

Sample Data Question 1

Document A – The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey – May, 2019

(Slightly Adapted for examination purposes)

(Source: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/csp1048mkwbrpsu/Electoral%20Integrity%20Worldwide.pdf?dl=0>)

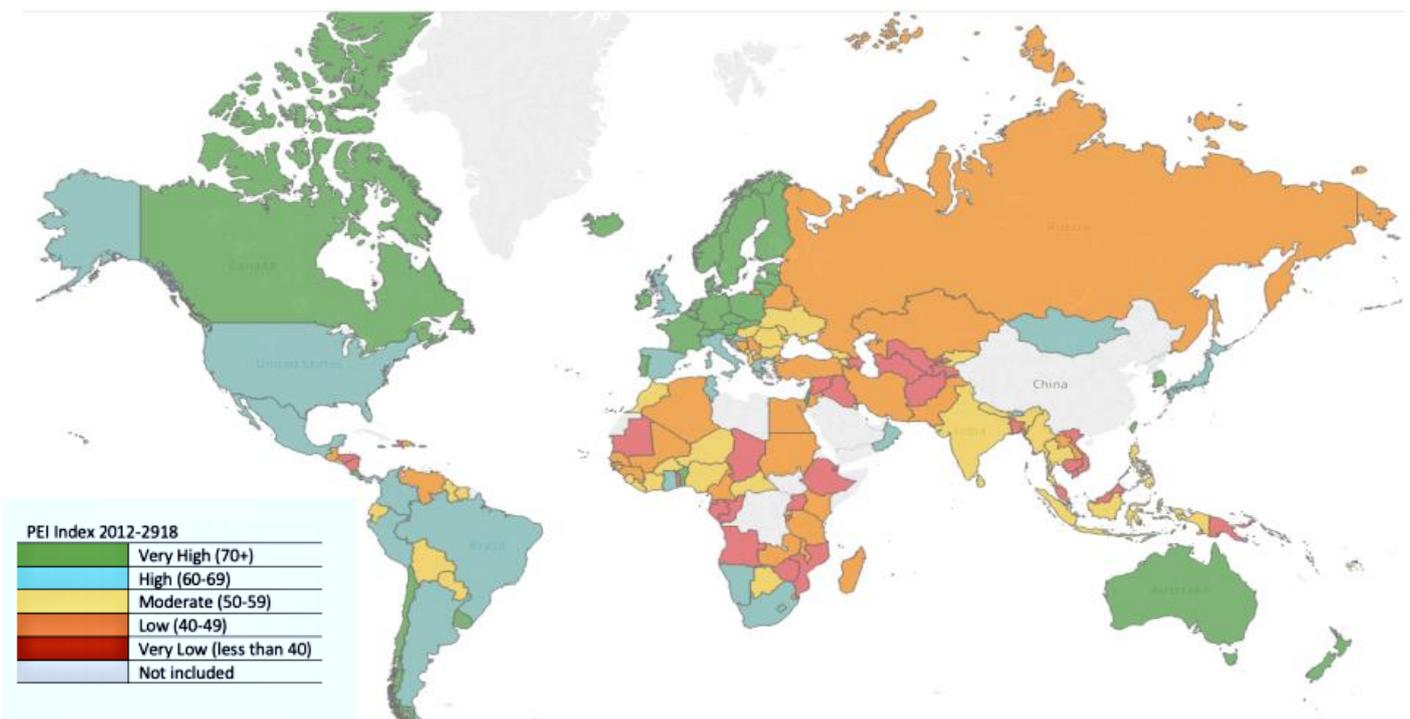
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Elections should provide opportunities for citizens to participate in politics and hold leaders to account. When they work well, elections can deepen civic engagement, inform public debate, stimulate party competition, strengthen government responsiveness, and allow the peaceful resolution of political conflict.

The problem is that too often contests fail to achieve these objectives. There is widespread concern in many countries about low or falling turnout, public disaffection, party polarization, and the failure of elections to ensure legitimate outcomes. Electoral malpractices (*abuse of the electoral system) continue to undermine contests around the world, from overt cases of violence and intimidation to disinformation campaigns, cybersecurity threats, barriers to voting, and the underrepresentation of women and minority candidates. To assess global trends, the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey monitors elections worldwide and regionally, across all stages of the electoral cycle.

Methodology: This report describes the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity dataset (PEI-7.0). The dataset is drawn from a rolling survey of 3,861 expert assessments of electoral integrity across 337 elections in 166 countries around the world. The cumulative study covers all national presidential and parliamentary elections from July 1, 2012 to December 31, 2018. This annual release adds 53 presidential or parliamentary contests held during 2018. Perceptions of electoral integrity are measured by experts in each country one month after polls close. Experts are asked to assess the quality of national elections on eleven sub-dimensions: electoral laws; electoral procedures; district boundaries; voter registration; party registration; media coverage; campaign finance; voting process; vote count; results; and electoral authorities. These items sum to an overall Electoral Integrity Index scored from 0 to 100. Additional batteries of items are used to monitor specific problems each year. Given widespread concerns about the issue of fake news, online disinformation, & foreign meddling, the 2018 survey focused on issues of campaign media.

FIGURE 1: ELECTORAL INTEGRITY WORLDWIDE, 2012 TO 2018



Source: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey, country-level www.electoralintegrityproject.com

FIGURE 2: THE PERCEPTIONS OF ELECTORAL INTEGRITY INDEX BY COUNTRY AND REGION

N&W Europe	Americas	C&E Europe	Asia-Pacific	MENA	Africa						
Denmark	86	Costa Rica	79	Estonia	79	New Zealand	75	Israel	74	Cape Verde	71
Finland	85	Uruguay	75	Lithuania	78	Korea, Rep.	73	Tunisia	68	Benin	70
Norway	83	Canada	75	Slovenia	77	Taiwan	73	Oman	61	Ghana	65
Sweden	83	Chile	71	Czech Rep	76	Australia	70	Morocco	57	Mauritius	64
Iceland	82	Jamaica	67	Slovak Rep	74	Japan	68	Kuwait	54	South Africa	63
Germany	81	Barbados	65	Poland	74	Bhutan	66	Jordan	49	Lesotho	62
Netherlands	80	Argentina	65	Latvia	73	Tonga	64	Iran	49	Namibia	60
Switzerland	79	Brazil	64	Croatia	65	Timor-Leste	64	Total	48	Botswana	58
Austria	77	Peru	62	Georgia	58	Mongolia	64	Algeria	43	Rwanda	58
Luxembourg	76	Grenada	61	Bulgaria	58	Vanuatu	62	Lebanon	42	Ivory Coast	56
France	75	US	61	Moldova	56	Micronesia	59	Bahrain	40	Liberia	54
Portugal	75	Panama	61	Romania	55	India	59	Egypt	40	Guinea-Biss.	54
Ireland	73	Mexico	61	Armenia	55	Solomon Isl.	57	Iraq	38	Nigeria	53
Belgium	71	Colombia	60	Hungary	54	Indonesia	57	Syria	24	Burkina Faso	53
Cyprus	69	Bolivia	56	Albania	54	Nepal	56			Sierra Leone	53
Spain	69	Bahamas	54	Kyrgyzstan	53	Fiji	55			CAR	53
Italy	68	El Salvador	54	Montenegro	52	Myanmar	54			Sao Tome Pr.	52
Greece	66	Belize	53	Ukraine	51	Samoa	53			Niger	52
UK	66	Guyana	53	Serbia	49	Singapore	53			Gambia	50
Malta	65	Suriname	51	Macedonia	48	Maldives	52			Malawi	48
Turkey	45	Ecuador	50	Russia	47	Sri Lanka	52			Comoros	45
		Paraguay	50	Bosnia-Herz.	46	Philippines	51			Zambia	45
		Guatemala	48	Kazakhstan	45	Thailand	51			Tanzania	44
		Antigua Bar	48	Belarus	40	Laos	48			Sudan	43
		Dom. Rep	44	Uzbekistan	38	Pakistan	47			Senegal	43
		Venezuela	41	Azerbaijan	36	Bangladesh	38			Kenya	43
		Honduras	37	Turkmenistan	36	Malaysia	35			Mali	43
		Nicaragua	36	Tajikistan	35	Papua NG	34			Guinea	42
		Haiti	32			Afghanistan	34			Madagascar	42
						Vietnam	34			Swaziland	42
						Cambodia	30			Cameroon	40
										Angola	39
										Mauritania	38
										Zimbabwe	38
										Togo	38
										Uganda	37
										Mozambique	35
										Djibouti	31
										Chad	31
										Gabon	30
										Congo, Rep.	29
										Burundi	24
										Eq. Guinea	24
										Ethiopia	24
Total	74	Total	56	Total	56	Total	54	Total	49	Total	46

Note: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity index summary scale ranges from 0-100. The PEI country-level mean scores cover national elections held 2012-2018.

Source: The Perceptions of Electoral Integrity expert survey, country-level (PEI 7.0)

Document B – Irish Times ‘Opinion Piece’ – 10 August, 2020.

(Words within brackets marked with * are simpler vocabulary to help students.) Adapted for Exam purposes. Source:

<https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/government-needs-to-act-on-promise-of-electoral-commission-1.4325920>

Government needs to act on promise of electoral commission

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The electoral process is only as strong as its weakest link and there are many chinks in Irish voting procedures. Since 2007, government after government has promised to establish an **electoral commission** to address vulnerabilities in how we manage elections and **referendums**. The commitment is back again in the 2020 **Programme For Government**. All the political parties favour an electoral commission but somehow it never gets to the top of the to-do list. Elections and referendums work reasonably well in Ireland and this has allowed an alarming complacency take hold.

Age and stability in a democracy provide no guarantee of immunity to global threats. Last month, in the United Kingdom, the Russia report demonstrated there was direct interference in the political system by Russian state actors (*people working on behalf of the Russian government). This interference was ignored by successive governments, and questions about how the **Scottish Independence** and **Brexit** referendums were affected remain unanswered. Russian meddling in elections has been well documented. The Trump election in 2016 continues to be marred in controversy and investigations. The European Union was on high alert for the 2019 European Parliament elections but these passed off relatively unscathed

(without being damaged). While external threats to democracy are at least discussed in other democracies, they are virtually ignored in Ireland.

Those who argue that Ireland is a small country of little interest to others forget that it is a crucial linchpin (*vital element of) global supply chains, perhaps most pertinently (*importantly/relevantly) at the height of the global pandemic, for pharmaceuticals and medical devices. It is also the European hub for the digital economy. Decisions taken in Ireland have global repercussions.

And there is evidence of interference. Overseas groups and individuals were able to purchase political advertising directly targeting Irish voters during the 2018 referendum on the **Eighth Amendment**, and no Irish institution had any power to act. With broadcast highly regulated, but the online world remaining a virtual no-man's land, we have witnessed the slow creep of **disinformation** and **polarisation** into Irish public life, with attack ads and conspiracy finding traction under the radar. We are leaving decisions over the kind of discourse (*debate/discussion) we want for our country to private companies in California with their eyes trained on Washington, DC.

An important point that's lost in debates about the outcome of the 2020 General Election was the troublingly low level of participation. **Voter Turnout** of just 62.9 per cent was recorded. Only general elections in 1922, 1923 and 2002 had lower levels of participation. In 2002 when turnout dropped to 62.6 per cent, a national campaign was initiated to improve **electoral registers** and staff involved in the most recent **census** were recruited to undertake a door-to-door campaign to address major concerns about the accuracy of the electoral registers.

The 2002 process may have temporarily alleviated the disarray (*reduced confusion) in the electoral registers but all evidence since points to the re-emergence of irregularities. A study in 2016 suggested that there could be as many as 500,000 names on the registers that should not be there. These included people who were registered at other addresses, voters who had died and many who had emigrated in the preceding years. The global **Electoral Integrity Project**, an independent academic study founded in 2012, has audited Irish electoral procedures over several elections and voter registration processes have consistently been scored as weak. At the 2016 general election, Ireland was ranked 137th in the world for our voter registration processes. This is an alarming finding for an old & stable democracy.

An interconnected problem is the poor voter education efforts at elections. This problem is all the more bizarre because there are quite robust voter information campaigns at referendums when each referendum commission engages in sustained campaigns highlighting the issues involved in the referendum, when the vote will take place and what the ballot will look like. But none of this information is provided at elections. The State relies entirely on media organisations which, while they do great work, cannot be a substitute for a publicly-funded national voter education campaign, explaining which election is taking place, who will be elected, what roles they play, when the election will happen, who is entitled to vote and how to vote.

Proportional representation through the single transferable vote (**PR-STV**) is a very unusual system and voters deserve detailed and regular information campaigns about how it works and how they should vote under this system. Most other democracies have such campaigns, helping voters understand the decisions being made and encouraging them to vote. The electoral commission has been put on the long finger for too many years. The Government must act and meet its own commitment to protect Ireland's democracy. The programme for government commits to having an electoral commission in place by the end of next year. The work to meet that deadline starts now.

Dr Theresa Reidy is a political scientist at University College Cork. **Prof David Farrell** is the head of politics and international relations at University College Dublin

(For the benefit of students engaging with this article, the exam author suggest that you compile a list of all the words highlighted in bold and be able to give a brief definition of those terms for future reference)

