

Strategy: | **The distribution deviation strategy to detect election fraud**

How it works: | **The key idea of this strategy** (developed by Klimek et al. (2012)) is to compare the reported distribution of turnout and vote share of the winning party to simulated distributions of turnout and vote share had the elections been clean. The difference between the two distributions is a measure of electoral fraud that is comparable across countries and elections.

This strategy generates separate estimates for what proportion of units suffer from two types of fraud: (a) "incremental" in which moderate proportions of the votes are shifted from opposition to the winning party, and (b) "extreme" in which almost all the votes are shifted to the winning party.

This strategy is preferred to statistical techniques that look for anomalies in the last digits of reported electoral returns. One of the strengths of this strategy is that it is robust to the level at which countries report election results (polling station, district, etc.). It is also better at detecting electoral fraud in the form of ballot stuffing.

Data gathering strategy: | Via official election returns

SDG goals this could be used for: | Allows assigning a measure of election fraud that is comparable across countries even if the source of data comes from different aggregated units (e.g., polling station, district, province)

Advantages: | Non-manipulable to the extent that governments release election returns.
Can be done everywhere and is comparable over space and time.

Disadvantages: | May be hard to separate fraud from strategic voting.
Relies on various assumptions about the data generating process and functional forms.

References: | Klimek, Peter, Yuri Yegorov, Rudolf Hanel and Stefan Thurner. 2012. "Statistical Detection of Systematic Election Irregularities." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109(41):16469-16473.
Walter R. Mebane, Jr 2015. "Election Forensics: Latent Dimensions of Election Frauds and Strategic Voting"