

AP[®] HUMAN GEOGRAPHY 2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

In the redistricting that occurred in 2012, voters in Maryland approved a redrawn Third Congressional District as shown in the map above. A geospatial analysis firm named it the least compact district in the nation.

- Identify the political phenomena represented on this map.
- Explain the relationship between redistricting and the United States Census.
- Identify and discuss **TWO** political consequences that could result from redistricting.

Part A: (1 point total)

1. **Gerrymandering**

Also acceptable: packing, cracking, wasted-vote, excess-vote, stacked-vote.

Part B: (2 points total)

Redistricting and the census

(1 point for basic or partial explanation; 2 points for full explanation)

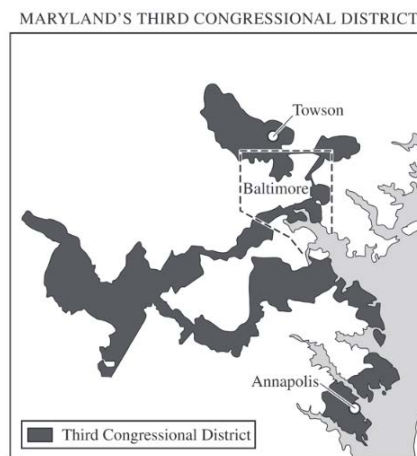
- Proportional Representation:** U.S. Constitution requires a census every 10 years to reset proportional representation in the House of Representatives.
- Allocating the number of seats:** Census results are used to reapportion the number of seats allocated to each state in the House of Representatives.
- Redraw boundaries:** Census results are used to examine demographic changes to redraw district boundaries.
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** Census data is analyzed by state political parties and political consultants using GIS programmed to determine the most advantageous house district boundary alignments.

Part C: (4 points total)

Two consequences

(1 point for identification + 1 point for discussion) + (1 point for identification + 1 point for discussion)

- Partisan Power:** Redistricting by state governments often results in elections that strengthen/weaken the power of a particular party. This creates party-safe districts and may create/break congressional gridlock.
- Lack of Social Cohesion/Sense of Community:** Gerrymandered districts can be represented by a congressperson who lives far from other district residents or is not of the same ethnic or socioeconomic background as most district residents, resulting in greater tension or disillusionment.



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Question 1 (continued)

3. **Advantage/Disadvantage to individual candidates:** Redistricting plans designed to protect or weaken the seats of incumbent candidates; weaken or improve the election possibility for challengers. Candidates can become more politically extreme.
4. **Advantage/Disadvantage for a voting bloc:** Gerrymandered districts can strengthen the political power of certain voting blocs. It can disenfranchise at-risk communities and citizens from the political process. It links or divides areas of voters with similar characteristics (race/ethnicity, socioeconomic, labor, religious, urban/suburban/rural, etc.).
5. **Create or preserve minority-majority district:** To create a district favoring an ethnic group, or to accommodate surrounding minority-majority districts.
6. **Lower voter participation:** Confusion over the changing spatial patterns of districts, or the elimination of candidates who were redistricted out; can discourage some voters from participating in the political process.
7. **Judicial challenges:** States can be sued over the shape and contiguity of redistricting plans once they are signed into state law. Courts can order district boundaries to be redrawn under judicial supervision.
8. **Preclearance:** Prior to 2013, redistricting plans in some states had to be “precleared” by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) or a three-judge panel in DC, due to past federal discrimination cases regarding violation of the Voting Rights Act. The U.S. Supreme Court ended this practice in specific jurisdictions on June 25, 2013. DOJ and judges still have the power to preclear or intervene in redistricting plans but rules are unclear (as of 9/25/2013).

ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 1

This redistricting is a clear example of gerrymandering, or redistricting for the purpose of elections. It often assures that a member of a specific party wins an election in the district.

Redistricting and the census are related because census results play a key role in the redistricting. If you want to create a district likely to vote for a republican, you would look at the census and identify where the majority of well-off white citizens are located. If you wanted a district that leans democrat, you'd analyze the census and identify where low-income, minority citizens cluster, and redistrict around that area. Your census would play a huge role in where to draw lines when redistricting.

One political consequence of redistricting is creating nearly impossible to lose seats for a given political party. Whether it is positions like senators or state reps, gerrymandering and redistricting can effectively hand a seat over to a candidate on a silver platter. For example, in Texas, Ted Cruz can say basically whatever he wants ~~it~~ because of the overwhelmingly republican district he runs for. That specific district has been drawn to guarantee a republican vote. If the redistricting hadn't happened, Mr. Cruz would have to be more careful, and try to appeal to more groups.

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ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 1

Another political consequence of redistricting is disproportionate voter representation. Many of these districts fail to represent the whole population, skewing votes one way or another. This can lead to voter frustration, or even an outright drop in voter participation. If voters feel they will be ignored due to their views in relation to that of the rest of the district, they may not even bother to vote, and this could just perpetuate more gerrymandering.

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A. The political phenomenon that is represented on the map that shows the redistricting of voters in Maryland is called gerrymandering.

B. Redistricting goes hand and hand with the census because districts are based on population and each representative receives a certain amount of constituents. So, when the population changes throughout the years, the census must be analyzed and evaluated in order to properly redistrict.

C. One of the political consequences that could result from redistricting is that gerrymandering can occur in a way that dilutes a certain party that exists in an area so that a certain party would win. This could mean some unfortunate representation for the minor party in that area. Another political consequence that can result from redistricting is that, as conveniently depicted by the illustration, a district can be comprised of areas that are not very compact. This could mean that gerrymandering most likely occurred in this area.

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A) The political phenomenon represented on the map is redistricting.

B) The relationship between redistricting and the census is quite obvious. The districts were probably redrawn because the census revealed a shift/change in the population or population density of the area.

C) There are two main political consequences that could result from the redistricting. One of those consequences could be the outcome of elections. The redistricting could give one politician favor over the other. Another consequence of the redistricting could be the voting locations. People may have to vote in a different location due to the redistricting.

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2015 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 1

Overview

Students were asked to (A) identify an important phenomenon (gerrymandering) that is both geographical and political, (B) explain the relationship between redistricting and the U.S. Census, and (C) identify and discuss political consequences that could result from redistricting. “Gerrymandering” is mentioned by name in Part IV of the Course Outline. Likewise, “census data” is mentioned by name in Part I and, by extension, in Part II, which calls attention to implications of various population distributions. Students, therefore, should have been well prepared to provide a complete answer to this question. The best answers required some degree of synthesis and would have drawn from three different parts of the course outline (Parts I, II, and IV). By focusing on redistricting and gerrymandering, this question asked students to think critically about one of the foundation stones of democracy as it is practiced in the United States.

Sample: 1A

Score: 7

The response earned full credit and demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of gerrymandering and the associated spatial relationships and connections of redistricting and politics. The response received 1 point in part A for identifying the phenomena represented on the map as gerrymandering. The response received 2 points in part B for a full explanation of the relationship between the United States Census and the redistricting process by indicating that the census plays a key role in where to draw the lines during redistricting (B3). The response received 4 points in part C for correctly identifying and discussing two political consequences resulting from redistricting. The response earned 2 political consequence points for correctly identifying that redistricting could create a situation where it is nearly impossible for a political party to lose seats and discussing that a specific district might be drawn in order to guarantee the vote of one party (C1). The response earned 2 additional political consequence points in part C for correctly identifying that redistricting can lead to voter frustration and discussing that if these voters feel ignored, they may not vote in future elections (C6).

Sample: 1B

Score: 5

The response earned full credit in part A (1 point), full credit in part B (2 points), and partial credit in part C (2 points). The response received 1 point in part A for identifying the phenomena represented on the map as gerrymandering. The response received 2 points in part B for a full explanation of the relationship between the United States Census and the redistricting process by indicating voting districts are based on population and then altered as population changes over time (B3). The response earned 2 political consequence points for correctly identifying that redistricting may dilute a certain political party and discussing, in turn, that particular political party would win the election (C1). No additional points were received in part C as the response did not provide an additional political consequence.

Sample: 1C

Score: 4

The response earned no credit in part A, full credit in part B (2 points), and full credit in part C (2 points). The response received no credit in part A as gerrymandering was not identified. The response received 2 points in part B for a full explanation of the relationship between the United States Census and the redistricting process by indicating voting districts were redrawn because the census revealed a shift or change in the population (B3). The response earned 2 political consequence points for correctly identifying

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Question 1 (continued)

that redistricting could alter the outcome of elections and discussing this outcome could favor one politician over another (C1). No additional points were received in part C as the response was insufficient.