

Partisan Gerrymandering

PPE Capstone

Redistricting Activity

1. **Draw Districts to Favor Party B:** Split the following jurisdiction into three districts so that the results favor Party B.

The districts must satisfy the following constraints: they must have an equal number of voters (in order to satisfy *One Person, One Vote*), and they must be contiguous.

JURISDICTION 1

A	A	A	A	B	B
A	A	A	A	B	B
A	A	A	B	B	B
A	A	A	B	B	B
A	A	A	B	B	B

2. **Question: What is *packing*? What is *cracking*? Did you use either of these techniques in drawing your districts?**

3. **Question: How do your districts affect the *ex ante* value of each voter's vote?**

- (a) Compare the *ex ante* value of the vote between each of the voters in the districts you've drawn, taken separately.
- (b) Compare the *ex ante* value of the vote between voters for each party's candidates across the two districts.
- (c) Compare the average values of the votes of voters for each party's candidates throughout the jurisdiction.

4. **Question: Is your district map *unfair*? If so, in what way? Is it unfair to any of the individual voters? If so, which ones?**

Typically, redistricting must satisfy several constraints: contiguity, political boundaries, compactness, respect for "communities of interest", and respect for America's racial and ethnic diversity (in order to comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965).

A district is *contiguous* just in case, for any two points in the district, it's possible to get from the one to the other without crossing a district boundary.

Two Measure of the Value of the Vote:

- (a) *Decisiveness*. The value of your vote is the probability that your vote will be make the difference in converting a losing coalition into a winning one.
- (b) *Successfulness*. The value of your vote is the probability that the candidate you vote for will successfully be elected.

5. **Try Again: Draw Districts, Don't Gerrymander.** Split the following jurisdiction into three districts satisfying the following constraints: they must contain an equal number of voters (in order to satisfy *One Person, One Vote*), they must be contiguous, and they must be fair.

JURISDICTION 2

A	A	A	A	B	B
A	A	A	A	B	B
A	A	A	B	B	B
A	A	A	B	B	B
A	A	A	B	B	B

How Is Partisan Gerrymandering Unfair?

Three Puzzles:

1. *Accidental Gerrymanders are Innocuous.* "If the objection to partisan gerrymandering has to do with its distorting effect on the representation of the people in the legislature, why should we care whether the distortion is produced intentionally or as a by-product of acting for a nonpartisan aim in constitution the system?"
2. *Partisan Gerrymandering Is Compatible with One Person, One Vote.* "In what respect, if any, does gerrymandering treat voters unequally and why, if at all, should we consider the inequality objectionable on grounds of fairness?"
3. *Vote for Candidates, Not Parties.* "If we regard each constituency ... as having its own contest, why should we think that the appearance of partisan bias at the level of the jurisdiction is evidence of anything other than differences among constituencies in the division of voters' judgments?"

Notice that the geographical distribution of Republican voters is more efficient than of Democratic ones. Democrats are geographically clustered in urban areas whereas Republican voters are more evenly distributed.

Beitz's Conclusion: Partisan Gerrymandering is unfair because ...

1. ... it imposes an unjustifiably large share of the costs of *single-member territorial districts* (measured in voters' *ex ante* prospects of influencing the legislative agenda) on voters who it disadvantages.
2. ... it diminishes the propensity of the system to adjust in response to changes in the will of the people.