

Title: Pack-Crack-Pack: Gerrymandering with Differential Turnout

Abstract

We study the strategic drawing of electoral maps by political parties, known as gerrymandering. We develop a theoretical framework in which individuals have two dimensions of heterogeneity: partisanship and the probability of turning out. In this framework, parties adopt different gerrymandering strategies depending on the turnout rates of their supporters relative to that of their opponents. The broad pattern is to pack-crack-pack along the turnout dimension. It entails packing both supporters with a low turnout rate and opponents with a high turnout rate, and mixing supporters and opponents of intermediate turnout rates. This framework allows us to derive a number of empirical implications about the link between partisan support, turnout rates, and electoral maps. Using a novel empirical strategy relying on the comparison of maps proposed by Democrats and Republicans during the 2020 redistricting cycle in the US, we find support for these predictions.