

COMMENTS ON GROFMAN AND CERVAS

This is an excellent paper. It is very useful to have all of these examples of fallacious claims about voter fraud in one place. Regarding the audience, I would pitch it as a tool for students in journalism/media classes in addition to statistics and public policy students. The journalism students are the ones who will be best able to help educate the public; they are also the ones who need not to unwittingly lead the public astray.

Specific Comments Intended to Clarify the Exposition for the General Reader

P. 3 – This must have been written before the 2022 election (with reference to candidates for state election administration who profess to believe in voter fraud); it should be updated accordingly.

Pp. 4-5 – Footnotes are VERY LONG. Either shorten or find a way to incorporate them in the text (perhaps in a box). Footnote 5 (about mainstream media giving credence to voter fraud claims by highlighting them as a theme) would work well in a box.

P. 7 – Failing to Weight Units – I would replace “low” and “high” population with “small” and “large”. In demography, one doesn’t say that NYC has a “high” population but rather a “large” population. Similarly, the argument about population size of counties is not as clear as it could be. “But, of course, that is nonsense” would seem to go with “because the number of counties does not necessarily square with the number of people in them” instead of saying Trump could have done better in the remaining counties—which is true but seems like a non sequitur. The point is that county population size varies drastically (see [Census-ACS-Geography - Primer - 8-21-22.pdf | Powered by Box](#), p. 19), and the public constantly sees county maps in area terms rather than in population terms. So I would make the point about county population size up front and start with Trump’s counties being smaller in population than Biden’s. In fact, it could be useful to include a table or graph about county population size.

p. 10 – In the Note under the area county map, I would reword “indicating Trump received more votes than Biden” as “indicating Trump won those counties.” And why not give the number of votes won by Biden in his 556 counties and ditto for Trump in his counties, so that the graph and note stand on their own.

pp. 11-12 – Don’t let the reader have to be confused throughout the entirety of this example up to p. 14 and the paragraph on two-party vote share! Up front in this example (about gains among various race groups), point out key facts that need to be understood to interpret the findings about Trump’s percentage gains—namely, what were the changes in voter turnout/voter growth due to population growth between two elections in total and for various race groups; how did third-party candidates do; and what influence did the electoral college have in terms of wasted votes, etc. Then you can go on to explain how both Biden and Trump could gain in percent of the White vote, etc. Again, include some tables/graphs to present the facts the reader needs to understand the arguments.

p. 12, line 32 – I would say “among minority voters and percentage point gains among White voters”, not “non-minority voters” here and elsewhere

p. 13 – footnote 13 is crying out to be put in a box.

p. 15 – footnote 14 merits inclusion in the text.

p.20, line 40 – Re silly null hypotheses, I would repeat at least one of them here to remind the reader.

p. 27, line 32 – I suggest replacing “can instead be interpreted as supporting evidence” to “are sometimes interpreted” – The use of “can” suggests that such an interpretation is valid.

p. 31 – A graph on negative/positive presidential coattails over time would be useful and interesting.

p. 32, line 20 – I don’t understand the sentence that Trump had a majority of the vote in the remaining states (excluding CA, MA, NY). Do you mean the majority of the **total** for those states? This needs to be made clear.

p. 35, footnote 43 – Biden was not an incumbent in 2020, so the quote about incumbents doesn’t make sense?

p. 45, last line – I would delete “even” from “even beginning students”. It’s patronizing.