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# REDISTRICTING DATA HUB PRISON GERRYMANDERING PART 2: BENEATH THE HOOD

# PART 2 AGENDA

Our nationwide project

How we got the data

How we clean the data

How we use the data

# CURRENT PROJECT: NATIONWIDE ASSESSMENT WITH NEW MAPS

- 37 states continue to use the Census's unadjusted data
- 13 states addressing this redistricting cycle
- Research team: Denise Wilson, Chelsea Canal, Gabi Oliveira



# IMPACT IN TEXAS (AS OF JAN 2023 )\*

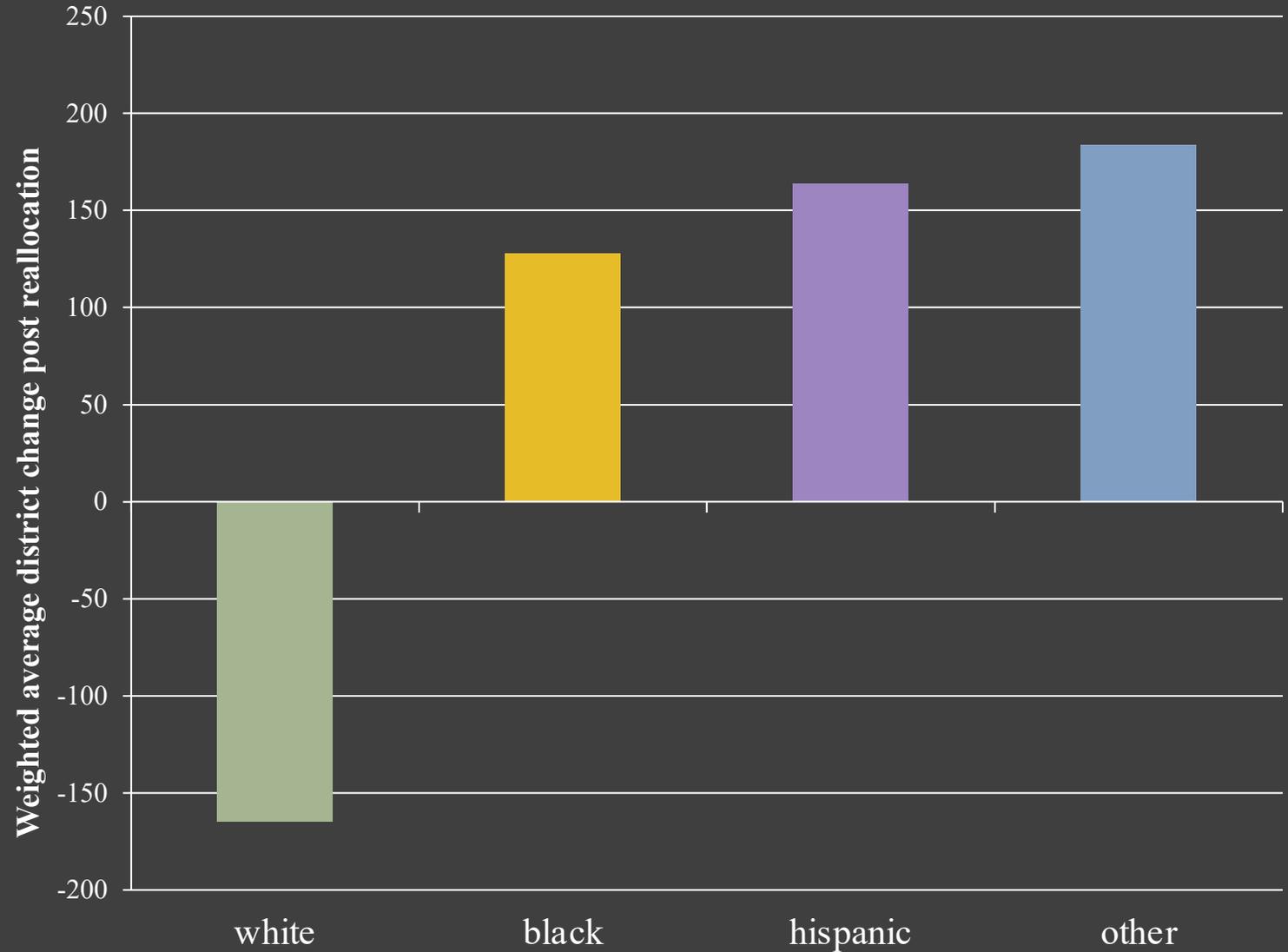


- ~15% of House districts would be unconstitutional
  - 12 districts would be legally too small
    - Range: Lose between 400- ~13,000 people
  - 11 districts would be legally too large
    - Range: Gain between 350- ~1300 people

\*Reallocation method: state facilities using county of origin and race;  
Legal size requirement: +/-5%

# Racially Unequal Impact in Texas

## District Size Change by Race and Ethnicity with Incarcerated Persons Reallocated, TX House



# GETTING THE DATA: THE EASIEST AND HARDEST PART

- Census data: super easy!
- state redistricting websites or Dave's Redistricting (usually easy)
- Direct contact with Departments of Correction followed by FOIA/sunshine law requests (ranges from easy to nearly impossible)
  - Best practices: individual addresses with race
  - Second best: aggregate data publicly available
  - Worst practices: asking for \$500, IRB approval (!?!) and/or months of delay to \*maybe\* fulfill request
- Feds and local jails not in data set

**Sample FOIA Request Letter**

The page often contains information regarding a FOIA request. It includes a FOIA request form and a sample request letter.

**Information:**

- Please provide a brief description of the information you are requesting. (You may also provide a brief description of the information you are requesting.)
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**Letter:**

To: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Re: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This is a request under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552, for the information described below. I am requesting that you provide me with the information described below. I am requesting that you provide me with the information described below.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this request. I can be reached at \_\_\_\_\_.

I am requesting that you provide me with the information described below. I am requesting that you provide me with the information described below.

I am requesting that you provide me with the information described below. I am requesting that you provide me with the information described below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

# CLEANING THE DATA: THE PROBLEMS

- State data isn't the same as Census data
  - Block ID codes inconsistent
  - racial/ethnic data options
    - Problems with Latinx—either double counted (NC) or left out entirely (MI)
  - We use best possible racial/ethnic data given constraints for individual states
- Only state facilities
  - Some private facilities did not provide good data to state partners
  - Federal BOP refuses to give data
  - Local jails often lack data (big problem for local redistricting, smaller problem for state level)

# PROCESSING THE DATA

- If given specific addresses:
  - Remove exact number of incarcerated from prison location block
    - Differential privacy mini-rant: Activate
  - Use batch Census API to identify blockid, return incarcerated to that block
    - Typically 50-70% match rate after basic error cleaning)
  - If API cannot identify blockid, use the magic of Google Maps
    - Look up address on google maps, confirm it has a dwelling via satellite imagery
    - Find geographic coordinates
    - Use geographic coordinates in Census API

# PROCESSING THE DATA

- Our Process if given aggregate data (county/city):
  - Remove exact number of incarcerated from prison location block
    - Differential privacy mini-rant: still valid
  - Identify each individual block's share of county/city racial population
  - Return that percentage of county/city incarcerated population to each block
    - *Imprecise estimates in counties with large populations*
    - *Imprecision means we **UNDERESTIMATE** local impact of prison gerrymandering*

# ANALYZING THE DATA: STATA CODE

# THANKFULLY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT WORK!

- Cleaned data now/soon available on redistricting hub website
  - Individual blocks
  - Aggregated results
- Word of caution with block level data: Blockid csv -> excel can be a problem
  - *Turn it into a string variable if you do use excel*
  - *Better: don't use excel!*
  - *Best: use R and share your code if you do (because I'm terrible at R)*



# RESULTING DATA: DISTRICT LEVEL

- I'm gonna show you a live excel! Exciting!

# LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE: EARLY IS ON TIME, ON TIME IS LATE

- Proactively work with CJ system to create better data well before 2030
- Provide incentive for CJ system to create that better data (California approach)
- Expect resistance
- Expect fear of “messy” data

# QUESTIONS?

- Can also email at [rory.Kramer@villanova.edu](mailto:rory.Kramer@villanova.edu) or [Brianna.remster@villanova.edu](mailto:Brianna.remster@villanova.edu)
- Thank you!!!