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# Redistricting and Familiarity With U.S. House Candidates

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Redistricting has the effect of placing numerous voters into districts with a different incumbent seeking reelection. This event brings up an important question that has not been empirically tested: Are redrawn individuals, those who have a new incumbent because of redistricting, less likely to know who their new representative is? Furthermore, is there a difference in the rates of recall and recognition of challengers as a consequence of redistricting? This research note examines the influence of redistricting on recall and recognition of U.S. House candidates with use of the American National Elections Studies panel surveys for the 1992 and 2002 elections. Whether the measure is recall or recognition, redrawn respondents are significantly less likely to identify their incumbent as compared with individuals with the same incumbent seeking reelection. In contrast, with the exception of candidate name recall in 1992, redistricting does not affect the likelihood of identifying House challengers. This study demonstrates that redistricting constitutes another institutional feature of the American electoral system that raises the costs of political information because redrawn constituents are less familiar with their new representative.

***Keywords:*** *redistricting; personal vote; candidate recognition; candidate recall; U.S. House of Representatives; political geography; voting; elections*

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less likely to know who their new representative is? Furthermore, is there a difference in the rates of recall and recognition of challengers as a consequence of redistricting? This research note examines the influence of redistricting on recall and recognition of U.S. House candidates with use of the American National Elections Studies (ANES) panel surveys for the 1992 and 2002 elections. Whether the measure is recall or recognition, redrawn respondents are significantly less likely to identify their incumbent as compared with individuals with the same incumbent seeking reelection. In contrast, with the exception of candidate name recall in 1992, redistricting does not affect the likelihood of identifying House challengers.

## Candidate Familiarity and Redistricting

A major component of the incumbency advantage is that constituents are much more familiar with their representative as compared with the challenger (Jacobson, 2004). Whether the measuring stick for familiarity is the ability to recall from memory the name of the House candidate or to signal recognition by rating the candidate on a thermometer scale, the much lower familiarity assigned to the challenger vis-à-vis the incumbent results in the vast majority of challengers kicking off their campaigns in obscurity and ending them in oblivion (with apologies to Maisel, 1982).

Despite the disparity in candidate familiarity that favors incumbents, the incumbency advantage is not a given, as recent scholarship has emphasized—the incumbency advantage is in fact highly variable (Desposato & Petrocik, 2003; Erikson & Wright, 2005; Petrocik & Desposato, 2004). As stated by Abramowitz (1975), "[a] congressman must cultivate his constituency to turn incumbency into an advantage" (p. 684). Clearly, candidate familiarity is a primary component of the incumbency advantage, but candidate familiarity can be affected by redistricting. Indeed, redistricting assures that for the redrawn portion of their district, the representative is the incumbent in name only, and many of these constituents may not know their new incumbent's name.

Every 10 years,[1] states with more than one congressional district are required to redistrict their U.S. House boundaries. Redistricting does not necessarily put incumbents at electoral risk (see Bullock, 1975; Tufte, 1973), but it certainly can because an incumbent is probably less familiar to voters who are drawn into the district. In the words of Desposato and Petrocik (2003),

> Incumbents can lose part of the personal vote portion of their incumbency advantage when redistricting brings them substantial numbers of 'new' voters (voters who were in a different district prior to redistricting). Among these new voters, the incumbent has no personal standing. He did not resolve their problems with Social Security, send letters to newly minted Eagle Scouts, attend community events, expedite passports, talk on the radio, or appear in the hometown newspaper—the incumbent from their old district did all these things. (p. 19)

Despite this observation, no one has measured the influence of redistricting on familiarity with U.S. House candidates. It is assumed that redistricting is disruptive for the very reasons stated by Desposato and Petrocik: that due to a lack of familiarity, the incumbency advantage does not materialize among the incumbent's redrawn constituents. Nonetheless, a comparison of candidate recall and candidate recognition rates among individuals with the same incumbent versus those of individuals with a new incumbent has heretofore gone untested. This oversight is unfortunate because research on the effects of redistricting on electoral outcomes assumes incumbents can lose vote share because of the loss of the personal vote, which occurs when they acquire new constituents. These redrawn residents are less likely to cast votes based on an incumbent's past service, because presumably they are ignorant of what their new incumbent has done. It would seem that an absence of incumbent familiarity is critical to affecting vote share because familiarity is a necessary condition for the existence of a personal vote.

If redrawn constituents are less likely to be familiar with their new incumbent, then this finding supports the argument that the reduction in incumbent strength following redistricting comes about because of the loss of a personal vote.[2] Without a rigorous empirical test of the impact of redistricting on candidate familiarity, we can only guess as to the magnitude of its effects. In addition, we cannot be certain that redistricting does indeed reveal a noticeable difference in candidate familiarity rates after controlling for other factors. Finally, in the absence of a statistical analysis it is not clear whether redistricting only serves to reduce candidate familiarity with respect to incumbents, challengers, or perhaps both types of candidates.

## Hypotheses, Data, and Methods

The simple act of redrawing political boundaries has the potential to place a large segment of the electorate at an informational disadvantage. In the context of federal elections, compared with presidential and U.S. Senate contests,

U.S. House elections are distinctive on two counts. First, in the case of House contests with an incumbent seeking reelection, the challengers in these races are usually "weak" opponents, no matter the indicator one prefers to assess them by (i.e., prior elective experience or fundraising; Jacobson, 2004). Indeed, House elections featuring incumbents are notable because of the marked low visibility of House challengers (Hinckley, 1980).

Second, in federal elections, voting boundaries are only subject to alteration in House races. Boundary changes brought about by redistricting provide a large portion of U.S. House electorates with a new menu of candidates. In the case of incumbent House races, because redistricting presents a segment of the electorate with a new incumbent, I offer the following hypothesis: Compared with individuals who retain their same incumbent after redistricting, redrawn constituents—those who now have a different incumbent because of redistricting—are expected to be less familiar with their representative.

The typical incumbent has worked over the course of several terms to establish greater familiarity with their constituents and redistricting does not allow enough time for incumbents to make themselves as well-known to their new residents. In addition, the truism that most individuals are not interested in politics (Downs, 1957) and therefore not well-informed (Converse, 1964), makes it all the more likely that redrawn residents will not pay attention to the representational consequences of a congressional boundary change.

Furthermore, in those districts with incumbents running unopposed, redrawn individuals should be less familiar with the incumbent for at least two additional reasons. First, compared with contested elections, these patently uncompetitive races garner hardly any media attention and thus redrawn constituents receive scant campaign information. Second, because their reelection is assured when they face no opposition, there is little immediate incentive for incumbents to expend energy introducing themselves to redrawn constituents.[3]

With respect to familiarity with House challengers, the effect of redistricting is less certain because most challengers have such low profiles. Nonetheless, there is likely to be substantial variability in candidate familiarity depending on the viability of the challenger. Strong challengers are better known because they raise the funds to present themselves to constituents. Also, because strong challengers make elections more competitive, media coverage can increase the profile of challengers. In addition, many strong challengers have previous elective experience representing a portion of the House district they are contesting in a previous capacity (e.g., state house, state senate, county commission).[4] Finally, it is likely

**Table 1**
**The District Percentage of Redrawn Constituents in 1992 and 2002**

| | 1992 | 2002 |
|---|---|---|
| All Incumbents | | |
| Mean redrawn | 24.6% | 22.0% |
| Median redrawn | 20.1% | 18.9% |
| (*N*) | (333) | (375) |
| Contested races | | |
| Mean redrawn | 24.4% | 22.7% |
| Median redrawn | 19.2% | 19.9% |
| (*N*) | (309) | (296) |
| Uncontested races | | |
| Mean redrawn | 27.9% | 19.3% |
| Median redrawn | 25.7% | 14.7% |
| (*N*) | (24) | (79) |

Note: These data exclude incumbents representing At-Large districts ($N = 10$ in 1992; $N = 10$ in 2002), districts contested by two incumbents ($N = 5$ in 1992; $N = 4$ in 2002), and a state that did not redistrict in 1992 and 2002 (Maine). Data for percent redrawn in 1992 were calculated from http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/websas/geocorr90.shtml; data for percent redrawn in 2002 were calculated from: http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/websas/geocorr2k.html

that a strategy of strong challengers is to target (contact) constituents living in the redrawn portion of the House district because these residents are expected to be less familiar with the incumbent and thus more susceptible to the appeals of a viable challenger (Petrocik & Desposato, 2004). For these reasons, highlighting effects that can potentially increase or decrease the profiles of challengers to varying degrees among redrawn and same-incumbent constituents, there is no expectation that redistricting affects the likelihood that an individual will recall or recognize the U.S. House challenger. These hypotheses are tested with ANES survey data on the 1992 and 2002 House elections.

The congressional redistricting that occurred following the 1990 and 2000 decennial censuses was unprecedented in the degree to which districts were redrawn to comply with the equal population rule, the Voting Rights Act as interpreted by the Department of Justice (DOJ) (Cunningham, 2001), and subsequent Court rulings overturning DOJ-inspired district boundaries established in several southern states (Butler, 2002). Table 1 presents district-level data (calculated by the author from the Missouri Census Data Center)[5] on the percentage of redrawn constituents inherited by incumbents in 1992 and 2002. In other words, these data show the district percentage of constituents that the incumbent now represents as a direct consequence of

redistricting. In 1992, an average of one out of four constituents was new to the incumbent with a median of 20% redrawn constituents. The percentage of redrawn constituents is slightly lower in 2002, but both years speak loudly to the dislocating effects of redistricting.

Now that it is evident just how consequential redistricting is with respect to resorting constituents among incumbents, the remainder of the article relies on survey data to examine the effects of redistricting on recall and recognition of U.S. House candidates in districts with incumbents seeking reelection. I use data from the 1990-1992 ANES Full Panel File and the 2002 ANES.[6] Both datasets contain a cross-section of panel respondents whose congressional districts can be identified before and after redistricting. The key explanatory variable is a dummy coded 1 for a redrawn respondent—a respondent who has a new incumbent representing their district after redistricting. The variable is coded 0 for same-incumbent respondents—respondents with the same incumbent representing them before and after redistricting.[7]

For the recall question, the interviewer asks the respondent to recall the names of the candidates running for the U.S. House. The question is branched so that the respondent is first asked whether they can recall the names of the U.S. House candidates who ran in their district. If the respondent answers yes, then they are given the opportunity to state the name and then the party of every candidate they recall running in their congressional district. The interviewer then verifies the name and corresponding party of each candidate recalled by the respondent. In this study, I am only concerned with whether the respondent provides the correct name, not whether the corresponding party was also correct.

There is, however, a noticeable drawback to the recognition question. Unlike the recall question, which is verified by the interviewer, the candidate recognition question is a response option provided on a feeling thermometer question (see Mann & Wolfinger, 1980, pp. 631-632). Respondents are given just the name of the U.S. House candidate and are asked to rate the U.S. House candidate on the 0-100 feeling thermometer scale.[8] One option is for respondents to state that they do not recognize the name. But recognition is not truly affirmed because rating the candidate on the thermometer scale constitutes recognition. Thus, it is probably true that many respondents choose to rate U.S. House candidates without actually recognizing them and this partially accounts for the reason why recognition rates greatly exceed recall rates. Fortunately though, the social desirability[9] that most likely accounts for the very high candidate recognition rates—especially with respect to incumbents—should be randomly distributed among redrawn and same-incumbent respondents.

**Table 2**
**Recall Names of U.S. House Candidates in 1992**

| Respondent Type | Recall Name of Incumbent (%) | Recall Name of Challenger (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Same-incumbent | 36.6 | 10.9 |
| (*N*) | (760) | (760) |
| Redrawn | 18.9 | 6.8 |
| (*N*) | (190) | (190) |
| Difference | 17.7** | 4.1* |

Note: These data only include contested races (Democrat vs. Republican) with an incumbent seeking reelection. Recall means that the respondent correctly stated the candidate's name from memory when asked by the interviewer. Data are from the 1990-1992 American National Election Studies (ANES) Full Panel File (ICPSR #6230).
*$p < .05$. **$p < .001$. Difference of proportions (one-tailed tests).

In the two results sections that follow, I evaluate the effect of redistricting (1 = *redrawn respondent*, 0 = *same-incumbent respondent*) on the likelihood that a respondent can recall the names of the major party House candidates (incumbent and challenger, respectively) in 1992 and recognize the names of House candidates in 1992 and 2002.[10] I first present cross-tabulations for the recall and recognition rates of redrawn and same-incumbent respondents. Then I estimate multiple logistic regressions to show the probability of recalling/recognizing the name of the House candidate according to the value of the redrawn respondent dummy when the other factors in each model are held at their mean values. The next section presents results for the candidate name recall question in 1992 and then I present results for candidate name recognition in 1992 and 2002.

## Candidate Name Recall in the 1992 U.S. House Elections

Starting with candidate name recall in Table 2, it is apparent that incumbents are much more familiar than are challengers. Overall, a third of respondents (33.1%) were able to recall the name of the incumbent in 1992 compared with just 1 in 10 (10.1%) who recalled the name of the challenger. Equally striking is the disparity in recall rates among redrawn and same-incumbent respondents. The recall gap (17.7 percentage points) is especially pronounced in the case of incumbents ($p < .001$). Though the

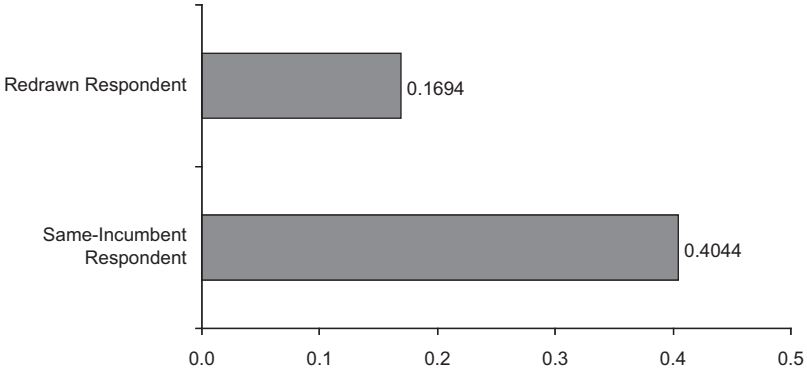
challenger recall gap is narrower (4.1 percentage points), again we see that redrawn respondents exhibit lower recall rates ($p < .05$). At least from the descriptive data, redrawn respondents are significantly less familiar with their U.S. House candidates.

A more rigorous check of the difference in the recall rates of redrawn and same-incumbent respondents can be done with multivariate analysis. I run two regressions (results shown in Table A1 of the appendix) with the following dependent variables: (a) incumbent name recall (1 = *recall name*, 0 = *do not recall name*) and (b) challenger name recall (1 = *recall name*, 0 = *do not recall name*).

All the following explanatory variables in the candidate name recall models (Table A1) are included in the candidate name recognition models (Table A2). With respect to the independent variables, the redrawn respondent dummy (1 = *redrawn respondent*, 0 = *same-incumbent respondent*) is the variable of interest. In accordance with the hypotheses stated above, the redrawn dummy is expected to have a negative effect on incumbent name recall and no effect on challenger name recall. Control variables include the party affiliation of the incumbent (1 = *Democrat*, 0 = *Republican*) in the first model and the party affiliation of the challenger in the second model (1 = *Democrat*, 0 = *Republican*). A dummy for whether the incumbent is a freshman is included in both models. Particularly in the incumbent recall model, it is expected that the presence of a first-term incumbent should decrease the likelihood of recalling their name. In both models I control for whether a respondent voted in the U.S. House election (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*). By registering a preference in the House contest, voters are expected to be more familiar with the names of House candidates. I also include various controls for demographic,[11] psychological,[12] and mobilizing[13] factors expected to influence candidate name recall.

With respect to the demographic controls, I account for potential differences in candidate name recall based on race, gender, age, educational attainment, residential stability, and the urban percentage of the district. Of these variables, educational attainment in particular should exhibit a positive effect on the likelihood of recalling the name of a House candidate. For the psychological controls, I include strength of partisanship and how much one cares about the U.S. House contest. Both variables indicate a heightened interest in politics and therefore each should positively influence candidate name recall. Finally, the controls for mobilization account for related measures of competitiveness. It is not necessarily expected that these variables will affect incumbent name recall, but they are likely to influence

**Figure 1**
**Probability of Recalling the Name of U.S. House Incumbent in 1992**




challenger name recall. District competitiveness provides a general indicator of the likelihood that the incumbent will retain the seat and is therefore an indirect measure of challenger strength. Challenger spending and challenger quality (previous elective experience) more directly signal candidate viability. It is expected that all three mobilization variables positively affect challenger name recall.

Figure 1 presents the probability of recalling the name of the incumbent for redrawn and same-incumbent respondents when all the control variables in Table A1 are set at their mean values. The likelihood of recalling the name of the incumbent is .40 for same-incumbent respondents and .17 for redrawn respondents, a substantial difference of .23. Thus, we see that the simple act of redrawing congressional boundaries causes individuals with a new incumbent to be much less likely to know their representative's name. In contrast, there is no significant difference in the likelihood of recalling the name of the challenger for redrawn and same-incumbent respondents. It is worth noting, however, that after setting the other variables at their mean values, there is only a slim chance that either redrawn or same-incumbent respondents will correctly recall the name of the challenger (.03 for redrawn respondents and .06 for same-incumbent respondents). The much lower recall probabilities associated with the challenger are expected because most incumbents draw weak opponents who lack the campaign funds necessary to establish name identification (Abramowitz, 1991; Jacobson, 2004).

**Table 3**
**Recognition of U.S. House Candidates in 1992 and 2002**

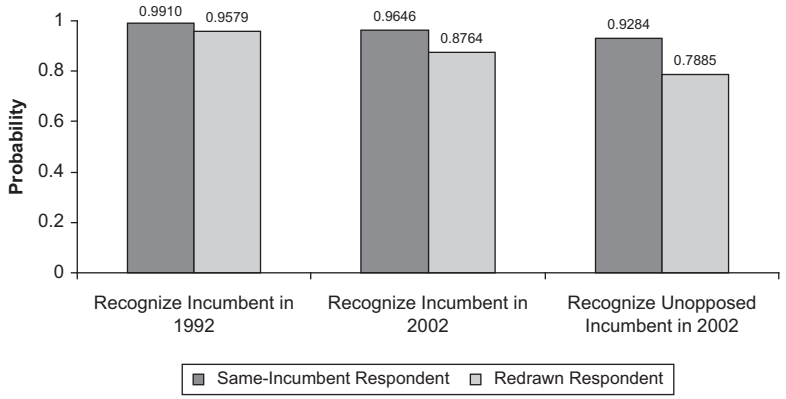
| | Incumbent (%) | | Challenger (%) | | Unopposed Incumbent (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respondent Type | 1992 | 2002 | 1992 | 2002 | 1992 | 2002 |
| Same-incumbent | 97.1 | 92.7 | 58.9 | 61.0 | 95.7 | 89.7 |
| (*N*) | (622) | (572) | (581) | (539) | (47) | (136) |
| Redrawn | 85.8 | 83.8 | 65.8 | 61.0 | — | 72.0 |
| (*N*) | (127) | (160) | (114) | (154) | — | (50) |
| Difference | 11.3** | 8.9** | 6.9 | 0.0 | — | 17.7* |

Note: In 1992, in the case of unopposed incumbents, there were no redrawn respondents for the candidate recognition question. Recognition means a respondent rated the candidate on the feeling thermometer scale. Data are from the 1990-1992 American National Election Studies (ANES) Full Panel File (ICPSR #6230) and the 2002 ANES (ICPSR #3740).
*$p < .01$. **$p < .001$. Difference of proportions (one-tailed tests).

## Candidate Name Recognition in the 1992 and 2002 U.S. House Elections

Turning to candidate name recognition, we can see if the same pattern regarding candidate name recall holds. Again, it is expected that redrawn respondents are less familiar with their incumbent, but redistricting should not affect challenger name recognition. Table 3 presents the percentage of redrawn and same-incumbent respondents who recognized the names of their incumbent and challenger or just their incumbent for those respondents who resided in districts with an unopposed incumbent. Recognition rates in 1992 and 2002 are substantially higher than the 1992 recall rates. The recognition gap between redrawn and same-incumbent respondents shows up in the case of opposed incumbents in 1992 ($p < .001$) and 2002 ($p < .001$), and in 2002 for unopposed incumbents ($p < .01$). Notice, however, that there is no challenger recognition difference in 2002 and in 1992, the recognition rate for redrawn respondents is higher (65.8% vs. 58.9% for same-incumbent respondents). An insignificant difference is not surprising though, because, as discussed, there are a multitude of factors that may increase or decrease challenger familiarity among redrawn versus same-incumbent respondents. The mobilization strategies of challengers are just as likely, if not more so, to be directed at redrawn constituents, and because most challengers are not perennial candidates, they are new to both redrawn and same-incumbent voters.

**Figure 2**
**Probability of Recognizing U.S. House Incumbents in 1992 and 2002**




Note: Probabilities derived from incumbent recognition models in Table A2.

Figure 2 presents the incumbent recognition probabilities derived from Table A2 (in the Appendix) when all the control variables are set at their mean values.[14] The likelihood of recognizing the name of an opposed incumbent in 1992 is .99 for same-incumbent respondents and .96 for redrawn respondents, a difference of .03. The likelihood of recognizing the name of an opposed incumbent in 2002 is .96 for same-incumbent respondents and .88 for redrawn respondents, a difference of .08. Finally, the likelihood of recognizing the name of an unopposed incumbent is .93 for same-incumbent respondents and .79 for redrawn respondents, a difference of .14.[15]

## Conclusion

This is the first article to empirically demonstrate that redrawn voters are less familiar with their new incumbent and the extent to which they are less familiar. In this regard, it fills a hole in the literature—providing the missing link to studies that contend redrawn voters are less supportive of incumbents in part because they are presumed to be less familiar with their new representative. A growing literature has shown the substantial

effects of redistricting on electoral outcomes and candidate emergence across time and in different contexts. What is curious is that until now, almost all these studies imply that redistricting influences candidate strategies and electoral outcomes because it produces informational asymmetries that directly impact the incumbency advantage. At the heart of this structural effect are redrawn voters. They are the political wild card, because their reduced familiarity with the new incumbent makes redrawn voters more responsive to challengers and short-term political conditions (Desposato & Petrocik, 2003; McKee, 2008). Redistricting is an institutional feature of the American electoral system that raises the costs of political information because redrawn constituents are less familiar with their new representative.

Even after controlling for education, partisanship, district competitiveness, whether a respondent voted for the U.S. House, and several other factors expected to influence candidate familiarity, the simple act of redrawing congressional boundaries consistently reduces the ability of individuals to recall and recognize the name of their incumbent.[16] However, because there is no comparable work that has measured the effect of redistricting on familiarity with House candidates, it may be surprising that the disparities are not larger. Most likely, given the strategic nature of elected politicians (Jacobson & Kernell, 1983)—especially when faced with a boundary change—many if not most incumbents actively cultivate the support of their new residents (see Boatright, 2004).

The resources incumbents use to increase their name recognition undoubtedly serve to increase their familiarity among redrawn residents—but in the short term it is not enough to entirely close the familiarity gap produced by redistricting. The findings in this research note lend confirmation to the pronouncements of scholars who accept at face value that redrawn individuals are less likely to know their new incumbent (e.g., Desposato & Petrocik, 2003, 2005; McKee, 2008; Petrocik & Desposato, 1998). And by extension, these results bolster the claim that incumbents are vulnerable to the presence of redrawn constituents because they have yet to establish a personal vote with so many of these new residents.

# Appendix

## Table A1
## Redistricting and the Likelihood of Recalling Names of 1992 U.S. House Candidates

| Independent Variables | Recall Name of Incumbent | Recall Name of Challenger |
|---|---|---|
| Redrawn respondent | −1.202 (0.278)*** | −0.623 (0.405) |
| Democratic incumbent | 0.451 (0.218)* | — |
| Democratic challenger | — | 0.360 (0.311) |
| Freshman incumbent | −0.646 (0.334)* | −0.665 (0.425) |
| Voted for U.S. House | 1.657 (0.245)*** | 1.721 (0.554)*** |
| Demographic controls | | |
| African American | −1.348 (0.412)*** | −1.922 (1.059)* |
| Male | 0.716 (0.180)*** | 0.086 (0.259) |
| Age | 0.010 (0.006)* | −0.016 (0.008)* |
| Education | 0.179 (0.038)*** | 0.260 (0.060)*** |
| Time in residence | −0.008 (0.110) | 0.115 (0.173) |
| Percentage urban | −1.754 (0.471)*** | −1.704 (0.771)* |
| Psychological controls | | |
| Partisanship | 0.147 (0.095) | 0.160 (0.135) |
| Care about U.S. House race | 0.473 (0.114)*** | 0.835 (0.181)*** |
| Mobilization | | |
| District competitiveness | −0.246 (0.158) | 0.144 (0.198) |
| Challenger spending | 0.0016 (0.0009)* | 0.0036 (0.0011)*** |
| Challenger quality | 0.330 (0.250) | 0.271 (0.335) |
| Constant | −5.162 (0.766)*** | −9.057 (1.267)*** |
| Log likelihood | −390.87 | −209.01 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | .23 | .26 |
| $N$ | 754 | 754 |

Note: Logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. These data only include contested races (Democrat vs. Republican) with an incumbent seeking reelection. The dependent variable is as follows: 1 = *recall name*, 0 = *do not recall name*.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. (one-tailed tests).

## Table A2
## Redistricting and the Likelihood of Recognizing U.S. House Candidates in 1992 and 2002

| | Recognize Incumbent | | Recognize Challenger | | Recognize Unopposed Incumbent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Independent Variables* | 1992 | 2002 | 1992 | 2002 | 2002 |
| Redrawn respondent | −1.572 (0.598)** | −1.347 (0.330)*** | 0.146 (0.283) | −0.189 (0.231) | −1.246 (0.501)** |
| Democratic incumbent | 1.122 (0.485)* | −0.052 (0.332) | — | — | 0.083 (0.714) |
| Democratic challenger | — | — | −0.294 (0.213) | 0.424 (0.206)* | — |
| Freshman incumbent | 0.252 (0.885) | −0.677 (0.467) | 0.232 (0.366) | −0.271 (0.334) | 0.094 (0.688) |
| Voted for U.S. House | 2.395 (0.572)*** | 1.527 (0.333)*** | 0.648 (0.209)*** | 1.436 (0.235)*** | 1.084 (0.550)* |
| Demographic controls | | | | | |
| African American | −1.146 (0.534)* | −1.240 (0.433)** | −0.128 (0.323) | −0.446 (0.355) | 1.001 (1.123) |
| Male | 0.461 (0.481) | −0.004 (0.308) | 0.097 (0.183) | −0.075 (0.187) | −0.169 (0.501) |
| Age | −0.005 (0.013) | −0.005 (0.011) | −0.007 (0.006) | −0.009 (0.007) | −0.007 (0.017) |
| Education | 0.180 (0.082)* | 0.209 (0.106)* | 0.107 (0.038)** | 0.089 (0.062) | 0.294 (0.155)* |
| Time in residence | 0.164 (0.213) | 0.058 (0.145) | −0.028 (0.105) | −0.122 (0.098) | 0.204 (0.246) |
| Percentage urban | −0.907 (1.122) | −0.112 (0.769) | −1.610 (0.470)*** | −0.362 (0.459) | −0.651 (1.904) |
| Psychological controls | | | | | |
| Partisanship | −0.107 (0.221) | 0.112 (0.169) | −0.075 (0.096) | 0.145 (0.106) | 0.121 (0.268) |
| Care about U.S. House race | 0.077 (0.259) | 0.188 (0.195) | 0.402 (0.110)*** | 0.191 (0.124) | 0.164 (0.328) |
| Mobilization | | | | | |
| District competitiveness | 0.107 (0.463) | 0.863 (0.505)* | 0.279 (0.172) | 1.179 (0.419)** | — |
| Challenger spending | 0.0016 (0.0018) | 0.00005 (0.00038) | 0.0038 (0.0009)*** | 0.0013 (0.0006)* | — |
| Challenger quality | −0.397 (0.610) | 0.314 (0.420) | 0.133 (0.262) | 0.953 (0.275)*** | — |
| Constant | 0.012 (1.640) | −0.435 (1.108) | −1.534 (0.707)* | −2.811 (0.836)*** | −0.169 (2.136) |
| Log likelihood | −86.26 | −164.11 | −374.87 | −355.49 | −60.12 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | .29 | .19 | .14 | .20 | .15 |
| *N* | 705 | 705 | 653 | 665 | 180 |

Note: Logistic regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable is 1 if a respondent rated the candidate on the feeling thermometer and 0 if the respondent did not recognize the name of the candidate.
*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$. (one-tailed tests).

# Notes

1. And in some states even more often; most recently Texas redistricted in 2006 and Georgia in 2005—and several other southern states covered by the Voting Rights Act redistricted throughout the 1990s.

2. As other studies have argued, with respect to electoral outcomes, ceteris paribus, incumbent support from redrawn voters is lower because redistricting severs the bond of incumbency, making these voters more susceptible to short-term political conditions and the appeals of viable challengers (see Desposato & Petrocik, 2003; McKee, 2008; Petrocik & Desposato, 2004). As Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2000) have demonstrated with county-level data, incumbents consistently earn a higher share of the vote from their old (same-incumbent) constituents. They contend that it is the lack of a personal vote with their new (redrawn) constituents that accounts for the lower support among these residents. Likewise, in an analysis of block-level data, Desposato and Petrocik (2003, 2005) found that California U.S. House incumbents have their vote shares depressed by the presence of redrawn residents. From the vantage of redrawn constituents, redistricting creates an informational environment more akin to an open seat contest (see Petrocik & Desposato, 2004), albeit a typically lopsided one with respect to competitiveness. The point is that, similar to an open seat race, the novelty of the incumbent explains why redrawn respondents' candidate recall and candidate recognition rates are lower than those of same-incumbent respondents, and as a result, this is why incumbents typically lose support among their new residents.

3. Of course it is expected that incumbents are forward looking and therefore will make certain their new residents get to know them by the time the next election occurs.

4. Another factor worth noting is that some House challengers have run for Congress multiple times. Some of these candidates are formidable whereas others are perennial losers (Canon, 1990).

5. These data were calculated by the author using the geographic correspondence engine provided by the Missouri Census Data Center in 1992 (http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/websas/geocorr90.shtml) and 2002 (http://mcdc2.missouri.edu/websas/geocorr2k.html).

6. ICPSR study numbers are #6230 and #3740, respectively.

7. Determining who is a same-incumbent respondent versus a redrawn respondent is done on the basis of matching individuals with incumbents. In other words, district numbers alone do not indicate whether an individual is redrawn. For instance, Representative Nancy Pelosi's district was CA-5 in 1990 and in 1992 it was CA-8; thus an individual who resided in these districts was a same-incumbent respondent even though Pelosi's district number changed. By definition, a redrawn respondent is an individual who has a different incumbent seeking reelection in their congressional district as a direct consequence of redistricting (see Desposato & Petrocik, 2003, p. 21).

8. The feeling thermometer question is asked separately for the Democratic and Republican U.S. House candidates.

9. Many respondents want to convey to the interviewer that they are politically informed.

10. The recall question was asked in 1992 but not in 2002.

11. Demographic variables are as follows: African American (1 = *yes*, 0 = *no*), male (1 = *male*, 0 = *female*), age (in years; 18 to oldest), education (0-17 categories: 0 = *no grades completed* and 17 = *17 years graduate study*), time in residence (0 = *less than 6 months*, 1 = *6 to 12 months*, 2 = *13 to 24 months*, 3 = *from 3 years to entire life*), and percentage urban (urban percentage of the district: data are from the *Almanac of American Politics* [Barone & Cohen, 2003; Barone & Ujifusa, 1993]).

12. Psychological variables are as follows: partisanship (1 = *pure independent*, 2 = *independent leaner*, 3 = *weak partisan*, 4 = *strong partisan*), and care about U.S. House race (1 = *not at all*, 2 = *not very much*, 3 = *pretty much*, 4 = *very much*).

13. Mobilization variables are as follows: district competitiveness (1 = *safe district*, 2 = *one party is favored*, 3 = *leans toward one party*, 4 = *no clear favorite*: data are from *Congressional Quarterly*), challenger spending (total dollars spent divided by $1,000: data are from the *Almanac of American Politics* [Barone & Cohen, 2003; Barone & Ujifusa, 1993]), and challenger quality (1 = *prior elective experience*, 0 = *otherwise*: data are from Jacobson, 2004). I ran models with the inclusion of a contact variable, but since the contact variable is not the same in 1992 and 2002 (candidate contact variable in 1992 and party contact variable in 2002), I dropped the variable from the models. The contact variable had a significant positive effect on the likelihood of recalling/recognizing U.S. House candidates. The statistical significance of the redrawn respondent dummy was not altered in these models.

14. All the multiple regressions were estimated with Stata. The candidate thermometer question, which includes the "don't recognize" response option, is asked separately for the Democratic and Republican House candidates. This, and considerable variability in the omitted response options (e.g., "Don't know where to rate" and "Refused" to rate the candidate), explains why the total cases are not equal for incumbent and challenger recognition for a given election (in 1992, $n = 705$ for incumbent model and $n = 653$ for challenger model; in 2002, $n = 705$ for incumbent model and $n = 665$ for challenger model).

15. This analysis cannot be conducted for 1992 because the 1990-1992 American National Elections Studies Full Panel File did not contain redrawn respondents in unopposed districts with incumbents seeking reelection.

16. With regard to challengers, with the exception of the candidate name recall question in 1992 (Table 2), there is no significant familiarity difference on the basis of whether one is a redrawn or same-incumbent respondent. This finding is both intuitive and important. First, because most challengers make their election debuts in the presence of same-incumbent and redrawn constituents, this might explain why redistricting does not consistently influence challenger familiarity rates. In other words, same-incumbent and redrawn constituents, if they are paying attention, are both seeing the challenger for the first time. Second, despite the fact that redistricting weakens a key component of the incumbency advantage—greater familiarity among voters vis-à-vis the challenger—most challengers, as indicated by their inability to raise money (see Abramowitz, 1991; Jacobson, 2004), are still too ineffectual to take full advantage of the beneficial effects of redistricting. This said, it is also true that redistricting affects candidate strategies, with most quality candidates emerging in a redistricting year (Hetherington, Larson, & Globetti, 2003), because boundary alterations produce a large population of voters who are not loyal to the incumbent (Desposato & Petrocik, 2003).

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