research might address how non-citizens process the exclusion of extended family members, more valued in non-Western cultures but ignored in the U.S. immigrant preference regime, and those of most immigrant-receiving states. Immigrants to the United States are known to circumvent limitations on family-based preferences through employment-based and non-immigrant admissions (a strategy also among same-sex partners until their recent inclusion in the category of “spouse” for immigration law purposes). Such promising research avenues lend themselves more to sociological and empirical methods than to legislative surveys. *Fictive Kinship* supplies a critical treatment of the politics of family immigration on which to build.

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Three quarters of American political history transpired before the 1960s, and yet virtually all of the research on congressional redistricting examines its effects after the 1962 one-person, one-vote ruling. The commonly held academic opinion that redistricting registers limited effects ignores the very different political setting of the late eighteenth and entire nineteenth centuries, when the absence of judicial oversight and congressional intervention produced an electoral milieu whose signature feature was no-holds-barred partisan gerrymandering. The lack of attention to the role of redistricting, as it was practiced throughout most of American history, not only has created scholarly blind spots, but these gaps in knowledge have led political scientists to overemphasize the critical-election narrative of party system change and its attendant effects on congressional policymaking.

By incorporating the role of redistricting in shaping the course of American history, Erik Engstrom offers a richer account of the political evolution of the U.S. Congress. Political time is divided into three broad periods: the early Republic (1789–1840), the partisan era (1840–1900), and the candidate-centered era (1900 to the present). Engstrom makes a point of demarcating, in the last period, the time before and after the 1964 *Wesberry v. Sanders* decision mandated equal district populations in congressional elections.

In the early period, redistricting was driven by partisan incentives to institute those rules and procedures most conducive to furthering electoral gain. In other words, the rules themselves were hotly contested and up for debate within Congress. For instance, in many states, because one party was clearly favored, the entire House delegation would run for election under the
“general ticket,” which meant that all candidates were elected statewide as opposed to in single-member districts. By contrast, other states would opt for district-based elections if the party in control of redistricting recognized that it would fare worse under statewide contests. Even in the early period, Engstrom empirically documents the skill of line drawers in furthering partisan gerrymanders.

In 1842, Congress mandated single-member districts, a decision which, of course, was political (the Whigs expected to fare better under this system). From 1842 to 1900, we see the full flowering of partisan gerrymandering and its great significance in American history. This era is the heart of Engstrom’s analysis and the most-impressive section of the book. Nationally, the major parties were very competitive, and partisan gerrymandering became the primary tool for overturning the electoral status quo. Redistricting occurred frequently in most states (for example, six times in Ohio between 1878 and 1890, p. 8), especially when partisan control of the state legislature changed hands. If the extant map was drawn by the out-party, then the triumphant in-party was certain to draw a new plan. Twice, in 1878 and 1888, redistricting accounted for majority control of the U.S. House. And because districts were drawn at the margins to maximize partisan gains, shifts in political tides resulted in massive partisan turnover (in 1854, 1874, and 1894. Most significant, the major legislative priorities (the slavery issue, Reconstruction, economic policy) of these years were handled by partisan majorities that owed their victories to gerrymandering.

By the turn of the twentieth century, redistricting was no longer a blunt partisan instrument. It occurred much less frequently and, not surprisingly, because incumbents knew it would jeopardize their tenure in an institution that became entrenched with career politicians. In addition, the decline in two-party competition in most sections of the country and the lengthening of congressional careers increased the number of incumbent protection maps. Decennial redistricting, equal population, majority-minority districting, have transformed contemporary redistricting, but a look to the past, as deftly analyzed by Engstrom, better informs us of how altering voting boundaries impacts politics.

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Christina Gerken makes a critical contribution to our knowledge of the debate over immigration reform in the recent past. Her detailed and richly