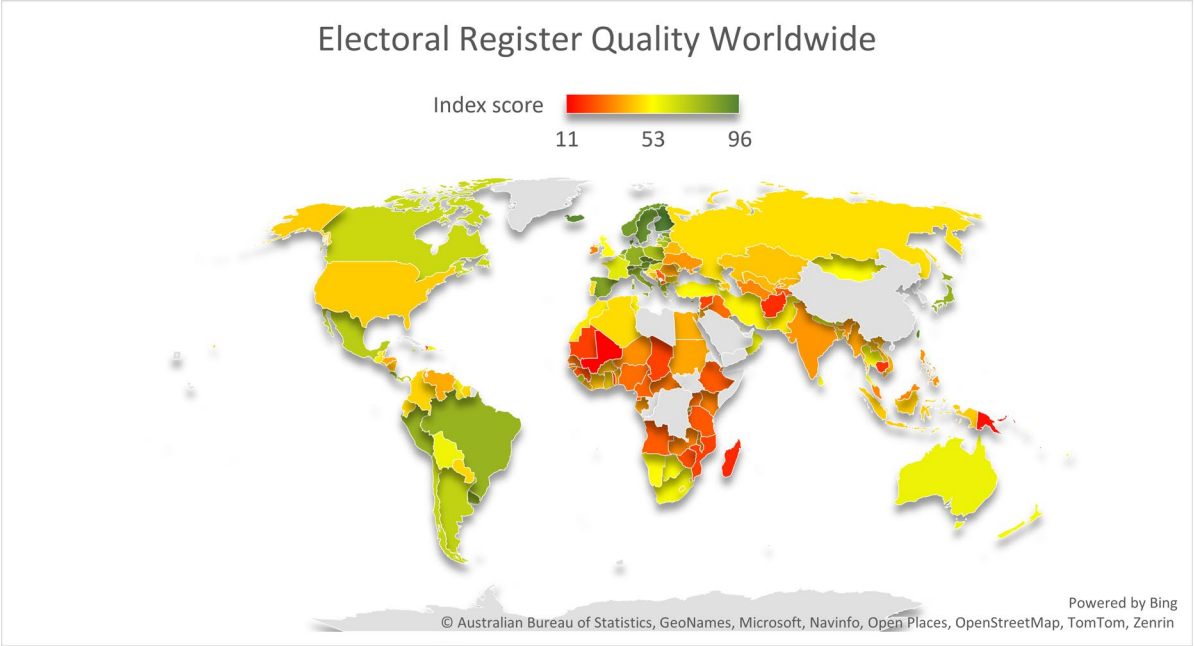


## Written Evidence Submitted by Professor Toby S. James [ELR 0013]

1. We are responding to the request to submit evidence on voter registration for the *Levelling Up, Housing and Communities select committee*. We are the co-directors of the Electoral Integrity Project, a world-leading academic project which produces innovative and policy-relevant research on elections worldwide.
2. The quality of the electoral registers around the world can be measured using the Voter Registration Index, which is part of the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Index [1]. This is an expert survey constructed by the Electoral Integrity Project.<sup>1</sup> New data is published each year to cover the elections held in the previous year. In July 2023 we published the latest dataset and report to include elections held in 2022.
3. The Committee has requested that we provided an updated estimate on the quality of electoral registration in the UK compared to the rest of the world. Figure 1 shows a map of electoral register quality around the world. Figure 2 shows a ranking of the top 60 countries.
4. The United Kingdom is now ranked 60<sup>th</sup> out of 169 countries according to the index. In terms of electoral registration completeness it is ranked 106<sup>th</sup>. In terms of accuracy it is ranked 79<sup>th</sup>.
5. The Committee has been interested in electoral registration in Canada. In terms of comparison, Canada is ranked 40<sup>th</sup> overall. It is 46<sup>th</sup> for completeness and 38<sup>th</sup> for accuracy.
6. Since our last submission of evidence we have published an article in the journal *Representation* which analyses the factors which lead to improved electoral registers. We find clear evidence that:
  - Automatic voter registration increases both the accuracy and completeness of the electoral register. As per our original submission **automatic registration** is most commonly where registration lists are compiled through sources such as municipal or state residence lists. This model provides the greatest ease for the voter, since the state actively insists on their voter registers being up-to-date and accurate.
  - The organisational performance of the electoral management body responsible for running elections was also shown to have positive effects on completeness and accuracy [2].
7. We therefore strongly encourage the committee to consider ways of using automatic and assisted methods of voter registration in the UK to improve the quality of elections and democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> This consists of 49 indicators of electoral integrity across the 11-stage electoral cycle. These data have been collected for each national-level election between 2012-2022 (current data release 9.0 includes country means of this time period). For more on this dataset, please see: <https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/PEI>



*Figure 1: Voter Registration Quality Around the World 2012-22. Source: authors based on the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Dataset 9.0 [1].*

## Electoral Registration Index Score, by County 2012-22

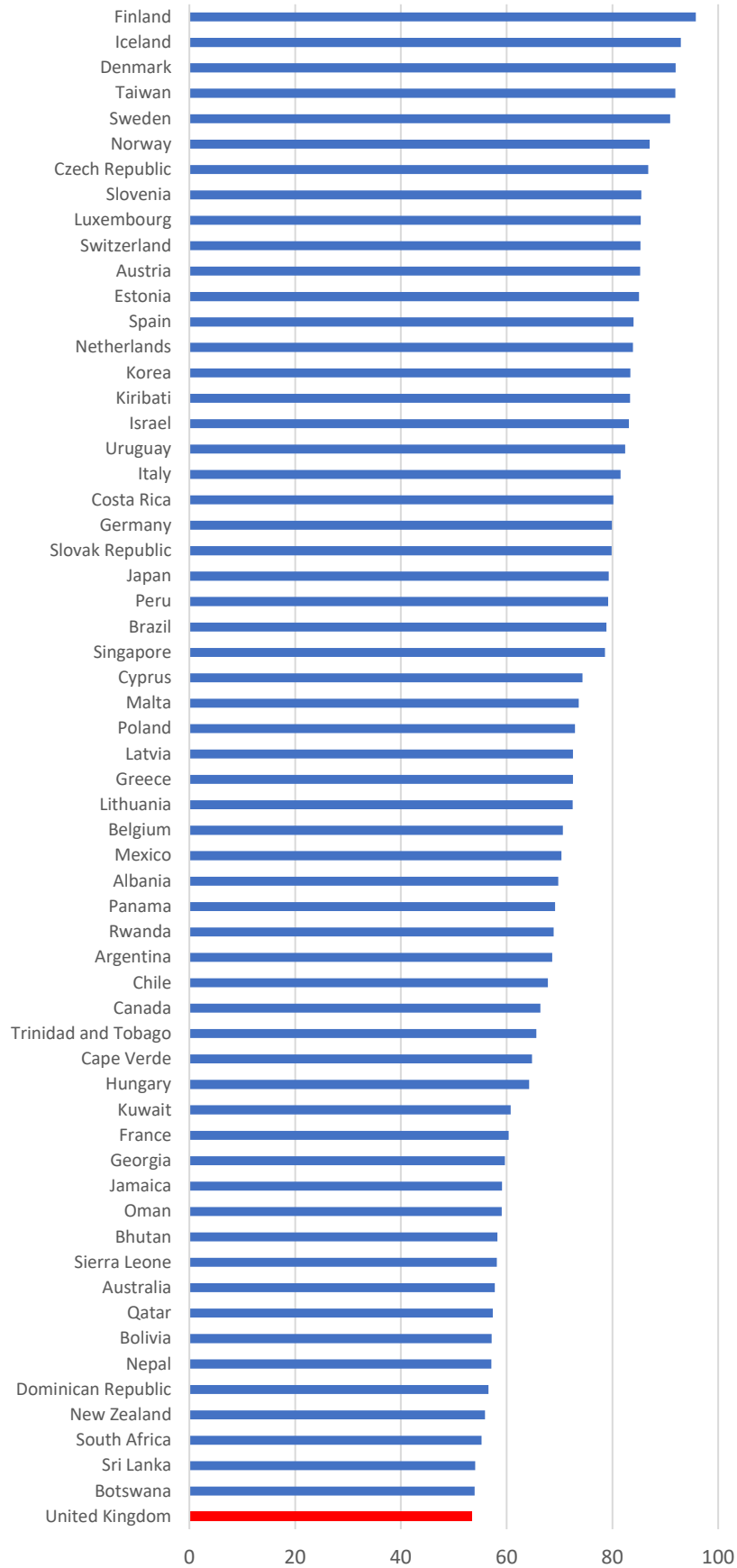


Figure 2: Electoral Registration Index Score, Ranked by Country 2012-22. Top 60 countries shown.  
*Source: authors based on the Perceptions of Electoral Integrity Dataset 9.0 [1].*

#### Bibliography

1. Garnett, H.A., et al., *Perceptions of Electoral Integrity, (PEI-9.0)*. 2023, Harvard Dataverse.
2. James, T.S. and H.A. Garnett, *The Determinants of Electoral Registration Quality: A Cross-National Analysis*. Representation, 2023.

*October 2023*