

International Perspectives on Election Audits & Statistics

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An Audit is More than a Recount

In a **recount** ballots cast in an electoral contest are tallied again following an election. Often a different organization will count the ballots to confirm the results.

In an **audit** allegations of fraud or malpractice are investigated. An audit may involve a full or partial recount as well as other actions undertaken to determine whether one or more people have deliberately sabotaged the election process, unfairly manipulated the election results, or committed extensive mistakes in administration.

–IFES/DI Report

Who controls the process?

Election Administrators should perform audits if at all possible

- Other neutral third parties; international actors if necessary

Advanced statistical methods will often require technical assistance

- Such contingencies must be anticipated and planned for in advance

Key stakeholders should be able to observe the process but **NOT** control it



What will happen during the audit?


Standards and Procedures must be established well in advance of need

- Basis in election law

Common problems must be anticipated; procedures to address those problems established

- History; Reforms; Innovation; general knowledge can all provide clues

Audit procedures can be remedial and still be effective



How will the audit be conducted & communicated?

Again: The more advanced the techniques, the more likely to require technical assistance

Transparency should be a priority

Technical analyses need to be communicated clearly to minimize potential for stakeholder disputes.

Expert analyses poorly conveyed will undermine rather than enhance election confidence





Venezuela Presidential Recall Audit 2004

Audit recommended and observed by the OAS and Carter Center based on question of election results vis-à-vis exit polls, and **failed immediate audit**

Audit compared paper receipts to transmitted results on a random sample of polling place

- Subsequently addressed post-audit criticisms regarding audit methodology

Conclusion: Outcome Supported

Chart 1: Frequency of discrepancy by machine

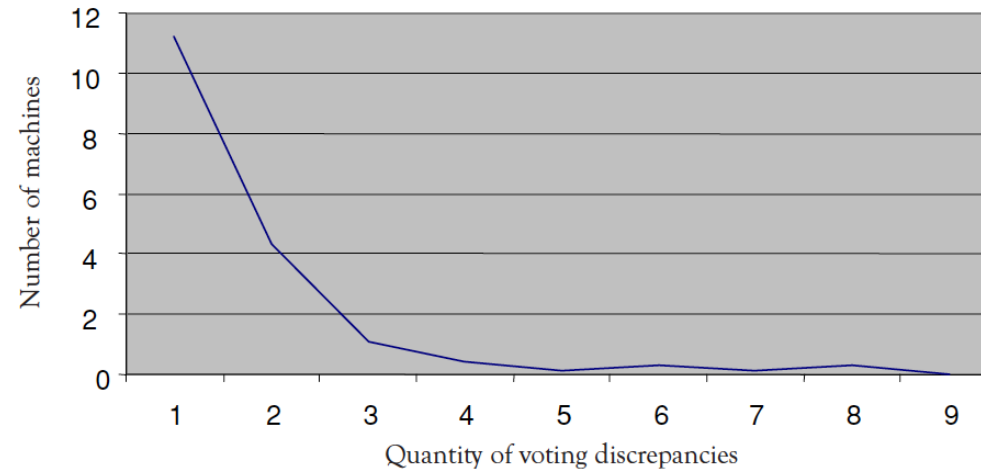


Table 3. Cumulative distribution of machines with discrepancies

X	Number of machines with discrepancies of X or more	Percentage of machines with discrepancies
1	184	55.1
2	72	21.6
3	29	8.7
4	18	5.4
5	14	4.2
6	13	3.9
7	10	3.0
8	9	2.7
9	6	1.8

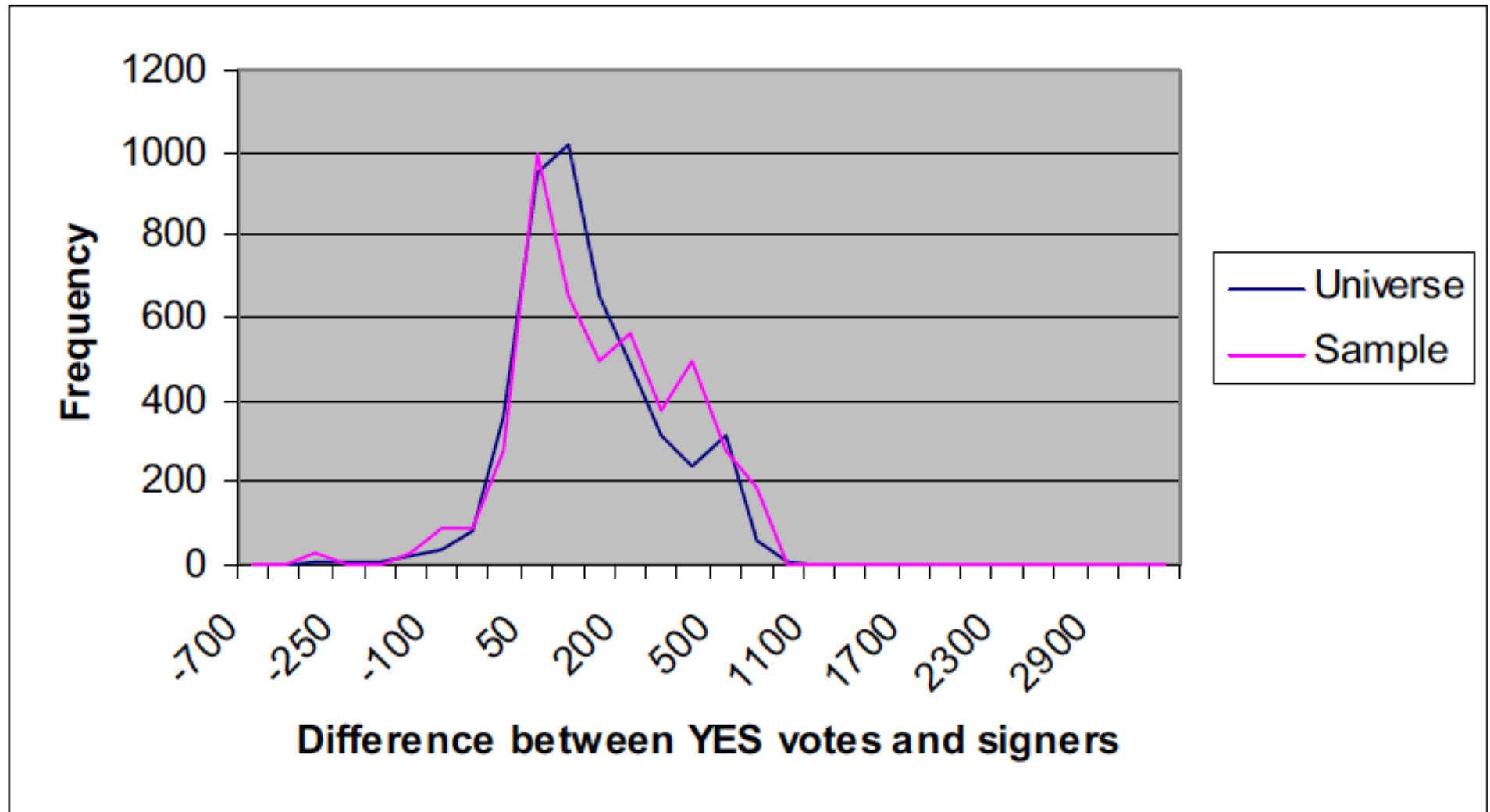


Chart 2: Distribution of difference between YES vote and signers per center



Haiti 2010 Verification and Tabulation Mission

Audit conducted by the OAS after many concerns about fraud arise during the first round of voting

Random sample of polling station results to identify turnout & voting rates

Systematic scrutiny of outliers

- Those with above-average turnout (including turnout >100%)
- Those with large margins of victory

Conclusion: questionable returns should be excluded and 2nd and 3rd place candidates should be reversed

Kenya 2017 (a Non-Example)

Post-Election concerns and eventual annulment of results by Supreme Court

No official Audit because:

- Insufficient time (14 day dispute resolution window)
- Multiple, unreconciled data sources (paper & electronic)

Audit would Require:

- Paper Verification & Analysis
- information about vote aggregation software and security checks



Advanced Statistical Methods require High-Quality Data

Data should be extensive

- Voter registers
- Voter turnout
- Results

Data must be Disaggregated

- Geographically—polling place
- Temporally—reporting and aggregation times

Must be made available to Auditors

- Raw components + code & procedures
- This will depend on election law and officials



Data Challenges

Certain EMBs do not permit disaggregation

- Nigeria
- Guyana
- Cambodia

Certain Aggregation processes are potentially problematic

- Electronic transmissions in Venezuela
- Paper vs. Electronic aggregation in Kenya

Demographic patterns can confound inferences from geographic patterns

Data in Kenya 2017: Exemplar of Challenges

Multiple Sources of Data

- Paper tabulation
- Electronic translation & transmission without sufficient verification

Election Forensics analysis on one source of data

- Electronic

Issues of geographical confounding factors

- Voting along ethnic lines
- Ethnic heterogeneity at sub-national levels

OAS official Report Honduras 2017: Data Dream

Opposition Leads presidential election by 5% with 57% of vote counted day after election; Days later incumbent president is declared winner

Opposition alleges fraud on part of the incumbent regime

Incumbent regime claims that opposition strongholds reported first, skewing the initial reports

Data in Honduras 2017

Rich data allows for multiple evaluations of claims made

- Precinct-level reports and timing of results reporting

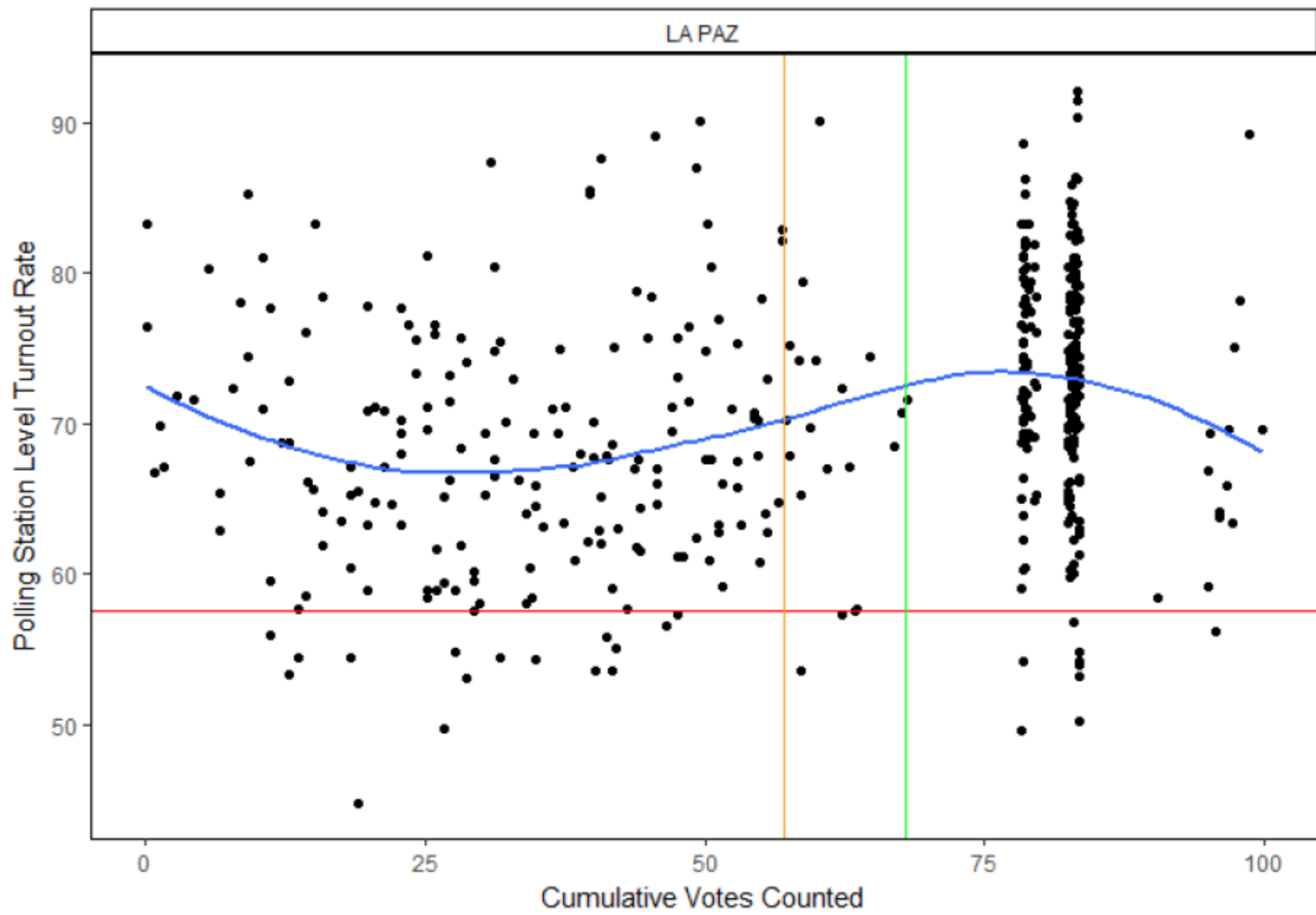
Simulations of randomized reporting procedures

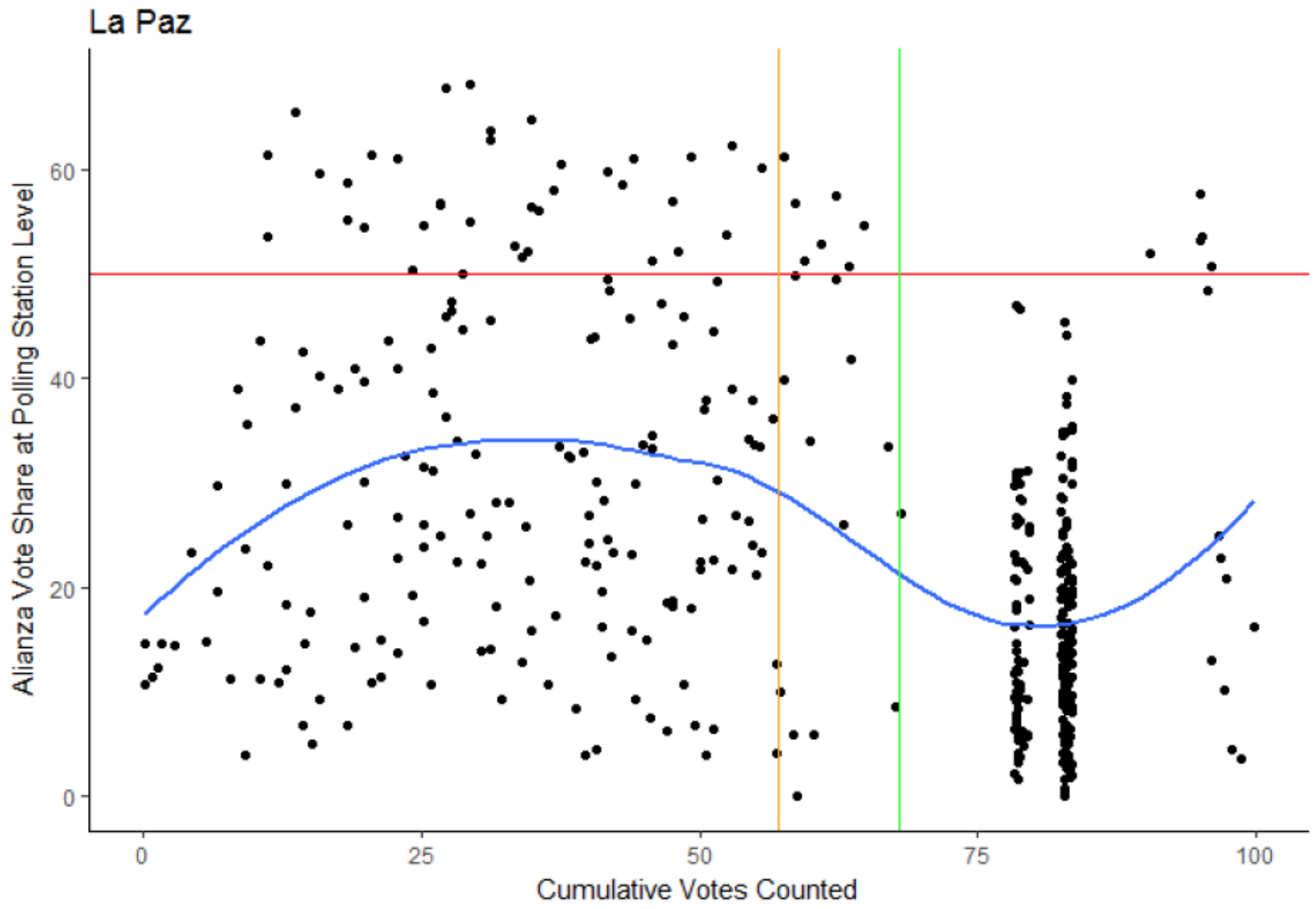
- show that shift in vote shares is plausible IF votes counted accurately

Analysis of reporting over time

- suspicious surge in turnout and vote share for incumbent in EVERY department (including those considered opposition strongholds)

Conclusion: Outcome Questioned





Don't forget this is Politics



Afghanistan 2014

Alleged Fraud after second round of presidential election

UN supports an audit of 100% of polling locations

Results of the audit are never released to the public

New position in government created for loser of the election

Kosovo 2010

Remedial automatic "audit" implemented

Cross-check of tabulation sheets with official results sheets

Determined over 50% of polling place results should be invalidated

Did NOT increase confidence in elections



Conclusions from the International Experience

Plan for the whole process, well in advance

Statistical techniques require appropriate high-quality data

What is the ultimate goal of the audit?