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Electoral Integrity and Election Monitoring in Turkey

Türkiye'de Seçim Bütünlüğü ve Seçim Gözlemi

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Abstract

The political polarization, populist discourses and development of risk society inside the global context have been causing damages on electoral integrity and legitimacy. Domestic election monitoring is a necessity in order to establish a fair, secure and transparent election process. In Turkey, there is one domestic monitoring organization, *Vote and Beyond* and a few non-governmental organizations trying to observe elections. Elections in Turkey have not been analyzed around the concept of electoral integrity and citizens are not aware of domestic monitoring. The aim of this paper is to present the concept of electoral integrity and underline the importance of domestic monitoring, especially in politically divided societies. Our two key questions for this article are: "how can domestic monitoring organizations help to establish electoral integrity and legitimacy in Turkey?", "what are the ideas of volunteers at *Vote and Beyond* on electoral integrity in Turkey?" According to these questions, this article aims to analyze the activities of *Vote and Beyond* aiming to develop electoral knowledge of Turkish people and legitimacy of the elections in Turkey and the impact of volunteers working within this NGO. Our analysis will be based on in-depth interviews with the founders and a pilot study of a survey realized with volunteers of *Vote and Beyond*. The first argument relies on the idea that social and political polarization and the development of global risks by populist and post-truth politics have negative impacts on electoral integrity. And the second argument is that election malpractices encourage more and more citizens to participate in election observation in order to prevent fraud and corruption during the elections. Within this approach, the article aims to make a theoretical and empirical contribution to electoral studies in Turkey.

Keywords: Electoral Integrity, Electoral Studies, Domestic Election Monitoring, Polarization, Post-Truth, Populism, Civil Society.

Öz

Siyasi kutuplaşmalar, popülist söylemlerin yükselişi ve küresel ölçekte risk toplumunun gelişimi, seçim bütünlüğü ve meşruiyetini olumsuz etkilemektedir. Bu bağlamda, yerel seçim gözlemi adil, güvenli ve şeffaf seçim süreçlerinin sağlanabilmesi için bir zorunluluk olmaktadır. Türkiye'de seçimleri gözlemleyen çeşitli sivil toplum örgütleri ve aktörleri olmakla birlikte, yerel seçim gözlem kuruluşu şekilde çalışan bir sivil toplum kuruluşu, Oy ve Ötesi, bulunmaktadır. Türkiye'de seçim çalışmaları seçim bütünlüğü kavramı üzerinde durmamakta ve vatandaşlar yerel seçim gözlemi konusunda bilgi sahibi değildirler. Bu makalenin amacı öncelikle seçim bütünlüğü kavramını tanımlamak ve yerel seçim gözleminin,

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özellikle de siyasi kutuplaşmanın görüldüğü toplumlarda, öneminin altını çizmektir. Bu bağlamda, iki araştırma sorusu bu makalenin temelini oluşturmaktadır: yerel seçim gözlem grupları Türkiye'de seçim bütünlüğü ve meşruiyetini nasıl sağlayabilir? Oy ve Ötesi gönüllülerinin Türkiye'deki seçim bütünlüğü üzerine düşünceleri nelerdir? Bu sorular çerçevesinde, makalede, Türkiye'de seçimlere dair bilginin gelişmesi ve seçim meşruiyetinin sağlanması için çalışan Oy ve Ötesi derneğinin çalışmaları ve gönüllülerinin seçim bütünlüğünün gelişimine katkısı incelenecektir. Çalışmanın verileri Oy ve Ötesi Derneği'nin iki yöneticisi ile gerçekleştirilmiş derinlemesine görüşmenin ve gönüllüler arasında gerçekleştirilmiş pilot anket çalışmasının verilerine dayanmaktadır. Çalışmanın ilk argümanı şöyledir: küresel ölçekte gözlemlenen toplumsal ve siyasi kutuplaşma, popülizm ve gerçek sonrası söylemlerle gelişen risk toplumu, seçim bütünlüğünü olumsuz etkilemektedir. İkinci argüman ise, seçimlerdeki yanlış uygulamalar, vatandaşları seçimlere ve secim gözlemine katılmaya teşvik etmektedir. Bu yaklaşım çerçevesinde, makale, Türkiye'deki seçim çalışmalarına teorik ve ampirik çerçevede bir katkı sağlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Seçim Bütünlüğü, Secim Çalışmaları, Yerel Seçim Gözlemi, Kutuplaşma, Gerçek Ötesi, Popülizm, Sivil Toplum.

Introduction

Election quality, electoral integrity and electoral malpractices have been important research areas for international academics and policymakers; however, these areas have not generated significant attention among the Turkish academic community. In a traditional context, this article emphasizes the linkage between electoral process and democratization; in other words, the processes of democratization by elections but also goes beyond the analysis of electoral integrity and the impact of populist discourses on electoral integrity in Turkey. According to civil society reports after elections (OSCE, 2017, Oy ve Otesi, 2017) and the perceptions of the electoral integrity index (Norris, *et al.*, 2016, 2017) Turkey, after 2015 and 2017 elections, has been listed on a scale between low to very low degree of electoral integrity with 48 point. Domestic election monitoring is a necessity in order to establish a fair, secure and transparent election process. In Turkey, there is one domestic monitoring organization, Oy ve Otesi (*Vote and Beyond)* and a few non-governmental organizations trying to observe elections. Election observation and electoral integrity are very new concepts for the Turkish political science literature and the specific case of Turkey has not been very often studied. Our two key questions for this article are: "how can domestic monitoring organization help to establish electoral integrity and legitimacy in Turkey?" and "what are the motivations and ideas of volunteers at *Vote and Beyond* on electoral integrity in Turkey?" With the ambition to answer these research questions, two studies were conducted. One was based on *Vote and Beyond*'s electoral activities, focusing on the information they are providing via the Internet site of the association and in-depth interviews conducted with two key persons of the association. The other is a qualitative survey realized among *Vote and Beyond*'s volunteers in order to reveal their socio-demographic and political profiles and their opinions about the electoral integrity process in Turkey. However, the data collection process had limitations; during the in-depth interviews we had broader, not very detailed information about

the association that showed the revealed attitudes of the professionals; during the qualitative survey, in order to find survey respondents, the collaboration between the researcher and *Vote and Beyond* was quite difficult. However, using the snowball method, we reached 22 responses to our survey that was used as a pilot study, not representing the general view of all volunteers. The survey and analysis of cross tables and research reports have been done via *Qualtrics* social survey service. Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods, this article aims to make a contribution to studies on electoral integrity as a new concept for the Turkish political science literature. The first argument relies on the idea that, in global context, social and political polarization and the development of global risks by populist and post-truth politics have negative impacts on electoral integrity. The second one is that election malpractices encourage more and more citizens to participate election observation in order to prevent fraud and corruption during the elections. Turkey needs regulations, measures and more active participation for developing its electoral integrity and democracy.

To examine these issues, this part introduces the main objectives, questions, arguments and methodology of the paper. Part two offers a literature review on electoral integrity, election monitoring and populism in order to put together our basic conceptual frameworks. Part three describes the organizational structure and functions of *Vote and Beyond* and emphasizes a comparative analysis of the literature on electoral integrity and populism with general survey results. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main findings and considers their implications. The study demonstrates that Turkey has more critical flaws in electoral integrity according to *Vote and Beyond* volunteers and the political discourse has been more and more oriented towards populism and nationalism. Thus, as a first domestic monitoring organization, *Vote and Beyond*, has assembled a large group of people, in contradiction with the general intention, and their growing existence within a civil society organization observing elections, especially during corrupted periods, will be a useful tool for the development of the democratization process by election and the electoral integrity in Turkey. Regarding the lack of academic writing and literature on the concept of electoral integrity (a sub-domain of electoral studies and political sociology) and election monitoring, this study has the objective to think on electoral integrity, how it has to be developed in Turkey in order have fair and transparent elections compatible with international electoral standards and to elaborate the civil engagement and election monitoring created by *Vote and Beyond*. After the Gezi park protests in 2013, civil engagement awareness has been raised in Turkey especially among the young generation. Successive elections that Turkey has faced since 2014 created an atmosphere of mistrust towards politics and politicians and a perception of democratic backsliding and political and social polarization (related with Kurdish question, unfair party competition, discussions on regime change, security and terror problems). Related with these issues, *Vote and Beyond* has been founded as the first domestic monitoring organization in Turkey that aims to establish free, fair and transparent elections and to enhance civil knowledge and engagement. Many researchers dealing with the concept of electoral integrity in the United States, Latin America and Africa created the link between trust in politics, perception of fair and transparent elections and electoral integrity, therefor they

work on domestic monitoring organizations and the perception of those by citizens. This study focuses on domestic electoral monitoring and electoral integrity, which constitute a new study era for Turkish political science and especially on *Vote and Beyond*'s activities and it's volunteers' experiences on election monitoring. The assemblage of this large group of people and their motivation during the electoral cycle may have a great impact on the development of Turkish political knowledge and culture.

Literature Review on Electoral Integrity, Election Monitoring and Populism

Electoral Integrity and Turnout

An election's quality[1] can be measured by multi-dimensional approaches, by models and methodologies, it might be defined as good or bad; free and fair, substantially free and fair, not free or fair; or strong or weak in some areas (Elklit and Reynolds, 2005, p.149, Elklit, 2012, Van Ham, 2015, 717, National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA), Quality of Elections (QED) and Index of Electoral Malpractice (IEM)). Three phases, before, during and after elections, are crucial moments in order to measure electoral quality. Before the election, an education is given to voters and domestic election observers during which they learn the regulation of the ballot, polling and counting, campaign regulation, appeal to new voters (Elklit and Renolds, 2005, p.150); during election is an active moment where all security measures must be applied and after election process is a time for evaluation and thinking about possible mistakes ever done before and during election process and it is a process of preparation for the new period. Elklit and Reynolds' (2005) election quality model indicates that for fledgling democracies legal framework, election management, access to ballot, polling, counting votes are essential; voter education and registration are important and campaign regulation and post-election procedures are desirable conditions that exist in Turkey's case. Besides, electoral quality and integrity is a concept embedded in political history and the polarization of the country.

Norris (2012a) indicates that the notion of electoral integrity helps to conceptualize many electoral problems both negatively and positively framed as 'fraud', 'malpractices', 'manipulation' or 'credible', 'transparent', 'free' and 'fair'. Electoral integrity has been studied by various scholars (Birch, 2008, 2010, Carreras and Irepoglu, 2013, McAllister, 2008, McAllister and White, 2001, Van Ham, 2015) and according to Norris (Norris, 2004, 2012, 2013, Norris *et al*., 2016, 2017) electoral integrity can be defined as follows:

> Agreed international principles and standards of elections, applying universally to all countries worldwide throughout the electoral cycle, including during the pre-electoral period, the campaign, and on polling day and its aftermath. Conversely, electoral malpractice refers to violations of electoral integrity.

1 See Sarah Birch. 2012. *Electoral Malpractice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Susan D. Hyde and Nikolay Marinov. *Codebook for National Elections across Democracy and Autocracy (NELDA)* Nov 10th 2011; Judith Kelley. 2010. *Quality of Elections Data Codebook*. http://sites.duke.edu/kelley/data/.

Regarding to her definition, all international standards and principles of elections, as normative standards, as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which enables international support to elections or electoral assistance; UN International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR of 1966); practical guidelines for electoral observers standardized by the OSCE *Election Observation Handbook* and adopted by the European Union and United-States; UN Convention against Corruption adopted in 2003, have been in used in many countries. These standards work on the one hand for the transparence, fairness, impartiality and independence of the elections and on the other hand, for equal and universal electoral rights of candidates, parties and voters and rights for freedom of expression (Norris, 2012(a), p.4-5).

Secondly, Norris states that electoral integrity problems in long-established democracies have been least damaging for their legitimacy because they have more established managerial bodies working according to professional standards; however, in democracies under-development or divided societies with low degree of trust to state officials, legal institutions or electoral authorities, violation of electoral integrity may cause more critical damage such as lawsuits against officials, protests or social cleavages (Birch: 2008, 315). However, Kelly (2008, p.223) argues that inviting international monitors shows the intention of the states to hold fair and free elections yet all government should not invite monitors. The need of a country for domestic or international monitors, the status of its electoral integrity, existing electoral violation or fraud are related to its political and sociological characteristics. Norris *et al.*, (2014b, p.792) suggest the same approach while constructing the PEI (The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index) that electoral integrity is related with contemporary levels of liberal democracy, levels of economic development, and countries' historical stock of democratic capital based on the length of democracy and process of democratization. Scholars (Norris, 2013a, Levitsky and Way, 2010, Schedler, 2006, Wigell, 2008, White and Herzog, 2016) have made the definition of hybrid regimes and electoral authoritarianism, in which we may also include Turkey:

> hybrid regimes hold flawed elections for national office which are characterized by serious restrictions of fundamental human rights and party competition. These defining features have been classified as 'competitive authoritarian regimes or 'electoral authoritarianism. (Norris, 2013a, p.571)

Facing the existing problems of electoral integrity, the international community founded independent election management bodies (Norris, 2012a, Kelley, 2008, Pran and Merloe, 2007, Van Ham and Lindberg, 2015) such as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA), the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES), the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and encouraged international and domestic monitoring organizations and observers[2]

2 See Neil Nevitte & Santiago A. Canton (1997), "The Role of Domestic Observers", Journal of Democracy 8(3), pp.47-61; Alexander Boniface Makulilo (2011), "'Watching the watcher': an evaluation of local election observers in Tanzania", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49, pp.241262; Laila El Baradei (2012) "The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Monitoring Elections: Lessons Learned for the New Egypt", *International Journal of*

like the Organization of Social and Economic Cooperation (OSCE), the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), and the Organization of American States (OAS). Scholars have discussed the effect and non-effect of election management bodies; non-effect of these bodies is related to the different types of democracies and regimes with low and high quality of governments. As a conclusion, authors suggest that in low levels of democracy independent electoral management bodies have strong impact on electoral integrity and monitoring elections (Van Ham and Lindberg, 2015, p.455-469).

Finally, Norris underlines that electoral integrity is a long-term process or even a cycle, which involves pre-election, during election and post-election processes. As the Turkish case shows, the most visible electoral violations or illegal acts happening on polling-day or during the counting process. Our aim in this paper is not to deliver a measurement of electoral integrity specific to Turkey. However, by referring to previous studies on electoral integrity, researches on perceptions of electoral integrity index and data of our pilot survey, my objective is to make an analysis about the actual status of electoral integrity in Turkey, show what *Vote and Beyond*'s volunteers perspective offers on electoral integrity and the contribution of the first domestic monitoring organization, *Vote and Beyond*.

Election monitoring also functions as a cycle. It emerged after the Cold War from the need of democracy, fair elections and human rights. The international environment's change (instrumentalism and norms) encouraged the demand for monitoring. The dramatic increase in election monitoring in non-established democracies, 28% in 1989, 44% in 1990, 70% in 1998 and 81,5% in 2004 indicates the search of governments for legitimacy and monitoring has become a governmental norm for these democracies. (Kelley, 2008, p.226-30).

In the process of analyzing electoral integrity, and this cycling process, as electoral monitors and observers have a crucial impact, political candidate, parties and media may also cause damage to free and fair elections. Unequal media coverage of candidates, miscounted votes, misconducting electoral laws during the elections are some of the examples. The approaches of electoral management bodies (governmental institutions) during and after the vote and vote counting process; the role mass media for free competition and the role of international and nation election monitors overseeing the hole integrity of the process, provide information about electoral integrity (McAllister and White, 2015, p.80). However, in developing democracies, like Turkey, voting is the first act that involves ordinary citizens to their only political engagement. Thus, we can observe a high level of participation and engagement to elections but this is not necessarily indicating a high level of electoral integrity. As mentioned in our data, the motivation of political participation of a specific population fraction is based on stopping electoral violations. When it comes to fraud, violation and corruption, participation and engagement in electoral

Public Administration, 35(9), pp.587-602; Sharon F. Lean (2007) "Democracy Assistance to Domestic Election Monitoring Organizations: Conditions for Success", *Democratization*, 14(2), pp.289-312; Arturo Santa-Cruz (2005), "Constitutional Structures, Sovereignty, and the Emergence of Norms: The Case of International Election Monitoring", *Interna*

processes increase. As Birch (2008, p.307) states "possible violations of electoral integrity make it even more probable that ordinary citizens will be 'tuned into' the election as a process". As our data indicates, most of all volunteers of civil society organizations that observe the elections have been motivated to participate in the election monitoring process because they think that there are fraud, violation and corruption in Turkish elections until ten years.

Moreover, the more electoral integrity develops, the more public support for democracy increases. Martinez I Coma and Trinh (2016, p.2-3) argue that when elections are characterized by electoral integrity voter turnout increases. According to the authors, the relation between electoral integrity and turnout at elections can be understood by three reasons: first, we should consider the quality of the elections; second, electoral integrity and turnout are crucial for the legitimacy of democracies thus electoral integrity and legitimacy have to be in positive correlation with turnout; the third reason is related to the individual perception and nation-wide level of electoral integrity. At the individual level, the decreased level of electoral integrity may negatively influence an individual's decision to vote (Birch, 2010) and at the nation-wide level, the increase of fraud or violation causes decreases in turnout (McCann and Dominguez, 1998, p.499, Simpser, 2012, p.793, Carreras and Irepoglu, 2013, p.609). Several researches point out the relations between the basic notions of this article, such as electoral integrity and populism, electoral integrity and turnout and electoral integrity and corruption perception of citizens. These pioneer researches helped us to rethink on electoral integrity in Turkey and place Turkey's experience amongst other countries. As Norris (2014) states, there is a positive relation between perception of high-level electoral integrity and electoral participation. Citizens, who think that elections are fair and free, are more likely to vote and in the contrary a negative perception on electoral integrity encourages the protest (Coffe, 2017, p. 282). Carreras and Irepoglu (2013, p. 609) indicate that trust in elections is another important component for political participation and all misconduct does not necessarily lead to a decrease in turnout, which also corresponds with the case of Turkey. Authors also argue that ordinary citizens participate in the elections when they perceive the impact of their vote to the results of the elections; therefore, the appearance of the elections to the people is the most important thing. When citizens see that elections are unfair they do not participate to the elections because they feel that their vote has no impact to policies (Carreras and Irepoglu, 2013, p.611). According to our analysis on civil society volunteers in Turkey, contrary to the studies focusing on established democracies, I may suggest that there is a linkage between electoral integrity and turnout in elections. However, this correlation is negative: the more electoral integrity decreases, the more turnout increases. In our case on Turkey, citizens who perceive that the elections are fair are likely to go to the polls. However, citizens who perceived a downfall in electoral security or integrity are also more likely to participate to the elections in order to prevent malpractices.

Electoral integrity perception is also linked to political sophistication, knowledge and socialization. The political socialization process may give some ideas about the level of support to elections but it is not necessarily sufficient to explain if people accept the electoral integrity or not in a specific period of time. Even if political socialization provides a benchmark of support, it is not possible to argue that the level of support to elections or electoral integrity remain unchanged through time

especially for the case of Turkey which faced more than a dozen of national elections (Bowler, et. al. 2015, p.2). On the other hand electoral malpractices may reduce legitimacy to political actors, trust in institutions like the parliament and parties and satisfactory performance of democracy, and national community (Norris, 2013a, p.570)

Klassen's (2015) study shows the demographic determinants of perceived electoral integrity such as age, gender, education, and income. According to its results, younger individuals have more negative views on electoral integrity than older individuals; individuals who have a higher income respond more likely positive to electoral integrity in developing countries. People with university degrees in developed democracies with low corruption have more positive views for elections instead in developing democracies with a high corruption level and people with primary education have a more positive approach to elections and electoral integrity. Finally considering regional differences, women are more negative towards electoral integrity than men with the improvement of nation levels of democracy, corruption and development.

Monitoring and Fraud

Related to electoral integrity and turnout, domestic and international election monitoring has been studied by many researches (Nevitte and A.Canton, 1997, Lean, 2007, Igarashi, 2008, Makulilo, 2011, El Baradei, 2012, Ichino and Matthias, 2012) focusing especially on established and under-development democracies such as African or Latin American democracies. Election monitoring and being engaged to this work has advantages both to society in general and to individuals who take part. It encourages a stronger associational life, enlarges the civic space by the network of volunteers, and helps to build one of the major components of democratic stability which is "social capital" defined by Robert Putnam (Nevitte and A.Canton, 1997, p.58). Monitoring is also necessary for the democratic transition and consolidation, raising awareness and knowledge on civil rights and civic participation of ordinary citizens. As this study focuses on domestic election monitoring organization in Turkey, I may refer to some basic definitions of this concept. Domestic monitoring is a non-partisan monitoring of elections by civil associations or networks of the home country. DMOs observe and report the malpractices and qualities of elections; hence, they do not exercise formal authority over the elections. The term includes national actors whose major area of activity is the elections. DMOs may be discrete organizations created for a specific purpose of monitoring elections or networks of existing organizations that create staff infrastructure and participate to observe elections (Lean, 2007, p.290). Election monitoring also means following and observing the election process, ensuring that elections are conducted without any violations and in accordance with governing laws and regulations. An integral election monitoring process has to pass through three main stages: before, during and after the elections. It may involve in the pre-election phase diverse activities such as following up on media coverage of elections, monitoring election spending, and checking voter lists, plus training volunteers on the monitoring process (El Baradei, 2012, p.588). We adopted a closer perspective to Baradei's (2012, p.592) research on activists who worked on election

monitoring during Egypt's elections. In this study the following points were taken into account: the organization of monitoring work, obstacles and challenges that they encountered and their recommendations about developing election monitoring. During my study I also observed these points regarding to the responses that I had from the volunteers of *Vote and Beyond* but the idea of an existing electoral fraud in Turkey was the main motivation of volunteers in participating to the DMO, *Vote and Beyond*, in our case.

Electoral fraud or corruption is not a natural phenomenon and Maley & Maley's study (2016) indicates that electoral fraud or corruption is neither over the human control nor a consequence of underdevelopment. It is a conscious behavior of actors who try to demolish a process in order to make it work for their benefit. For a legitimate election, election process should be conducted according to rules, procedures and standards. Different actors or channels may portray fraud or corruption during an election: first, it may be reported by party agents, domestic or international observers, the media, or voters themselves; second, fraud may be understood by the condition of materials such as ballot boxes, materials returned from polling stations, or even the completed ballot papers themselves; third, fraud may be understood from electoral statistics or reports. Fraud may not be confirmed or accepted by any state officials in un-established democracies; however, as Maley&Maley state, "a 'clean' election does not guarantee legitimacy, but a corrupted election may well lead to elite fragmentation and a consequent regime crisis" (Maley and Maley, 2016, p.654-57-59). Even with the participation of civil society in elections, the electoral integrity may not be accomplished. The hypothesis that civil society or all civic organizations serve to the development or consolidation of democracy may be falsified. Lean (2007, p.294) suggests that if state institutions are not strong enough, there is a social polarization, past interventions and there is lack of trust in the society, even a strong civic organization may not promote democracy.

Populism

A vast academic literature exists on populism reflecting different approaches from all over the world (Panizza, 2005, Mény&Surel, 2002, Mudde, 2009, Filc, 2011, Fieschi&Heywood, 2004, Boily, 2005) and especially the latest political developments such as the vote for Brexit, the election of Donald Trump in the USA and the rise of extreme-right wing political tendencies have attracted attention to populism (Kenny, 2017). The neopopulist movement started in the 1970s in Europe with right wing and extreme right wing politics, anti-immigration and xenophobic tendencies (Poblete, 2015, p.202). Populism is based on the idea that people are constructed as political actors and it can be understood by an anti-status quo discourse, which is its essential dimension, dividing the political sphere between the people and its others (Panizza, 2005, p.3). The sovereignty of the people and populist identities are at the heart of populism against all kind of established power and social, political, economic structures. Likewise, populism is not only a reaction against power structures but also an appeal to an accepted authority (Canovan, 1999, p.4). As Lacau (1977, p.143, Stavrakakis, 2004, p.254) points out, by a poststructuralist approach, populism indicates an antagonism between popular elements and the ideology of the dominant

bloc. From a political approach populism is related to the existence of a charismatic political leader using neoliberal policies with broad social support. Poststructuralist approach comprehends populism as political reasoning and regarding to this perspective, a rupture of status quo, the production of anomie and dislocation may give way to populist tendencies (Poblete, 2015, p.202-4). As Canovan (2004, p.242) states, populism is broadly placed on the right of the political spectrum, emerged in established democracies and has the objective to challenge mainstream parties and policies. Populism also refers to a political style, rhetoric and organization and it tries to offer solutions "to complex political problems appealing to the common sense of the people and denouncing the intellectualism of the established elites" as Abts and Rummens (2007, p.407) suggest. Mudde (2004, p.543) adds to this idea that populism says something showing the relationship between the elite and the people and he defines the ideology as follows:

> an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite', and which argues that politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people.

This relationship, according to Mudde, indicates that populism has two oppositions: the elite and pluralism. By motivating an anti-establishment and anti-elite discourse, a simpler language has been preferred by leaders based on specific issues of the society. Canovan (2002) adds at this point that populism has to be evaluated as a *thin-centered ideology* that does not provide a general comprehension of a society but gives priority to key concepts of politics and is concerned with the structure of power in a society. Referring to Canovan's (1999) ideological approach of populism, Abts and Rummens (2007, p.409) define populism as follows: "*a thin-centered ideology which advocates the sovereign rule of the people as a homogeneous body*". Mudde (2004, p.544) also underlines this definition of populism as a thin-centered ideology, which has not the same level of intelligence but it can be combined with other ideologies. Stanley (2008, p.95) argues in the same way that populism is a 'thin' ideology that can be combined with established full ideologies; its description as a 'thin' ideology indicates that it can stand alone as a strong political ideology able to find solutions to crucial political questions with a coherent programme although it is not able to offer comprehensive policy. In populism, the people and their place are identified as the main subject of politics; however, other concepts are also interrelated with it: homogeneous units 'the people' and 'the elite'; their antagonistic relationship; popular sovereignty; valorization of 'the people' and negative connotation of 'the elite' (Stanley, 2008, p.102). According to the theorization of populist ideology, recent researches indicate that populism has been triggered by nativist, angry, xenophobic political discourses of strong political leaders. As we can cite from Norris and Grömping's study (2017, p.24), they show the evolution of populist tendencies:

> Across Europe, the average share of the vote for populist parties in national and European parliamentary elections has more than doubled since the 1960s, from around 5.1% to 13.2%. During the same era, their share of seats has tripled, from 3.8% to 12.8%.

Referring to our data and literature review on populism, we can assume that populist leaders or trends adopting year-by-year, anti-establishment or anti-authority rhetoric and actions may damage free and fair elections; may weaken trust in political institutions and processes violating international standards of electoral integrity. Populists attack 'the established' standards of elections by vague promises through simplistic slogans with a general appeal to the *volonté général* of the people. As Norris and Grömping state (2017, p.28-9) "in hybrid regimes, populist authoritarians often reinforce their power through fraud and corruption, undermining human rights, and restricting party competition". Turkey's constitutional referendum on 16 April 2017 was strongly criticized by OSCE observers and PEI index due to the imprisonment of thousands of citizens, state control of the media, and limits on civil society organizations". This negative effect of populism is compatible with Canovan's (1999) argument based on the idea that populism may be understood as a 'pathology of democracy' (a shadow cast by democracy).

In Turkey we can observe the cohabitation of neoliberal and conservative ideologies. The very existence of neoliberal tendencies may be understood by the adoption of political discourse based on biopolitics and populism. In order to discipline and govern a heterogeneous population, political leaders in Turkey have always had the objective to gain the legitimacy of a diversified society by using biopolitical and populistic discourses. Two parts of this neoliberal approach, the people and the market are primordial elements of these discourses. The political authority aims to involve some of the social domains, which were not included in the past into the domain of the market with an economical reasoning, such as state, family, citizenship, healthcare. By the implication of these domains into the economic market, the political authority has the objective to establish a pragmatist and progressive control over the population in general (Küçük and Özselçuk, 2015). The Turkish version of populism has its source from this vision that is why we can define it as a populist pragmatism hat places the "service to the people" at the heart of its functioning. Service of the state offered to the collectivity has the objective to satisfy the people more than the previous governments did. This service and satisfaction especially target the poor and discredited social fractions of the society who were decentered from the economic and social development by previous governments. In return to these services, the state aims to have the loyalty of the people and the reproduction of basic national values. Pragmatist vision of the state creating its own group of people, loyal and productive according to some specific values, encourages more and more the division of Turkish society.

Vote and Beyond and Volunteers of a Civic Engagement

The concept of civil society may be defined as the relationship between the public and the private spheres (Cohen 1999, 66, Calhoun 1999, Janoski 1998, 16, Habermas 1989 [1962], Seligman 2000, p.13), a three dimensional nature of the relationships between the sphere of political decision-making (state or government), the market and the non – governmental public sphere (Müller,

2006, 312). Referring to Jefrrey Alexander's "umbrella-like" concept, civil society merging institutions and spheres outside the state such as public opinion, political parties, public and private associations create relationship, trust and social co-operation (Müller, 2006, p.313).

Election times constitute a crucial moment during which the social co-operation arrives to its peak because especially in countries with high degree of electoral participation, ordinary citizens, with access to political process, attribute more attention to this opportunity. As civil society and its functioning is related to the development of public sphere, the election process may not be separated from the formation of public opinion (Levitt, 2014, p.70). As mentioned by international organizations, to pursue the democratic electoral rights, people must have the freedom to associate and form organizations[3] in forms of political parties and civil society organizations. These types of organizations help to aggregate people's interest through participation in public and political affairs. Association of citizens, in order to promote and defend their right to vote and to develop electoral integrity, takes the form of election monitoring organizations (Pran and Merloe, 2007, p.7). Çakmaklı's study (2015) made a very good contribution to the development of active citizenship and the implications of civil society organizations (CSOs) to the process of learning citizenship in Turkey. Our study may be considered a follow-up research to this study, sharing a common idea that active citizenship and engagement to civil society may reduce the division of the society along political, ethnic and religious lines and the unitary and nationalistic structure of citizenship opening a way to diversity and tolerance. We observe in Turkey a passive citizenship, embedded in the republican tradition, the citizens' duties are defined by a passive attachment to the state (Çakmaklı, 2005, p.422). According to Çakmaklı's study, an engagement into the CSOs develops a learning environment, which triggers active citizenship practices; helps to gain self-confidence; helps to increase political knowledge and competence that develops self-actualization and civic action skills (taking responsibilities and aiding others) and by the development of tolerance and empathy social coherence can be achieved (Çakmaklı, 2005, p.432). This example found a body in our case study, *Vote and Beyond* and volunteers of this CSO indicate that Turkey is on its way to develop electoral knowledge, tolerance, empathy and social coherence.

The *Vote and Beyond* association was found on April 24th 2014, as the first and only domestic monitoring organization in Turkey, by young volunteers totally independent from political parties in order to establish and develop democratic and transparent electoral consciousness. They worked as volunteer observers and ballot counters to keep the ballots safe during the following elections in Turkey: March 30th 2014 local elections (they were only based in Istanbul at the beginning), August 10th 2014 presidential elections, June 7th 2015 general elections, November 1st 2015 repeated general elections (in 143 districts all over Turkey), April 16th 2017 referendum for presidential system, with a limited support to vote count because of the security issues. *Vote and Beyond* has three missions: first, develop and enable the organization of

3 See, Article 20, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and Article 22 I*nternational Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* concerning the right to freedom of association

volunteer monitoring of ballots; second, become a pressure group to settle the malfunctions in the election system and third, realize this work by developing their social network. The mission of the association is to develop projects in order to develop knowledge on participative democracy in Turkey. By doing so, they aim to help to create a social unity for people from different social fractions, different beliefs and opinions working for a common purpose. The organization type is based on the idea to create a democratic, transparent election process and initiate the people to scrutiny and ballot monitoring, which are their constitutional rights. They aim to explain to citizens the importance of civic surveillance in local administration and do campaigns for clarifying ambiguous definitions and practices of legal regulations about elections. Their principle values are independence, fairness, freeness, complementarity, hard work, proactivity, protecting information, looking for social interest and ethical behavior (https://oyveotesi.org/hakkinda/biz-kimiz/). The first motivation of the organization was created by the very aftermath of Gezi park protests realized in May 2013 in Istanbul, in order to transmit the energy of this social movement into a concrete public sphere.

Regarding the Turkish constitutional system, election observers have the right to be at the ballots by representing a political party or an independent candidate (Article 25) and the vote count is public. Responsible for the ballots or election, observers cannot be working without representing a party or an independent candidate for the elections. For this reason, volunteers were representing a political party which may not necessarily be the party or the candidate that they vote for. Identity cards to election observers have to be given by political parties. During their first election in 2014, *Vote and Beyond* asked for the permission of the distribution of these cards from six political parties (Nationalistic Movement party, Republican People's party, People's Democratic party, Nation party, Anatolian party and Liberal Democrat party) and they were given the permission to have observers' identity cards from political parties to give to their volunteers during the election day. However, after the elections on August 10th the Nationalistic Movement party withdrew the distribution of the election observers' identity cards. By this regulation, we can understand that volunteers of *Vote and Beyond* take their election observer identity card from *Vote and Beyond.* Volunteers are doing the independent observation not in the name of the association but in the name of the all election process by having a political party's card, even if they do not vote for this party. This function also indicates that they are in the political process without having necessarily any political ties. Their job is close to political sphere but for the protection and continuity of political values. The election monitoring system of *Vote and Beyond* is focused on two phases, the first phase is at the ballot box; in other words, the scrutiny and the second phase is parallel vote counting. The process on the ballot box consists of voting, counting, monitoring the process regarding the regulations made by the High Council of Election and finally intervene if necessary. The second phase, which is parallel vote counting, is recounting the votes regarding the final official election record. Observers on the ballots have the final election record, they transfer it to T3 system (Turkey Record Confirmation) and the transferred document is controlled by three different *Vote and Beyond* center volunteers. If a mistake in official records is approved during the control process, this mistake is shared with political parties and the objection has to be made

by them to the High Council of Election. *Vote and Beyond* locates the mistake but it does not realize the objection. A malpractice during the local elections in 2014 in Istanbul, Kağıthane, was determined by *Vote and Beyond* and communicated with political parties. After the objection of a political party, this malpractice was corrected.

As similar organizations around the world, the integral election monitoring process by a domestic civil society organization, in this case *Vote and Beyond*, takes into account all processes of elections: pre-election (mobilize and train volunteers, audit voters lists, media coverage, prepare reports); on election day (watch and document all aspects of polling process, conduct parallel vote count, prepare reports); post elections (follow up on complaints and pledges, train volunteers, prepare reports); outcome (political awareness level raised, election monitoring regulations adopted); impact (more democratic regime and culture is developed). One of the post-election work of *Vote and Beyond* is to create a project named 'Regional Scaling Map'. This map aims to determine the needs of citizens in neighborhoods, reporting and satisfying this need and by doing so it aims to start a bilateral dialogue. This project has the objective to develop and enhance local policies.

Before giving my pilot study results about *Vote and Beyond*'s volunteers, it is important to show the latest scores of the PEI experts according to the June 2015 general elections of Turkey and the level of trust in Turkey by several studies. The PEI experts rated the November polls with a PEI Index of 48 (the global average is 56). These low scores indicate continued issues in Turkish electoral processes and politics. The electoral situation in Turkey is characterized by high polarization and negative campaigning. The media dimension of the PEI was evaluated with a score of 25 and 28 respectively (global mean: 47), including problems such as news favoring the governing party or unequal access to political broadcasting. PEI experts showed that electoral laws are unfair to small parties (4.9 and 4.6) and agreed that electoral laws favored the governing party (4.17 and 4.15) (Norris *et al.* 2016, p.53). Regarding the evaluation of the sub-dimensions of electoral integrity by country, Turkey was ranked 112th with 48 points: the lower scores can be seen for media coverage (27), campaign finance (26), and electoral law (31); and highest scores for election results (68), vote count (67), and electoral procedures (63) and electoral authoritarianism (50) points. (Norris and Grömping, 2017, p.34). Election evaluation reports from several institutions like IPSOS, OSCE or *Vote and Beyond* indicate concerns about electoral integrity in Turkey. IPSOS (2017) published its report in the aftermath of 2017 referendum. Opinions about fairness of the campaign period according to yes/no votes are as follows: of the overall voters (n=1501), 52% think that the referendum campaign period was not fair, 44% think that it was fair and 4% had no answer. According to yes/no dispersion, 77% of yes voters thought that the election was fair, 18% not fair and 5% no answers versus 87% of no voters thought that the election was not fair, 9% fair and 4% no answers. OSCE's 2017 pre and post referendum reports declared same concerns about conducting the referendum under a state of emergency, and shared findings about the political situation, referendum's legal framework and its administration, campaign and its financing, media, and citizens and international observers. In contrary to previous election, representatives of some civil

society organizations had to refrain or limit their observation efforts during the referendum due to political and security situations. And finally, as many researchers indicated, trust and democratic capital are important components in order to understand the turnout and even electoral integrity. The triggering point is the very low trust of Turkish citizen towards elections and their idea about the unfair situation of elections. In 2007 this idea was 27% and rose to 43% in 2015 and the level of trust is changing regarding to political party attachment. 83% of AKP voters thought that the elections were fair, on the contrary this perception was around 26% amongst CHP voters (Çarkoğlu *et al.,* 2015). A recent research that is conducted every year by Kadir Has University shows that the highest percentage of trust is for the presidency with 17,2 %, which is followed by 10,5% for the army; 11,3% for police department; 9,1% for the general assembly; 11,5% for the government; 6,1% for judiciary; 3,8% for civil society organizations; 3,4% for universities and political parties and 2,3% for the media (Türkiye Sosyal-Siyasal Eğilimler Araştırması, 2016).

Findings and Discussion

The following cross-tables aim to show the relations of dependent variables like electoral integrity, engagement in civil society and protests or boycotts and importance of elections. These relations can justify the need of the existence of a developed civil society and a developed electoral integrity in Turkey. As shown in the literature review, electoral integrity constitutes a very important concept in order to study the electoral democracy of a country and it is also related with political culture and engagement. Perception of electoral integrity is closely linked to political sophistication, high level of political and civil engagement and political knowledge. In Turkey we can face a development of active citizenship however Turkish citizens are not frequently showing their preferences by protesting on the streets. Most of the volunteers, who are not strongly engaged in civil society organizations other than *Vote and Beyond,* think that elections in Turkey are not fair. As after the referendum for the Presidential system in 2017, more than half of our population thought that the most important election conducted in Turkey was the presidential elections (77,27%). The ideas of people who are engaged in civil society, on electoral integrity show interesting results. We can assume from the data that our population, volunteers of *Vote and Beyond*, were not strongly engaged in other civil society organizations (40,91% work for CSOs and 59,09% does not) and they think the media does not provide true information during election times; that elections are not fair in Turkey; they do not have a clear idea about some people who do not have the right to vote are in electoral lists; they disagree about the equal and fair campaign options of all candidates and they agree that social media is exposed to unbalanced and untrue information. On the contrary, our population, who has a negative impression about the electoral integrity in Turkey and is not strongly engaged in civil society, is mostly open to participate to a boycott, protest or sign a petition in order to give its support to an issue (90,91%).

Table 1. Fairness of election and engagement in a civil society organization

		Are you engaged as member or volunteer into another civil society organization different than Vote and Beyond		
		Yes	No	Total
Elections are fair in Turkey	Strongly disagree	4	8	12
	Disagree	3	2	5
	Neither agree or disagree	2	2	4
	Agree	0	1	1
	Strongly agree	0	0	0
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	9	13	22

Table 2. Election importance and engagement in protest/boycott

		Do you participate to a petition, protest march or meeting when you want to give your support to an issue		
		Yes	No	Total
If there are more than one elections at the same time, which one do you consider the most important	Presidential	15	2	17
	Parliament	4	0	4
	Local elections	1	0	1
	Total	20	2	22

Table 3. Electoral integrity and engagement in a civil society organization

		Are you engaged as member or volunteer into another civil society organization different than Vote and Beyond		
		Yes	No	Total
During the election process I can provide true information through the media	Strongly disagree	5	8	13
	Disagree	3	4	7
	Neither agree or disagree	1	0	1
	Agree	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	0	1	1
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	9	13	22
Elections are fair in every region of Turkey	Strongly disagree	5	10	15
	Disagree	4	3	7
	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0
	Agree	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	0	0	0
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	9	13	22

Some people who do not have the right to vote are in the election lists	Strongly disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	0	1
	Neither agree or disagree	0	2	2
	Agree	5	3	8
	Strongly agree	2	6	8
	Do not know	1	2	3
	Total	9	13	22
All candidates participating in the elections can run equal and fair campaigns in Turkey	Strongly disagree	5	9	14
	Disagree	3	3	6
	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0
	Agree	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	0	1	1
	Do not know	1	0	1
	Total	9	13	22
During the election time, social media is exposed to unbalanced and unfair news	Strongly disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	0	1	1
	Neither agree or disagree	2	2	4
	Agree	4	2	6
	Strongly agree	3	8	11
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	9	13	22

Table 4. Being engaged in a protest/boycott and electoral integrity

		Do you participate in a petition, protest march or meeting when you want to give your support to an issue		
		Yes	No	Total
Elections are fair in Turkey	Strongly disagree	11	1	12
	Disagree	5	0	5
	Neither agree or disagree	3	1	4
	Agree	1	0	1
	Strongly agree	0	0	0
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	20	2	22
I can provide real information from the media during election time	Strongly disagree	12	1	13
	Disagree	7	0	7
	Neither agree or disagree	0	1	1
	Agree	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	1	0	1
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	20	2	22

Elections are fair in every region of Turkey	Strongly disagree	14	1	15
	Disagree	6	1	7
	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0
	Agree	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	0	0	0
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	20	2	22
Some people who do not have the right to vote are in the election lists	Strongly disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	0	1
	Neither agree or disagree	2	0	2
	Agree	7	1	8
	Strongly agree	8	0	8
	Do not know	2	1	3
	Total	20	2	22
All candidates participating in the elections can run equal and fair campaigns in Turkey	Strongly disagree	13	1	14
	Disagree	6	0	6
	Neither agree or disagree	0	0	0
	Agree	0	0	0
	Strongly agree	1	0	1
	Do not know	0	1	1
	Total	20	2	22
During the election time social media is exposed to unbalanced and unfair news	Strongly disagree	0	0	0
	Disagree	1	0	1
	Neither agree or disagree	3	1	4
	Agree	6	0	6
	Strongly agree	10	1	11
	Do not know	0	0	0
	Total	20	2	22

We can see from our data on education and engagement into civil society organization and protests that most of the PhD holders (31,82%) are active in civil society organizations besides *Vote and Beyond*. When the education level is lower (bachelor 31,82% or master's 36,36%) the participation in civil society decreases. We can assume from our data that there is a positive correlation between education and electoral integrity level; the higher the education level, the lower the idea for electoral integrity. Even our data have a high level of education; their political views are quite heterogeneous: around 54% of our population define themselves as socialist, social democrat, leftist or democrat; nevertheless, there are definitions also like apolitical, liberal democrat, Gezi generation, liberal left, laic. However, these nonhomogeneous political identities can mostly be categorized as the left side of the political spectrum.

Volunteers had four main functions; they worked as chief of ballot board, member of ballot board, observer, and they confirmed vote count by the T3 system. 8% of our population worked as chief of ballot board, 72% as observer, 20% counting votes by T3. The motivation of the volunteers participating *Vote and Beyond* is also significant for the analysis of the electoral integrity in

Turkey. They can be analyzed under sub-concepts, which are primordial for democracy and civil society such as social-cohesion, electoral fraud, electoral security, electoral integrity, rise of political awareness. Following quotes from the semi-structured survey question (*What was you motivation to join Vote and Beyond?*) aim to indicate the existing aspiration for electoral integrity, social cohesion and development of democracy in Turkey:

> *"Feeling of cohesion after Gezi protests"*
>
> *"Preventing electoral fraud"*
>
> *"Enabling ballot security"*
>
> *"Being sure of a fair election"*
>
> *"I decided to be politically active after Gezi"*
>
> *"Enable fair vote counting and making a contribution to free elections"*
>
> *"I had concerns about the stealing of the votes, that's why I wanted to be active"*
>
> "*Prevent fraud from the electoral process and vote counting and make a contribution to democracy and well-being of the country"*

The table below aims to show the experiences and facts observed by *Vote and Beyond's* volunteers during pre-electoral period, campaign period and polling day and its aftermath.

Table 1. Periods of elections

Pre-electoral period	Campaign period	Polling day and its aftermath
All candidates can run an equal and fair campaign (63,64% strongly disagree, 27,27% disagree)	I can have real information from the media (59,09% strongly disagree, 31,82% disagree)	77,27% of volunteers are not threatened with violence at the polls. However 22,73% faced some problems (giving permission to some citizen who did not have the right to vote or was not on the lists, entering voting booth with cell phones, trying to orient the votes of older and handicapped people, accepting invalid ballots)
79,17% participated to *Vote and Beyond*'s training	Elections are fair in every region of Turkey (68,18% strongly disagree, 31,82% disagree)	95,45% participated to the vote count after polling
Elections are fair in Turkey (54,55% strongly disagree, 22,73% disagree)	Some citizens who do not have the right to vote are on electoral lists (Strongly agree and agree 72,72%)	Votes are counted unfairly (invalid votes are approved by chief of ballot box, observers were restrained from monitoring)
I knew *Vote and Beyond* from my social network (50%), from internet (45,45%), from TV/ newspaper (4,55%)	Social media may provide unrealistic information (27,27% agree, 50% strongly agree)	68,18% of volunteers do not have any relations with Vote and Beyond after the elections

Table 1 on perception of electoral integrity during election periods indicates that electoral integrity in international standards and norms has not been ensured in Turkey. As researches on

electoral integrity point out, election is a process and for a fair and transparent elections people has to work before elections to create public knowledge about elections, political context and candidates; during campaign period in order to ensure the transmission of true information by the conventional and social media and the access of every citizens who has the right to vote to the ballots and finally during the polling day to create a fair voting and vote count. Importance of the elections has to be perceived according to this cyclic situation of electoral integrity and citizens who are engaged in civil society activities has to work for fair, equal and transparent elections in Turkey. In populist thinking, states have the idea to serve the people and aim to gain the loyalty of it. In Turkey, populist discourses of politicians often reinforce their power through fraud and corruption, undermining human rights, and restricting party competition by valorizing the people as the very subject of the politics. Hence, the problems faced during the polling day can be defined by the Weberian concept of legitimate violence of the state.

Conclusion

This study has made a contribution to the political sociology and electoral studies research literature by analyzing the actual status of electoral integrity according to the views of volunteers, who worked for a domestic monitoring organization that is established in 2014 for the first time in the political history of Turkey. The results shown here present just the preliminary analysis of the available data and we aim that further research will expand our data about electoral integrity in Turkey.

Only election monitoring bodies, especially organized by the civil society, can not find the way to develop electoral integrity processes in developing democracies. Electoral integrity is a cyclic process by the inclusion of diverse actors and it may be damaged by unequal media coverage of candidates, miscounted votes, misconducting electoral laws during the election. In Turkey, voting is the first act that involves ordinary citizens to political engagement. Thus, we can observe a high level of participation and engagement to elections but this does not necessarily indicate a high level of electoral integrity nor political knowledge. As mentioned by our data, the motivation of political participation and electoral observation of a specific population fraction (volunteers of *Vote and Beyond*) is based on stopping electoral violations. According to our analysis on civil society volunteers in Turkey, contrary to the studies focusing on established democracies, I may suggest that there is a linkage between electoral integrity and turnout in elections. However, this correlation is negative: the more electoral integrity decreases, the more turnout increases. Turkish citizens who perceive that the elections are fair are likely to go to the polls however citizens who perceived downfall in electoral security or integrity are also more likely to participate to the elections in order to prevent malpractices. Citizens' political knowledge, socialization and general level of trust in a country have also an impact on turnout. Turkey is a country with very high level of turnout (around 86%) but there is a very low level of trust and political knowledge is an open subject to new researches. Following this case, there is a negative correlation between perceived electoral integrity and turnout in elections. The more level of trust and the more

electoral integrity perception decrease, there is a high level of electoral participation. Referring to our data, younger individuals (80%) have more negative views on electoral integrity than older individuals; people with university degrees in developing democracies with high corruption have more negative views for elections; women (80%) are more concerned about electoral integrity than men (%20). Engagement in civil society organizations encourages a stronger associational life, enlarges the civic space by the network of volunteers, and helps to build "social capital".

However, civil society organization is not a *sine qua non* for an accomplished electoral integrity. If state institutions are not strong enough, there is a social polarization, past interventions and there is lack of trust in the society, and in this case, even a strong civic organization may not promote democracy. However, active citizenship and engagement to civil society may reduce the division of the society along political, ethnic and religious lines and may lead to diversity and tolerance.

Three key findings emerge from the study: firstly, not only a civil society organization may be a total necessity for the development of electoral integrity but state officials, law regulations and election monitoring measures and bodies have to be enhanced; secondly, civil society participation, in our case being engaged in a domestic monitoring organization, has a positive impact on increasing social-coherence, tolerance, empathy and decreasing social and political polarization and division; and finally, electoral fraud, malpractices or decrease in electoral integrity may have a reverse impact on turnout in developing democracies; namely, in Turkey electoral malpractices may be considered as a tool in order to develop political knowledge, electoral integrity and social cohesion. Data used in the article, does not have an objective to generalize all the motivations of volunteers however, findings aim to pave the way to new academic and intellectual discussions on electoral integrity in Turkey.

The study does lend support to the thesis that a strong civil society and state organization and electoral integrity will have a positive impact on the Turkish democratization process. In order to attain these objectives, new research has to be encouraged on electoral integrity and political sophistication of especially young people in Turkey.

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