Review of “Fallacies in Statistically-Based Claims about Massive Election Fraud in 2020: A Compendium” (Stat & PP USPP-2022-0019)

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This is a well-done analysis that addresses an important public policy issue. In essentially an update to “How to Lie with Statistics,” the authors show that the claims about election fraud are not just one-off errors that can be dismissed. To pick up on the authors’ analogy, rather than cutting off one head at a time, they go for the hydra-headed monster’s heart!

I have only a few minor issues.

First, Section I (and the Abstract) refers repeatedly to what many BELIEVE to be election fraud. It is worth a note that, as the Dominion Voting case against Fox News is showing, that some of the loudest voices do not actually believe the claims they are making.

It appears that one sentence on p. 3 (ll. 28-30) is based on a prediction that some of those claiming fraud will prevail in the 2022 election. I believe that this has proven to be the case, and the paper should be updated accordingly.

I agree with the first example on p. 18 (ll. 13-25). The authors might add that 2016 and 2022 are different elections with different candidates and issues, so you would expect to get

different results! This is similar to the next point.

On p. 24, ll. 9-34, multiplying probabilities assumes independence. Fred Mosteller wrote a lot about statistical coincidences of the sort described in this section of the paper, but one example that is to the point is that when one takes correlation into account, “coincidences” aren’t quite so rare. The example, if I recall, involved “white woman with blonde hair in a ponytail” not being four independent characteristics.

The racial bias described in footnote 32 is more than “amusing” and probably deserves mention in the text rather than a footnote.