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Review Essay: the Impact of Congressional Redistricting in the 1990s on Minority Representation, Party Competition, and Legislative Responsiveness

Seth C. McKee

University of Texas at Austin

This essay reviews recent research evaluating the effect of 1990s congressional redistricting on minority representation, party competition, and legislative responsiveness. Each of these three lines of research is initially discussed separately, with an emphasis on piecing together consistent findings and offering possible explanations for conflicting results. Then, several of the disputed issues that stem from these areas of research are briefly discussed. The essay concludes with some final observations.

The racial/ethnic and partisan composition of the House of Representatives underwent drastic change in the 1990s. The number of Black and Hispanic representatives increased dramatically in 1992. In the 1994 elections the GOP netted 52 seats, enough to take back the House for the first time in forty years. Furthermore, party polarization in the Congress increased throughout the 1990s as Democrats became more unified and liberal and Republicans more unified and conservative in their roll-call voting behavior (Stonecash, Brewer, and Mariani 2003).

Is it possible that these three political occurrences are related and that they were all influenced by a common factor? Perhaps,

and since the 1992 elections, social scientists have been hard at work determining the extent to which redistricting in the 1990s played a role in affecting the aforementioned developments. In this review essay I discuss the findings of researchers who have sought to assess the effect of congressional redistricting on minority representation, party competition, and legislative responsiveness.

This essay is constrained in several ways. First, my review is limited to published research and therefore it takes stock of what has been made available to the widest possible audience. Second, because the focus is on congressional redistricting in the 1990s, the research I comment on has been confined to congressional studies that necessarily include an analysis of the impact of redistricting in at least one election from 1992 through 2000. Third, although this review is not exhaustive, it is broad enough to be considered representative of published research in the areas I cover. Finally, the lion's share of research on 1990s redistricting is empirical and most of the studies I review rely on hard data to conduct statistical analyses that gauge the impact of redistricting.

The review proceeds as follows. I consider in sequence the effect of redistricting on minority representation, party competition, and legislative responsiveness. Next, I discuss several of the unresolved debates over the impact of redistricting; the discussion shows the interdependence of the three lines of research. Last, I conclude with some parting thoughts.

MINORITY REPRESENTATION

In this section I document the increase in the number of African-American and Hispanic representatives as a consequence of racial redistricting. Then, I discuss descriptive and substantive representation and review several studies that seek to quantify

the percentage of a district's minority population needed to obtain descriptive representation.

The 1990s round of congressional redistricting was unprecedented in terms of the emphasis that was placed on increasing the number of minority representatives. Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) as amended in 1982 stipulated that electoral arrangements that had the effect of diluting the votes of minority groups would not be permitted. Given the timing (after the 1980s reapportionment was completed) of this new provision, its consequences were not fully realized until the 1990s when the Department of Justice (DOJ) used Section 2 along with the preclearance provision of Section 5 to pressure the states under the VRA to maximize their number of majority-minority districts (Bullock 1995a; 1995b; 2000; Clayton 2000; Cunningham 2001).

It is indisputable that racial redistricting served to dramatically increase the number of Black and Hispanics elected to Congress. Table 1 shows data on black representatives and black majority districts and data on Hispanic representatives and Hispanic majority districts. After the creation of 15 new black majority districts in 1992, the number of black representatives increased by 52% (25 in 1990 to 38 in 1992). All but two of the new districts were in the South.¹ Most black members hail from black majority districts and only one black majority district has been represented by someone who was not Black.² Court-ordered redistricting reduced the number of black majority districts in the South and yet every Black incumbent whose district was consequently made majority white won reelection—this fact has led to a vigorous dispute over the necessity of black majority districts for the purpose of electing Black Americans.

¹ Unless stated otherwise, throughout this study the South refers to the states of the Confederacy: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

² District 1 in Pennsylvania from 1992 to present has been represented by a white Democrat.

TABLE 1
REDISTRICTING AND
AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND HISPANIC REPRESENTATION

	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
AFRICAN-AMERICAN						
<i>Black Representatives</i>						
South	5	17	17	16	16	16
Non-South	20	21	22	21	23	21
Total	25	38	39	37	39	37
<i>Black Majority Districts (BMDs)</i>						
South	4	17	17	11	10	10
Non-South	13	15	15	15	15	15
Total	17	32	32	26	25	25
<i>BMDs/Black Representatives</i>						
Ratio	17/25	32/38	32/39	26/37	25/39	25/37
	.68	.84	.82	.70	.64	.67
HISPANIC						
<i>Hispanic Representatives</i>						
South	5	7	7	8	8	8
Non-South	5	10	11	10	11	11
Total	10	17	18	18	19	19
<i>Hispanic Majority Districts (HMDs)</i>						
South	6	9	9	8	8	9
Non-South	5	10	10	11	10	15
Total	11	19	19	19	18	24
<i>HMDs/Hispanic Representatives</i>						
Ratio	11/10	19/17	19/18	19/18	18/19	24/19
	1.10	1.11	1.05	1.05	.94	1.26

SOURCE: Data compiled by the author from *The Almanac of American Politics: 1992-2002*; *Vital Statistics on American Politics: 1999-2000*; Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies website (for total number of black representatives in 2000).

The creation of Hispanic majority districts in 1992 has also served to increase the number of Hispanic representatives although some of these districts have non-Hispanic representatives (see the ratios in Table 1). Compared to Blacks, a larger percentage Hispanic population is needed to elect a Hispanic because of the high rate of non-citizens, less cohesive voting (not as Democratic), and sizable portions of Hispanics below voting age in these districts (Handley, Grofman, and Arden 1998; Lublin 1997a; 1997b).

From the data in Table 1 it is clear that Black and Hispanic descriptive representation increased in the 1990s. In this context, descriptive representation means that a particular racial/ethnic group elects one of the "members of their group to public office" (Lublin 1997b, 12). Substantive representation on the other hand, means that a representative, regardless of race/ethnicity, furthers the policy interests of a particular racial/ethnic group. The distinction between these two kinds of representation is important because several studies have found evidence of a tradeoff between maximizing descriptive and substantive minority representation. Simply stated, the tradeoff stipulates that at some point increasing the number of black and Hispanic members comes at the expense of reducing the influence of black and Hispanic voters in districts with more conservative white (non-Hispanic) representatives. In fact, the most important debate over minority representation is whether there is a tradeoff and if there is, how severe is it?

Most scholars agree that there generally is a tradeoff between descriptive and substantive minority representation. In some places, however, like urban areas in the Northeast, there is no tradeoff because of large concentrations of minority populations that live in close proximity to majority populations that share the same partisan preferences (see Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Lublin 1997b). The tradeoff is most evident in

the South where voting is more racially polarized since it is more often the case that a majority of whites prefer a candidate opposed by a majority of Blacks or Hispanics.

The first step in establishing whether a tradeoff exists is to determine what percentage of a district's minority population is necessary to achieve descriptive representation. If the minority population in a district is greater than the percentage needed to elect the minority population's candidate of choice then it follows that substantive minority representation has been compromised because the excess number of minority voters could have been placed in other districts where they could have an influence on electoral outcomes.

The actual minority percentage necessary for descriptive representation has been estimated in several studies. Lublin (1997a; 1997b) estimated the percent black and Hispanic necessary to elect black and Hispanic representatives, respectively, based on congressional elections from 1972-1994. In his models, Lublin includes a district's percent black and percent Hispanic population as explanatory variables for the probability of electing a black or Hispanic representative. Controls are included for several other demographic factors, but Lublin finds that percent black and Hispanic are the only factors that account for whether a minority is elected. Lublin finds a 55% black district population is enough to ensure the election of a Black (probability is .86). This result assumes that the Hispanic population is zero. An increase in the Hispanic population lowers the black population necessary to elect a Black American. In addition, Lublin finds that a 55% Hispanic population ensures (probability is .84) the election of a Hispanic provided that at least 85% of the district population has lived in the state for at least five years. Lublin is wise to stress that "[l]ocal differences should be taken into account when determining the threshold at which a congressional

district will probably elect a black [or Hispanic] representative” (1997b, 48).

Cameron, Epstein, and O’Halloran (1996), and Epstein and O’Halloran (1999a; 1999b; 2000) regress the probability of electing a black Democrat on the black voting age population (BVAP), controlling for region. In the 1990s, for every region of the United States a BVAP less than 50% gives a Black candidate at least an equal chance of winning election. These studies stress the BVAP percent where there is a .50 probability of electing a black Democrat because this is the minimum threshold for the minority community to have an equal chance of electing their candidate of choice (Epstein and O’Halloran 1999b). The point of equal opportunity for electing a black Democrat is highly variable across space and time. Based on the 1992 elections (103rd Congress), Cameron, Epstein, and O’Halloran (1996) find the point of equal opportunity for electing a black Democrat is a BVAP of 40.29% in the South, 47.29% in the Northwest, and only 28.43% in the Northeast. Epstein and O’Halloran (1999a, 190; 2000, 100) show that the point of equal opportunity for electing a black Democrat has declined over time and across all regions: (1) South: BVAP = 50.7% in 1974, 54.9% in 1984, and 40.4% in 1994, (2) East: 49.4%, 52.8%, and 47.6%, and (3) Other (rest of the U.S.): 41.9%, 27.0%, and 29.0%.³

In the 1990s, a debate ensued over the minimum minority population required to establish descriptive representation. The participants in this debate have spent much ink talking past each other. For example, although Lublin (1997a; 1997b) does not divide his results by region in his analysis, the point of equal op-

³ The South is Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia. The Northeast/East is Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and West Virginia. The Northwest/Other are the remaining states.

portunity for electing a Black American (assuming zero percent Hispanic) is less than 50%. Lublin's finding is probably statistically indistinguishable from the results in Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran (1996) and Epstein and O'Halloran (1999a; 1999b; 2000) since the BVAP necessary for an equal chance of electing a black Democrat in the South (in the 1990s) falls between 40 and 50%.⁴ Lublin stressed that a greater than 50% black population was necessary to ensure the election of a Black, but Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran (1996) and Epstein and O'Halloran (1999a; 1999b; 2000) focus on the point of equal opportunity. Based on their estimates, it is also the case that a greater than 50% black population is needed to guarantee the election of a black Democrat, at least in the South.

In the South several black incumbent Democrats whose districts were made majority white won reelection. In 1996, black incumbent Democrats Sanford Bishop (GA 2nd district), Cynthia McKinney (GA 4th), and Corrine Brown (FL 3rd) won reelection in districts that were about 27, 40, and 39% black, respectively (Voss and Lublin 2001). Based on their analysis of these elections, Voss and Lublin (2001) claim that the incumbency advantage does not explain (except for perhaps Sanford Bishop) why these black incumbents won reelection. Instead, Voss and Lublin contend that the ongoing realignment of southern whites in favor of the Republican party explains how black Democrats can now win election in minority influence districts—districts on the order of about 40% black. Because a majority of southern whites are now Republican voters, black voters now comprise a majority of the Democratic primary electorate in many districts that are majority Democratic. Thus, black voters can elect a Black in

⁴ The Epstein and O'Halloran analysis (1999b) is based on data from State Senate elections (1988-1994) in South Carolina; the point of equal opportunity for electing an African American is about 47% BVAP.

the primary and there are enough whites who support the Democratic party to elect the Democratic nominee regardless of their race (Voss and Lublin 2001).

Voss and Lublin (2001) conclude there is no white backlash in districts with substantial black populations. In other words, as the percentage black in a district increases, whites do not respond by voting in favor of the candidate opposed by most Black voters. On the contrary, white voters in majority-minority and minority influence districts are more Democratic than whites who reside in districts with low minority populations. As Voss (2000) argues, proximity among the races does not breed political contempt in terms of racially polarized voting. The absence of racially polarized voting is plausible because the redistricting plans in most southern states were drawn to concentrate the most Republican voters in districts represented by Republicans. Therefore, those white voters most likely to oppose minority preferred candidates do not live in majority-minority or minority influence districts.

PARTY COMPETITION

Most scholars agree that redistricting contributed to Republican electoral gains in the 1990s (but see Engstrom 1995). There is, however, substantial disagreement over the extent to which racial redistricting advantaged the GOP (Canon 1999a; Lublin 1999b). In this section I examine the conventional wisdom that racial redistricting disproportionately benefited Republican candidates. I present several studies that provide the number of GOP wins attributed to racial redistricting. Next, I discuss several studies that address the impact of 1990s redistricting on party competition. Finally, I discuss a study that makes a strong case that racial redistricting played a minimal role in Republican success.

Table 2 presents the total number of seats held by each party and according to region from 1990 through 2000. There are three patterns worth noting: (1) the massive nationwide shift of seats

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF U.S. HOUSE SEATS HELD BY
EACH PARTY FROM 1990-2000

	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	2000
South						
Republicans	39	48	64	71	71	71
Democrats	77	77	61	54	54	53
Difference	-38	-29	3	17	17	18
Non-South						
Republicans	127	128	166	156	152	151
Democrats	191	181	143	153	157	158
Difference	-64	-53	23	3	-5	-7
Nation						
Republicans	166	176	230	227	223	222
Democrats	268	258	204	207	211	211
Difference	-102	-82	26	20	12	11

SOURCE: Data for 1992-2000 elections are from Table 1.1 in Black and Black (2002). 1990 election data compiled by the author from *The Almanac of American Politics* (1991).

going to the GOP in 1994, (2) the continual increase in the number of Republican seats in the South, and (3) the decline in Republican seats in the Non-South since the 1996 election.

The national Republican tide in 1994 increased the number of Republicans in the South by one-third and the non-South by 30%. After 1994, regional patterns diverge as the South continues to gain Republican seats while the Non-South continues to lose them. Furthermore, the partisan balance in the South was constant between 1988 and 1990—39 Republicans and 127 Democrats. Republican advances in the South commence in 1992 with a gain of nine seats for the GOP in the first election held

under the newly drawn congressional districts. In the non-South, it appears 1994 was a short-term deviating election with national conditions that swung heavily in favor of the GOP. In the South, the evidence suggests 1994 was a critical election that reinforced a trend in favor of the Republican party that began in 1992.

The timing (1992) and the surge of Republican gains (concentrated between 1992 and 1996) in the South has led many scholars to argue that racial redistricting played a significant role. Thirteen out of the fifteen new black majority districts were created in the South (see Table 1). Furthermore, the sharp decline in the number of white Democrats corresponded with the increase in the number of black Democrats and the even larger increase in the number of Republicans.

Racial redistricting benefits Republicans if enough black voters are packed⁵ into a majority-minority district to cause at least one neighboring district's whiter constituency to elect the Republican candidate in a seat previously held by a Democrat. *Ceteris paribus*, the only way Republicans would not benefit from racial redistricting that packs minority voters is if the minority population for the majority-minority district was taken entirely from districts represented by Republicans (assuming the GOP does not already control every seat in the state).⁶ In this case, racial redis-

⁵ "Packed" means there are more voters than necessary to elect a Democrat.

⁶ It is possible that if the minority percentage in a Democratic district was well below 50%, a reduction in the minority population could be offset with a more Democratic population if a larger share of the white population was also replaced with a more Democratic white population. An equal exchange between white and black voters always favors the GOP because the typical black voter is much more supportive of Democratic candidates. Shotts (2001; 2002) points out that in a heavily Republican state the requirement to create a majority-minority district can reduce the number of Republicans elected. This possibility has yet to present itself in the South because the Democratic party is still competitive and the black population has proven large enough to prevent the Republican party from capturing every seat in a given state. However, if the movement of whites in favor of the GOP continues, it is possible that a state like, say, Tennessee could be entirely Republican if its one majority-minority district was dismantled. Then again, the Note continues

tricting would lead to a one-to-one exchange where a minority Democrat wins election at the expense of a white Democrat and the number of Republicans remains the same. Because of geographic constraints and the fact that the percentage of the minority population in districts represented by Republicans was already much lower than the percentage for Democrats prior to redistricting (Hill 1995; Overby and Cosgrove 1996), most of the minority populations in new majority-minority districts were in fact taken from districts represented by white Democrats (Grose 2001; Handley, Grofman, and Arden 1998; Lublin and Voss 2000; McKee 2002). Thus it appears that racial redistricting must have benefited the Republican party and the question that remains is the extent to which the GOP benefited.

Table 3 lists several studies that quantify the number of Republican wins because of racial redistricting. Almost all of these estimates consist of seats won by the GOP in the South because, as previously mentioned, only two new black majority districts were created outside the South. In the South the GOP netted nine seats in 1992 and sixteen more in 1994. Most of the studies in Table 3 claim a third or more of Republican victories between 1992 and 1994 were caused by racial redistricting.

A word of caution is in order with respect to Table 3. Most of the studies fail to control for other factors that may have accounted for these GOP wins. The most common method employed to calculate these estimates is a simple count of the seats where "the number of black voters removed from a district exceeds the GOP victory margin" (Bullock 1995a, 22). The exceptions are Grofman and Handley (1998), and Hill (1995). Grofman and Handley employ a decomposition model to separate the number of seats won by Republicans independent of re-

VRA would prevent this scenario because dissecting the large concentrated black population in the Memphis area would be considered minority vote dilution.

TABLE 3
NUMBER OF REPUBLICAN SEAT GAINS DUE TO
RACIAL REDISTRICTING

Author and Year	Net GOP seats	Elections
Beachler (1995)	4-5	1992
Benenson (1992)	3	1992
Bositis* (n.d.)	≥17	1992-1994
Bullock (1995a)	6-9	1992-1994
Bullock (1995b)	≥13	1992-1994
Grofman and Handley (1998)	2-11	1990-1994
Hill (1995)	≥7	1992-1994
Lublin (1995)	9	1992-1994
Lublin (1997b)	≥9	1992-1994
Lublin and Voss (2000)	11	1992-1994
McKee (2002)	4	1992
Swain (1995)	≥17	1992-1994

*The estimate for Bositis is cited by Lublin (1997b, 112-113).

districting (behavioral change) and the seats won as a result of redistricting (compositional change). They find that most of the seats won by the GOP in the South from 1990 to 1994 were because of a rise in Republican voting not related to the effect of racial redistricting. At most, no more than 11 Republican seats can be attributed to race-based redistricting and even if this number is correct, the Republican party would still have won the House in 1994 even if no seats were won as a result of racial redistricting.⁷

Kevin Hill (1995) employs the *JudgeIt* predictive program designed by Gelman and King (1994) to evaluate the impact of

⁷ See Engstrom (1995) for a discussion that goes so far as to almost completely discount the evidence for racial redistricting leading to GOP gains. See Lublin and Voss (2000) for a criticism of the decomposition method employed by Grofman and Handley (1998).

race-based redistricting on Republican wins in 1992 and 1994 among the eight southern states that created new black majority districts.⁸ Because of their large reductions in black populations, Hill considers four GOP wins, Alabama's 6th, Georgia's 1st, 3rd, and 4th Districts to be a result of racial redistricting in the 1992 elections. Hill's multivariate analysis regresses the percent of the 1992 Democratic House vote on the percent of the 1992 GOP presidential vote, a dummy for incumbency, a dummy for contested seats, district percent black in 1992, and the change in the percent black between 1992 and 1990. The change in the percent black is the variable of interest and controlling for the other factors, Hill's model predicts the above mentioned four GOP wins. Hill runs the model again for the 1992 elections using the 1990 district racial compositions and finds that the Democrats would have held onto the four seats actually won by Republicans. Finally, Hill runs his model for the 1994 elections based on 1992 data and it predicts three more GOP victories due to racial redistricting (Districts 8 and 10 in Georgia and District 2 in North Carolina).

In a follow-up piece, Hill and Rae (2000) use *JudgeIt* to predict individual House elections in the South from 1988 to 1996. Using a multivariate analysis to predict the district share of the Democratic House vote, Hill and Rae find that their variable of interest, the percent black in the district is only significant in 1992, suggesting the importance of redistricting. Employing the counterfactual condition that the 1990 districts remained in place and that the incumbents who retired in 1990 ran for reelection, Hill and Rae find the Republican takeover would not have occurred until 1996. In other words, racial redistricting "probably

⁸ These states are Alabama (7th), Florida (3rd, 17th, 23rd), Georgia (2nd, 11th), Louisiana (4th), North Carolina (1st, 12th), South Carolina (6th), Texas (18th, 30th), and Virginia (3rd).

gave the GOP the prize 2 years too early" (Hill and Rae 2000, 18).

Among these several studies, it is evident that there is considerable variance in the number of GOP wins deemed to be a result of racial redistricting. It appears that the growth in southern Republicanism in the 1990s was so robust that racial redistricting was a contributory factor, but perhaps it was not even a necessary condition for the GOP to take control of the House before the end of the decade. For instance, Hill (1995) documents that many districts were trending Republican even in the absence of a change in racial composition.

But before discounting the impact of redistricting, it is important to consider that most studies have focused primarily on the direct effect of racial redistricting on party competition. In the South, beyond reducing the black populations outside of majority-minority districts, redistricting and reapportionment had the effect of making these districts more Republican and politically unstable because a large percentage of districts contained new constituents.

Perhaps the most important impediment to Republican ascendancy in the South was the incumbency advantage that southern Democrats enjoyed since the end of Reconstruction. The growth of southern Republicanism has been top-down with most white voters preferring Republican presidential candidates since the 1960s (see Aistrup 1996). In presidential contests the South became a Republican bastion in the 1980s, providing a large chunk of guaranteed electoral votes (Black and Black 1992). And despite Clinton's wins in 1992 and 1996, the South remains the most presidentially Republican region in the nation. In fact, a Democrat in the White House appears to have been just what was needed for Republican advancement in House elections (see

Jacobson 1990).⁹ The 1992 elections marked a substantial decline in the portion of white southerners who split their tickets in favor of the Republican nominee for president and the Democrat for the House (35% in 1988, 18% in 1992). Not surprisingly, there was a corresponding increase in the share of whites who voted a straight Republican ticket (32% in 1988, 41% in 1992).¹⁰

Several scholars have noted the precarious situation of so many southern Democrats who represented districts that voted Republican in presidential contests. Campbell (1997) labeled these districts split-result districts and found that the Republican takeover in 1994 was because of GOP gains in these districts. Jacobson (1996; 2000) and Abramowitz (1995) both show that the GOP's strongest candidates (based on prior elective experience and funding) targeted split-result districts and that a disproportionate number of these districts account for Republican success in the 1990s.

More than any other scholars, Earl and Merle Black (2002) have demonstrated the broader importance of redistricting in contributing to southern Republican gains. Their findings suggest that redistricting was vital to the rise of southern Republicans in House elections in the 1990s. Redistricting provided new racial foundations more favorable to Republicans. But in addition to whiter districts, redistricting made these districts much more Republican based on presidential voting. In effect, redistricting widened the split in so-called split-result districts, putting southern Democrats at even greater electoral risk.

New racial foundations made it easier for Republican candidates to win elections since most Republicans require overwhelming white support given that Blacks typically vote

⁹ Jacobson (1990) shows that since 1946, "Democrats have won fewest House seats when losing the presidency, [and] second fewest at midterm elections with a Democrat in the White House" (135).

¹⁰ These numbers come from the author's analysis of National Election Studies data.

upwards of 90% Democratic. A reduction in black constituents meant a lower share of the white vote would be needed for Republicans to win election. Black and Black (2002, 334-335) note that before redistricting more than 60% of southern districts had black populations of at least 15%; after redistricting, "nearly half (46 percent) of the southern districts had black populations of less than 15 percent." Although in several instances Democratic line drawers were able to concentrate Republican strength in a limited number of districts (Beachler 1998; Canon 1999a), overall, lower black populations served to disperse Republican support. Black and Black find that after redistricting, "the number of Republican presidential landslide districts [60% or more of the two-party vote] increased from fifty-three to sixty-five" (2002, 335).¹¹

So what was the success rate for Republican candidates in districts made more favorable to their party? Here is what Black and Black found: (1) The GOP won 30 of 53 (57%) Republican presidential landslide districts in 1988 and 42 of 65 (65%) landslide districts in 1992; (2) Republican dominance was confined to Republican presidential landslide districts less than 15% black and these districts increased from 28 to 41 after redistricting; (3) The GOP won 64% (18 of 28) of Republican presidential landslide districts under 15% black in 1990 and captured 80% (33 of 41) of these districts in 1992; (4) In 1994 the GOP won 95% (39 of 41) of Republican presidential landslide districts under 15% black; (5) Between 1990 and 1994 the GOP gained 25 seats in Republican presidential landslide districts giving the party 55 of these 65 districts (2002, 335-338).

According to Black and Black, "[i]n order for the Republicans to take advantage of the grassroots Reagan realignment,

¹¹ Black and Black (2002) compare the 1988 Republican presidential vote for districts before and after redistricting.

presidentially Republican districts held by Democrats would have to be destabilized" (2002, 331). Black and Black provide compelling evidence that redistricting did not just accelerate an ongoing partisan realignment. Rather it was a structural component necessary for Republican advancement in southern House elections. The number of split-result districts drastically declined as redistricting made them even more vulnerable to strong Republican challenges.

Similar to Black and Black (2002), Petrocik and Desposato (1998) find that the destabilizing effect of redistricting benefited the GOP. However, Petrocik and Desposato depart from most scholars by offering a more nuanced argument that heavily discounts the impact of race-based redistricting on Republican advancement in the South between 1992 and 1994. They contend that Republican gains were mainly a consequence of the pro-Republican voting behavior of "new" constituents located in districts represented by Democratic incumbents. The creation of majority-minority districts was the first-order effect that led to the shuffling of so many voters into districts with different incumbents running for reelection in 1992 and 1994. The second-order effect was the loss of familiar voters, or rather, an increase in the number of new constituents, "defined as individuals who were in a different incumbent's district prior to the redistricting" (1998, 616).

To assess the significance of the first-order effect, Petrocik and Desposato regress the share of the Democratic House vote on the change in a district's percent black. This is done separately for 1992 and 1994. Change in the percent black is significant in 1992, but not in 1994. The second-order effect is evaluated by regressing the Democratic House vote on a district's percent new constituents. The percent new has a negative and significant effect on the Democratic vote in 1992 and 1994.

According to Petrocik and Desposato, given the constancy of Democratic support among black voters, the only possible explanation for Republican gains was an increase in Republican support from white voters. Based on an examination of National Election Study surveys, redistricting alone, as a consequence of race-based redistricting (the first-order effect), would not provide enough white voters to secure Republican victories in 1992 and 1994 if the previous levels of Democratic support among white southerners (white Democrats, white Independents, and white Republicans) remained at their 1990 levels.

Petrocik and Desposato (1998, 616) claim that "the key factor [for Republican gains] was the second-order effect of losing familiar voters. This loss of familiar constituents was more important than the first-order effect of a reduced black constituency."

So with respect to the effect of redistricting on Republican gains, new voters were the crucial factor in tipping the balance in favor of Republican candidates in the 1992 and 1994 elections. Petrocik and Desposato contend that many of the plans administered by Democratically controlled state legislatures essentially backfired.¹² Assuming voting behavior remained at its pre-redistricting level, the Democrats may have even benefited from redistricting, "[h]owever, an impossible-to-anticipate, large anti-Democratic tide undermined a 'friendly' redistricting that had every prospect of leaving the Democrats in charge" (Petrocik and Desposato 1998, 630).

Petrocik and Desposato provide a convincing explanation for why the Democratic incumbency advantage was weakened by redistricting. New voters did not have a bond with the new incumbent they found representing them as a consequence of re-

¹² Most of the southern states had Democratic legislatures (AR, FL, GA, NC, TN, TX, and VA), and the rest were divided between the two parties (AL, LA, MS, SC) during the initial redistricting following the 1990 census (Niemi and Abramowitz 1994, 813).

districting. Since most of these voters were white and thus voted Republican in presidential contests, the lack of familiarity with their Democratic incumbent made it much more likely that new voters would view the elections of 1992 and 1994 (to a lesser extent) as open seat contests (even if the incumbent sought reelection) and fall back on their partisanship as exhibited in presidential contests and thus vote for the Republican challenger. And even though Republican incumbents actually inherited districts that averaged a higher portion of new constituents, 37% for Republicans *v.* 21% for the Democrats (Petrocik and Desposato 1998, 625), these new voters were partial to the GOP. But in the final analysis, Petrocik and Desposato argue that it was not so much new voters as it was a Republican tide that accounted for GOP gains in 1992 and 1994. In effect, they opt for a realignment style explanation, not redistricting, as the primary reason for GOP success in the South in 1992 and 1994.

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIVENESS

The narrower focus of research that evaluates the impact of redistricting on legislative responsiveness has produced several studies that take very similar methodological approaches. In this section I explain what is meant by legislative responsiveness and provide the rationale for how redistricting may affect it. Then, I discuss the results of eight studies that measure the impact of redistricting on representatives' roll-call voting behavior.¹³

Legislative responsiveness refers to the extent to which members adjust their behavior in an effort to meet the demands of

¹³ See Canon (1999b) for a strong criticism of using roll-call voting behavior as a dependent variable to gauge legislative responsiveness. Canon notes that the interest group ratings that comprise the dependent variable in most studies are not sufficient to distinguish the interests of blacks and whites and roll-calls contain the "censored data" problem because these votes necessarily measure only the end of the legislative process.

their constituents. By altering the partisan and racial compositions of districts, it is plausible that redistricting affects the responsiveness of representatives. For instance, Democrats whose districts are made more Republican may respond by taking more conservative positions as reflected in their rhetoric and documented in their voting behavior. In the literature, "[r]esponsiveness refers to the change in representatives' roll-call voting that can be attributed to district-level ideological change, controlling for relevant variables" (Sharpe 2001, 278).

In the 1990s, several studies have evaluated whether redistricting affected legislative responsiveness. I confine my discussion here to eight of these studies. Table 4 provides information on these studies. Although several different vote score types are used for the dependent variables in this research, all but two studies include the change in the district percent black (1992%-1990%) as a key explanatory variable. In addition, only the study by Grose (2001) evaluates responsiveness based on court-ordered redistricting that occurred after the decennial redistricting for the 1992 elections.

Limiting his analysis to the South, Bullock (1995c) measures responsiveness according to separate regressions with change in Conservative Coalition (CC) scores as the dependent variable and change in Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) scores as the dependent variable.¹⁴ By running separate regressions for these two models controlling for party, an increase in the percent black causes Democrats to vote more liberal on CC scores and more in favor of civil rights (LCCR scores). The change in percent black has no impact on the responsiveness of

¹⁴ The CC score is calculated by subtracting the scores from the 102nd Congress from the 1993 scores and LCCR scores from 102nd Congress subtracted from seven roll call votes that the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies considered to be "crucial to African Americans" (the LCCR scores were not yet available for 1993) (Bullock 1995c, 146).

TABLE 4
SAMPLE OF STUDIES THAT ASSESS THE EFFECT OF
REDISTRICTING ON LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIVENESS

Bullock (1995c)	
Main Finding	Change in percent black affects responsiveness of all members. Running models for black and white Democrats however, shows change in percent black only affects responsiveness of black Democrats.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	CC; LCCR
Congress	103 rd
Key Independent Variable(s)	Change in percent black
Grose (2001)	
Main Finding	Reduction in percent black due to redistricting between 1993 and 2000 causes black Democrats to become more conservative on ideological voting and more liberal on civil rights voting. Increase in percent black makes white Republicans more conservative on civil rights voting.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	W-NOMINATE; LCCR
Congress	103 rd -106 th
Key Independent Variable(s)	Change in percent black
Hurley & Kerr (1997)	
Main Finding	Analyzing 103rd and 104th Congresses separately. Generally, new Democrats and new Republican members in both Congresses are more liberal and conservative, respectively, compared to incumbent members of their party. New minority Democrats are more liberal than all other new Democrats in 103rd Congress.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	Party unity scores; Party unity scores on key votes
Congress	103 rd , 104 th
Key Independent Variable(s)	New member (Democrat or Republican); New member (Minority Democrat in 103 rd)

TABLE 4 (continued)

LeVeaux & Grand (2003)	
Main Finding	Increase in percent black and post-redistricting percent black cause Democrats to become more liberal. Large change ($\geq 10\%$) in percent black makes Democrats more responsive; a large decline ($\geq 10\%$) in percent black makes Democrats much more conservative. Increase in post-redistricting percent black makes Republicans more conservative and large decline in percent black makes Republicans even more conservative.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	ADA
	Congress 103 rd
Key Independent Variable(s)	Change in percent black; percent black post-redistricting; Large change in percent black (10% or more)
Overby & Cosgrove (1996)	
Main Finding	Limited analysis to white incumbents, change in percent black affects responsiveness. When models are run according to party, change in percent black does not affect Republican voting, but white Democrats remain responsive even controlling for region.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	COPE
	Congress 103 rd
Key Independent Variable(s)	Change in percent black
Sharpe & Garand (2001)	
Main Finding	For all incumbents, change in percent black and percent black post-redistricting caused more liberal voting. For white incumbents, only change in percent black caused more liberal voting. Separating members by region (South/Non-South), shows both variables affect voting for southerners and only post-redistricting percent black affects voting of non-southerners. A large change ($\geq 10\%$) in percent black has an even greater effect on voting for all members whether or not controlling for race (whites only) or region.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	ADA
	Congress 103 rd
Key Independent Variable(s)	Change in percent black; percent black post-redistricting; Large change in percent black (10% or more)

the LCCR voting is not significant. The evidence from Bullock (1995c) and Whitby (1997) strongly suggests that it is the election of black Democrats from black majority districts who account for redistricting-induced legislative responsiveness based on a change in the percent black. And based on difference of means tests, Hurley and Kerr (1997) find that newly elected minority Democrats from new majority-minority districts are significantly more liberal than all other newly elected Democrats according to average party unity scores and average party unity scores on key votes in the 103rd Congress (1993-1994).¹⁵

The findings of Sharpe and Garand (2001), Overby and Cosgrove (1996), and LeVeaux and Garand (2003) are not consistent with Bullock (1995c) and Whitby (1997). It appears that one reason for the difference is that the former studies are limited to incumbent members whereas Bullock and Whitby include dummies for freshman Democrats and freshman Republicans. Sharpe and Garand (2001) do not run separate models according to party. They run four models: (1) all House members, (2) only white members, (3) southern members, and (4) non-southern members. In all four models the change in percent black positively impacts a member's Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) rating (a higher score is more liberal). The most important finding in this research is that a very large change in percent black, 10% or more, has a much stronger impact on responsiveness; this points to a threshold effect where district changes may have to be substantial in order to affect the responsiveness of certain members.

Contrary to Bullock (1995c) and Whitby (1997), Overby and Cosgrove (1996) find that white southern Democrats are responsive to a change in the racial composition of their districts. An

¹⁵ The scores for newly elected minority Democrats from new majority-minority districts are not different from those of incumbent minority Democrats (Hurley and Kerr 1997).

TABLE 4 (continued)

Sharpe (2001)	
Main Finding	Author finds that members are responsive to changes in the partisan composition of their constituency based on NOMINATE scores because members exhibit more conservative voting behavior if their districts are made less Democratic through redistricting prior to the 1992 elections. Furthermore, the author shows that more senior members are slightly less responsive to partisan changes in their districts.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	D-NOMINATE
	Congress 103 rd
Key Independent Variable(s)	Change in NOMINATE score
Whitby (1997)	
Main Finding	Change in percent black affects responsiveness of southern members in states that created new black majority districts. The relationship holds when reducing the model to just Democrats, but does not hold for just white Democrats.
Vote Measure (Dependent Variable)	LCCR
	Congress 103 rd
Key Independent Variable(s)	Change in percent black

Republicans. Taking his analysis a step farther, Bullock runs separate models for white and black Democrats, finding that the change in percent black no longer affects white Democrats' responsiveness but it does affect black Democrats for both CC and LCCR scores.

Whitby's study (1997) corroborates Bullock's findings (1995c). Whitby limits his analysis to the eight southern states that created black majority districts for the 1992 elections. Whitby runs three models to evaluate a change in percent black on the LCCR scores for (1) all members in these states, (2) a model just for Democrats, and (3) a model for white Democrats. For white Democrats, the effect of a change in percent black on

increase in the percent black as a result of redistricting positively impacts these members' Committee on Political Education (COPE) rating (higher scores are more liberal). However, as Bullock found (1995c), the change in percent black has no effect on the responsiveness of Republicans. LeVeaux and Garand (2003) run separate models for incumbent Democrats and Republicans to estimate the effect of a change in percent Black population on ADA scores. In addition, they assess the impact of a large change (equal or greater than 10%) in percent black on responsiveness. For Republican incumbents, an increase in percent black negatively affected their ADA scores. No Republicans experienced a large increase in black population, but many experienced a large decrease (10% or more) in their black populations because of redistricting, and these members exhibited even more conservative voting as reflected in over a 2.5 point reduction in ADA scores.

In contrast to Republicans, Democratic incumbents were much more responsive to large changes in the percent Black population. In addition to the change in percent black increasing Democrats' ADA scores, a large change increased Democrats' ADA scores by over five points; a 10% or higher increase in black population had no effect; a 10% or higher decrease in black population caused a reduction in ADA scores of more than eight points. The reason large increases in the black population have no effect is because Democrats are already highly responsive (have high ADA scores) to black constituents because black voters are part of the core constituency of most Democrats. In other words, most of these incumbent Democrats depend on black votes for reelection. Nonetheless, compared to Republicans whose core constituents are white voters, a large reduction in the black population places Democrats at greater electoral risk and thus they respond by exhibiting more conservative roll-call

voting behavior to retain the electoral support of white moderates.

The Grose study (2001) departs from the other seven studies by focusing on the roll-call voting behavior of southern representatives in the case of court-ordered redistricting that reduced the black populations in several black majority districts from 1993 to 2000.¹⁶ Running separate regressions for white Democrats, white Republicans, and black Democrats, Grose finds that a change in the black population only affects Poole and Rosenthal W-NOMINATE scores of black Democrats. Since the populations of black Democrats have been reduced, making them majority white because of court-ordered redistricting, it makes sense that black Democrats respond by voting more conservatively according to NOMINATE scores. Similar to LeVeaux and Garand's (2003) explanation, black Democrats recognize that an increase in white constituents means they will have to respond by voting more conservative because a portion of the white voters need to be part of the core constituency for black Democrats to win reelection.

It is interesting, however, that when regressions are run with LCCR scores as the dependent variable, black Democrats who lose black constituents respond by voting more in favor of civil rights issues. Civil rights issues are of great concern to black constituents and since they still comprise the foundation of the primary constituency for black Democrats in white majority districts, these members have to guard against potential opponents who could run to the left of them if these members reduced their support for civil rights. A change in the percent black has no effect on white Democrats' LCCR scores, but it does affect the

¹⁶ Considerable changes to congressional boundaries were made for the following southern states: Florida (1996 election), Georgia (1996), Louisiana (1994 and 1996), North Carolina (1998 and 2000), Texas (1996), and Virginia (1998) (Grose 2001, 212).

scores of white Republicans who respond to an increase in black population by reducing their support on civil rights legislation. Similar to the explanation for black Democrats who gained white constituents, white Republicans who gained black voters "were worried about primary challenges from moderate Republicans. In order to win primaries, these Republicans became more conservative on civil rights...to appeal to conservative voter bases" (Grose 2001, 212).

Finally, Sharpe (2001) extends the work of Glazer and Robbins (1985) to the 1990s to test whether a change in the partisan composition of a district affects a member's roll-call voting on Poole and Rosenthal D-NOMINATE scores. The key variable of interest is the change in NOMINATE score, calculated by multiplying the coefficient from the district Democratic presidential vote in 1988 (the independent variable in a separate model) by the difference in the district Democratic presidential vote in 1988, before and after redistricting (see Sharpe 2001, 279). The NOMINATE score will be positive as the Democratic composition decreases. Therefore a reduction in the Democratic composition is expected to cause members to respond by casting more conservative votes. Sharpe finds that members are in fact responsive to changes in the partisan composition of their constituency based on NOMINATE scores because members exhibit more conservative voting behavior if their districts are made less Democratic by redistricting for the 1992 elections.

These eight studies vary considerably in their findings, but there is enough evidence to support some tentative conclusions. First, in general, members are responsive to redistricting-induced change. Republican members generally are not affected by a change in the percent black in their districts because Black voters do not support them. As a whole, Democratic members are responsive to a change in the racial composition of their districts, but the evidence is mixed with respect to the subpopulation of

white southerners. Large changes (10% or more) in the percent black in a district leads to greater responsiveness on the part of Republicans and Democrats. Republicans respond by voting more conservatively in the face of a substantial increase in the black population whereas Democrats vote more conservatively when their black constituencies decline by a large amount.¹⁷ Despite using many different measures for the dependent variable and including different variables in the multivariate models, the responsiveness of representatives to 1990s redistricting suggests that members act in accordance with the incentive to be re-elected.

CONTROVERSIES IN THE LITERATURE

In this section I discuss several of the controversies that have emerged from each of the three literatures on redistricting. There are certainly more disagreements than the ones I present, but I consider these to be the most important.

Minority Representation and Legislative Responsiveness

In the case of minority representation and legislative responsiveness, two interdependent debates worth considering are: (1)

¹⁷ The literature on legislative responsiveness may explain Overby and Brown's (2002) finding that an increase in the black population in the South negatively impacted white incumbent Democrat's share of the two-party vote in 1994. I think the reason for the decline is that an increase in percent black caused Democratic incumbents to be responsive to black interests (e.g., in their roll-call voting behavior) and they were punished at the polls by their white constituents who comprised the majority of their voters. They were turned off by their representative, whom they correctly perceived to be too liberal (see Table 2, p. 344 of Overby and Brown 2002). Similarly, Petrocik and Desposato (1998) find an interesting curvilinear relationship with Democratic percent of the vote and change in the percent black in 1994 (see the figure displayed in Appendix B, p. 632). It may have been the case that voters in the 1990s wanted a new direction in public policy and this was only possible by voting in a Republican majority. It appears to be a question of micro versus macro responsiveness. Members are responsive, but this may not be satisfactory when voters want a change in partisan representation.

ensuring *v.* providing an equal opportunity for minority descriptive representation, and (2) descriptive *v.* substantive minority representation. A major point of contention is whether districts should be configured to guarantee election of minority candidates or should contain just enough minorities to provide minority voters with an equal chance to elect their preferred candidates. Even if it was agreed that districts should be racially configured at the point of equal opportunity, it may be impractical to do so because the point of equal opportunity appears to be district specific and varies across space and time.

The literature on redistricting and descriptive representation does not provide firm estimates for a minimum threshold of minority population necessary to provide a fair chance for descriptive representation. We cannot be sure that a non-incumbent black Democrat can win in a minority influence district in the South because this scenario has not materialized. We can be confident, however, that in general a minority candidate has a better than even chance of winning election in districts that have less than majority-minority populations. But there is substantial variability in the minimum minority percentage necessary to give minority voters an equal opportunity to elect their candidate of choice. The point of equal opportunity varies across space and time and it is dependent on the current configuration of districts. The point of equal opportunity was lower in the 1990s because redistricting plans established majority-minority and minority influence districts with substantial numbers of white voters partial to the Democratic party (Canon 1999a).

A reconfiguration of districts would invariably have an effect on the point of equal opportunity. One reason racial polarization is higher in majority white districts is because these districts were purposely drawn to concentrate the most Republican voters (e.g., southern white suburbanites). Nonetheless, since there is less racially polarized voting where blacks and whites live in

close proximity (the inner city), this geographic reality places a ceiling on the degree that redistricting accentuates differences in the voting behavior of whites versus minorities. Another complication that mainly affects the South is the presence of a continuing realignment of whites into the GOP. The point of equal opportunity will continue to fluctuate considerably in the South because of its dynamic electoral environment. A substantial alteration in the racial, geographic, and partisan composition of congressional boundaries can significantly increase or decrease the point of equal opportunity for electing Black and Hispanic representatives.¹⁸

Despite the variability associated with the point of equal opportunity, from a policy standpoint, if the goal is to increase substantive minority representation then the minority percentage in many minority representatives' districts needs to be lowered. In those parts of the country (especially the South), where the tradeoff between descriptive and substantive representation is substantial, divvying up substantial shares of minority populations across several districts increases the overall influence of minority voters as reflected in the roll-call voting behavior of members and also increases the competitiveness of elections. As shown by Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran (1996), Epstein and O'Halloran (1999a; 1999b; 2000), and Lublin (1997b), minority voters exert an influence on the roll-call behavior of members before they attain the critical mass needed to elect their own preferred candidates.

The level of racially polarized voting determines the severity of the tradeoff between descriptive and substantive representation. The more the preferences of whites diverge from the preferences of minorities the more important it is for district minority

¹⁸ It is of course also true that the characteristics of particular candidates can decrease or increase the point of equal opportunity for electing minority candidates.

populations to be large enough to impact electoral outcomes in a greater number of districts. In the South, racial redistricting negatively impacted the overall representation of minorities because it dismantled the biracial coalitions that assured the election of a higher number of moderate white Democrats (Lublin and Voss 2003). Studies that assess the effect of redistricting on roll-call voting make it clear that who is elected matters much more than the effect of racial/partisan composition on a member's voting behavior. In those studies (Bullock 1995c; Whitby 1997) that account for partisan change by providing a dummy for a seat that changed partisan hands after redistricting, the difference in the roll-call voting behavior of a Republican who replaces a Democrat is enormous. As Epstein and O'Halloran (2000, 105) put it, "electoral effects—who you elect—usually dominate representation effects—how they vote." And, because of geographic and demographic constraints, there is an upper limit on the number of black majority districts that can be created (Swain 1993). Thus, it is far more desirable to increase the chances of electing candidates who must pay attention to minority interests whether or not they happen to be Black.

Despite evidence demonstrating a tradeoff between descriptive and substantive minority representation, there is strong resistance to reducing the populations in majority-minority districts. For one, many black and Hispanic representatives prefer to run in districts where their election is guaranteed. Also, some scholars (see Canon 1999b; Guinier 1994) argue that there is a fundamental difference in the kind of representation that accrues from the particular race/ethnicity of the representative. And there is evidence that suggests highly educated blacks favor majority-minority districts (Tate 2003)—perhaps leading to elite-driven resistance to creating more minority influence districts at the expense of majority-minority districts.

Party Competition

There is also substantial disagreement as to the effect of redistricting on party competition in the 1990s. Part of the reason for this is that so many studies employ different methods and conceptual approaches. Another complication arises from the level of analysis. A study that seeks to capture the aggregate effect of redistricting will miss effects noticeable at a lower level, especially in the case of studies that examine the partisan effect of redistricting in a single state. Even if it was possible to bring some standardization to the literature, there is an inherent complication in this line of research. In the South, the focus of the bulk of the studies, most of the evidence points to an ongoing partisan realignment. A task in most of these studies has been to sort GOP gains according to evidence of realignment (or normal two-party competition) from those gains attributable to redistricting. To some extent, it may not be possible to disentangle redistricting effects from realigning effects because redistricting is such a pervasive intervening factor. In this section I present three possible explanations for the high variance and mixed findings: (1) the timing and magnitude of effects, (2) differing levels of analysis, and (3) the difficulty of separating realigning effects from redistricting effects.

As Petrocik and Desposato (1998) explain, the importance of the political behavior of new voters has been overlooked in most studies. Whereas the effect of race-based redistricting is more immediate with the change in the black composition of districts registering an effect on the two-party share of the House vote in 1992, the impact of new voters persists at least through 1994. In other words, the timing of the effects of redistricting may have worked in two overlapping stages. First, the large decline in black constituents leads directly to GOP wins in several districts (perhaps as many as six) in 1992. Many other Democratic-held districts are made competitive by the decline in black constitu-

ents and the concomitant increase in new voters. Corresponding with a reduction in black voters, the second-order effect of new voters further serves to endanger many Democrats in 1992 and accounts for the actual defeat of several Democrats in 1994.

Of course the second-order effect that Petrocik and Desposato place so much stock in would not be as strong without the implementation of race-based redistricting. The reconfiguration of new voters is determined entirely by racial redistricting and thus it may not make much sense to emphasize the effect of new voters as though it is a separable phenomenon. As stated by Lublin and Voss (2000, 436), placing an emphasis on the second-order effect of new voters "strikes us as a matter of semantics...because it still means that Democratic incumbents suffered after white Republicans took the place of their minority voter base."

As discussed, the timing of the impact of redistricting on party competition is an important consideration because the effects can persist over several elections. Also, the use of counterfactual analyses can uncover the magnitude of the effects of redistricting on party competition. In addition to Hill (1995) and Hill and Rae (2000), both of whom use the *JudgeIt* program to run counterfactual models, Swain, Borrelli, and Reed (1998) show how redistricting favored the GOP under the hypothetical condition of all open seats in 1992.

Swain, Borrelli, and Reed seek to answer two questions: (1) did one party clearly benefit from the post-1990 redistricting? (2) did party control of redistricting at the state-level lead to partisan advantage? The authors estimate the partisan composition of every district for 1990 and 1992 to see if either party benefited. If incumbency is accounted for, it appears neither party was advantaged by the post-1990 redistricting. However, if projections assume every seat is open in 1992, then the Republican party clearly benefits, especially in the South where the GOP is pre-

dicted to net 17 seats (only 4 seats if incumbency is accounted for). Even though the first question is answered by finding the GOP benefited by the post-1990 redistricting under the condition of all open seats, there is no evidence that partisan gerrymandering systematically favored either party at the state-level. Party control of redistricting at the state-level did not show any partisan impact in the aggregate (across states). The authors contend that if one only seeks to answer the short term question of how redistricting impacted partisan fortunes, incumbency should be accounted for and thus neither party was advantaged. But if one cares to consider the long term effects of redistricting, then the open seats assumption is more sensible and in this case, the Republican party clearly benefited from the post-1990 redistricting.

The use of counterfactuals points to a substantial redistricting-induced effect on party competition. Under the scenario outlined by Petrocik and Desposato (1998), the electoral earthquake of 1994 may not have been as strong if redistricting had not unhinged so many voters from the incumbents who represented them before reapportionment. Severing the bond of incumbency enhanced the likelihood that so many new constituents would now vote Republican in 1992 and especially in 1994 when national conditions swung heavily in favor of the GOP. Furthermore, Swain, Borrelli, and Reed (1998) present evidence that the short-term benefit of incumbency in 1992 was enough to prevent a potentially massive gain in seats for Republicans in the South. It turns out that from 1994 to 2000, the number of Democrat-held districts lost to Republicans in open seat contests was seventeen (McKee 2002). Undoubtedly, redistricting made these seats more electorally advantageous to the Republican party.

The level of analysis also accounts for so many mixed findings with regard to the effect of redistricting on party competition. Studies that assess the aggregate effects of redistricting (national and regional) fail to detect the effects present at the

subregional and state-level. Lublin (1997b, 113) criticizes Petrocik and Desposato on this point stating that "[t]heir focus on the aggregate shift in voting patterns...prevents them from being able to answer the key question of whether a fraction of the seats won by Republicans could have been held by Democrats if racial redistricting had not occurred" (see also Lublin and Voss 2000, 434-436).

As mentioned, Swain, Borrelli, and Reed (1998) find that in the aggregate, party control of redistricting at the state-level did not amount to a partisan advantage. A similar study by Niemi and Abramowitz (1994) arrives at the same finding. A shortcoming in both of these works is their focus on the immediate effect of partisan control of redistricting at the state-level by evaluating election data for just 1992. Once again, there is strong evidence that the effect of redistricting can persist over several elections. Furthermore, as Lublin (1997b) shows, although Florida and Georgia had Democratically controlled state legislatures, these states' redistricting plans favored the GOP. Dividing the South into Deep (AL, GA, LA, MS, and SC) and Peripheral (AR, FL, NC, TN, TX, and VA) subregions reveals a Republican redistricting advantage in the Deep South states and a Democratic redistricting advantage in the Peripheral South states.

In the Deep South, redistricting clearly favored the GOP (see McKee 2002). Republicans benefited the most from redistricting in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina; Louisiana was a Democratic gerrymander (Lublin 1997b); Mississippi's redistricting aided the GOP by increasing the black percentage in its one black majority district (2nd). In the peripheral South, with the exception of Florida, the Democratic party was in control of redistricting. Arkansas and Tennessee did not create new black majority districts and their new congressional boundaries underwent

minor adjustments¹⁹; North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia however, implemented Democratic gerrymanders (Lublin 1997b).

State-level studies have served the important function of clarifying and dissecting the partisan effects of redistricting on party competition. It is no wonder that regional and national studies failed to find a partisan advantage because of redistricting, since in the aggregate, the presence of several states with either Democratic or Republican gerrymanders served to cancel out their partisan effects.

State-level studies of congressional redistricting by Beachler (1998) (Georgia, North Carolina, and Texas), Gronke and Wilson (1999) (North Carolina), Kousser (1996) (California, North Carolina, and Texas), Lublin (1995; 1997b) (Alabama and North Carolina), Rush (2000) (Montana), Weber (2000) (Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, and Texas), and Webster (1993) (Alabama) have done much to further our understanding of the partisan effects of 1990s redistricting on party competition.

In fact, there is state-level evidence that suggests the requirement to create black majority districts eventually eroded Democratic fortunes even in a state like Texas, which engaged in some extremely creative cartography to implement a highly successful Democratic gerrymander. States with the most Democratic redistricting plans (i.e., Louisiana, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia) would almost certainly have produced even more favorable Democratic gerrymanders if they were not constrained by the majority-minority mandate (Shotts 2001).

Finally, another reason there is such an utter lack of consensus about the role of redistricting in affecting party competition is the difficulty of separating realignment effects from redistricting effects. These two types of effects are to some degree indi-

¹⁹ Arkansas is the only southern state without a majority-minority district and Arkansas and Tennessee are the only southern states not covered by the Voting Rights Act.

visible. Consider a simple example. A Democrat-held district in the South is trending Republican prior to redistricting as many of its residents are realigning in favor of the GOP. After redistricting, the district's new boundaries contain less minority voters, making it even more Republican. The Democratic incumbent faces a strong challenge from a Republican state legislator. The challenger wins with 55% of the vote and proceeds to win reelection comfortably for as many terms as he/she wishes to serve. How much of the victory can be attributed to voter realignment and how much to redistricting? This strategic politician may have won the seat prior to redistricting since a good share of Republican voters supported the Democratic incumbent because of the absence of a quality Republican challenger. But it took a favorable redistricting for the Republican state legislator to contest the seat. It is evident that both redistricting and realignment factor into the Republican challenger's win, but it also appears exceedingly difficult to determine how much weight to assign to each effect. As Lublin and Voss (2000) point out:

On balance, changes in party preferences caused by concentrating minorities will tend to alter a state's aggregate vote so we cannot separate this policy decision from the southern Republican realignment toward the GOP as though they were discrete events.... [P]artisan preferences are intimately tied to districting policy, and they are not merely part of the background against which redistricting operates. (437, 439-440)

CONCLUSION

More research needs to be undertaken to clarify the relationship between redistricting and minority representation, party competition, and legislative responsiveness. Research on the effects of redistricting on minority representation and legislative

responsiveness is more clear-cut and yet it is also more politically controversial. We may have more confidence in the findings from this literature, but the implications for policy remain firmly tied to normative positions. All things constant, a decline in the number of majority-minority districts will increase the likelihood that there will be a reduction in the total number of minority representatives. But incremental reductions could possibly increase the number of minority members because in politics *ceteris paribus* does not exist. We do know however, that significant reductions in minority populations will lead to greater substantive representation at the expense of descriptive representation because white Democrats dominate elections in minority-influence districts. And in the South, given the current strength of the Republican party, it would probably take a drastic reduction and dispersal of the minority population for Democrats to have any hope of winning back a majority of seats. In this case, it probably makes more sense to maintain some minimum threshold for the number of districts that guarantee the election of minority representatives.

The literature on the effect of redistricting on party competition remains open to vigorous debate primarily because it is so difficult to isolate the impact of redistricting on party competition. There appears to be significant insight to be gleaned from focusing on state-level analyses because aggregate analyses often fail to detect lower level effects. Then again, the researcher's question determines the approach to take. Aggregate analysis certainly serves a useful purpose if the goal is to assess the overall effect of redistricting. But many researchers make the mistake of claiming redistricting has no effect on party competition based on aggregate analyses. These claims are instances of the ecological inference fallacy; at the state-level, there may be numerous cases of blatant and highly effective partisan gerrymanders. Another complication is that the effects of redistricting may persist

over several elections. Even a thorough reading of the literature on redistricting and party competition will puzzle the most gifted scholars. But as social scientists, we are in the business of solving puzzles and fortunately, the phenomenon of redistricting should keep us employed for a long time to come.

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