

Class 9a:

Political Geography II

- Reapportionment and redistricting
- Gerrymandering
- Local politics

Proportional representation

- VA Plan vs. NJ Plan → Great Compromise
- Large states wanted proportional repr.
- Small states wanted equal repr.
- 3/5 Compromise on slaves

Proportional representation

- 100 Senators, 435 Representatives
- Basis for Electoral College
- All votes are not equal
 - Minimum representation
 - Winner-take-all

Reapportionment

- Population changes with migration
- Need to reapportion seats
- Based on Census
- Every state keeps at least one Representative
- Method of equal proportions

Redistricting

- Redrawing district boundaries based on reapportionment
- In most states, done by legislature
- Meant to maintain equality of votes
- Can be manipulated

Gerrymandering

- Discriminatory redistricting
- Consolidating power
- Diluting opponents' power

Gerrymandering

- Racist gerrymandering after Civil War
 - Put all minorities in one district
 - Dilute them among all districts
- 1982 Voting Rights Act
 - Majority-minority districts
 - Constitutional issues

Gerrymandering and democracy

- Preserves incumbents
 - In 1992, 61% of races won by >20%
 - In 2002, 80% of races won by > 20%; average margin of victory 39%
 - 1 of 53 seats in CA competitive

Gerrymandering and democracy

- Removes decision-making from voters
- “Candidates choose the voters”
- More polarized Congress

Local politics

- Hierarchy of jurisdictions
- Special-purpose districts
- Local governments and urban sprawl

Hierarchy of jurisdictions

- First order divisions
 - Largest units within a state
 - Provinces, states, oblasts, prefectures
 - Unitary vs. federal

Hierarchy of jurisdictions

- Second order divisions
 - Counties, townships, parishes, boroughs
 - 3000 in US; from 24 to 20,000 miles² and from 100 to 8 million residents
- Functions depend on the state
 - Law enforcement, highways, taxes, statistics, welfare, elections

Hierarchy of jurisdictions

- Minor civil divisions
 - Townships, cities, villages
- Land use and zoning
- Growth by annexation

Special purpose districts

- Consequence of federal system
- Territory and organization for one purpose
- Fire, water, flood control, mosquito control, irrigation, etc.
- Over 35,000 in 2002

School districts

- Land granted to new territories (1 section per township)
- Land grant colleges
- Historically, little federal input
- Over 15,000 in 2002
- Funding depends on local tax income

Urban sprawl

- Too much local decision-making
- Each MCD acts in its own interests
 - Maximize tax revenue
 - Minimize need for services
- Reluctance for regional government