Geography 23: Power, Territoriality and Political Geography

Redistricting Houston

Introduction: Each group will create a redistricting plan with six electoral districts for the Houston, TX metropolitan area using ArcMap, a GIS package available in the Geography Department's Rahr Computer lab. Groups will formally present their redistricting plans in a public hearing to a "redistricting panel" in class on July 27. The panel, as well as opposing groups will have the opportunity to ask questions and to challenge each plan.

The data for this exercise comes from actual Census and election data, and are the type of information used in actual redistricting processes.

Written Report: In addition to the oral presentations, each group will prepare a 2-3 page written report (due July 27) that outlines, explains and justifies its redistricting plan. The report and presentation should address both the legal and political aspects of redistricting. In addition to the text, these reports should include a map of the districting plan, and a set of Uniform Redistricting Reports. (These reports will enable the redistricting panel to quickly compare the plans.)

Groups: The six groups represent: 1) the Democratic Party, 2) the Republican Party, 3) the African American Coalition for Representation (AACR), 4) the Latino Election Council (LEC), 5) the Madisonian Public Interest Association (M-PIA), and 6) the Committee for Political Continuity (CPC).

The AACR, LEC, M-PIA and CPC are hypothetical interest groups. The AACR seeks to protect and expand the political representation and power of African Americans, while LEC seeks to do so for Latinos. M-PIA is a group of activists who argue that Madison's anti-factional argument in Federalist #10 is the only sound basis for democratic representation. Finally, the CPC seeks to protect the ability of incumbent representatives to be re-elected.

Consequently, the six groups have distinctly different goals for the redistricting of Houston. Each will attempt to convince the redistricting panel that their plan is the most appropriate one. *The panel will take a number of factors into account including, but not limited to, the equal population requirement, "traditional districting principles," the Voting Rights Act, recent Supreme Court decisions, the political history and context of Texas, and "the interests of the people of the state."*

- **NOTE:** Each member of a group will receive the same grade, so this work should be a true collaborative effort and every member of the group should contribute an equivalent amount of work. (In the event that one member of a group is not contributing equally, the other members should see me immediately.) Every group member should also play a "hands-on" role in creating the districting plan. Aside from this, however, a group may allocate its work in any way it chooses. For

example, one person may focus on one issue, two people on another issue, etc. *At a minimum,* all members should participate in the oral presentation and, each group should review and discuss the final report together before turning it in.

Background: The six current Houston districts are malapportioned and need to be redrawn. Groups may use the existing district plan as a template, or they may design a radically different looking plan. The new plans should fulfill Constitutional and legal requirements, and should reflect the political interests of the groups that created them.

Incumbents: There are three Democratic incumbents (red) and three Republican incumbents (blue). Their residence and party affiliations are indicated by the "push-pins" on the current plan map.

Data: The demographic data comes from the 2000 Census. The basic political data are the results from the 2002 senatorial race. There was no incumbent in that race, so neither candidate had an advantage in that respect. The Republican candidate, John Cornyn (an Anglo male), beat the Democratic candidate Ron Kirk (an African-American male). See the Uniform District Report at the end of this assignment for further details on the current set of districts.

Variables: Table 1 lists all the variables in the data set and includes a brief explanation of each. You may not need to consider every variable listed for your redistricting plan.

Software and Data:

We will use a GIS application called **ArcMap**, based on the industry-standard package **ArcGIS** (produced by the ERSI corporation). The majority of actual political redistricting is done using software based on ArcGIS, so what you are doing for this exercise is very similar to what takes place during the redistricting process.

Groups:

Democratic Party	Republican Party	AACR

LEC	M-PIA	CPC

Table 1: Redistricting Variables

Variable	Description
DISTRICT	The district number (1-6)
TOTAL	The total population (2000 Census)
TOTAL_DEV	The population deviation from the ideal (778,262 people)
ANG	The total Anglo population (white, non-Hispanic)
ANG_P	The percentage of Anglo population in a particular district
ANGVAP	The total Anglo voting age population*
BH	The total Black and Hispanic populations combined
BH_P	The percentage of Black and Hispanic populations in a particular district
BHVAP	The total Black and Hispanic voting age population*
BLAK	The total Black population
BLAK_P	The percentage of Black population in a particular district
BLAKVAP	The total Black voting age population*
HSP	The total Hispanic population
HSP_P	The percentage of Hispanic population in a particular district
HSPVAP	The total Hispanic voting age population*
OTH	The total Other population (not white, Black and/or Hispanic)
OTH_P	The percentage of Other population in a particular district
OTHVAP	The total Other voting age population*
VAP	The total voting age population*
TOTALTO	The total turnout in the 2000 election**
TOTALVR	The total voter registration for the 2000 election***
SPANSUR	The number of registered voters with Spanish surnames for the 2000 election***
TOTAL02	The total votes from the 2002 Senatorial race ****
REP2002	The number of Republican votes in the 2002 Senatorial race****
DEM2002	The number of Democratic votes in the 2002 Senatorial race****

* Voting age population (or VAP) is the population >18 years of age, regardless of citizenship.

** Presidential elections like the 2000 race typically produce the highest voter participation.

*** The number of voters with "Spanish surnames" is a measure used by the Department of Justice to assess the proportion of Latino voters.

**** The 2002 Senatorial race featured a white Republican candidate (John Cornyn) running against an African American Democratic candidate (Ron Kirk). They ran for an open seat, so neither was an incumbent. Cornyn won the election, taking 54% of the vote in the Houston area and 56% statewide.

Table 2A: Demographic Characteristics of the Current Houston Districts

District	Total	Total Voting Age Population	Anglo	Anglo Voting Age Population	Black + Hispanic	Black + Hispanic Voting Age Population
		Uniform Redistricting Report A (Totals)				
1	778627	549101	464039	343615	268634	172804
2	778220	541640	360042	267241	402289	262996
3	776695	543191	324826	251450	424865	271978
4	679528	487073	320391	245029	329970	220615
5	857596	623098	349563	275759	420983	282397
6	798905	569449	421032	318181	296390	192113

District	Black	Black Voting Age Population	Hispanic	Hispanic Voting Age Population	Other	Other Voting Age Population
1	117028	76357	153628	97442	45954	32682
2	151416	104693	253091	159437	15889	11403
3	87897	60027	339780	213384	27004	19763
4	165999	116338	166428	105534	29167	21429
5	194089	131898	230839	152774	87050	64942
6	94452	61663	204822	132043	81483	59155

District	Total Turnout (2000 General)	Total Voter Registration (2000 General)	Registered Spanish Surnames (2000 General)	Percent Spanish Surnames of Total Voter Registration		
1	272003	395324	34574	8.75		
2	212761	366512	54615	14.90		
3	198567	333328	79442	23.83		
4	270805	371624	46684	12.56		
5	269628	386985	41812	10.80		
6	258971	370997	40300	10.86		

Table 2B: Political Characteristics of the Current Houston Districting Plan

District	Total Votes (2002 Senatorial)	Republican Votes (2002 Senatorial)	Democratic Votes (2002 Senatorial)	Percent Republican of Total Votes
1	179672	122187	57485	68.01
2	131975	67349	64626	51.03
3	122766	62439	60327	50.86
4	147028	67643	79385	46.01
5	179873	91498	88375	50.87
6	169651	114216	55435	67.32

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of the Current Houston Districts (percentages)

		Uniform Redistricting Report B (Percentages)			
District	Anglo (% of Total Population)	Anglo Voting Age Population (% of Total VAP)	Black + Hispanic (% of Total Population)	Black + Hispanic Voting Age Population (% of Total VAP)	Black (% of Total Population)	Black Voting Age Population (% of Total VAP)
1	59.60	62.58	34.50	48.92	15.03	21.31
2	46.26	49.34	51.69	74.27	19.46	27.96
3	41.82	46.29	54.70	78.22	11.32	16.18
4	47.15	50.31	48.56	67.75	24.43	34.08
5	40.76	44.26	49.09	67.56	22.63	31.15
6	52.70	55.88	37.10	52.05	11.82	16.59
District	Hispanic (% of Total Population)	Hispanic Voting Age Population (% of Total VAP)	Other (% of Total Population)	Other Voting Age Population (% of Total VAP)		
1	19.73	27.98	5.90	8.37		
2	32.52	46.73	2.04	2.93		
3	43.75	62.55	3.48	4.97		
4	24.49	34.17	4.29	5.99		
5	26.92	37.05	10.15	13.97		
6	25.64	35.97	10.20	14.31		

Table 4: Population Deviation

Population Deviation Analysis		
Ideal District Population	778262	
Total Houston Metro Population	4669571	
District	**Total**	**Deviation**
1	778627	0.047
2	778220	-0.005
3	776695	-0.201
4	679528	-12.686
5	857596	10.194
6	798905	2.652
Total Metro Area Deviation	3.813%	

Current Houston Redistricting Plan