

Theatrical Democracy and France Presidential Election

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Abstract: *While the turnout rate in the second round of the election was 34.3 percent, 65.7 percent of registered voters did not vote. The recent elections in France raise serious concerns for the future of democracy. The same was true of the Brexit elections. Are citizens voting less important than their tax payments? To live and maintain democracy, a significant majority of voters must vote, such as at least 70%. Otherwise, it means the theater of democracy or theatrical democracy rather than democracy. In a Democracy, the opinion of the majority should matter, not the majority of the voters. Moreover, democracies are regimes where the rights of the minority, not only the majority, should be protected. Democracies should not be the tyranny of the majority.*

Keywords: France Presidential Election, Democracy, Theater of Democracy, Citizenship, Elections, Ballot in Europe, Theatrical Democracy

1. Introduction

Democracy originates from the Greek words demos (people) and Kratos (power). ‘Democracy is a government of the people, by the people, and for the people,’ said Abraham Lincoln (Tuncer 2022).

The election is one of the important parts of democracy, but election alone means nothing in terms of the concept of democracy. When world history is examined, it is seen that the most important blows to democracy and human rights have been dealt with elections. The rise of Adolf Hitler is the most striking example of this. Moreover, many dictatorship regimes came with elections, using the blessings of democracy, but they refused to go with elections. To use the concept of "polyarchy", which means freedom of thought, free non-governmental organizations, the right of all politicians to compete on equal terms, the existence of various independent sources of information, and the existence of reliable principled state institutions, as well as free and fair elections, instead of democracy, which is worn and distorted today, which is tried to be considered as consisting only of elections. maybe it will be more accurate (Tuncer 2021).

Robert Dahl argued that it is wrong to regard democracy as consisting only of elections that participation and criticism should be active, and that democracy is a process and used the term polyarchy instead of democracy (Dahl, 1997).

Democracy has advantages as well as disadvantages. For example, while political equality gives everyone the right to vote, it gives the same and equal voting rights to those who want to end democracy and those who defend democracy.

In the first decade of the 2000s, pessimistic views on democracy increased. In 2015, terms such as “Democracy in Ricotta”, “Democracy Under Stress”, “Democracy in Recession”, and “Democracy on Hell’s Edge” were used and recorded as the “Age of Worry of Democracy” 2015. European and American democracies were in decline. Colin Crouch was talking about “post-democracy”. Meanwhile, while the number of countries with reasonably free elections

was 147 in 1988, it increased to 191 in 1999 (Tuncer 2021). Is it possible to end democracy with a democratic election? This seems possible.

According to "Freedom House" data, while 29% of the countries in the world were governed by democracy in 1971, this rate increased to 42% in 1992.

However, only 40% of the world's population believes in the necessity of democracy. If democracy is such a good government, why don't most people believe in democracy? The reason is that democracies have turned into a democratic tyranny in the wrong hands, not with broad participation, but with the populist influence of minorities and leaders (<https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedomworld/2018/democracy-crisis>).

2. Democracy and Theatrical Democracy

There are many types of democracy that we can list here the particular ones, such as liberal, constitutional, monarchic, feminist, radical, representative, and deliberative democracies (Gagnon 2014).

Two important factors of elections sustain a host of electoral misincentives, associated with “wasted” votes and “spoiler” candidates, which combine to impose a dilemma of disempowerment on voters (Maloy 2019). While an important decision should be made with the majority of the voters, a small part of the electorate participates in many elections and the decision can be made with the votes of this minority. It would not be correct to call it democracy or democratic elections.

Another factor that drives the voters out of the ballot box in democracies is that the votes cannot be fully reflected in the results. The reason for this is either direct or indirect dam applications. The threshold should be removed from the selection criteria and every candidate who receives enough votes to elect a single deputy should be able to be elected.

Formal democracies where democracy seems to work formally but the voters cannot fully reflect their views on the

administration can be called theatrical democracies (Tuncer 2021, Tuncer 2022).

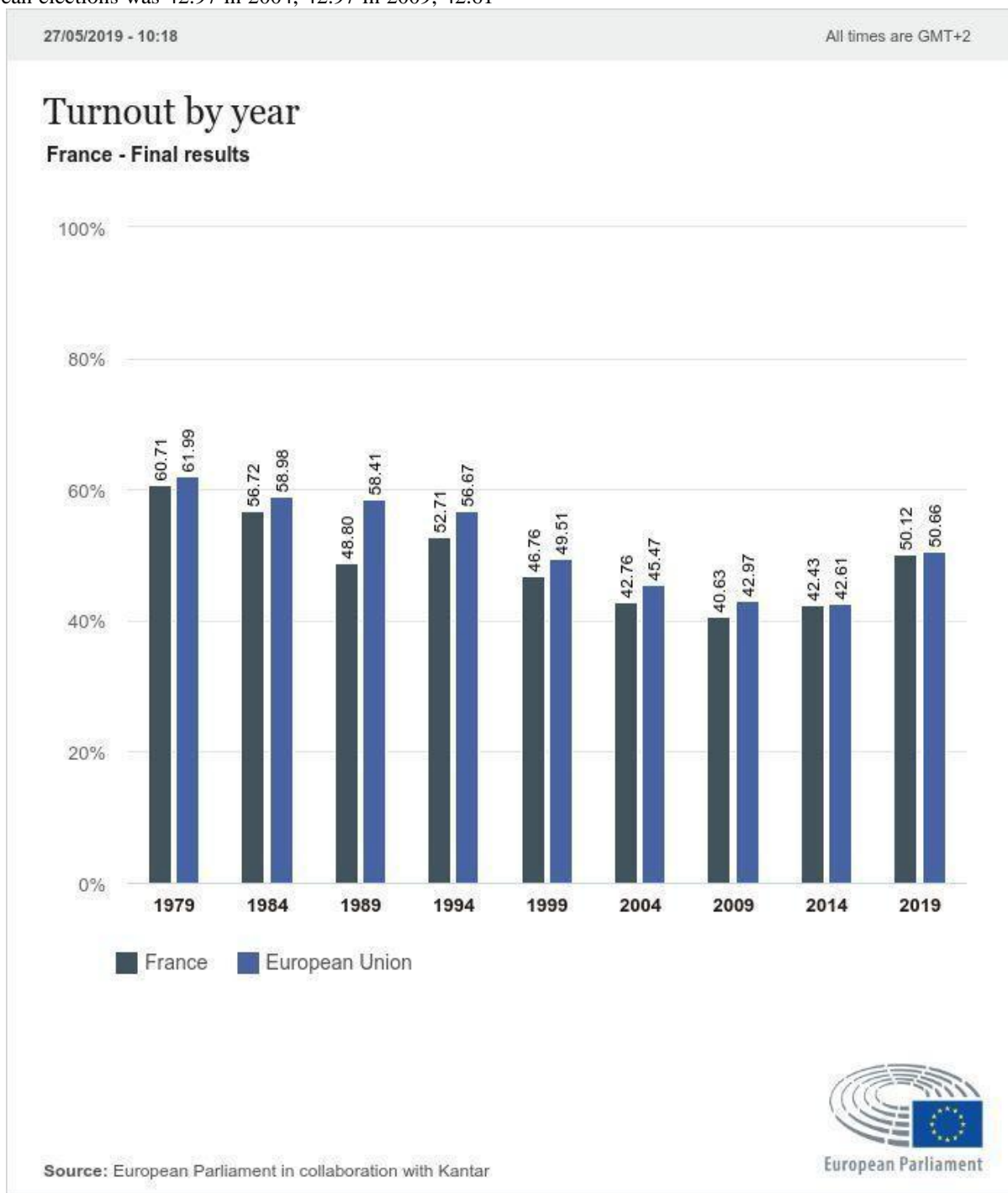
3. Election turnout rates in Europe and France

Looking at the electoral turnout in Europe between 1979 and 2019, the lowest turnout was recorded in the 2013 elections in Croatia with 20.8%.

The highest turnout was recorded in Belgium with 91.08% in 1999 elections. (www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019/en/turnout/). The average turnout in the European elections was 42.97 in 2004, 42.97 in 2009, 42.61

in 2014, and 50.66 in 2019 (www.europarl.europa.eu/election-results-2019).

When we look at the participation averages in France and Europe between 1979 and 2019, we see the lowest participation rates in 2009 with 40.63, and the highest rates with 60.71 in 1979, especially in the French elections. While the turnout rate in the second round of the regional elections, which is the first stage of the election was 34.3 percent, 65.7 percent of registered voters did not vote (https://tr.euronews.com/2021).



As it happened: Voter abstention at 28% in the French presidential run-off, up 2.5% from 2017 (https://www.france24.com/en/france).

Marine Le Pen, Chairman of the far-right National Unity Party, made his first assessment of the election results and she said that her nearly 42 percent vote in the second round

was a victory and she will fight for the general election in June. In the general elections, if 10% of the voters who support Macron do not go to vote in June, there is a strong possibility that LePen will be elected (<https://www.dunya.com/dunya/fransada-secimin-galibi-macron-haberi-656084>). It is inconsistent with the general definitions of democracy that the decision of the voters, rather than the general and weighted opinion of the public, determines the outcome.

4. Conclusion and Solution

Emmanuel Macron was re-elected as president of France but a powerful showing by his far-right rival Marine Le Pen — her strongest ever — spells trouble for his second term and sends a warning shot to NATO and the European Union.

Considering the vote rates of the far-right party over the years, if the left-wing parties make the same mistake in the upcoming elections, a France headed by LE Pen is already on the way to becoming Europe's nightmare.

The president's victory is clouded by the fact that his rival — an anti-immigration, nationalist candidate who advocates banning the Islamic headscarf in public, has courted Russian President Vladimir Putin and wants to turn the European Union into an "alliance of European nations" — won more votes than any far-right candidate in the history of the French Republic. The division of the left parties, their inability to unite, and their strategic mistakes took the elections in France in a different direction, and the French voters were forced to make a compulsory choice between the two right parties, and as expected, more unwanted than two unwanted ones were eliminated.

Voting of voters should be compulsory except for force majeure such as tax liability.

Although the election itself does not mean democracy, it is an indispensable condition. The full fulfillment of this condition will only be possible if the real thoughts of the public are reflected in the ballot box. An important condition for the reflection of public opinion on the ballot box is that the majority goes to the ballot box. There is a need for a brand new approach in our understanding of democracy to prevent the votes of the voters from being considered worthless and wasted in the election results; Quantum Politics (Tuncer 2021).

If this kind of theatrical democracy game continues, trust in democracies will continue to be shaken, the peaceful environment will be damaged in the future and social fears and concerns will rightfully increase.

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