Unwelcome Constituents: Redistricting and Countervailing Partisan Tides

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Abstract

We analyze the effect of redrawn constituents on incumbent vote shares in Georgia U.S. House elections from 1992 to 2006. The Georgia General Assembly redrew the congressional boundaries for the 2006 midterm and the new lines redistributed approximately 31% of residents into districts with a different incumbent than the one representing them in 2004. With the use of Voting Tabulation District (VTD) data, we use a hierarchical model to evaluate the effect these redrawn constituents had on their new incumbent's vote share. We find a consistent pattern: both Democratic and Republican incumbents experienced significant reductions in their vote shares as a consequence of the redrawn VTDs placed in their districts. The short-term political climate featuring a national Democratic tide and a simultaneous statewide trend favoring the Grand Old Party (GOP) helps to explain this finding. With offsetting partisan conditions, the incumbency advantage came to the fore as Georgia U.S. House members, irrespective of party affiliation, performed better among the constituents they retained prior to redistricting. Our findings for the 2006 election run counter to the significant Republican redistricting advantage prevailing in Georgia congressional contests from 1992 to 2004.

The incumbency advantage affords representatives an additional share of the vote garnered from cultivating a personal connection with constituents. Redistricting, however, severs this bond when residents drawn into a different incumbent's district lack familiarity with their new representative. Thus, under neutral conditions, when

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electoral boundaries are redrawn, incumbents perform better among their old constituents due to their efforts establishing name recognition and credit for performing constituent service (i.e., casework and pork barrel projects). In this study, we evaluate the effect of redistricting on incumbent vote shares in Georgia U.S. House elections from 1992 to 2006. What makes the Georgia case so compelling is that the state is realigning in favor of the Republican Party, but in 2006, there was a strong national Democratic tide running in the congressional midterm.

As the long-term Republican trend in Georgia was countered by a short-term national Democratic shift in 2006, we hypothesize that these conflicting tides make redrawn constituents less supportive of incumbents of either political party—a result similar to what we would anticipate under neutral partisan conditions. With the exception of one congressional district, our empirical analysis finds that in 2006, both Democratic and Republican Georgia U.S. House Representatives received less electoral support among their redrawn constituents. Our results speak to the importance of the prevailing conditions at the time a redistricting is enacted. The influence of redistricting on incumbent vote shares in 2006 reveals a marked departure from the contemporary pattern in Georgia, a state that since the early-1990s has been characterized by unprecedented Republican growth.

Incumbency, Redistricting, and Political Conditions

The incumbency advantage is variable. Despite rigorous analyses of the average increase in the vote attributable to being an officeholder (e.g., Gelman and King 1990), there remain exogenous conditions that can greatly affect the incumbency advantage in any given election. For instance, when a partisan tide benefits one party over the other, incumbents of the disadvantaged party will be more likely to retire and the most vulnerable among them who seek reelection will face stronger challengers (Jacobson and Kernell 1983). Likewise, a redistricting can do considerable damage to reelection bids. Depending on the plan, a remap can completely eviscerate an incumbent's old constituency by parceling the district into numerous new congressional boundaries. This sort of displacement may force an incumbent to square off against a fellow incumbent in one of the reconfigured districts or the representative may choose to retire (Cain 1984; 1985; Cain and Campagna 1987; Yoshinaka and Murphy 2011).

The incumbency advantage is valued by officeholders because of the potential and actualized electoral gains that are tied to the efforts expended on cultivating a personal vote through activities such as advertising, credit claiming, position taking (Mayhew 1974), and constituency service (Cain, Ferejohn, and Fiorina 1987; Erikson and Wright 2009; Fiorina 1977). But unfortunately for incumbents, congressional boundaries are not static. Beyond natural changes to the district population due to residential mobility and the life cycle, the redrawing of congressional lines constitutes a new relationship between the representative and a considerable segment of their electorate. Lacking familiarity with their new representative (Hayes and McKee 2009; McKee 2008a), the incumbency advantage is severely discounted

with respect to these potentially unwelcome constituents who are drawn into the district (Desposato and Petrocik 2003). Because the incumbency advantage is compromised by redistricting, it is no wonder that the strategic response by quality candidates is to emerge in a redistricting year when incumbents are faced with a large share of constituents who they did not represent prior to the remap (Hetherington, Larson, and Globetti 2003; McKee 2010; Murphy and Yoshinaka 2009).

In addition to the emergence of a higher number of quality challengers, an unfavorable political climate at the time of a redistricting can further jeopardize the chances of winning another term. Ceteris paribus, over the long run, it is apparent that incumbents will perform better among the constituents they represented prior to redistricting. As Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart (2000) have demonstrated with data spanning House elections from 1872 to 1990, incumbents win a greater share of the vote among old constituents when there has been a redistricting. And this disparity in vote shares among old voters and redrawn voters has widened as the incumbency advantage has grown over time with the shift toward candidate-centered elections. Given this long-term finding, however, the prevailing conditions for a specific redistricting can increase, decrease, or have no significant effect on incumbent vote shares.

Narrowing the timeline to a particular decennial reapportionment allows us to see that short-term political conditions have different effects on the incumbency advantage. For instance, compared with the 1990 reapportionment, the 1980 reapportionment showed fairly limited electoral effects tied to redistricting (see Born 1985; Gopoian and West 1984; Jacobson 1990; Rush 1992; 1993). By contrast, the 1990s redistricting round showed marked electoral effects due to redistricting. There are perhaps two primary reasons why this was the case. First, a change in the Department of Justice's (DOJ) enforcement of Section 5 preclearance of redistricting plans for states covered by the Voting Rights Act led to a massive alteration of congressional boundaries to increase the number of majority–minority districts (Bullock 2010; Butler 2002; Cunningham 2001). Second, the incumbency advantage had been slowly diminishing as increasing polarization (especially among House members and candidates) and reinvigorated partisanship (Bartels 2000) nationalized congressional elections in the 1990s (Fiorina 2005).

Conditions during the 1990s decennial reapportionment especially advantaged Republicans in the South[1] (Black and Black 2002; Hill and Rae 2000; McKee 2010; Petrocik and Desposato 1998), where most majority–minority districts were created for DOJ compliance. African American voters were packed into majority black districts with the direct effect being a reduction in Democratic support in adjacent districts that now contained higher white populations (Black and Black 2002; Cameron, Epstein, and O'Halloran 1996; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999; 2000; Lublin 1997; Petrocik and Desposato 1998). These so-called "bleached" districts—because they contained a higher portion of white constituents—were poised to vote Republican in U.S. House contests because a long-term Republican secular realignment was reinforced by short-term Republican tides (Hill and Rae 2000; Petrocik and Desposato

1998), and most of these districts were represented by Democrats who drew strong Republican challengers in the 1992–94 elections (Black and Black 2002; Jacobson 1996; McKee 2010).

Unlike the 1990s reapportionment, the hallmark of the 2000 redistricting cycle was states' adoption of incumbent protection plans (Forgette and Platt 2005; Forgette and Winkle 2006; Jacobson 2004; 2005; Schweers 2003; Yoshinaka and Murphy 2009). To be sure, there were several partisan gerrymander exceptions to the bipartisan rule (i.e., Michigan, Pennsylvania, and the controversial 2003 Texas "re-redistricting"; McKee and Shaw 2005; McKee, Teigen, and Turgeon 2006), but most congressional boundaries were not nearly as tortured as the 1990's lines. Conditions at the time of the initial redistricting cycle in 2002 also showed a bias in favor of the Republican Party because it was the electoral beneficiary of presidential leadership on the terrorism issue in the wake of the 9/11 attacks (Jacobson 2003).

Electoral conditions were favorable to the GOP from 1992 to 2004, but by the 2006 midterms, the short-term climate had turned sharply in favor of the Democratic Party. As Jacobson (2007) pointed out, this midterm holds the historic distinction of being the only one in which a party retained all of its seats in both chambers of Congress. In fact, there were only two Democratic incumbents who faced difficult reelections in 2006: Jim Marshall (District 8) and John Barrow (District 12), members representing neighboring districts in the Georgia U.S. House delegation. Georgia was the only state to undergo a statewide redistricting for the 2006 congressional elections (Texas enacted a partial, court-ordered redistricting that affected 5 of its 32 districts for the 2006 contests). It is the case of Georgia to which we now turn—a state that since the 1990s has witnessed a Republican surge.

Redistricting in Georgia, 1992–2004

In the 1990s, Georgia was the poster child for unintended electoral consequences generated by redistricting. Like several of its southern neighbors (i.e., Alabama and North Carolina), the Democratic-controlled Georgia General Assembly was hamstrung in its freedom to redraw congressional boundaries because of the strict oversight of the DOJ. For the 1992 elections, out of a total of 11 districts (a one seat gain through reapportionment) in addition to the existing majority black District 5, Georgia was ordered to draw 2 new majority black districts (GA-2 and GA-11). Declared unconstitutional racial gerrymanders in *Miller v. Johnson* (1995 515 U.S. 900), these districts would eventually be redrawn prior to the 1996 elections with significantly reduced black populations (Voss and Lublin 2001). But by then, the damage to the Democratic Party was done. In no other state had the Republican congressional transformation been as swift as in Georgia (Hill 1995). In 1990, Newt Gingrich was the lone Republican in the 10-member Georgia U.S. House delegation. By 1995, with Representative Nathan Deal's switch to the Republican Party, the Georgia congressional delegation consisted of 8 Republicans and 3 Democrats—all of whom were African Americans representing Georgia's majority black districts.

Georgia redistricting in the 1990s was a classic example of what Grofman and Brunell have dubbed a "dummymander": "[A] gerrymander by one party that, over the course of the decade, benefits the other party, and actually looks as if it was designed by that party rather than the party in power" (2005, 184). Motivated by self-preservation, Georgia Democrats of course did not intend to implement a dummymander in 1992, and in fact they did their best to avoid one (see the creative cartography of GA-11, referred to as *Sherman's March to the Sea*, thanks to a thin strip of land connecting parts of Savannah in a district that also includes sections of Atlanta). But the DOJ's majority–minority maximization order, an ongoing Republican realignment, a short-term GOP tide, and the emergence of quality Republican candidates proved disastrous to white Democratic incumbents who were severely punished by redrawn voters. Lacking a bond with their new Democratic congressman, under these extraordinarily favorable conditions for the Republican Party, redrawn individuals were much more likely to vote Republican (on this point, see McKee 2008b; 2010).

The Republican advantage in Georgia U.S. House elections was essentially unchallenged from 1992 to 2004, and during this period, redistricting was an important component of GOP success. Georgia Democrats retained control of the redistricting process in the 2002 cycle, but even after the 2004 elections, the U.S. House delegation remained majority Republican (seven Republicans and six Democrats). We can use district-level data spanning the 1992–2004 Georgia U.S. House elections to demonstrate that redistricting generally favored Republicans despite the fact that Georgia Democrats drew the lines to benefit their party in 1992 and 2002, and a court-drawn plan altered the congressional boundaries in 1996.

To provide empirical support for the role of redistricting in influencing electoral outcomes in Georgia, we regress the Republican share of the two-party U.S. House vote onto the following covariates: *Democratic Incumbent* (1 = *Democrat*, 0 = *Republican*), *Redrawn Constituents* (%), *Redrawn Constituents × Democratic Incumbent, Republican Presidential Vote* (%), *Black Voting Age Population* (%), *Median Family Income* (in thousands), and *Election Year* (1992 is the base category). The *Redrawn Constituents* variable is calculated as the percentage of the district population that was placed in the incumbent's district due to redistricting. Thus, these individuals resided in a district represented by a different incumbent prior to the redistricting. For instance, in the 1996 court-ordered redistricting, Democratic Representative Sanford Bishop (GA-2) inherited many new constituents who previously resided in Georgia District 1, represented by Republican Congressman Jack Kingston.[2]

This district-level regression, displayed as Model 1 in the appendix, includes House elections from 1992 to 2004 and it omits open seat and uncontested races. We do this because we want to demonstrate the effect of redistricting when an incumbent sought reelection and faced major party opposition. Limiting the analysis to races with opposed incumbents reduces the total number of cases from 81 to 42 (see Model 2 in the appendix for the results of a model that includes open seats and uncontested seats).[3] We should note, however, that the substantive findings and

statistical significance do not change if we perform the analysis with all 81 congressional districts.[4]

The primary variable of interest is the interactive term: *Redrawn Constituents ×
Democratic Incumbent*, which we expect to be signed in a positive direction and statistically significant, indicating that for Democratic representatives, an increase in the percentage of redrawn constituents should positively influence the Republican share of the two-party vote. In short, redistricting should exhibit a one-sided effect, reducing the vote shares of Democratic incumbents, but having no significant effect on Republican incumbent vote shares.

As the Georgia electorate is realigning in favor of the GOP, for Republican incumbents, after controlling for the other factors in the model, the inheritance of new constituents should not affect their electoral support because these voters are shifting toward the Republican Party. In other words, the incumbency advantage matters for Democratic incumbents because they are expected to receive more support from their old constituents and less from their redrawn residents. By contrast, the incumbency advantage is not expected to distinguish the support given to the Republican incumbents on the basis of redrawn versus same constituents.

Because short-term conditions and an ongoing realignment are pushing redrawn constituents in favor of Republican candidates, their electoral support for the GOP is indistinguishable from the level of Republican voting exhibited by old constituents. Thus, the personal vote is for all practical purposes masked by the commensurate level of Republican voting among redrawn voters. As shown in Model 1 of the appendix, this hypothesis is confirmed. From 1992 to 2004, in Georgia U.S. House elections, a 10-percentage point increase in redrawn constituents reduced the vote shares of Democratic incumbents by 3 percentage points.

To better demonstrate the effects of redistricting, Figure 1 displays the Republican share of the House vote according to an incumbent's party affiliation and the percentage redrawn constituents. The Republican redistricting advantage is substantial. In the case of Republican incumbents, going from a district with 0% redrawn constituents (actual lowest = 1% redrawn) to 100% redrawn constituents (actual highest = 100% redrawn) reduces the Republican vote by a mere two-tenths of a point (60.9%–60.7%). As hypothesized, the presence of redrawn constituents essentially has no effect on the vote shares of Republican incumbents. By comparison, for Democratic incumbents, going from a district with 0% redrawn constituents (actual lowest = 8% redrawn) to 70% redrawn constituents (actual highest = 69% redrawn) increases the Republican vote by more than 20 points (34.9%–55.1%).

In the early-1990s, as was true throughout the South, the principal problem faced by Georgia Democratic incumbents was that the electorate was trending strongly in favor of the Republican Party. Redistricting served to hasten this realignment in congressional elections because removing so many constituents from their current House members and placing them in new districts undermined the Democratic incumbency advantage. For those residents we define as redrawn because they have a different representative as a direct consequence of redistricting, the personal vote was not
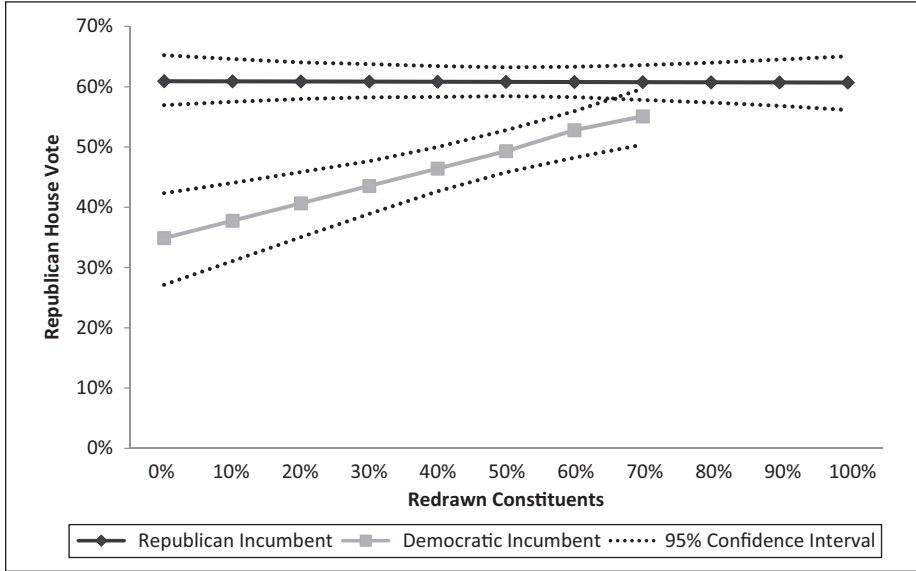
Figure 1. Simulated Republican U.S. House vote in Georgia according to incumbent party affiliation and percentage of redrawn constituents, 1992–2004 elections.
Note: Values were generated from Model 1 in the appendix using *CLARIFY* (Tomz, Wittenberg, and King 2003). The highest actual percentage of redrawn constituents for a Democratic incumbent was Richard Ray at 69% in GA-3 for the 1992 elections. The highest actual percentage of redrawn constituents for a Republican incumbent was Newt Gingrich at 100% in GA-6 for the 1992 elections. In 1992, Gingrich vacated the reconfigured GA-3 (where Richard Ray sought reelection) for the newly created GA-6.

applicable to them—they had no relationship with their new incumbent. Lacking a nonpartisan reason to support the incumbent, redistricting conditioned these redrawn voters to rely most heavily on their partisanship and the short-term forces prevailing at the time of redistricting. This proved an electoral nightmare for Peach State Democratic incumbents because, like the southern white electorate writ large, redrawn constituents were strongly realigning in favor of the GOP (McKee 2010) and short-term conditions served to reinforce the Republican trend.

Redistricting for the 2006 Midterm

In a marked departure from the prevailing pattern of Republican dominance since the 1992 reapportionment, the national Democratic tide in 2006 neutralized the Republican redistricting advantage in Georgia U.S. House elections. By taking control of the lower state House after the 2004 elections, Georgia Republicans occupied the governorship and both chambers of the legislature for the first time since Reconstruction. Hence, the practically uninterrupted growth of the Georgia GOP enabled the party to enact a new congressional map for the 2006 elections. But

Table 1. Georgia U.S. House Districts in the 2006 Election.

District in 2006	Name of U.S. representative	Number of House terms	Party affiliation	Share of two-party vote (%)	Incumbent percentage of spending	Same VAP (%)	Redrawn VAP (%)
1	Jack Kingston	8	Republican	69	91	84	16
2	Sanford Bishop	8	Democrat	68	97	79	21
3	Lynn Westmoreland	2	Republican	68	94	73	27
4	Henry C. Johnson Jr.	0	Democrat	75	77	75	25
5	John Lewis	11	Democrat	100	100	81	19
6	Tom Price	2	Republican	72	95	66	34
7	John Linder	8	Republican	71	96	59	42
8	Jim Marshall	3	Democrat	51	48	55	45
9	Nathan Deal	8	Republican	77	99	85	15
10	Charlie Norwood	7	Republican	67	98	75	25
11	Phil Gingrey	3	Republican	71	100	45	55
12	John Barrow	2	Democrat	50	53	70	30
13	David Scott	3	Democrat	69	48	45	55
N = 13			Republican = 7, Democrat = 6	Republican = 55, Democrat = 45	73	69	31

Note: VAP = voting age population. District 4 was open in 2006 because Democratic incumbent Cynthia McKinney was defeated in the primary. Percentage same and redrawn VAP was computed according to the percentage of the VAP McKinney represented before and after the 2005 redistricting. All remaining 12 districts were won by incumbents. Election data are from the Georgia Secretary of State's website. Data for percentage same and redrawn VAP were calculated by the authors using block-level data from Geolytics (CensusCD 2000/Redistricting Blocks) and congressional maps from the U.S. Census Bureau. Only District 5 was uncontested.

unlike the 2003 mid-decade Texas redistricting, where defeating Anglo Democratic incumbents was the sole objective (see Gaddie 2004), Georgia Republicans tried to accomplish more than just defeating Democratic incumbents. In order of most to least important priority, Georgia Republicans wanted to smooth out the extant Democratic-drawn congressional boundaries, fortify a vulnerable Republican incumbent (Representative Phil Gingrey, GA-11), and unseat two Democratic Representatives—John Barrow and Jim Marshall (see Barone and Cohen 2007; Hood and McKee 2009). They accomplished the first two goals but failed to defeat Barrow and Marshall.

In furtherance of their intentions, under the 2006 congressional map, Georgia Republicans greatly altered the relationship between representatives and constituents. Table 1 presents summary statistics for the 2006 Georgia U.S. House elections. Overall, the new plan placed 3 out of 10 residents in a district with a new incumbent (31.3% of Georgia constituents were redrawn). Whereas Representative Nathan Deal had 15% redrawn constituents, Representatives Phil Gingrey and David Scott had a majority of new constituents in their reconfigured districts (55.3% and 55.2% redrawn, respectively). As seen from their vote shares in 2006, only the two targeted Democrats, John Barrow and Jim Marshall, came close to losing reelection. Figure 2 shows how extensive the redistricting was by presenting a map of Georgia House
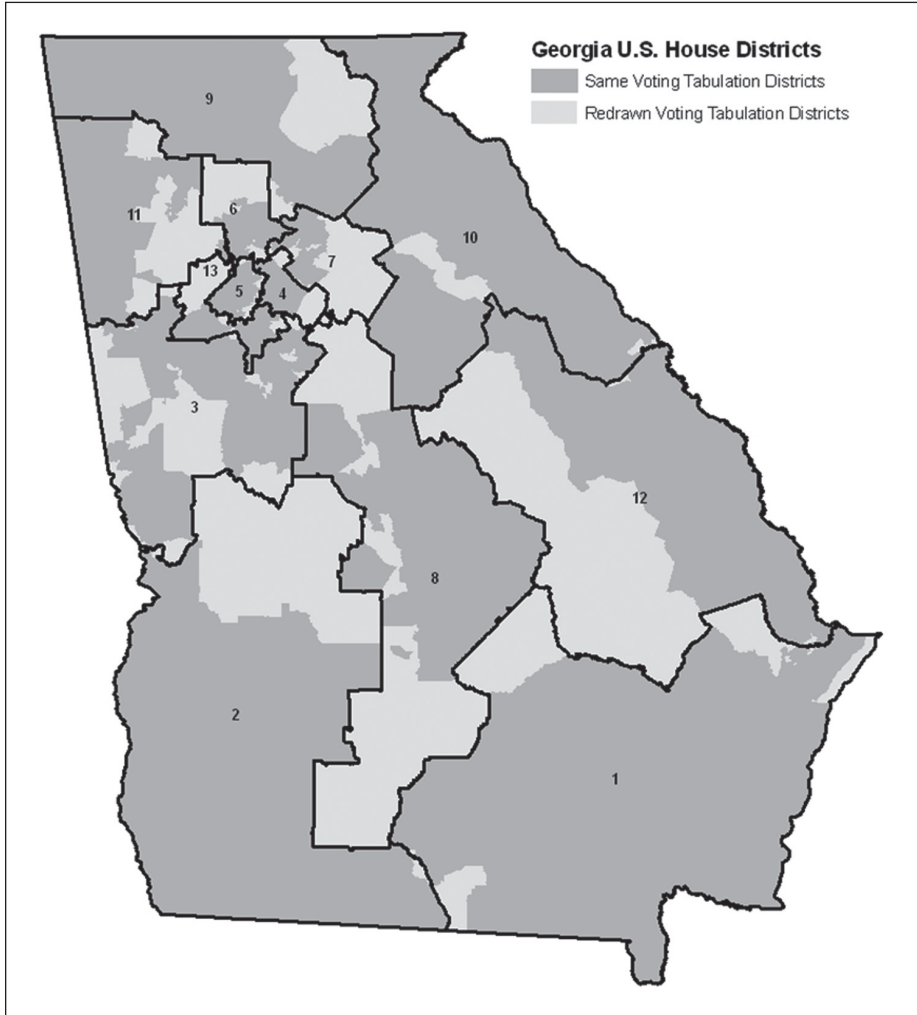
Figure 2. The 2006 Georgia congressional map.
Source: Map created by the authors with shapefiles from Georgia's Legislative Reapportionment Services Office.

districts with two shades to distinguish constituents with the same incumbent (in dark gray) from those areas denoting redrawn constituents (in light gray).

As previous research has demonstrated (Hood and McKee 2008; 2009), redistricting jeopardized the reelection bids of Congressmen Marshall (GA-8) and Barrow (GA-12) because redrawn constituents were much more likely to vote for the Republican challengers, two former Georgia U.S. House members (Mac Collins in
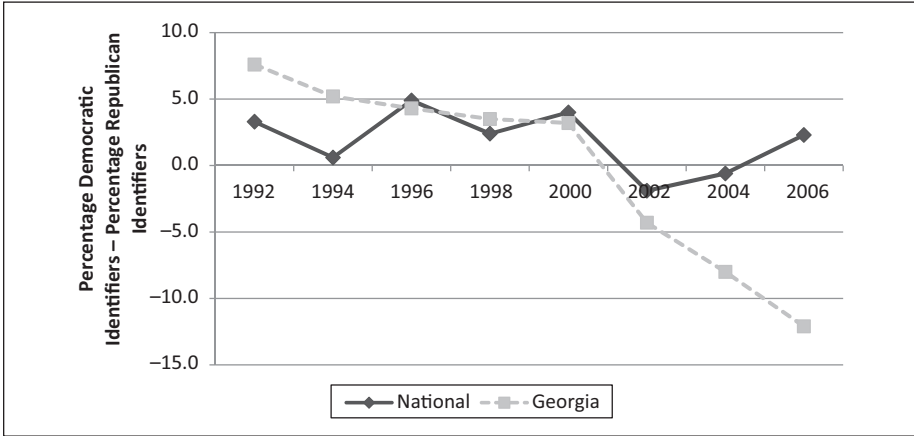
Figure 3. Partisan distribution of electorates, 1996–2006.
Note: The figure displays exit poll data subtracting the percentage of voters who are Republicans from the percentage identifying with the Democratic Party. Since 2002, the national data show a trend in favor of an increasing number of Democrats, whereas in Georgia, the number of Republicans has increased vis-à-vis the number of Democratic identifiers since the start of the time series in 1992.

GA-8 and Max Burns in GA-12). This finding is somewhat surprising because 2006 was such a good year for the national Democratic Party. But contrary to the national Democratic tide, in Georgia, 2006 proved to be another year of Republican growth.[5] In the words of Bullock,

> In contrast with national trends that favored Democrats in 2006, Georgia Democratic losses continued to mount in 2006 when their top two prospects, Lieutenant Governor Mark Taylor and Secretary of State Cathy Cox, competed for the gubernatorial nomination. Taylor's nomination relied on strong support in the African American community, which cast almost half the votes in the Democratic primary . . . In the general election he managed only 38 percent of the vote, the poorest showing by a major party gubernatorial nominee in a generation . . . Democrats lost the two positions vacated by their gubernatorial hopefuls, a seat on the Public Service Commission, and seven seats in the state House. Two members of Congress came closer to losing reelection than any other Democratic incumbents in the nation as John Barrow held onto his seat by less than 900 votes, while Jim Marshall won a third term with 51 percent of the vote. (2009, 59)

Looking at their vote shares, it seems obvious that redistricting negatively affected Barrow's and Marshall's reelection bids. But in the absence of a counter-vailing national Democratic tide, perhaps both of these incumbents would have lost

in 2006. Figure 3 plots exit poll data on party identification from 1992 to 2006. For both national voters and Georgia voters, the two lines indicate the percentage difference in the share of Democratic identifiers versus Republican identifiers. The point to emphasize is the diverging patterns between Georgia voters and national voters. Since 2002, the "macropartisanship" (see MacKuen, Erikson, and Stimson 1989) of the national electorate has moved in favor of the Democratic Party, whereas an opposite trend commenced in 1992 among Georgia voters and this pattern has grown even stronger since the 2000 elections. Indeed, by the 2006 midterm, GOP identifiers in Georgia outnumbered Democrats by 12 points (46%–34%). By contrast, at the national level, the partisan difference shows that in 2006 Democrats outnumbered Republicans by 2 points (39%–37%). Under conditions of conflicting partisan tides such as these, with an unusually robust shift toward the national Democratic Party in the 2006 midterm countered by a persistent Republican realignment in Georgia, we hypothesize that both Democratic and Republican House members will receive a lower percentage of the vote from their redrawn constituents.

Data and Method

The data for the 2006 Georgia congressional elections come primarily from a Voting Tabulation District[6] (VTD) file compiled by the Georgia Reapportionment Services Office. We estimate a multilevel regression model where VTDs serve as our Level-1 units that are nested within 11 of Georgia's congressional districts.[7] Use of a multilevel model in this situation allows us to explicitly take into account the fact that VTDs throughout the state are not independent observations but are contained within a specific congressional district (Steenbergen and Jones 2002). Our dependent variable is the percentage of the two-party congressional vote for the Republican candidate at the VTD level.

The primary variable of interest for our study, *Redrawn VTD*, was coded 1 to indicate that a VTD had been redrawn into a new incumbent's district following the 2005 redistricting or coded 0 if the VTD remained in the same incumbent's district.[8] Two additional Level-1 variables were also included as fixed effects in the model. To control for the partisan composition of the VTD, we include a measure of voting support for the 2006 Democratic gubernatorial candidate calculated as the percentage of the two-party vote going to Democrat Mark Taylor. A second critical control is the percentage of the total VTD turnout comprised of black registrants. Both *Black Turnout* and *Democratic Gubernatorial Vote* should be negatively associated with the Republican House vote.

At the congressional district level, we model a random intercept and also include a substantive Level-2 measure to denote congressional districts that were represented by a *Democratic Incumbent*. Finally, a cross-level interaction was created by multiplying *Democratic Incumbent* by *Redrawn VTD*. In this manner, we can differentiate the

Table 2. Multilevel Regression Model Predicting 2006 Republican House Vote in Georgia Congressional Districts.

	Coefficient
Level-1 fixed effects	
Redrawn VTD	−.0184** (.0025)
Black turnout	−.0855** (.0098)
Democratic gubernatorial vote	−.8318** (.0128)
Constant	.9613** (.0142)
Level-2 effects	
Democratic incumbent	−.1201** (.0231)
Random intercept	.0366** (.0078)
Cross-level interaction	
Redrawn VTD × Democratic incumbent	.0485** (.0039)
Level-1 units (VTDs)	2,564
Level-2 units (congressional districts)	11

Note: VTD = Voting Tabulation District. Entries are maximum likelihood estimates with standard errors in parentheses.
**p < .01 (two-tailed).

effects of redistricting among Democratic and Republican members of Georgia's congressional delegation. Inclusion of a random intercept allows us to control for district-level heterogeneity while still including substantive contextual indicators in the model (Steenbergen and Jones 2002).

Findings

The results of our multilevel model are displayed in Table 2.[9] Compared with same VTDs, the GOP House vote in redrawn VTDs within Republican congressional districts is significantly lower during the 2006 midterm as represented by the negative sign on the *Redrawn VTD* coefficient. Likewise, redrawn VTDs in Democratic districts are also less supportive of Democratic incumbents as denoted by the positive and significant coefficient for the interactive term indicating higher levels of Republican support from these VTDs. Not surprisingly, compared with districts held by Republican House incumbents, same VTDs located within districts held by Democratic incumbents had lower Republican vote shares.

To get a better idea of the effects related to redistricting, we calculated the marginal effects for vote share by party of the incumbent (Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006). For Democratic incumbents, the percentage of the Republican vote share is estimated to be 3 percentage points higher in redrawn VTDs. For Republican incumbents, there is a corresponding drop in the GOP vote share in redrawn VTDs of −1.8 percentage

Table 3. Incumbent Vote Shares in the 2006 Georgia U.S. House Elections.

District	Party of incumbent	Same VTDs	Redrawn VTDs	Difference
1	Republican	68.5% [65.7, 71.3]	55.4% [52.6, 58.2]	13.1*
2	Democrat	67.3% [63.7, 71.0]	65.3% [61.6, 69.0]	2.0
3	Republican	69.7% [66.9, 72.5]	53.1% [50.3, 55.9]	16.6*
6	Republican	71.6% [68.8, 74.4]	66.3% [63.5, 69.1]	5.3
7	Republican	69.8% [67.0, 72.6]	66.8% [64.0, 69.6]	3.0
8	Democrat	56.5% [52.9, 60.2]	42.7% [39.0, 46.4]	13.8*
9	Republican	75.5% [72.7, 78.3]	74.3% [71.5, 77.1]	1.2
10	Republican	70.5% [67.8, 73.2]	47.3% [44.5, 50.1]	23.2*
11	Republican	66.0% [63.2, 68.8]	71.5% [68.7, 74.3]	−5.5
12	Democrat	54.1% [50.4, 57.8]	43.6% [40.0, 47.3]	10.5*
13	Democrat	82.2% [78.5, 85.9]	60.8% [57.1, 64.5]	21.4*

Note: VTD = Voting Tabulation District; 95% CIs = 95% confidence intervals. Entries represent the predicted vote share for House incumbents by VTD type (same vs. redrawn), and 95% CIs in brackets. Data for Districts 4 and 5 are excluded because District 4 was an open-seat contest and the Democratic incumbent in District 5 (John Lewis) was unopposed.
*Difference between same and redrawn VTDs significant at $p < .05$.

points. Thus, it is evident that congressional incumbents of both parties in Georgia were harmed by redrawn constituents in the 2006 general election. After calculating the marginal effects, we can see that the impact of redistricting was about 1.9 times greater for Democratic incumbents than that for Republican incumbents, and this finding tracks nicely with the fact that the Republican identification trend is growing at a faster rate than the positive Democratic identification trend found at the national level (as shown in Figure 3).

The Democratic gubernatorial vote and black turnout are both negatively associated with the Republican House vote at the VTD level. The random intercept coefficient indicates that there is significant variation between Georgia congressional districts with regard to voting for GOP House candidates even after the inclusion of various substantive indicators. To summarize, incumbents of both parties received lower vote shares from redrawn VTDs compared with same VTDs during the 2006 midterm election in Georgia.[10]

Although the model presented in Table 2 aptly demonstrates that redrawn VTDs in the 2006 Georgia midterm were less likely to support incumbents of either party, we further decompose the effects of redistricting by taking into account both the fixed and random effects associated with the model. In Table 3, the predicted value for the incumbent House vote is presented by congressional district, party of incumbent, and redistricting status (same vs. redrawn VTDs). Although the differences between same and redrawn VTDs vary, the general pattern that incumbents of both parties

lost support from voters new to their districts is borne out. With one exception, the difference between same and redrawn VTDs for Republican incumbents ranges from 23 points (GA-10) to 1 point (GA-9). For Democratic incumbents, these differences range from 21 points (GA-13) to 2 points (GA-2). Using the confidence intervals also reported, one can see that the gap between same and redrawn vote shares is statistically significant for 6 of the 11 districts analyzed.

The sole exception to the general pattern of incumbents garnering a lower percentage of the vote among their redrawn residents is Republican House Member Phil Gingrey (GA-11), where the model predicts redrawn VTDs actually produced higher levels of support (72% vs. 66%).[11] As shown in Table 1, Gingrey's district underwent the largest constituent change (55% redrawn), and he captured 71% of the two-party vote in 2006. Previously, we pointed out that one of the primary objectives of the redistricting was to fortify Gingrey, since he was the most electorally vulnerable of the Republican officeholders.[12] The remap clearly accomplished this goal by ensuring that the redrawn population was significantly more Republican than the constituency Gingrey represented prior to redistricting.

In fact, Gingrey's redrawn constituency consisted of what was by far the most Republican redistribution of voters in the state. Whereas the change in the partisan composition of all other districts was under 10 points based on the 2004 presidential vote,[13] Gingrey's district went from 55.6% Bush before redistricting to 71.2% Bush after redistricting—an increase in the Republican presidential vote of 15.6 points. Clearly, the redrawn constituency in GA-11 was so staunchly Republican in voting behavior and partisanship that it overrode the incumbency advantage Gingrey had cultivated among the electorate he retained after redistricting.

Conclusion

The political milieu at the time of a redistricting can have a considerable impact on a representative's electoral fate. In this study, we looked at a case where redistricting occurs at a time when a state-level partisan tide conflicts with the prevailing national partisan tide. To be sure, many others have evaluated the effect of redistricting on incumbent vote shares (e.g., Ansolabehere, Snyder, and Stewart 2000; Desposato and Petrocik 2003; Rush 1993), but this is the first study to specifically examine an instance where it is clearly evident that the short-term political climate contains countervailing partisan tides. Based on the theory that a primary component of the incumbency advantage is rooted in the cultivation of a personal vote (Fenno 1978; Jacobson 2004), we would expect redrawn constituents' lower familiarity with their new representative (Hayes and McKee 2009; McKee 2008a) makes them less supportive of incumbents. Yet, we have shown that in Georgia (see the appendix), from 1992 to 2004, the ongoing Republican realignment demonstrated a one-sided effect on incumbent vote shares when congressional boundaries were redrawn: only Democratic incumbents had their vote shares significantly reduced

by the presence of redrawn constituents. This finding is also corroborated by a study of the entire South for the 1992–94 House elections (see Petrocik and Desposato 1998).

Exhibiting a notable departure from the electoral evidence from 1992 to 2004, in 2006, the competing national and state partisan tides in Georgia effectively countered each other, because we no longer find that redrawn constituents only reduce the vote shares of incumbent Democrats. Instead, in the presence of conflicting partisan tides, redrawn Georgia voters exhibited a negative effect on Democratic and Republican incumbents' vote shares. This is what we hypothesized because in the absence of conditions that clearly favor one party, redrawn voters who lack a bond with their new representative should be less supportive of their incumbent vis-à-vis voters who retained the same incumbent after a redistricting.

The anchor model of incumbency advanced by Petrocik and Desposato (2004) is an apt metaphor for understanding the relationship between prevailing political conditions, redistricting, and incumbent vote shares. As Petrocik and Desposato contend, incumbency acts as an anchor in the face of a partisan tide, allowing most officeholders to weather a short-term political storm. For instance, in 1994 and 2006, pronounced partisan tides spelled political defeat for many incumbents affiliated with the disadvantaged party and also allowed several long-shot candidates to ride the wave into office. But, if we focus on the anchor metaphor, we know the vast majority of incumbents who found themselves on the wrong side of the partisan current won reelection and their cultivation of the incumbency advantage saved them from defeat.

Likewise, in the 2006 Georgia U.S. House elections, two embattled Democratic incumbents managed to narrowly escape defeat and in no small part by performing significantly better among the constituents they represented prior to redistricting (see Table 3). Those constituents they had more time to nurture a "home style" with (Fenno 1978) afforded these incumbents an electoral bonus that proved the difference between winning and losing. Their redrawn constituents, however, were not anchored by incumbency and thus the extant political conditions exhibited a much greater effect on their voting behavior. Yet, as we have shown, the electoral environment in Georgia was atypical of what existed in the vast majority of states in the 2006 midterm.

The Democratic tsunami that engulfed most of the nation in the 2006 congressional elections was countered by a rolling Republican realignment in Georgia that first manifested itself in the 1992 U.S. House contests. Given these countervailing forces, we expected that Georgia incumbents of both parties would receive less political support from redrawn constituents. Although we can never be certain, it appears to us that Representatives Barrow and Marshall[14] owe their reelections to the presence of a national Democratic tide. Perhaps it provided just enough resistance to the Republican wave that, until 2006, has perpetually lifted the Georgia GOP to higher electoral heights no matter how low the political office.

Appendix

The Republican Redistricting Advantage in Georgia U.S. House Elections, 1992–2004

	Incumbent House races	All House races
Variables of interest		
Democratic Incumbent (1 = Democrat, 0 = Republican)	−0.261 (.052)***	−0.291 (.072)***
Redrawn Constituents (%)	−0.002 (.037)	−0.074 (.068)
Redrawn Constituents × Democratic Incumbent	0.290 (.087)**	0.209 (.099)*
Controls		
Republican Presidential Vote (%)	0.589 (.204)**	1.365 (.278)***
Black Voting Age Population (%)	0.016 (.144)	0.244 (.210)
Median Family Income (in thousands)	−0.0004 (.0010)	0.002 (.002)
Open seat	—	0.020 (.056)
Contested seat	—	−0.106 (.043)*
Constant	0.299 (.144)*	−0.021 (.198)
Adjusted R^2	.90	.75
N	42	81

Note: OLS = ordinary least squares. OLS coefficients with standard errors are shown in parentheses. Election-year dummies were included in the models but are not shown (1992 was the omitted year). Georgia redrew its congressional districts in 1992, 1996, and 2002. The *Redrawn Constituents* variable accounts for all of these changes to district populations. The dependent variable is the Republican share of the two-party U.S. House vote.
*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p < .001 (two-tailed).

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. We define the South as the 11 former Confederate states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.
2. Because we include multiple election years in this analysis (some in which a redistricting occurred and others when congressional boundaries remained the same), it is necessary

to explain how the redrawn constituents variable was coded. For instance, Democratic Congressman Sanford Bishop (GA-2) was first elected in 1992 and thus we do not code his district as containing any redrawn constituents until the next boundary change in 1996 when Bishop is an incumbent running for reelection. The court-ordered map for the 1996 elections altered Bishop's district so that he now had 38% redrawn constituents and we maintain this number from 1996 until the next boundary change that occurs in 2002. Under the assumption that Bishop has established a relationship with many of his redrawn voters since 1996, we recalculate the redrawn percentage for 2002, and in this election, 13% of Bishop's reconfigured district population is redrawn and we maintain this number for 2004.

3. With only contested races where an incumbent ran for reelection included in the model ($N = 42$), the number of contests included in the analysis for each year is as follows: 1992 = 5, 1994 = 4, 1996 = 10, 1998 = 7, 2000 = 9, 2002 = 5, and 2004 = 2.

4. One objection to limiting the analysis to contested races with an incumbent seeking reelection is that some incumbents actually lost their reelection bids and hence are dropped from the model in the subsequent election year. This is a reasonable concern, but a model, including all contests, does not change the substance or significance of our findings. In the full model ($N = 81$), including controls for contested and open seats, the variable of interest *Redrawn Constituents × Democratic Incumbent* has a coefficient of 0.209, a standard error of .099, and a *p* value of .04 (two-tailed). Finally, we should point out that the district-level findings presented in the appendix models are stronger if we confine the analyses to only redistricting years.

5. In Georgia, there are eight partisan statewide elective offices that represent the entire state: Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State School Superintendent, Agriculture Commissioner, Insurance Commissioner, and Labor Commissioner (there are also partisan statewide elective Public Service Commission seats, but these offices do not represent the entire state, only certain defined districts within the state). All eight aforementioned offices are up for election in midterm years. In 2002, Democrats won five of the eight offices, but in 2006, Republicans won five of the eight offices. The two-party percentage of the Republican vote cast in these eight statewide elective offices was 48.8 in 2002 and it jumped to 53.9 in 2006. In their assessment of the GOP's performance in contemporary statewide contests throughout the South, Bullock and Gaddie remark that in Georgia, "only Democratic incumbents survived the 2006 GOP surge" (2009, 344).

6. In Georgia, a Voting Tabulation District (VTD) is equivalent to a precinct in terms of population aggregation. VTDs are rarely split by congressional districts. We checked the data file and eliminated the small number of split VTDs ($N < 5$) from our analysis.

7. Two districts, District 4, which was open, and District 5, which contained an incumbent with no opposition (Democratic Representative John Lewis) in the 2006 midterm, are not included in our study.

8. Using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) overlays of Georgia's congressional districts as they existed prior to the 2005 redistricting, and afterward, we were able to code VTDs as being new to an incumbent (redrawn) or retained in the incumbent's district (same).

9. To ensure that the standard errors in the multilevel model were not biased downward due to the small number of Level-2 units, we ran the analysis again bootstrapping the standard errors by clustering on congressional district. All the coefficients in the model remained significant at the .01 level or greater, with the exception of the control variable included to measure black turnout, which was now significant at the .10 level (see Harden 2011; 2012 for a discussion of this issue).

10. The 95% confidence interval (95% CI) of the estimated vote share for Democratic incumbents is 2.4% to 3.6%. For Republican incumbents, the corresponding figures are −2.3% and −1.4%.

11. It should be noted that the vote share difference between same and redrawn VTDs for District 11 is not statistically significant.

12. Among the current GOP representatives, Gingrey's 2004 vote share was the lowest at 57%; three of the seven Republicans ran unopposed in 2004 and besides Gingrey, the other two Republicans who faced Democratic challengers won reelection in 2004 with more than 70% of the two-party vote (Barone and Cohen 2005, 483–507). In addition, the Cook Partisan Voting Index (a measure of partisan district strength based on comparing the two-party presidential vote in the district with the national two-party presidential vote, as averaged for the last two presidential elections) shows that among the winning Republicans in 2004, Gingrey's district had the lowest Republican partisan advantage at +3 Republican (Barone and Cohen 2005, 507). After redistricting, the Cook Partisan Voting Index in Gingrey's district was +17 Republican (Barone and Cohen 2007, 488).

13. The second largest partisan change was 7.4 points more Democratic in the 2004 presidential vote: 27.4% Kerry before redistricting to 34.8% Kerry after redistricting in Republican Charlie Norwood's district (which was GA-9 in 2004 and GA-10 in 2006; Barone and Cohen 2005; 2007).

14. As an afterword, it bears mentioning that the 2010 election was not kind to Democratic Representative Marshall, who ended up losing his seat to Republican Austin Scott. Even in the face of a powerful Republican tide, Marshall was competitive, taking 47.3% to Scott's 52.7% of the two-party vote. Going back to the data in Table 1, after the 2006 redistricting, 45% of Marshall's district voting age population was redrawn, and in 2010 voters in these redrawn precincts sent Marshall into involuntary retirement. Whereas Marshall won 54% of the two-party vote among his same precincts in 2010, he won just 40% in the precincts newly drawn into his district in 2006 (this analysis was conducted by the authors using GIS software with congressional maps, a VTD map, and precinct-level returns from the Georgia Secretary of State's website). Two election cycles after the 2006 redistricting, Marshall was unable to secure support in his redrawn precincts and this ended his congressional career.

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