**Forum**: COMUN 2020
**Issue**: Protecting nations against foreign electoral interference
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# Introduction

Foreign electoral interventions is an issue that has arisen recently due to the increase in technological innovation and the increased media coverage in countries such as the US, the UK, and multiple other countries within the EU. Russia has been blamed and investigated by multiple countries like the US, and the UK. Despite this Russia has not accepted any liability or responsibility for the attacks, and has released a year-long investigation into Ukraine for the 2016 election process within the US. This Issue affects the sovereignty and rights of multiple nations and is, therefore, an issue of great urgency which needs acting upon.

In almost all countries, foreign interference in elections is illegal and looked down upon, yet even countries such as the US have interfered with 81 foreign elections. Regulating and tracking these electoral interventions has been mentioned and implemented by multiple countries but a worldwide attempt to reduce this problem has still not been released or mentioned.

# Definition of Key Terms

## Foreign electoral interventions
An attempt by an outside country to alter the results of an election or a political referendum of a nationwide vote of some manner.

## Cyber Attack
An attempt by hackers to potentially damage/manipulate the result data on a computer network

## Social Media Agitation
Social media agitation refers to the releasement or spreading of fake news through a media source to agitate voters and alter the result of an electoral vote.

## NGO
A non-government organization is a non-profit organization that works independently from any government

# General Overview

Countries have only and will only interfere with other countries' electoral processes and results if it will lead to a benefit for the country in which will "attack the process". Eradicating this benefit or altering the process so it can not be affected is something that many countries are currently putting in place. By altering the result of the process is an infringement of a country's sovereignty and a to a certain level a breach of human rights, depending on the human rights emplaced on the specific country. Many organizations are working towards stopping the interference of other countries on one's electoral processes such as the EU, the UN, and many organizations specific to member states.

Almost every country has an electoral system and allows voters to vote and affects the result of the process through a democratic vote. These processes are therefore of great importance to all citizens and in some countries are celebrated, and days such as the voting result day are treated as holidays. Processes like these are often considered the base structure for all democratic societies, holding countries and their liberal styles of ruling ahold. This problem evident by the 18 examples of electoral interference within the EU in the past 3 years must be fixed and a deal must be upheld by all countries to ensure all citizens are safe and all governments can be trusted.

## Ways in which to affect an electoral process;

The threats of interference can be split into three main categories, two of which are publicly acknowledged and are most common today. The main three categories can be split as;

**Direct interference with the results/data:**

Direct interference is only a result of cyber attacks from one nation to another with the intention to change the result to ensure that their country will benefit in the process. The suggestion that this category could happen or has happened completely brakes public trust in a government to perform its own processes and deems an entire countries electoral process and result invalid and untrustworthy. This sets a bad precedent for any future elections.

**Affecting public opinions through unfair/bias data:**

Affecting the opinion of the public can affect the result of an election dramatically, and these opinions could be a set of false information and bias. It is relatively easy to alter the opinion of someone by presenting them with false information and providing examples that are irrelevant or taken out of context. This can be seen with media today, as many media outlets provide the public with general overviews and opinions. If false media is to prevail in a country during an election, it can greatly affect the final outcome. This category is hard to specifically stop in the future and will need the oversight and collaboration of a variety of economically able countries to ensure its success.

**Miscellaneous:**

Miscellaneous cases result from accidents or holes within an electoral process making it so that countries can affect the process or result without the need for the first two well-known categories. This category is not seen in economically stable countries, which have strong democratic backgrounds.

All of these categories can have detrimental effects on an electoral process, and economy, and can lead to a breach in a countries sovereignty. All categories must be taken into consideration when attempting to stagnate or reduce electoral interference in the nearby future.

## 2016 Electoral Process Interventions;

Many people may have heard of the 2016 election scandal or the Cambridge Analytica scandal. This problem arose as Facebook data was used and manipulated by Cambridge Analytica to affect the opinions of hundreds of thousands of voters. This is an example of the second category when people spread false information and use illegal ways to target and manipulate voters. There are rumors that this may have taken place for Trump's campaign, yet these have not been proven. Cambridge Analytica executives have been head discussing extorting politicians by sending women "to trap them", spreading propaganda to help clients, and preying on "Public's fears". Ad targeting and specifically sending ads to people who it will appeal to is a big part of electoral processes for candidates, and by using services such as the ones provided by companies such as Cambridge Analytica is heavily illegal, and ruins the idealism of democracy and how many countries in and outside of the EU are governed on a daily basis.

# Major Parties Involved

### United States of America
The US has directly interfered with a total of 81 foreign electoral elections within the past and therefore is a culprit for all interventions yet the US has also fought against foreign electoral interventions and constantly tried to stop countries such as Russia from interfering with their elections.

### The Russian Federation
Russia has been blamed multiple times for interfering with foreign elections, and therefore is a party involved within this problem. Russia has denied these cyberattacks and electoral interventions and blamed countries such as Ukraine for the attacks.

### The United KIngdom
The UK as a main party within the EU and a strong economic force will lead a big role in this debate, with many economic ties, the UK will attempt to stop all intervention in electoral processes, and protect its sovereignty.

### Ukraine
Ukraine was blamed by Russia for interfering with the 2016 elections in the USA, therefore Ukraine will want to hold an investigation and attempt to prove itself innocent or blame Russia.

# Timeline of Events

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| 1991 | UN assists over 100 countries with running their election processes |
| November 8th 2016 | USA's presidential election held place on this date which was later fully investigated and there were traces of intervention from countries such as Russia |
| July 25th 2019 | Senate releases full report detailing Russia's involvement within the elections |
| November 22nd 2019 | Russia's attempt to blame Ukraine for meddling in the 2016 elections was found inevident. |
| October 10th, 2019 | The EU takes drastic acts to attempt to stop election interference within EU countries |
| October 10th, 2019 | EU states that 998 cases of interference have been directly related to Russia within a timespan of 1 year |

# Previous attempts to solve the issue

The UN has previously attempted to decrease the amount of interference with electoral processes in places like Burundi, a resolution created by the security details the amount of work the UN has emplaced to ensure peaceful, and transparent elections in 2020. The EU has made big steps in the process to absolutely stop all interference in EU member states elections, by having many conferences and discussions on the topic, attempting to work together as governments and include privatized businesses in the media market to help and eradicate foreign interference in elections. With the implementation of the GDPR, the EU has been able to ensure all human rights are protected and that information is reliable and the spread of fake information decreases over time. They have also ensured that businesses do not abuse citizens and their data and work to stop companies such as Facebook, and other massive media companies from selling and releasing data in an "unfair way". Therefore the EU and any countries within it will bring a new asset to the table within this topic, and should heavily influence the final resolution.

# Possible solutions

Possible solutions within the future would need to take into consideration the views and laws within all countries and would need to ensure that all countries do not have access or the right to alter the results of one's electoral process. Some solutions which have not yet been created by the UN could be, an agreed-upon specific body of the UN which would focus primarily on stopping countries for interfering with other election processes, and would help strive to make countries more independent and ensure their election processes are fair.

Or the action of allowing the UN or a separate NGO to watch over all election processes and data results to ensure no country has had its election results altered unfairly, which would work closely to the SC to ensure that the NGO would have some level of power or negotiating skills over nations.

# Useful documents

https://ec.europa.eu/epsc/sites/epsc/files/epsc_-_election_interference_thinkpieces.pdf

https://gdpr-info.eu/

https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/cambridge-analytica-files

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