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The Effects of Redistricting on Voting Behavior in Incumbent U.S. House Elections, 1992–1994

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Although numerous studies have assessed the influence of the 1990s redistricting on U.S. House elections, without exception, these published studies rely on aggregate data (e.g., district-level data). Likewise, the author uses aggregate data, but he also departs from previous studies by using survey data to assess the influence of redistricting on vote choice in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections. Unlike past studies, with the use of survey data, the author makes more definitive statements regarding the effects of redistricting on vote choice. The 1990s redistricting was an important factor contributing to the Republicans' House majority because voters drawn into districts with a different incumbent standing for reelection were much more likely to vote Republican.

Keywords: *redistricting; redrawn; incumbent; elections; vote choice; U.S. House*

The 1994 U.S. House elections were historic as Republicans finally ended more than forty consecutive years of minority status. Overall, the GOP netted fifty-two seats. The 1994 Republican tide was national, deep, and broad—sweeping out of office thirty-four Democratic incumbents while sparing every Republican who ran for reelection (Jacobson 2004). The sheer magnitude of the 1994 elections tends to divert attention away from the significance of the 1992 contests. Although a Democrat won the White House for the first time since the 1970s, 1992 was on balance a Republican year in U.S. House contests as the GOP gained ten seats (Jacobson 2004). The modest Republican shift in 1992 overlooks the underlying significance of a congressional redistricting that proved a major factor in contributing to the ascendancy of House Republicans. Redistricting harmed the electoral fates of Democratic incumbents in the 1992 and 1994 elections because voters who were drawn into districts with a different incumbent were much more likely to vote Republican.

This article examines the relationship between electoral rules (redistricting), the political environment (public opinion), and voting behavior (vote choice). To date, no other published research on the 1990s congressional redistricting has used individual-level data to estimate its effects on vote choice.¹ Unlike previous published studies, which rely solely on aggregate-level data, I complement district-level data with individual-level data. In addition, whereas previous research on the partisan impact of the 1990s redistricting has focused

overwhelmingly at the regional level—especially the South—I show that the 1990s redistricting was a national phenomenon. With the use of survey data and a national analysis of the influence of the 1990s redistricting on vote choice, this study breaks new ground by examining the microfoundations of the relationship between redistricting, the incumbency advantage, and voting behavior.

The Relevant Redistricting Literature

In this section I present an overview of the literature that assesses the influence of redistricting on partisan outcomes in U.S. House elections. This literature, especially the research on the 1990s round of redistricting, exhibits three characteristics that relate to the importance of my study: (1) all of the published research relies on aggregate-level data; (2) there are a small number of studies that explicitly model the effects of redistricting, and they make inferences regarding individual-level behavior; and (3) the most influential studies have a regional focus.

First, there is a vast literature on the effects of the 1990s redistricting on voting behavior. Yet despite the numerous studies on this subject, without exception, these analyses utilize aggregate-level data to evaluate

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the effects of redistricting on partisan outcomes. This, of course, is not a problem if the purpose is to determine how redistricting influences the U.S. House vote at the district level, and many studies are designed to do this (for examples, see Black and Black 2002; Cox and Katz 2002; Niemi and Abramowitz 1994).

Second, the vast majority of studies fail to explicitly model the effects of redistricting by isolating those portions of the district that an incumbent represented before and after redistricting versus the segment of the district that is new to the incumbent. There are, however, a handful of studies that do separate the new and old portions of an incumbent's district to assess the effects of redistricting on voting behavior. These analyses have distinguished the old and new portions of congressional districts with all of the following units of population aggregation: blocks (Desposato and Petrocik 2003), towns (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2000; Rush 1992, 1993), counties (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2000; Rush 2000), and parts of congressional districts (Petrocik and Desposato 1998; McKee, Teigen, and Turgeon 2006).²

For example, Rush (1992, 1993) used New England towns (specifically in Connecticut and Massachusetts) as the unit of analysis for examining the effects of redistricting from 1972 through 1986.³ Rush separated towns on the basis of whether they are retained by the incumbent, or new to the incumbent, as a consequence of redistricting. Rush concluded that redistricting often has unanticipated outcomes. Partisan plans, in particular, often fail to register their intended effects because voters new to an incumbent's district are apparently pulled in the direction of the incumbent since the vote share awarded to the party of the incumbent is higher than it was prior to redistricting. Rush (2000) also used county-level data from 1972 to 1996 in Montana congressional races to demonstrate, again, that over time (more than one election), counties new to an incumbent's district adjust their votes in favor of the incumbent. Thus, incumbency has the effect of dampening partisanship because incumbents eventually gain the support of voters in counties who would appear to be a direct threat to their reelection—based on the votes cast in these counties before redistricting.

Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2000) used counties and towns to distinguish the old and new parts of incumbents' U.S. House districts. Their examination of incumbent vote shares from 1872 to 1988 reveals a consistent pattern: incumbents receive a higher portion of the vote from the old portions of their districts. Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart

concluded that part of the incumbency advantage is a direct result of the higher percentage of the vote received among the old portion of the district—presumably incumbents have cultivated a personal vote with these more familiar voters.

More recent work by Desposato and Petrocik (2003) used block-level data from California in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections. Blocks are hardly ever split between congressional districts, and this allows the authors to determine precise differences in the votes received by incumbents in their old blocks (old voters) versus their new blocks (new voters). Desposato and Petrocik argued convincingly that the incumbency advantage is generally reduced in the new blocks compared to the old blocks, but more important, the incumbency advantage is highly variable among new voters because their voting behavior is affected by partisanship, district competitiveness, and short-term conditions.

Finally, by determining the percentage of the old and new parts of incumbents' congressional districts, Petrocik and Desposato (1998) and McKee, Teigen, and Turgeon (2006) showed that in the South, because political conditions strongly favored the Republican Party, Democratic incumbents had less support from the new parts of their congressional districts. In the 1992 and 1994 southern U.S. House elections, Petrocik and Desposato found that the higher the district percentage of new constituents (new voters), the lower the Democratic incumbent's share of the vote. Similarly, McKee, Teigen, and Turgeon looked specifically at Texas's controversial 2003 redistricting and found that the Anglo Democrats targeted for defeat in 2004 received much lower vote shares in the new parts of their districts.

An obvious shortcoming in all the aforementioned studies is that without the use of individual-level data, no one has been able to determine the effect of redistricting on voter preferences. In most of these works, discussion of individual-level voting behavior is stated explicitly and implicitly, especially with respect to the theoretical argument that underpins the empirical analyses. It is evident that these studies aim to assess how redistricting influences voter preferences, but this is most appropriately done with the use of survey data, which heretofore has been absent. In short, these works tend to tread heavily on the ecological inference fallacy.

Third, most of the influential studies on the 1990s redistricting have been limited in geographic scope—either state-level or regional analyses. Perhaps because most of the racial redistricting implemented

for the 1992 House elections occurred in the South,⁴ the most widely cited and respected studies on redistricting have been conducted at this regional level (see Black and Black 2002; Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Epstein and O'Halloran 2000, 1999; Grofman 1998; Hill 1995; Hill and Rae 2000; Petrocik and Desposato 1998; Shotts 2001; Voss and Lublin 2001). To be fair, most of this research focuses on an examination of whether racial redistricting affected the number of seats won by Republicans. But on the other hand, in modeling the effects of redistricting on voting behavior in the 1992 and 1994 elections, it is readily apparent that Republican success was not limited to the South and thus majority-minority redistricting was not the only reason why Republicans gained seats in these years. Unlike most of the research on this topic, I model the effects of redistricting at the national level, and I control specifically for the effects of redistricting on voting behavior, with aggregate- and individual-level data on the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections.

Placing the 1990s Redistricting in Context

The effect of redistricting on vote choice is variable because it depends on prevailing political conditions like the current state of public opinion. The incumbency advantage is generally diminished as a direct result of redistricting because voters with a different incumbent seeking reelection no longer have a personal basis for preferring the incumbent (Desposato and Petrocik 2003). Redistricting further weakens the incumbency advantage because a favorable political climate triggers the emergence of viable challengers who recognize that voters with a different incumbent behave similarly to open-seat constituents (since they are less familiar with the incumbent), whose voting behavior is more responsive to short-term factors like the political environment and candidate quality (Petrocik and Desposato 2004).⁵ From the perspective of an incumbent, then, the worst case scenario would be (1) a redistricting that resulted in the inheritance of a large percentage of redrawn constituents, (2) an unfavorable political climate, and (3) the emergence of a strong challenger. This was just the kind of scenario that numerous Democratic incumbents were faced with in the 1992 and 1994 House elections.

First, the redrawing of district boundaries done to satisfy the equal population requirement and the majority-minority maximization position advocated

by the Department of Justice (Cain, MacDonald, and McDonald 2005; Cunningham 2001; Jacobson 2004) resulted in a multitude of voters who were represented by a new incumbent before the 1992 House elections. As discussed above, according to Petrocik and Desposato (1998, 616), these so-called "new" voters,⁶ "defined as individuals who were in a different incumbent's district prior to the redistricting," were more likely than same-incumbent (old) voters (those with the same incumbent representing them before and after redistricting) to cast Republican ballots in the 1992 and 1994 southern U.S. House elections.

Petrocik and Desposato (1998) contended that the presence of GOP tides in 1992, and especially in 1994, coupled with the effect of unhinging voters from their old incumbents, explains why redrawn voters favored Republican candidates. The bond of incumbency is severed when a voter is drawn into a district with a different representative. In other words, the incumbency advantage, the nonpartisan electoral benefit incumbents receive based on things like name recognition, constituency service, and pork barrel spending (Erikson and Wright 2005; Mayhew 1974; Petrocik and Desposato 2004)—is greatly discounted with respect to redrawn voters (Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2000). Redrawn constituents have not resided in the district long enough to be influenced by these kinds of incumbent activities that serve to increase the personal vote (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; Desposato and Petrocik 2003; Petrocik and Desposato 1998).

Second, in addition to the fact that the incumbency advantage does not materialize among redrawn voters, the political climate⁷ of the early to mid-1990s could hardly have been worse for Democratic incumbents. This was a time when House Democrats were unusually vulnerable because of political missteps (especially the House Bank Scandal; see Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1994, 2003; Banducci and Karp 1994; Dimock and Jacobson 1995; Jacobson 2004; Lyons and Galderisi 1995) and the declining approval ratings of President Clinton (Campbell and Rockman 1996; Jacobson 1996; Nelson 1998). There was an anti-incumbent mood in the electorate, and given the Democratic Party's majority status, this translated into an anti-Democratic incumbent mood⁸ (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1994). By cutting the bond of incumbency, redistricting created a large population of redrawn voters who were poised to vote Republican because public opinion was moving against the Democratic Party.

Finally, it is well known that the political climate shapes the strategic responses of political actors (Jacobson and Kernell 1983).⁹ Candidate emergence

patterns are responsive to short-term political conditions like the anticipated partisan effects of a redistricting (Hetherington, Larson, and Globbetti 2003). For instance, in 1992, there were eighty House candidates with previous office-holding experience who challenged incumbents, and fifty-three (66 percent) of them were Republicans (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2003, 266). In addition, as previous research has shown, in the 1992 and 1994 elections the GOP ran its strongest challengers (e.g., those able to raise large sums of money and/or had previous elective experience) against the most politically vulnerable Democratic incumbents—according to district competitiveness measures (e.g., Congressional Quarterly's competitiveness rankings of House districts), the Republican presidential vote (Black and Black 2002; Jacobson 1996, 2000, 2004), and the district percentage of Republican identifiers (Abramowitz 1995).

In sum, redrawn voters should be more likely to vote Republican in 1992 and 1994 because short-term factors benefited the GOP—a historically low approval rating of the Democratic-controlled Congress, the low approval ratings of President Clinton, and the presence of viable Republican challengers. To be sure, redistricting alone did not produce a Republican House majority. Rather, the political context provided the right conditions for redistricting to reward Republican candidates. Short-term factors prevailing in the 1992 and 1994 elections broke decidedly in favor of the GOP, and the party responded by running strong challengers who generally cast themselves as political outsiders (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 2003; Gaddie and Bullock 2000) campaigning on a conservative reformist message (Gimpel 1996; Rae 1998) that resonated with an electorate fed up with the political status quo.

Data and Methods

I use district- and individual-level data to evaluate the effect of redistricting on the Republican House vote and the likelihood of voting Republican, respectively, in the 1992 and 1994 House elections.¹⁰ The district-level data are from four sources: (1) the U.S. Census Bureau, (2) *The Almanac of American Politics* (Barone and Ujifusa 1993, 1995), (3) Congressional Quarterly's *Congressional Elections, 1946-1996* (1998), and (4) the Missouri Census Data Center (<http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/websas/geocorr90.shtml>). The individual-level data are from two American National Election Study (ANES) panel surveys: (1) ANES, 1990-1992: Full Panel Survey

(ICPSR Study no. 6230) and (2) ANES, 1994: Post-election Survey (Enhanced with 1992 and 1993 Data) (ICPSR Study no. 6507).

To assess the effect of redistricting on election outcomes, the explanatory variable of interest is the percentage of redrawn constituents in the district-level models and a dummy variable coded 1 for a redrawn voter and 0 for a same-incumbent voter for the individual-level models. The Missouri Census Data Center provides a district overlap tool that allows one to determine the percentage of redrawn constituents assigned to each incumbent running for reelection in the 1992 House elections. The ANES panel data make it possible to determine whether a respondent is a same-incumbent voter or redrawn voter because there are variables that identify the congressional district a respondent resided in before and after redistricting. Most of the panel respondents surveyed in the 1990 and 1992 elections were also interviewed for the 1994 elections, and thus I pool the data from the two panel surveys to have a large enough number of observations on redrawn voters.

Two hypotheses drive the analyses in this study, and both concern the effect of redrawn voters on the Republican vote in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections. First, drawing on the research of Petrocik and Desposato (1998), at the district-level I estimate the effect of the percentage of redrawn constituents on the Republican share of the House vote.¹¹ And at the individual level, I expect that redrawn voters will be more likely than same-incumbent voters to cast Republican ballots in 1992 and 1994.

Second, since the political climate during the 1992 and 1994 elections was favorable to Republicans, the effect of being redrawn may exhibit an interactive effect with the party affiliation of the incumbent. In other words, the influence of redrawn voters on the House vote is conditioned by whether the incumbent is a Democrat since it is not expected that redrawn voters strongly depress the vote shares of Republican incumbents.¹² So, more formally, I test the following two hypotheses with individual- and district-level data on the 1992 and 1994 House elections:

Hypothesis 1: Redrawn voters (constituents) are more likely than same-incumbent voters (constituents) to support Republican candidates in the 1992 and 1994 House elections.

Hypothesis 2: Redrawn voters (constituents) are more likely than same-incumbent voters (constituents) to support Republican candidates when redrawn voters (constituents) are represented by a Democrat.

These hypotheses warrant the construction of two general models: (1) a model that includes a variable for redrawn voters (percentage redrawn constituents) and (2) a model that includes a variable for redrawn voters (percentage redrawn constituents) and an interaction between redrawn voters (percentage redrawn constituents) and the party affiliation of the incumbent (1 = Democratic incumbent, 0 = Republican incumbent).

District-Level Models and Results

In the 1990s round of redistricting, compliance with reapportionment, the equal population rule, and a large increase in the number of newly drawn majority-minority districts altered the racial compositions of districts and placed large swaths of voters into districts with a different incumbent seeking reelection. Table 1 presents data on the percentage of redrawn constituents for all incumbents, Democratic incumbents, and Republican incumbents who faced partisan opposition in the 1992 House elections.¹³ All incumbents averaged 24 percent redrawn constituents, and the median was almost one-fifth redrawn constituents. Compared to Republicans, Democratic incumbents inherited a slightly smaller percentage of redrawn constituents. It is noteworthy, however, just how large the percentage of redrawn constituents was in 1992 as a direct result of redistricting. Such a large population of redrawn voters could clearly upset the electoral status quo given the right political conditions.¹⁴

With district-level data I construct additive and interactive ordinary least squares (OLS) models for the 1992, 1994, and 1992 and 1994 incumbent House elections. The additive models test the first hypothesis (H1: percentage redrawn constituents) and the interactive models test the second hypothesis (H2: Percentage Redrawn Constituents \times Dem Incumbent). The dependent variable for each model is the Republican share of the two-party House vote. All the models include the following control variables: the percentage of the 1992 Republican presidential vote (a proxy for district partisanship), the percentage of the black voting-age population (VAP), median family income (in thousands), and a dummy for region (1 = South, 0 = otherwise).¹⁵ I include a year dummy (1 = 1994, 0 = 1992) for the models that combine the 1992 and 1994 elections.

The variables of interest are the party affiliation of the incumbent (1 = Democrat, 0 = Republican), the

Table 1
Percentage of Redrawn Constituents for U.S. House Incumbents Seeking Reelection in 1992

Incumbent Type	Mean Redrawn (%)	Median Redrawn (%)	N
All incumbents	24.4	19.2	309
Democratic incumbents	23.4	18.6	192
Republican incumbents	25.9	20.7	117

Note: These data only include contested (Dem vs. Rep) districts with an incumbent running for reelection in 1992. Redrawn is the district percentage of constituents an incumbent inherited after redistricting. The variable was calculated based on data from the following link: <http://osedamissouri.edu/plue/geocorr/>.

percentage redrawn constituents, and the interaction of these two variables (Redrawn \times Dem Incumbent). The models include only contested elections (Democrat vs. Republican) and are restricted to districts with incumbents seeking reelection.

Table 2 presents the OLS estimates for all the district-level multiple regressions. Hypothesis 1 is strongly supported ($p < .05$) in the 1992 additive model and the 1992 and 1994 additive model. The "Redrawn Constituents" coefficient, however, is not significant in the 1994 additive model. Hypothesis 2, on the other hand, is supported in all three interactive models—the Republican House vote is positively influenced by the interaction of redrawn constituents and Democratic incumbent party affiliation.¹⁶ From the results in Table 2, it is evident that the effect of "Redrawn Constituents" is conditioned by the party affiliation of the incumbent—with Democrats disproportionately harmed by the presence of redrawn constituents.

To get a better sense of the effect of the interaction term, Figure 1 plots the expected Republican House vote according to incumbent party affiliation and the percentage redrawn constituents. These estimates are calculated from the interactive model for the 1992 House elections when the remaining variables are set at their means.¹⁷ The plotted values are bracketed by 95 percent confidence intervals. For Republican incumbents, the maximum difference in the expected Republican House vote is 3.8 percentage points: a Republican vote equal to 60.3 percent when redrawn constituents is 0 percent and a Republican vote equal to 56.5 percent with 100 percent redrawn constituents.¹⁸ For Democratic incumbents, the maximum difference in the expected Republican House vote is more than two and a half times as large, 9.7 percentage points: a Republican vote equal to 36.6

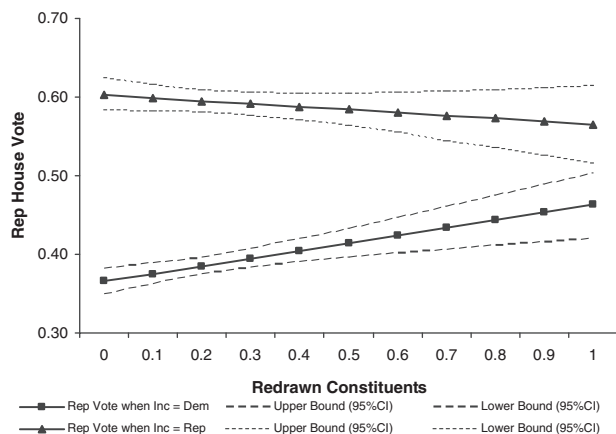
Table 2
Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) Estimates of Republican
U.S. House Vote in 1992, 1994, and 1992 and 1994 Elections

	1992 Additive	1992 Interactive	1994 Additive	1994 Interactive	1992 and 1994 Additive	1992 and 1994 Interactive
Variables of interest						
Democratic incumbent	-.206 (.010)***	-.237 (.014)***	-.226 (.011)***	-.241 (.015)***	-.215 (.008)***	-.238 (.010)***
Redrawn constituents (%)	.035 (.021)**	-.038 (.031)	.024 (.020)	-.006 (.029)	.031 (.015)**	-.019 (.021)
Redrawn × Dem Incumbent	—	.134 (.041)***	—	.058 (.041)*	—	.095 (.029)***
Control variables						
Republican pres vote (%)	.451 (.054)***	.466 (.053)***	.540 (.057)***	.545 (.057)***	.492 (.040)***	.502 (.039)***
Black voting-age population (%)	-.123 (.043)***	-.128 (.042)***	-.121 (.040)***	-.123 (.040)***	-.122 (.029)***	-.126 (.029)***
Median income (thousands)	.002 (.001)***	.002 (.001)***	.000 (.001)	.000 (.001)	.001 (.000)***	.001 (.000)***
South	.004 (.012)	.009 (.012)	.015 (.012)	.017 (.012)*	.008 (.008)	.012 (.009)*
1994	—	—	—	—	.047 (.006)***	.047 (.006)***
Constant	.325 (.036)***	.333 (.036)***	.391 (.038)***	.395 (.038)***	.335 (.027)***	.341 (.026)***
Adjusted R ²	.80	.80	.85	.85	.82	.82
N	309	309	260	260	569	569

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses. The dependent variable is the Republican district share of the two-party U.S. House vote. The models only include contested (Dem vs. Rep) districts with an incumbent seeking reelection.

* $p \leq .10$. ** $p \leq .05$. *** $p \leq .01$. (one-tailed tests).

Figure 1
The 1992 Republican House Vote Based on the
Party Affiliation of the Incumbent and the
Percentage of Redrawn Constituents



Note: The plotted values and 95 percent confidence intervals (CI) were calculated from the 1992 Interactive model in Table 2.

percent when redrawn constituents is 0 percent and a Republican vote equal to 46.3 percent with 100 percent redrawn constituents.

In sum, the district-level effects of the 1990s redistricting were asymmetric, reducing the vote shares of Democratic incumbents to a much greater extent in comparison to the vote shares of Republican incumbents. If redistricting is just about incumbency, then both Democratic and Republican representatives

should lose votes at the same rate given the presence of redrawn constituents. But clearly, short-term forces broke in favor of the GOP in the 1992 and 1994 elections, and this explains why the effect of redistricting varies in accordance with the political affiliation of the incumbent.¹⁹

Individual-Level Models and Results

I construct logistic regression models to assess (1) the likelihood of voting Republican for redrawn voters and (2) the likelihood of voting Republican with the inclusion of the interaction between redrawn voter and incumbent party affiliation. These models pool together the 1992 and 1994 ANES panel data. The dependent variable is coded 1 for a Republican House vote and 0 for a Democratic House vote. The variables of interest are the party affiliation of the incumbent (1 = Democrat, 0 = Republican), redrawn voter (1 = redrawn voter, 0 = same-incumbent voter), and the interaction of these two variables (Redrawn Voter × Dem Incumbent).

The control variables include race (1 = African American, 0 = otherwise), party identification (7-point scale: 1 = *strong Democrat* and 7 = *strong Republican*), ideology (7-point scale: 1 = *extremely liberal* and 7 = *extremely conservative*), family income (twenty-four categories), region (1 = South, 0 = otherwise), and a year dummy (1 = 1994, 0 = 1992). Finally, in these models I exclude the following observations: uncontested races, voters who moved into a different House district

between the 1992 and 1994 elections, open seat contests, and voters who did not vote in their district of residence.

Before presenting the results of the multiple regressions, it is important to point out that within the ANES sample a disproportionate number of redrawn voters reside in districts represented by Democrats. Table 3 presents cross-tabulations of the Republican two-party vote for same-incumbent voters and redrawn voters according to incumbent type (all incumbents, Democrats, and Republicans). Of the total number of redrawn voters in the table, 83 percent (144 out of 173) resided in districts represented by Democrats. Among districts with Democratic incumbents, the portion of redrawn voters (25 percent redrawn: 144 out of 566 voters) is in the expected range, but redrawn voters are greatly undersampled (9 percent redrawn: 29 out of 311 voters) in districts represented by Republicans. In districts with Democratic incumbents, the rate of Republican voting was much higher among redrawn voters (33.3 percent Republican vs. 23.0 percent Republican for same-incumbent voters) in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections. Republican voting was also higher among redrawn voters in districts with Republican incumbents, but the small sample of redrawn voters in these districts necessitates caution.

Given the small number of redrawn voters in districts with Republican incumbents, I present the results for three models: (1) a model with a dummy for all redrawn voters, (2) a model with a dummy for all

Table 3
Republican Percentage of the Two-Party Vote in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House Elections by Incumbent and Voter Type

Incumbent Type	Same-Incumbent Voters (Rep %)	Redrawn Voters (Rep %)
All incumbents	42.3	40.5
<i>N</i>	704	173
Democratic incumbent	23.0	33.3
<i>N</i>	422	144
Republican incumbent	71.3	75.9
<i>N</i>	282	29

Note: Data exclude the following: uncontested races, voters who moved into a different House district between the 1992 and 1994 elections, open seat contests, and voters who did not vote in their district of residence.

redrawn voters and the interaction of redrawn voter with incumbent party affiliation, and (3) a model that only includes redrawn voters in districts with Democratic incumbents.²⁰ Thus, the first and third models test the first hypothesis: the effect of being redrawn on the likelihood of voting Republican; and the second model tests the second hypothesis: the likelihood of voting Republican when the effect of being redrawn is conditioned by incumbent party affiliation (Redrawn Voter × Dem Incumbent).

Table 4 presents the multiple regression estimates for the three models. The first hypothesis is supported in model 1 and model 3—redrawn voters were more

Table 4
The Effect of Redistricting on Vote Choice in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House Elections

	Model 1 (Hypothesis 1)	Model 2 (Hypothesis 2)	Model 3 (Inc = Dem)
Variables of interest			
Democratic incumbent	-2.492 (.264)****	-2.530 (.277)****	—
Redrawn voter	0.666 (.279)***	0.408 (.628)	0.720 (.298)***
Redrawn × Dem Incumbent	—	0.318 (.696)	—
Control variables			
African American	-1.423 (.751)**	-1.385 (.747)**	-1.341 (.863)
Party identification	0.568 (.066)****	0.567 (.066)****	0.522 (.083)****
Ideology	0.372 (.099)****	0.373 (.100)****	0.310 (.126)***
Family income	0.040 (.022)**	0.040 (.022)**	0.022 (.027)
South	0.892 (.294)****	0.890 (.294)****	0.774 (.302)***
1994	0.210 (.237)	0.222 (.238)	0.307 (.302)
Constant	-3.753 (.556)****	-3.728 (.559)****	-5.437 (.712)****
Log-likelihood	-263.364	-263.260	-171.889
Pseudo- <i>R</i> ²	.43	.43	.32
<i>N</i>	678	678	430

Note: Logistic regression estimates with standard errors in parentheses. The dependent variable is coded 1 for a Republican House vote, 0 for a Democratic House vote. Data exclude the following: uncontested races, voters who moved into a different House district between the 1992 and 1994 elections, open seat contests, and voters who did not vote in their district of residence.

p* ≤ .05. *p* ≤ .01. *****p* ≤ .001 (one-tailed tests).

likely than same-incumbent voters to cast Republican ballots in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections. The second hypothesis is not supported in model 2. The interaction variable (Redrawn Voter \times Dem Incumbent) is not significant. Thus, at the individual-level, there is no support for the expectation that redrawn voters are more likely to vote Republican if they are represented by a Democratic incumbent when incumbent party affiliation is allowed to vary.

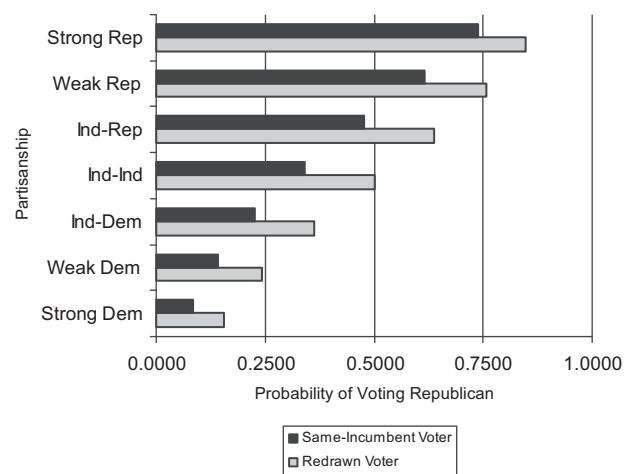
Instead, as the results in models 1 and 3 show, redrawn voters were more likely to vote Republican when the interaction with incumbent party affiliation is omitted. In the case of model 3, the observations are confined to only those voters in districts with Democratic incumbents, and the effect of being redrawn does indeed show that Democratic incumbents were harmed by the presence of redrawn voters.

Figure 2 presents the probability of voting Republican for same-incumbent voters and redrawn voters according to partisanship, based on the estimates from model 1. The greatest difference in the likelihood of voting Republican is among independent leaning Republicans, with a difference of .16 (Republican vote probability = .4758 for same-incumbent voters and .6387 for redrawn voters). In addition, among pure independents, same-incumbent voters are more likely to vote Democratic (Democratic vote probability = .6602), whereas redrawn voters are more likely to vote Republican (Republican vote probability = .5005). Thus, at the margins, in the case of the least partisan voters, redistricting pushed independents toward the Republican Party. Overall, the Republican vote probability was .34 for same-incumbent voters versus .50 for redrawn voters—a substantial difference in probability of .16. These results illustrate that redistricting proved beneficial to Republican candidates because voters with a different incumbent running for reelection were much more likely to vote Republican in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections.²¹

Conclusion

In the 1992 and 1994 House elections, redistricting disproportionately benefited the Republican Party because it resulted in a large segment of redrawn voters at a time when public opinion shifted decidedly in favor of the GOP, and the party responded by running House candidates who appealed to the sentiments of these unfettered voters. Building on the research of Petrocik and Desposato (1998), I have extended my

Figure 2
Likelihood of Voting Republican According to Partisanship for Same-Incumbent Voters and Redrawn Voters in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House Elections



Note: The probabilities were derived from the logistic regression estimates from model 1 in Table 4.

district-level analyses to encompass the entire nation since the Republican trend was not limited to the South. In addition, and perhaps most important, I am able to avoid the ecological inference fallacy by leveraging individual-level data to show that redrawn voters were much more likely than same-incumbent voters to cast Republican ballots in the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections.

In their seminal article on redistricting, Gelman and King (1994, 553) concluded that redistricting, whether it is done to further partisan or bipartisan interests, is preferable to not redistricting, because the “process repeatedly injects the political system with a healthy dose of increased responsiveness.” Redistricting disrupts the electoral status quo because redrawn voters are not constrained by the appeals of incumbents (Petrocik and Desposato 1998; Desposato and Petrocik 2003). With the incumbency bond cut, redrawn voters are more responsive than same-incumbent voters to the prevailing short-term political climate, much like open seat voters (Petrocik and Desposato 2004). When political conditions favor one party, candidate emergence patterns shift in favor of the advantaged party, and redrawn voters respond by altering their vote choice to reward the ascending party. In the 1992 and 1994 U.S. House elections,

redistricting resulted in a large population of redrawn voters who went Republican because short-term conditions advantaged the GOP and the party responded by running viable challengers who campaigned on a message that resonated with redrawn voters.

More generally, the mixture of a structural effect (redistricting) with the current political climate and the attendant response of elites (candidates), shapes the political behavior of redrawn voters. This explanation should be applicable to any redistricting. For example, compared to the 1990s redistricting, the partisan effects of redistricting were not as potent in the 1980s (Cox and Katz 2002; Rush 1993). Lower rates of partisanship among the electorate meant that the appeals of incumbents were more influential to redrawn voters, especially in the context of a fairly neutral political climate, which therefore did not condition the emergence of many viable challengers for either party (Jacobson 1990). Contrast this political setting with Texas's 2003 congressional redistricting. At a time when Texas Anglos were realigning in favor of the GOP and a popular native-son president sought another term, Republican line drawers understood that their new map would trigger the emergence of viable Republican challengers who would win the support of redrawn voters and hence result in the dismissal of several veteran Democratic incumbents (McKee and Shaw 2005; McKee, Teigen, and Turgeon 2006).²²

This article demonstrates that under certain conditions redistricting can indeed affect the partisan balance in Congress. Contrary to previous research that has thus far been restricted to aggregate-level analyses, generally confined to regional investigations, and resulting in mixed findings, both the aggregate- and individual-level results in this study clearly show that the 1990s redistricting contributed to the Republicans' House majority because redrawn voters shifted toward the GOP. A notable feature in several previous works (Lyons and Galderisi 1995; McKee, Teigen, and Turgeon 2006; Niemi and Abramowitz 1994; Swain, Borrelli, and Reed 1998) is their emphasis on the intentions of redistricters²³ and whether electoral outcomes furthered the partisan goals of these line drawers. Granted, this is an important question worth investigating, but intentions are often thwarted by intervening factors. When electoral outcomes do not support the objectives of those who drew the district boundaries, this does not mean that redistricting therefore had no effects—the effects just happen to be contrary to what was intended. This article consciously ignores the intentions of those in charge of redistricting, because

the effects of redistricting on voter preferences are expected to be, and are indeed found to be, derived from the short-term political conditions prevailing at the time of redistricting.

Notes

1. The only other study I am aware of that uses individual-level data to gauge the influence of redistricting on vote choice is a forthcoming article by Hood and McKee. The article by Hood and McKee used survey data to assess the effect of redistricting on vote choice in the 2006 U.S. House elections. These data are confined to a sample of white voters residing in Georgia District 8 and Georgia District 12.

2. A recent article by Engstrom (2006) used statewide-, county-, and ward-level data to assess the effects of redistricting on electoral outcomes in U.S. House contests. This study focused on nineteenth-century elections (1870 to 1900) and was not explicitly concerned with the relationship between redistricting and the incumbency advantage.

3. Rush examined the effects of redistricting in state senate and U.S. House contests (1992) and state senate, governor, and U.S. House contests (1993). His examination in U.S. House contests concerned the 1980s redistricting.

4. Racial redistricting is being used synonymously with redistricting that created majority black districts. Most of the new majority Hispanic districts were created in nonsouthern states.

5. As Petrocik and Desposato (2004) contended, incumbency serves as a buffer against short-term partisan tides because many voters remain loyal to the incumbent. But in the case of redistricting, redrawn voters behave similar to open seat voters because a lack of familiarity with their new incumbent forecloses the possibility of casting a personal vote. Under these conditions, similar to open seat voters, short-term political conditions should have a stronger pull on the vote choice of redrawn voters, especially those who are political independents or weak partisans. "Incumbency anchors voters by limiting their reaction to the party bias of the election environment" (p. 371), but in the case of redrawn voters the incumbency cue is absent.

6. Petrocik and Desposato (1998) used the term "new voters" to describe voters who have a different incumbent seeking reelection as a result of redistricting. I use the term "redrawn voters/constituents" because it is more descriptive in the sense that these voters have been drawn into different districts or they have a different incumbent running in their district because of redistricting. Also, "new voters" is a term easily mistaken for its most common usage, which refers to those individuals who have never voted prior to the election under study.

7. The early to mid-1990s was a politically volatile period. Consider the following events/episodes that generally contributed to a Republican House majority: public approval of Congress reached its nadir prior to the 1992 elections (Lyons and Galderisi 1995; Stimson 2004); the House Bank Scandal became a partisan issue as Republican Newt Gingrich used it as an exemplar of a politically corrupt Democratic majority since most check bouncers were Democrats (Jacobson 2004); the push for term limits picked up steam because of the perceived electoral insulation of incumbents; presidential scholars noted that President Clinton ran in 1992 as a centrist and subsequently enraged social and

economic conservatives with passage of the 1993 budget that increased taxes on the middle class and was enacted without a single Republican vote, a push for military admission of the openly gay, a crime bill considered too soft by many conservatives, and the failure of health care reform; the emergence of populist third-party presidential candidate Ross Perot; the rise of homegrown American militia and terrorist groups who targeted the federal government as the nation's greatest threat; the burgeoning of conservative talk radio (Bolce, De Maio, and Muzzio 1996); and the mobilization of the religious right (Balz and Brownstein 1996). Of course, it turned out that incumbents were extremely vulnerable to the prevailing political climate. Many chose to retire prior to the 1992 elections—the lowest number of incumbents running for reelection in more than half a century (Abramson, Aldrich, and Rohde 1994). The reelection rate (88 percent) for incumbents in 1992 was the lowest since the 1974 post-Watergate elections (Jacobson 2004).

8. Exit polls cast light on how the political climate punished Democratic candidates. In 1990, among whites who voted for the House, for those who agreed with the statement that “it’s time to give new people a chance” in Congress, 54 percent voted Democratic and 46 percent voted Republican (55 percent of white voters agreed with the position of giving new people a chance in Congress; contested districts only; 1990 Voter Research & Surveys exit poll data). In 1994, among white voters who agreed that “government would work better if all new people were elected this year,” 23 percent voted Democratic and 77 percent voted Republican (40 percent of white voters agreed that government would work better with all new people elected; contested districts only; 1994 Voter News Service exit poll data).

9. A detailed analysis of candidate emergence patterns is beyond the scope of this article; suffice it to say that challengers are not likely to garner a substantial share of the vote if they lack the funds to mount a serious campaign (Jacobson 2004).

10. All of the statistical analyses were estimated in STATA 9.0.

11. Petrocik and Desposato (1998, 631) used district-level data to measure the effect of redrawn constituents on the southern Democratic House vote controlling for the change in the percentage black. They ran these multiple regressions separately for the 1992 and 1994 elections. In their models, Petrocik and Desposato hypothesized and confirmed that the percentage redrawn will have a negative effect on the Democratic vote in 1992 and 1994.

12. Stated differently, compared to Republican incumbents, the negative effect on the vote due to the presence of redrawn constituents should be greater for Democratic incumbents. Thus, at the district level, the coefficient for the interaction between incumbent (Democrat = 1 and Republican = 0) and percentage redrawn constituents is expected to be positive, which indicates that the higher the district percentage of redrawn constituents, the higher the Republican share of the vote in districts represented by Democrats.

13. For the 1992 elections, all of the district-level analyses exclude the five cases where two incumbents faced off in the general election: (1) Iowa 2nd—Democrat David Nagle versus Republican Jim Nussle (2) Louisiana 5th—Democrat Jerry Huckaby versus Republican Jim McCrery (3) Louisiana 6th—Republican Richard Baker versus Republican Clyde Holloway (Louisiana’s general election takes the form of an open primary contest) (4) Maryland 1st—Democrat Thomas McMillen versus Republican Wayne Gilchrest, and (5) Montana At-Large—Democrat Pat Williams versus Republican Ron Marlenee (Montana had two U.S. House districts before reapportionment).

14. In the 1994 elections, six states redrew their congressional boundaries: Georgia, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, South Carolina, and Virginia. Maine’s first redistricting following the 1990 census was for the 1994 elections, but both districts were open seat contests in 1994 and thus these districts are excluded from the analyses. Using block-level data from Geolytics (CensusCD 2000/Redistricting Blocks), which includes 1990 population data on these states, I have used GIS software to overlay the 1992 and 1994 congressional maps to determine the redrawn percentages in these districts for the 1994 elections. Overall, the 1994 redistricting affected the redrawn percentages in sixteen districts (GA 3; LA 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7; MN 3, 4, 5, 7, 8; SC 2, 5; VA 1 and 4). For the 1994 data, the 1994 redrawn percentages in these sixteen districts were added to the 1992 redrawn percentages in these districts. These data will be made available by the author upon request.

15. The South is made up of the eleven former Confederate states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

16. In the interactive models, the “Redrawn Constituents” variable registers a negative sign but is never statistically significant. The negative coefficient for “Redrawn Constituents” is not substantively meaningful because the constitutive terms in an interactive model cannot be explained in the same manner as a linear-additive model (see Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006).

17. In Figure 1, I used *Clarify* (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003) to calculate the percentage of the Republican vote according to incumbent party affiliation (1 = Democrat, 0 = Republican) and the percentage redrawn constituents at intervals of 10 (0, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, and 100 percent redrawn constituents).

18. There were no Democratic incumbents who had 100 percent redrawn constituents, but there were two Republican incumbents who ran in districts with completely new electorates: Randy “Duke” Cunningham (CA 51) and Newt Gingrich (GA 6). The highest percentage redrawn for a Democratic incumbent was Gary L. Ackerman (NY 5) with 95 percent new constituents. Newt Gingrich was a victim of incumbent displacement (Cain 1984), which means that Georgia’s Democratic-controlled legislature redrew his old District 3 so that it would be less hospitable, thus forcing him to run in an entirely different district. California District 51 was a newly drawn Republican stronghold (Republican presidential vote in 1988 was 67 percent), whereas New York District 5 was competitive (Republican presidential vote in 1988 was 51 percent) (Barone and Ujifusa 1993).

19. I thank an anonymous reviewer for encouraging me to drive home this point.

20. I do not present the results for a model that only includes Republican incumbents because there are only 27 redrawn voters in this model ($n = 248$). In this model the redrawn voter dummy does not have a significant effect on the likelihood of voting Republican. There are 119 redrawn voters in the model that only includes Democratic incumbents ($n = 430$) and 146 redrawn voters in the first two models ($n = 678$).

21. Setting the other variables at their means, the likelihood of voting Republican for only those respondents in districts with Democratic incumbents (model 3) is .18 for same-incumbent voters and .32 for redrawn voters.

22. The political fallout from the Watergate scandal provides another example with the expectation that Democrats won a number of seats in the 1974 U.S. House elections in part because redrawn voters in 1972 were more likely to vote Democratic in 1974. The 1974 elections provide a nice parallel with 1994, because the political climate favored one of the major parties, and

the elite response was the emergence of viable candidates under the label of the advantaged party (Jacobson and Kernell 1983).

23. Intentions are typically assumed from the partisan control of the state legislature, which in most states is responsible for drawing congressional boundaries (Butler and Cain 1992).

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