Drawing Electoral Lines

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A frame for the conversation

- Assume John’s covered the basics
- Common problems
- Potential approaches

National
State
Local
Problems

- Accurate census count
- Racial discrimination
- Excessive partisanship
- Polarization in legislatures
- “Unfair” resulting districts
  - Partisan
  - Racial
  - Other
Problems

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  Partisan
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  Other
Is this a good district?
Is she a good singer?
Problems

Incumbents drawing their own lines

*Garza v. County of Los Angeles*, 1991:
When the dust has settled and local passions have cooled, this case will be remembered for its lucid demonstration that elected officials engaged in the single-minded pursuit of incumbency can run roughshod over the rights of protected minorities. . . . Protecting incumbency and safeguarding the voting rights of minorities are purposes often at war with each other. Ethnic and racial communities are natural breeding grounds for political challengers; incumbents greet the emergence of such power bases in their districts with all the hospitality corporate managers show hostile takeover bids. What happened here — the systematic splitting of the ethnic community into different districts — is the obvious, time-honored and most effective way of averting a potential challenge. . . . Today's case barely opens the door to our understanding of the potential relationship between the preservation of incumbency and invidious discrimination, but it surely gives weight to the Seventh Circuit's observation that "many devices employed to preserve incumbencies are necessarily racially discriminatory."
Good news!
Other means to impact the process

• Support for recognition of local communities
• Support for an accurate Census

• Enforce existing law
  - Constitution
  - Voting Rights Act
  - California Voting Rights Act
  - other state laws

• Local commissions
• Alternative voting systems
The frequent status quo

- Citywide “at-large” elections
- Each voter: 1 vote for each seat

5-seat city council

Vote for up to 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George W.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John A.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas J.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James M.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew J.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin v. B.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William H.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John T.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James P.</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary T.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Districts are the standard solution

- Districted elections
- Each voter: 1 vote in your district

Vote in your district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>George W.</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>0</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>John A.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thomas J.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>James M.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Andrew J.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Martin v. B.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>William H.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>John T.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>James P.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Zachary T.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5-seat city council

EXAMPLE
Just as an example: cumulative voting

- Citywide “at-large” elections
- Each voter: as many votes as seats, and the votes can be grouped

Allocate five votes

George W.  
John A.  
Thomas J.  ✓ ✓ ✓
James M.  
Andrew J.  
Martin v. B.  
William H. ✓
John T.  
James P.  
Zachary T. ✓

5-seat city council

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Just as an example: cumulative voting

- Citywide “at-large” elections
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Allocate five votes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George W.</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John A.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas J.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James M.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew J.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin v. B.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William H.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John T.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James P.</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary T.</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 16x5 9x5
Further information

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http://redistricting.lls.edu