U.S. National Elections
17.263/264

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Week 2: Patterns in Political History

Questions of the day

1. How should we make sense of political history?

2. What consistent patterns—periodicity, punctuated equilibria, distinct eras—structure politics in time?

3. What is gained by viewing political history through the lens of such structures, and what is lost?

4. Investigate these questions using the example of realignment theory, most influential theory on the structure of US political history.

The 2nd Party System

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for an electoral map of the 1840 presidential election.

The 3rd Party System

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Please see http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PresidentialCounty1880Colorbrewer.gif
for an electoral map of the 1880 presidential election.

The 4th Party System

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Please see http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PresidentialCounty1916Colorbrewer.gif
for an electoral map of the 1916 presidential election.

The 5th Party System

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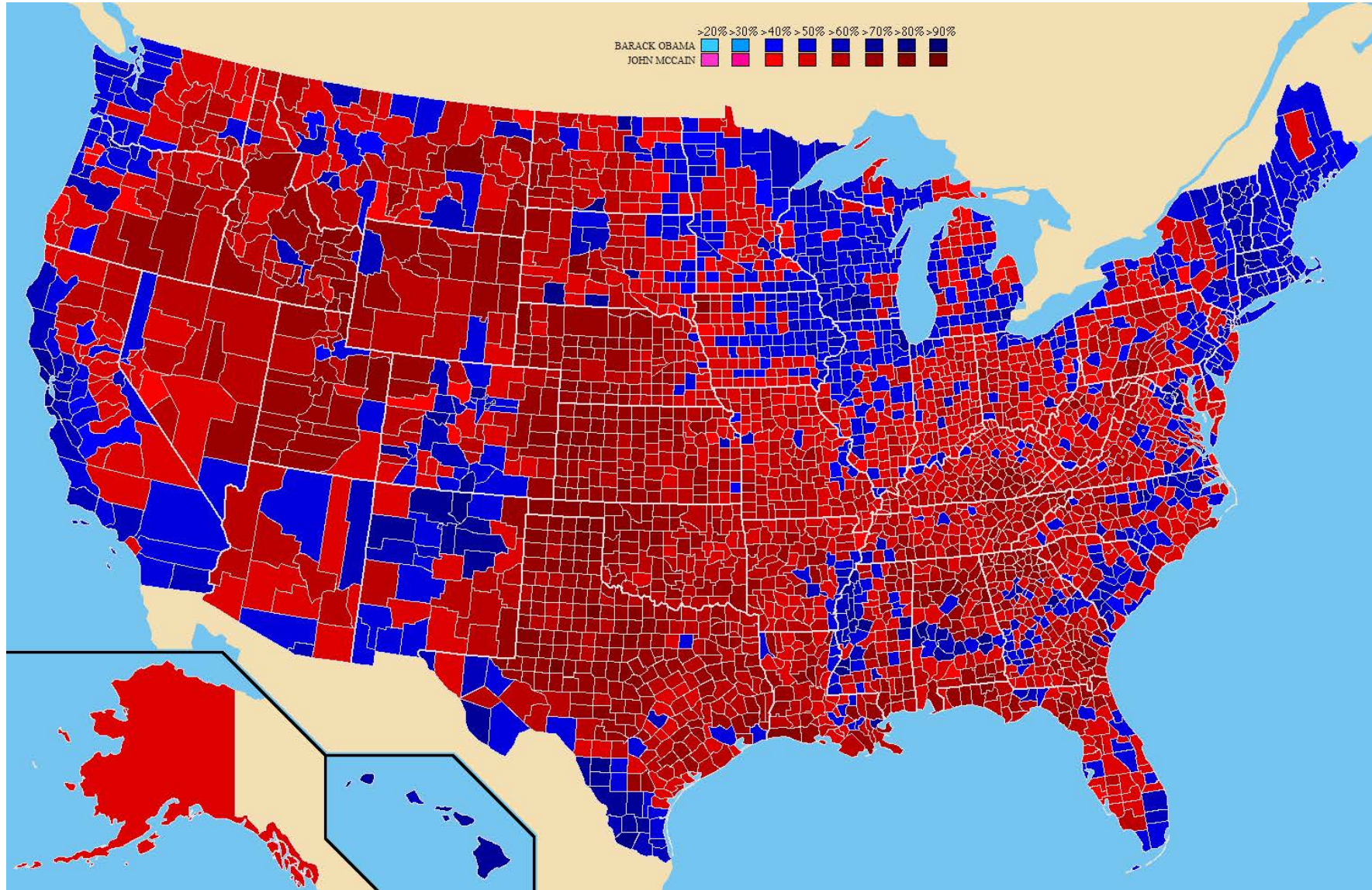Please see http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PresidentialCounty1944Colorbrewer.gif
for an electoral map of the 1944 presidential election.

Dealignment(?)
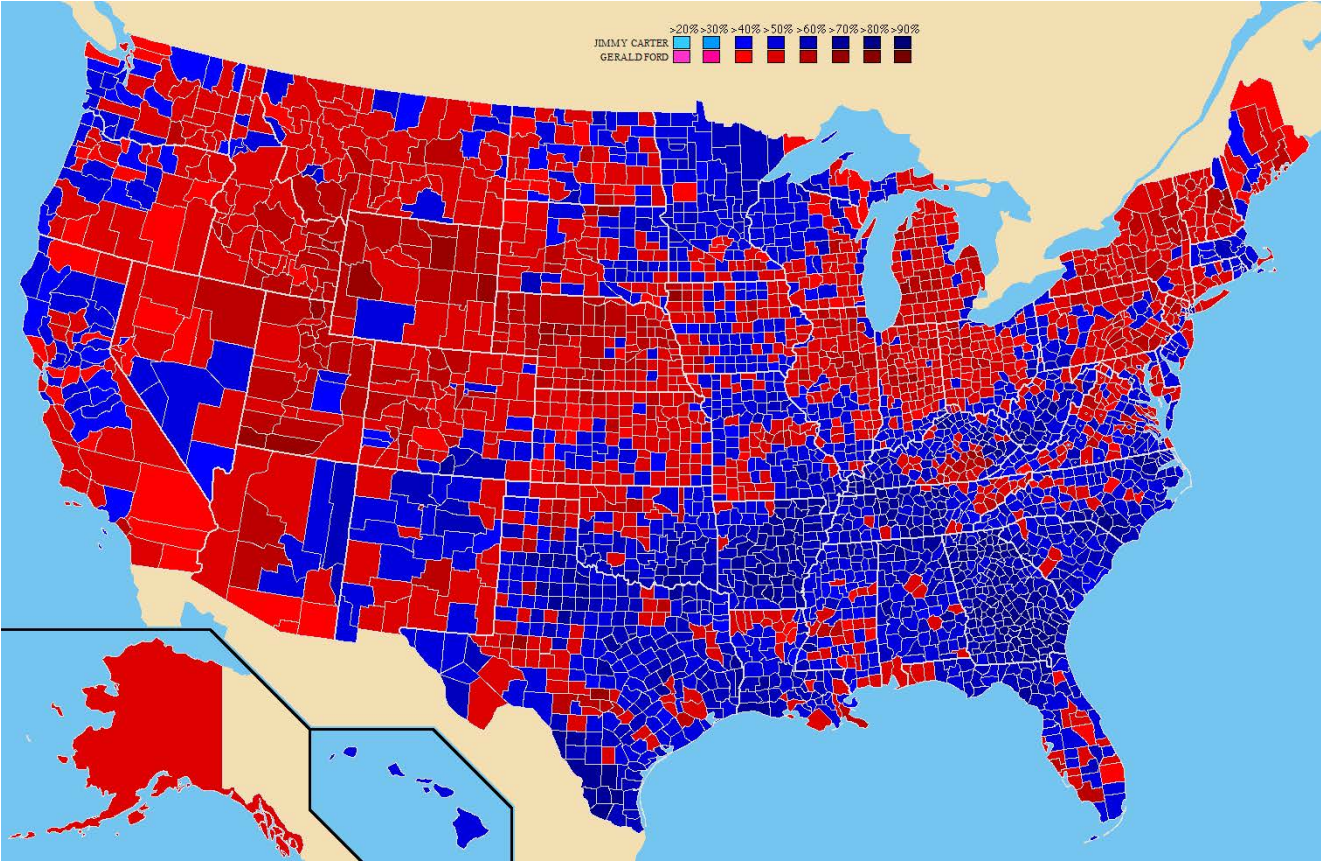
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Today

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Fall 2014