

31. VOTER TURNOUT IN NATIONAL ELECTIONS

Voter turnout is an indication of the degree of public trust in government and of citizens' participation in the political process.

Voter turnout varies across OECD regions (Figure 31.1). Australia and Belgium (where voting is mandatory), Austria, Turkey, and Italy display very high turnout (in some regions over 90%). The Czech Republic and Poland display the lowest turnout, lower than 40% in all Czech regions and lower than 50% in Polish regions. The United States has the largest regional variation: a difference of 31 points between Minnesota 77% and Hawaii 46%. Spain, Mexico and Finland also have large variation, while small differences are found in New Zealand, Sweden and Ireland (Figure 31.1). Variation in Spain, Finland and Australia is mainly due to a single region with lower turnout than the rest of the country: Melilla, Åland and Northern Territory, respectively.

The correlation between voter turnout and share of population by type of region (PU, IN or PR) reveals no clear trend across OECD member countries (Figure 31.2). In urban regions the correlation is positive in 12 out of 22 countries. In the Czech Republic, Australia, Portugal and Sweden the correlation of the voter turnout rate with the share of population in urban and rural regions is positive, but in Portugal and Sweden the coefficient is higher in rural regions.

Definition

Voter turnout is defined as the ratio between the number of voters to the number of persons with voting rights. The last national election is considered.

The Spearman correlation coefficient measures the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, in this case the voter turnout and the share of population in predominantly urban (PU), intermediate (IN) or predominantly rural (PR) regions. A value close to zero means no relationship (see Annex C for formula).

Source

OECD Regional Database, <http://dotstat/wbos/>, theme: Regional Statistics.

See Annex B for data sources and country related metadata.

Reference years and territorial level

Different years (latest national elections); TL2.

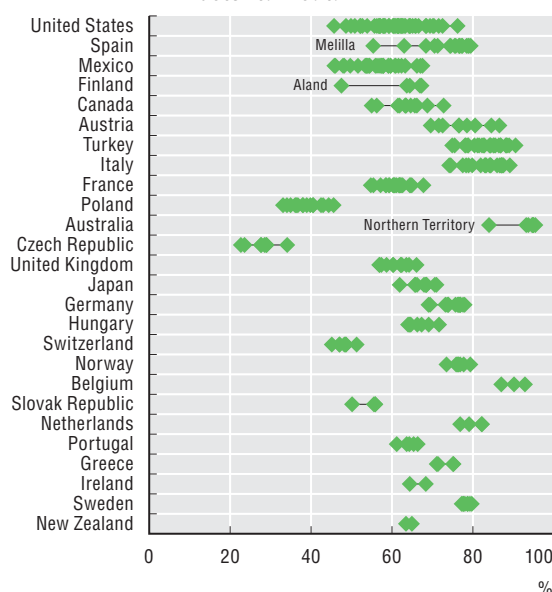
No regional data available for Denmark, Iceland and Korea.

Figure notes

Figure 31.2: For each country three correlations are run between the regional voter turnout and the share of regional population living in PU, IN and PR regions.

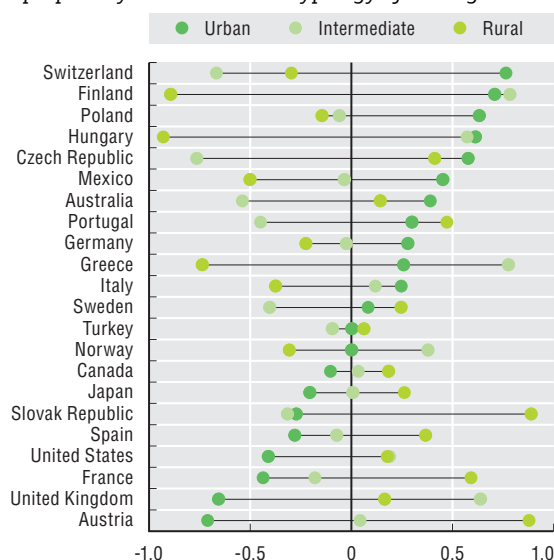
31.1 Range in TL2 regional voter turnout

The US and Spain display the largest regional differences in voter turnout.



31.2 Spearman correlation coefficient between voter turnout and share of population by regional type (TL2)

There is no clear correlation across OECD countries between the propensity to vote and the typology of the regions.

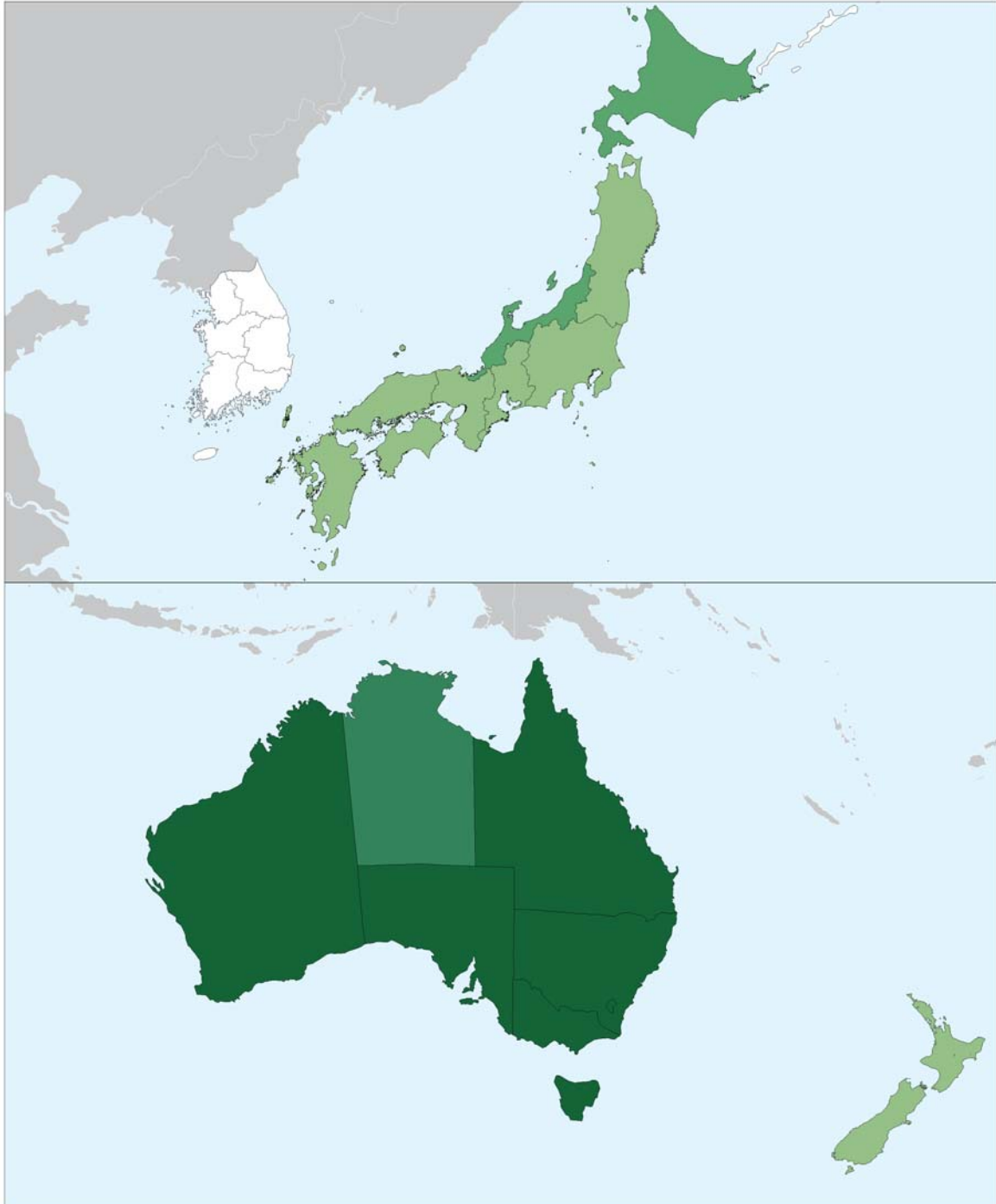


StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/524380682208>

31.3 Regional voter turnout: Asia and Oceania

TL2 regions, latest available year

- Higher than 90%
- Between 80% and 90%
- Between 70% and 80%
- Between 60% and 70%
- Between 50% and 60%
- Lower than 50%
- Data not available

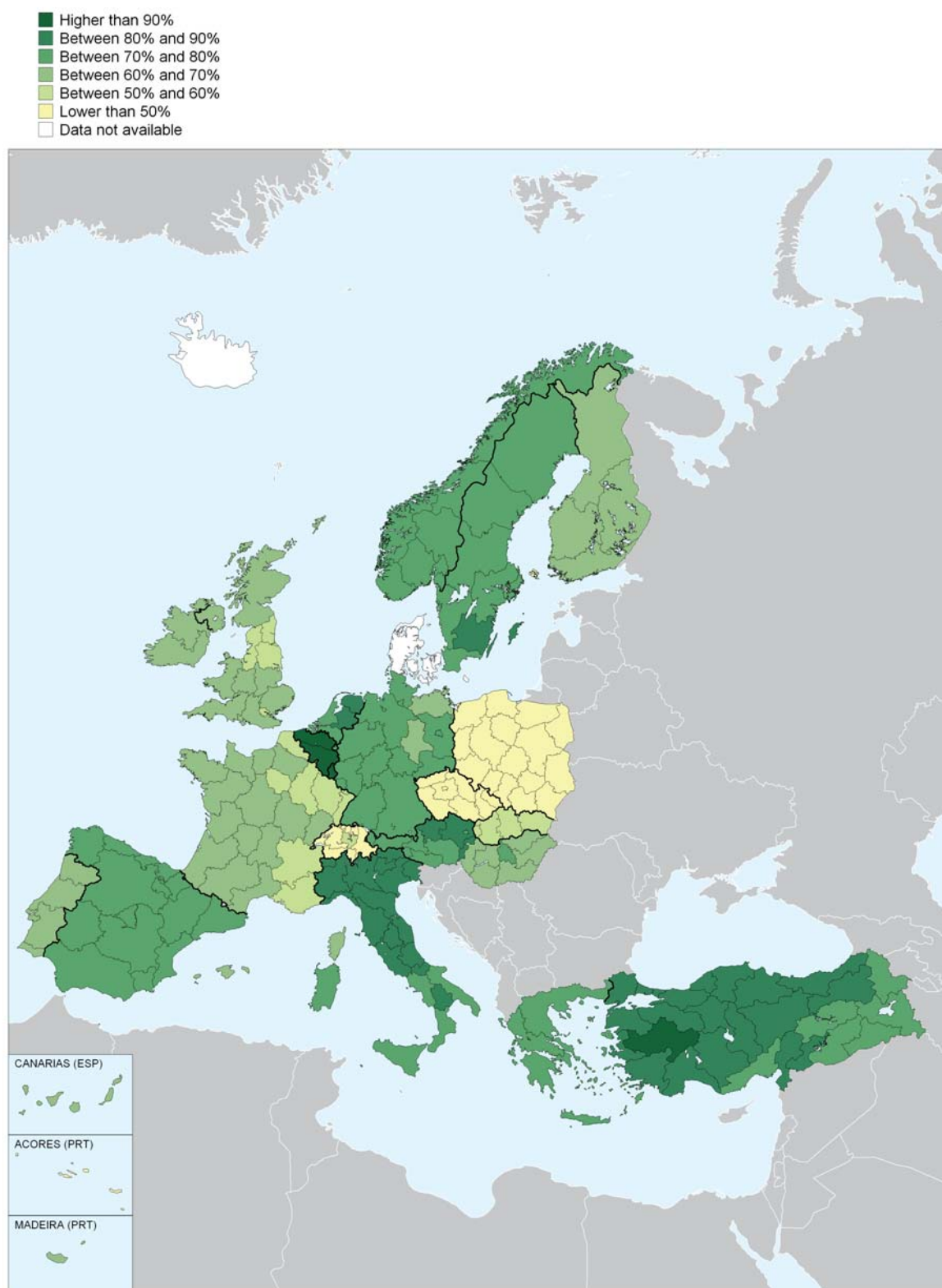


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31.4 Regional voter turnout: Europe

TL2 regions, latest available year

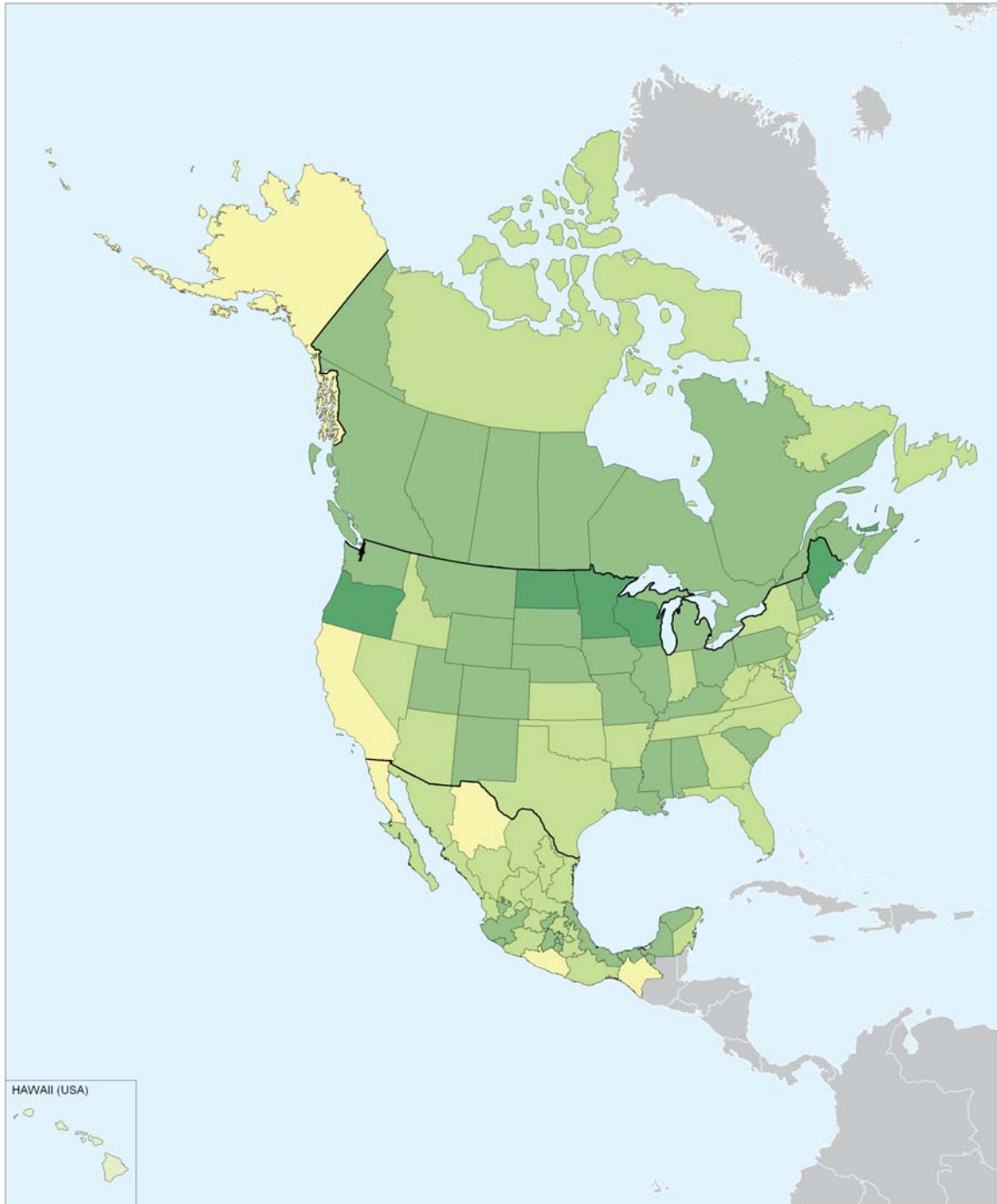
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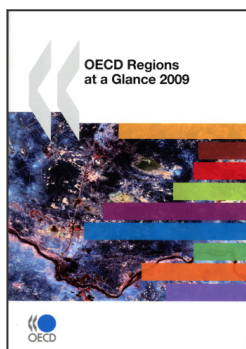
31.5 Regional voter turnout: North America

TL2 regions, latest available year

- Higher than 90%
- Between 80% and 90%
- Between 70% and 80%
- Between 60% and 70%
- Between 50% and 60%
- Lower than 50%
- Data not available



StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/525144615613>



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