

Communities of Interest, the Voting Rights Act, and Redistricting in California

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Roadmap

- Brief overview of redistricting and the Voting Rights Act
- Discussion of California's diversity, with a focus on race and ethnic diversity
- Thoughts on what the Commission can do regarding the Voting Rights Act and CA's diversity in the redistricting process.

CA's Redistricting Criteria

- Compliance with US Constitution
- Reasonably equal population
- Compliance with Voting Rights Act
- Contiguousness
- Political subdivisions and communities of interest intact
- Compactness
- Nesting of districts
- No regard for incumbents' domicile

Redistricting Criteria

- Provisions subject to the VRA caveat:
 - Population Calculus
 - Following political boundaries, neighborhoods and communities of interest
 - Compactness
 - Nesting

Voting Rights Act

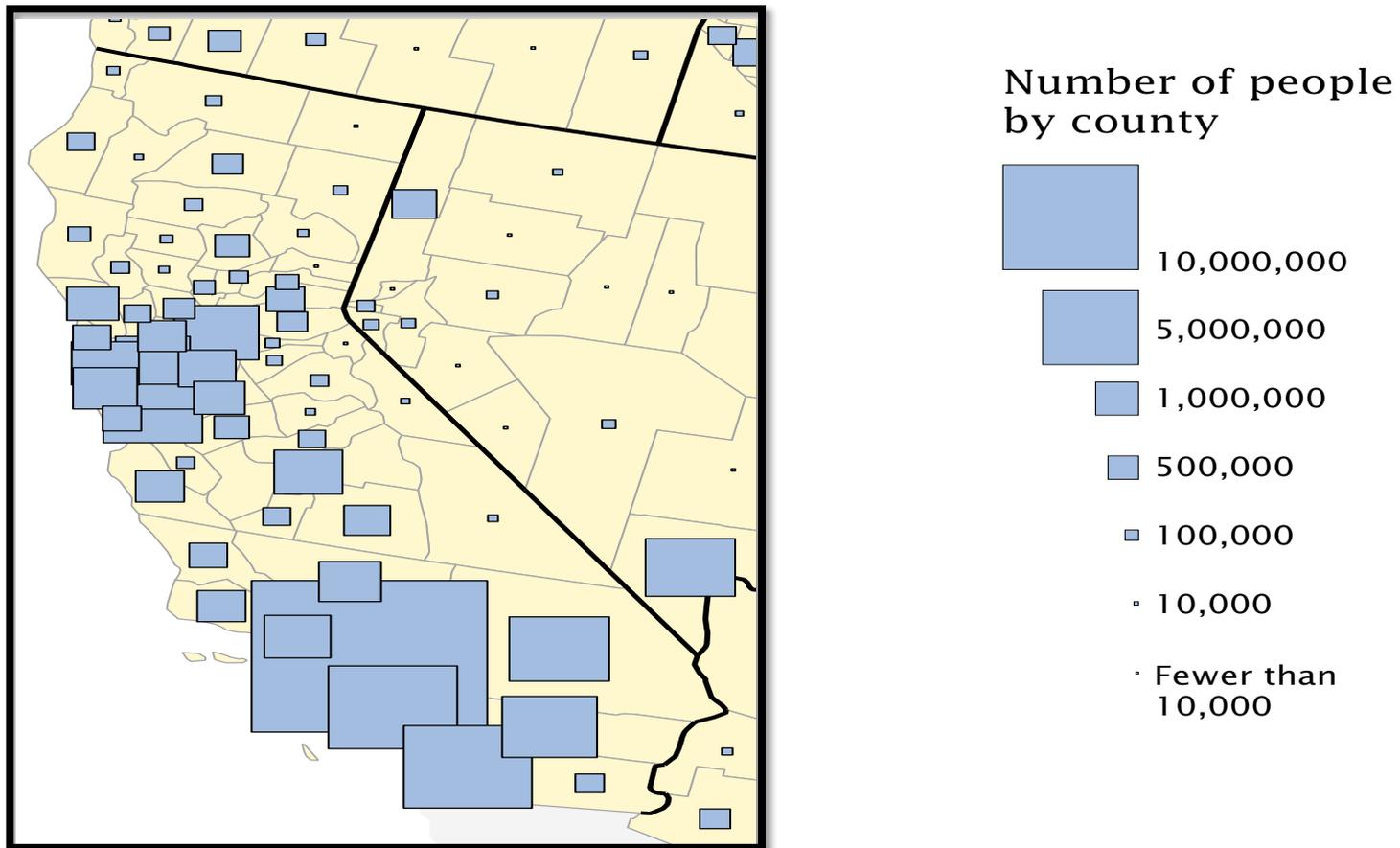
- Section 2: prohibits the denial or abridgement of voting rights on the basis of race or language minority status. 42 USC §
 - In redistricting, prohibits “vote dilution” or plans that reduce voters’ ability to elect candidates of choice.
- Section 5: requires certain jurisdictions to obtain preclearance before making changes to voting procedures, including redistricting.
 - Prohibits any changes that are “retrogressive”

The Redistricting Process



Redistricting Process

- Unequal population distribution



Redistricting Process: VRA Perspective

- Check Census data for geographic distributions of protected groups.
- Identify communities of interest, including racial groups.
- Sketch VRA districts.
- Draw rest of plan, adjusting VRA and other districts based on redistricting criteria.

Redistricting Process:

Other possible approaches

- Solely population based
- Solely following existing boundaries
- Solely compactness
- Solely nesting
- Problems:
 - Logistically difficult/conflict
 - Can dilute minority voting strength
 - Can divide communities of interests

Diversity: Committee Selection

- Commission must be “reasonably representative of this State’s diversity”
- Includes the variety in the racial, ethnic, geographic, economic, and gender characteristics of the population of California.

Diversity: Committee Members

- Members must have an appreciation for California's diversity, including race and others such as:
 - Geography
 - Personal/community characteristics
 - Benefit of participation, including to those previously excluded from voting/political process.

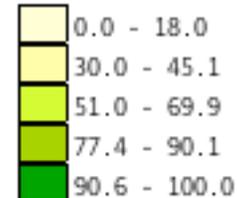
Non-Racial diversity example: Rural vs. Urban



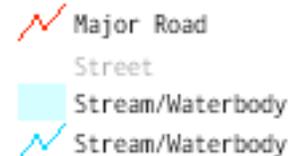
Proportion of County
Population Living in
Urban Areas
(2000 Census)

Data Classes

Percent



Features



Items in graytext
are not visible
at this zoom level

Diversity in CA: Race/Ethnicity

Proportion of Racial/Ethnic Groups in California and US Populations (2000 Census)

Group	United States	California
Non-Hispanic White	69.1%	46.7%
Black	12.9%	7.4%
Native American/Alaska Native	1.4%	1.9%
Asian American/Pacific Islander	4.5%	12.9%
Latino	12.5%	32.4%

California Diversity

- Some of California's minority groups have high degrees of within-group diversity.
- Language diversity, including language spoken and limited English proficiency.
- Increasingly diverse.
- Segregation.

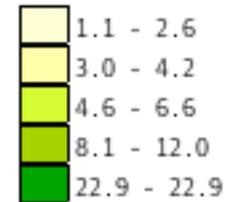
Racial Diversity: Native American/ Alaska Native

(2000 Census 100% Sample Data)

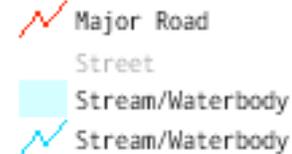


Data Classes

Percent



Features



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Racial Diversity: Non-Hispanic White

(2000 Census Data)



Data Classes

Percent

20.2 - 41.8
43.6 - 51.3
55.0 - 65.5
69.1 - 78.6
80.0 - 90.3

Features

Major Road
Street
Stream/Waterbody
Stream/Waterbody

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California Diversity: African American



Data Classes

Percent

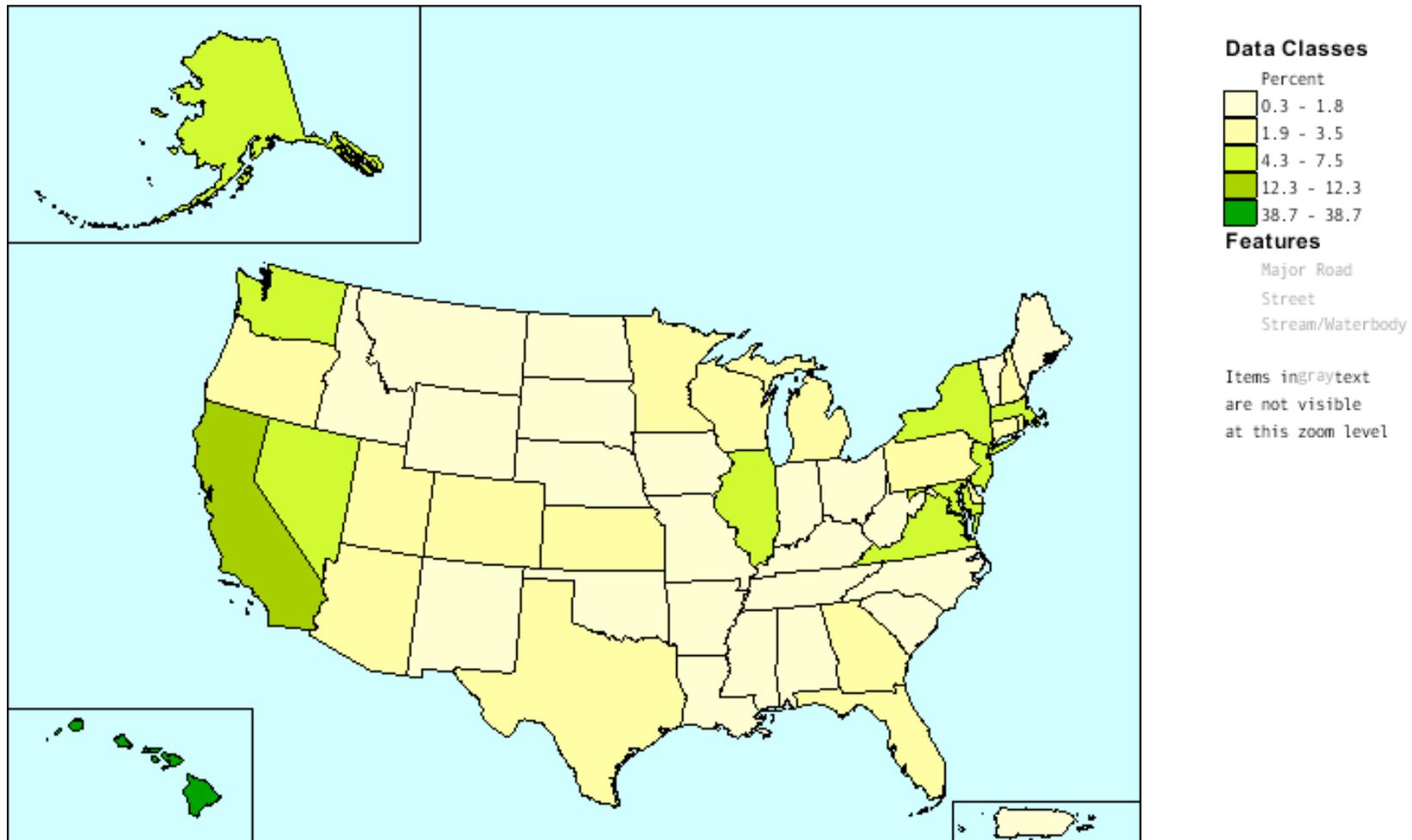
0.3 - 1.6
1.9 - 3.5
4.0 - 7.0
7.5 - 11.4
16.2 - 16.6

Features

Major Road
Street
Stream/Waterbody
Stream/Waterbody

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Diversity: Asian, Pacific Islander Americans (APIs)

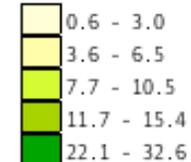


California Diversity: Asian American (2000 Census Data)

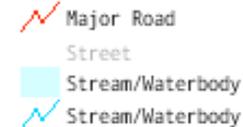


Data Classes

Percent

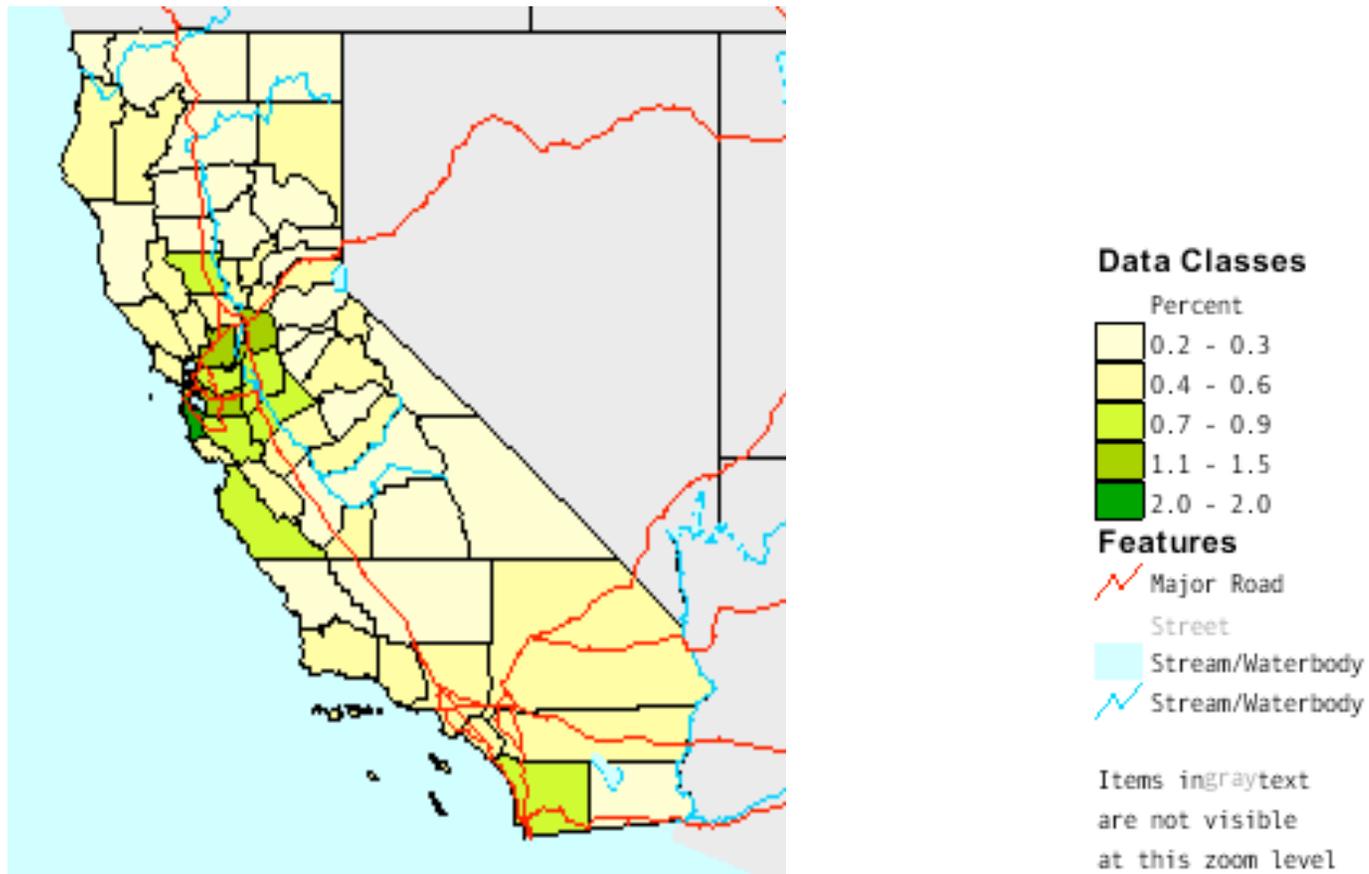


Features



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California Diversity: Pacific Islanders (2000 Census Data)



Diversity: APIs

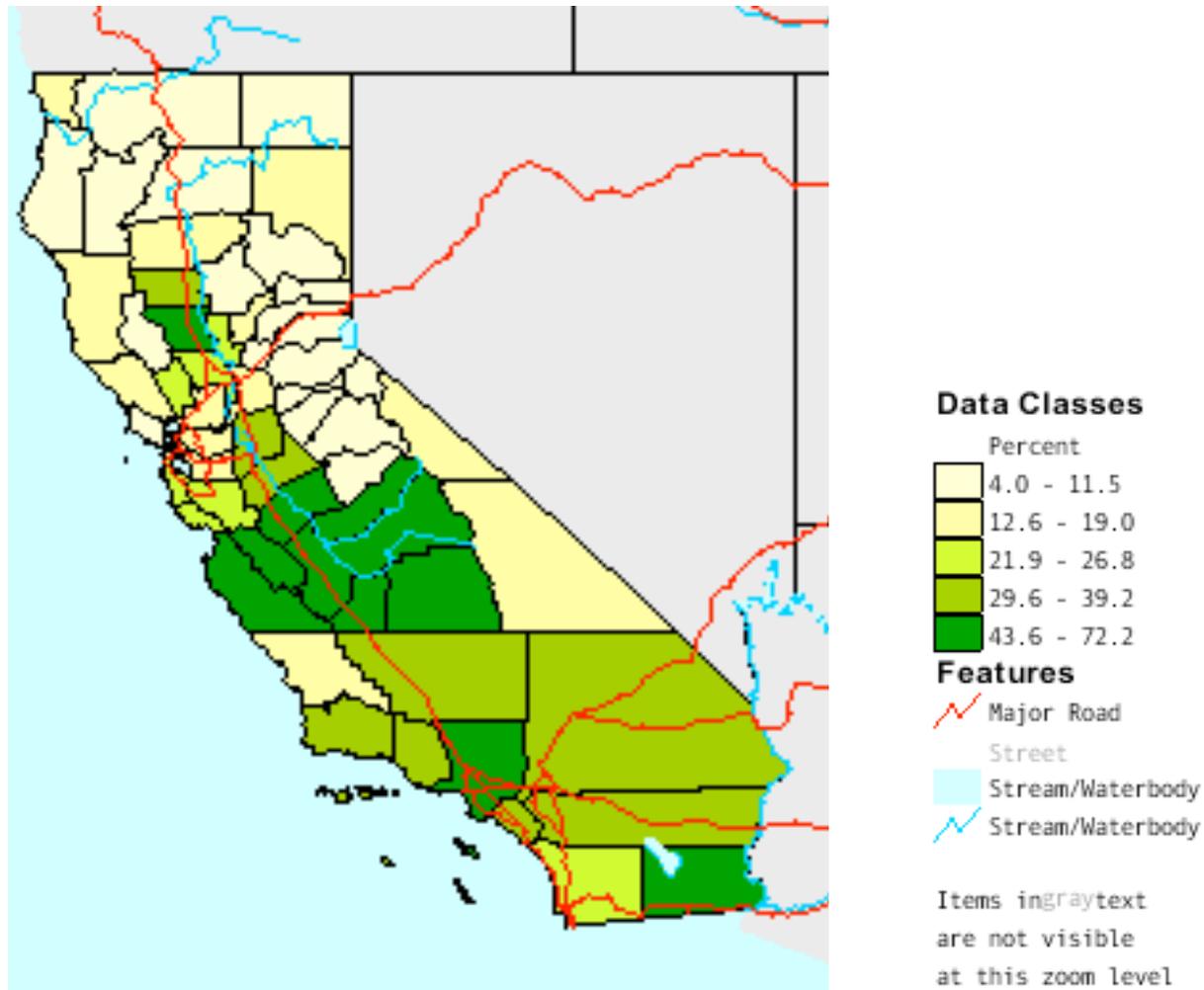
- Fastest growing group in CA between 1990 and 2000.
- California's population among the largest in the nation
- A diverse group

API Diversity

- API subgroups have important differences, such as:
- Region of residence
- Education
- Majority of adults in all groups, except Japanese, were foreign born.
- Poverty
- Language

California Diversity: Latinos

(2000 Census Data)



CA Diversity: Latinos

- Made up of several sub-groups
- Predominantly of Mexican origin, but also other groups.
- Geography
- Citizenship
- Language

CA Diversity: Latinos (2000 Census Data)

- Examples of differences between major Latino subgroups:
- About 44% of Mexican-Americans over 25 had a high school diploma or higher, compared with 36% of Salvadorans
- 43% of Mexican Americans were foreign-born compared with 81% of Salvadorans.

CA Diversity: Challenges and Opportunities

- Many different communities to consider
- Large and often concentrated minority populations allow drawing Constitutional VRA districts
- CA law also provides for other interests, such as geography, income, sexual orientation, etc.

Addressing CA's Diversity: Diversity in the Commission

- CA Law requires Commissioners who have an appreciation for CA's Diversity.
 - Diverse members
 - Proven experience with diverse communities
 - Awareness of communities
 - Willingness to make efforts to learn about new and different communities.

Addressing CA's Diversity: Commission Activities

- Proactively engage all areas, groups, and concerns in the state.
- This includes people and places that are very different than what one might be used to and where one will be in the minority.
- Also includes overcoming language barriers, especially for Latino and API citizens.

Addressing CA's Diversity: Commission Activities

- Don't rely solely on Census maps.
- Don't rely solely on communities coming to you.
- Do learn about communities of interest.
- Do encourage participation by community leaders and members.
- Do travel around state and get to know communities first hand.
- Do listen, even to complaints.
- Do remember that your actions can have a major impact on people's lives.

Thank you and Questions

