*	3.17	2.92	3.14
Norway	*	2.30	2.52	2.37
Poland	*	2.70	3.07	3.05
Portugal	*	*	3.01	2.85
Romania	*	3.04	3.02	3.18
Russian Federation	*	3.05	2.54	2.53
Serbia	*	2.80	3.04	3.04
Slovakia	2.69	2.69	2.56	2.99
Slovenia	*	2.66	2.80	3.21
Spain	2.90	2.75	2.73	3.09
Sweden	*	2.66	2.57	2.43
Switzerland	*	2.52	2.31	2.26
Türkiye	2.56	2.70	2.57	2.22
Ukraine	*	2.71	3.10	3.13
Total Average	2.72	2.68	2.80	2.85

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

E.5.

Average of answers to "Confidence in: political parties" (1=Has very much confidence, 2=Has quite a lot confidence, 3=Has not very much confidence, 4=Has not at all confidence) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2.95	3.09	3.65
Andorra	*	*	3.06	3.04
Austria	*	*	3.14	2.89
Belarus	3.00	3.23	2.87	2.84
Belgium	*	*	3.05	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2.60	3.20	3.38

Bulgaria	*	2.93	3.36	3.26
Croatia	*	2.95	3.39	3.60
Cyprus	*	*	2.87	3.04
Czech Republic	*	2.87	3.21	3.18
Denmark	*	*	2.59	2.80
Estonia	*	3.07	3.27	3.03
Finland	*	3.13	3.00	2.95
France	*	*	3.16	3.30
Germany	*	3.08	3.21	2.96
United Kingdom	*	*	3.12	3.09
Greece	*	*	3.17	3.44
Hungary	*	3.11	3.33	3.21
Iceland	*	*	2.99	2.97
Ireland	*	*	2.85	*
Italy	*	*	3.19	3.22
Kosovo	*	*	2.39	*
Latvia	*	3.32	3.28	3.35
Lithuania	*	2.99	3.18	3.05
Luxembourg	*	*	2.74	*
Malta	*	*	2.73	*
Moldova	*	3.17	3.09	*
Montenegro	*	3.07	3.09	2.93
The Netherlands	*	*	2.86	2.97
North Macedonia	*	3.28	3.12	3.27
Norway	*	2.74	2.75	2.67
Poland	*	3.21	3.33	3.33
Portugal	*	*	3.15	3.12
Romania	*	3.24	3.24	3.37
Russian Federation	2.63	3.14	3.10	2.93
Serbia	*	3.18	3.31	3.35
Slovakia	2.81	3.00	2.97	3.14
Slovenia	*	3.20	3.04	3.42
Spain	2.55	2.99	3.00	3.15
Sweden	*	2.82	2.82	2.67
Switzerland	*	2.92	2.86	2.87
Türkiye	*	3.07	3.05	2.62
Ukraine	*	3.15	3.25	3.20

Total Average	2.75	3.05	3.06	3.12

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

E.6.

Average of answers to "Confidence in: justice system" (1=Has very much confidence, 2=Has quite a lot confidence, 3=Has not very much confidence, 4=Has not at all confidence) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	2.35	3.02	3.15
Andorra	*	*	2.75	2.42
Austria	2.33	2.22	2.26	2.13
Belarus	2.89	2.55	2.38	2.40
Belgium	2.55	2.81	2.54	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2.14	2.68	3.04
Bulgaria	*	2.75	3.06	3.17
Croatia	*	2.64	3.12	3.30
Cyprus	*	*	2.17	2.25
Czech Republic	*	2.72	2.79	2.58
Denmark	1.99	2.08	1.90	1.90
Estonia	2.77	2.58	2.46	2.31
Finland	2.03	2.25	2.07	2.00
France	2.46	2.68	2.59	2.42
Germany	2.35	2.52	2.46	2.21
United Kingdom	2.30	2.58	2.47	2.23
Greece	*	2.67	2.56	2.40
Hungary	1.72	2.50	2.64	2.55
Iceland	2.23	2.12	2.21	2.33
Ireland	2.41	2.38	2.59	*
Italy	2.76	2.82	2.66	2.68
Kosovo	*	*	2.22	*
Latvia	2.73	2.69	2.65	2.47
Lithuania	2.65	2.98	2.89	2.49
Luxembourg	*	2.38	2.20	*
Malta	2.39	2.63	2.59	*
Moldova	*	2.55	2.80	*
Montenegro	*	2.32	2.63	2.76

The Netherlands	2.31	2.55	2.56	2.31
North Macedonia	*	2.92	2.83	2.95
Norway	2.01	2.24	2.02	1.86
Poland	2.45	2.53	2.72	2.75
Portugal	2.60	2.72	2.67	2.56
Romania	*	2.59	2.81	2.73
Russian Federation	2.68	2.78	2.76	2.69
Serbia	*	2.59	2.97	2.95
Slovakia	2.68	2.68	2.82	2.79
Slovenia	*	2.60	2.70	2.95
Spain	2.55	2.60	2.55	2.61
Sweden	2.30	2.35	2.24	2.06
Switzerland	*	2.28	2.14	2.21
Türkiye	2.19	2.14	2.04	2.10
Ukraine	*	2.73	3.01	3.11
Total Average	2.41	2.53	2.56	2.54

*Not included in the surveys for that period.

E.7.

Average of answers to "Confidence in: the EU" (1=Has very much confidence, 2=Has quite a lot confidence, 3=Has not very much confidence, 4=Has not at all confidence) in 1981 - 2022

Countries	1981 - 1990	1991 - 2000	2001 - 2010	2011 - 2022
Albania	*	1.66	1.86	2.13
Andorra	*	*	2.61	2.58
Austria	*	2.78	2.89	2.72
Belarus	*	2.32	2.58	2.68
Belgium	2.29	2.57	2.39	*
Bosnia-Herzegovina	*	2.28	2.65	2.56
Bulgaria	*	2.43	2.40	2.50
Croatia	*	2.75	3.06	2.97
Cyprus	*	*	2.56	2.59
Czech Republic	*	2.48	2.68	2.88
Denmark	2.73	2.95	2.63	2.59
Estonia	*	2.58	2.47	2.50
Finland	2.53	2.90	2.76	2.64
France	2.21	2.62	2.65	2.61

Germany	2.44	2.81	2.84	2.68
United Kingdom	2.52	2.92	2.96	2.74
Greece	*	3.08	2.61	3.02
Hungary	*	2.36	2.53	2.61
Iceland	2.76	2.64	2.89	2.70
Ireland	2.17	2.36	2.39	*
Italy	2.11	2.21	2.29	2.68
Kosovo	*	*	1.93	*
Latvia	*	2.62	2.70	2.44
Lithuania	*	2.67	2.30	2.28
Luxembourg	*	2.40	2.23	*
Malta	*	2.41	2.18	*
Moldova	*	2.15	2.33	*
Montenegro	*	2.77	2.61	2.46
The Netherlands	2.47	2.78	2.75	2.78
North Macedonia	*	2.66	2.66	2.58
Norway	2.73	2.95	2.66	2.60
Poland	2.37	2.51	2.52	2.61
Portugal	2.44	2.29	2.34	2.35
Romania	*	2.62	2.34	2.59
Russian Federation	*	2.87	2.81	3.15
Serbia	*	3.15	3.00	3.12
Slovakia	*	2.55	2.35	2.56
Slovenia	*	2.63	2.48	2.85
Spain	2.53	2.50	2.42	2.48
Sweden	2.39	2.94	2.73	2.56
Switzerland	*	2.66	2.70	2.87
Türkiye	2.79	2.57	2.92	2.82
Ukraine	*	2.47	2.77	2.57
Total Average	2.47	2.60	2.57	2.65

*Not included in the surveys for that period.