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Date:

THE BENEFITS OF COMPULSORY VOTING

Reading Vocabulary

- Compulsory- Required by law or a rule; something you must do
- Representative- reflecting the views and interests of a group of people.
- Infringement (infringe)- a minor offense that involves breaking or violating a rule, law, or right.
- Mandatory- Required by law or a rule; something you must do.
- Legitimate- In accordance with established rules, principles, or standards.
- Dissent- To differ in sentiment or opinion, especially from the majority; withhold assent; disagree

Reading Passage

Have you ever wondered what it would be like if everyone in a country had to vote in elections? In some parts of the world, that's exactly what happens through compulsory voting. Compulsory voting means that every eligible citizen is required by law to cast a vote in elections, whether they want to or not. This might sound surprising, but there are several good reasons why countries choose to have compulsory voting laws.

One of the biggest advantages of compulsory voting is that it increases voter turnout. In countries like Australia and Belgium, where compulsory voting is in place, voter turnout rates are typically much higher than in countries with voluntary voting systems. For example, in the last federal election in Australia, over 90% of eligible voters cast their ballots. This high turnout ensures that a larger portion of the population has a say in who gets elected and what policies are implemented.

Another important benefit of compulsory voting is that it promotes fairness and inclusivity in democracy. When everyone is required to vote, it reduces the influence of special interest groups. It ensures that politicians pay attention to the concerns of all citizens, not just those who are highly motivated to vote. This makes the government more responsive to the needs of the entire population.

Compulsory voting also encourages citizens to become more informed about politics and public issues. When you know you have to vote, you're more likely to pay attention to what the candidates stand for and how their policies might affect you and your community. This leads to a more educated electorate and better decision-making during elections.

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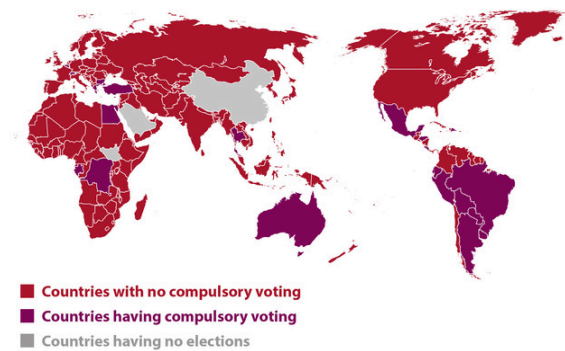
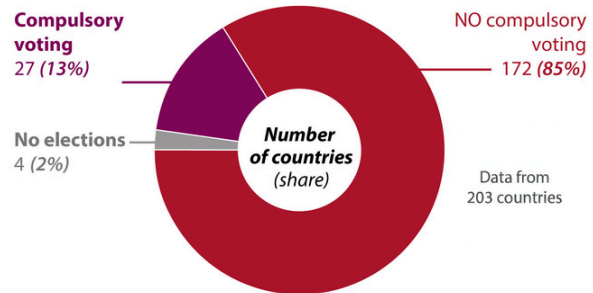
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Furthermore, compulsory voting helps to strengthen the legitimacy of the government. When a large majority of the population participates in elections, the resulting government is seen as more representative of the people's will. This can lead to greater stability and trust in democratic institutions.

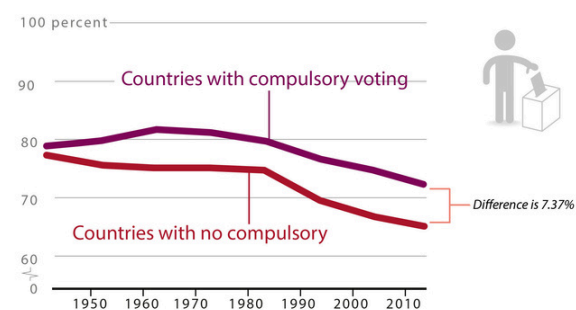
Critics of compulsory voting argue that it infringes on individual freedom by forcing people to participate in something they may not be interested in or knowledgeable about. However, in countries with compulsory voting, citizens often have the option to cast a blank ballot or choose "none of the above," allowing for dissent while still fulfilling their civic duty.

In conclusion, while compulsory voting may seem unusual at first glance, it has proven to be an effective way to enhance democracy. By increasing voter turnout, promoting fairness, encouraging political awareness, and strengthening government legitimacy, compulsory voting ensures that everyone has a voice in shaping the future of their country. As more countries around the world consider their voting systems, compulsory voting stands out as a method that benefits both citizens and the democratic process as a whole.

COMPULSORY VOTING IN THE WORLD



VOTER TURNOUT TRENDS



Source: www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout

Source: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/voter-turnout-database/compulsory-voting>

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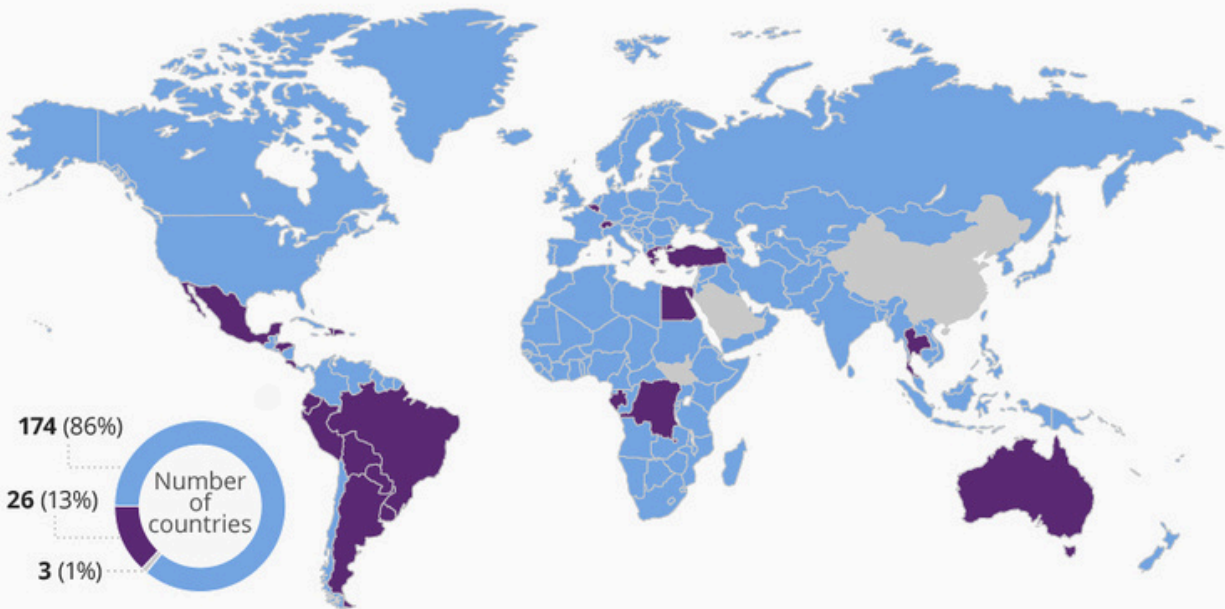
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The Countries Where Voting Is Compulsory

- Countries with no compulsory voting
- Countries with compulsory voting
- Countries with no elections



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Comprehension Check

- 1 What are three positives of compulsory voting according to the article?
- 2 Why is a higher voter turnout a good thing for democracy?
- 3 How does compulsory voting promote fairness and inclusivity?
- 4 Would citizens be more likely to pay attention to political issues and politicians if compulsory voting existed? Why or why not?
- 5 In what ways are citizens still allowed their right to protest the candidates in a compulsory voting system?