



**PALGRAVE STUDIES IN US ELECTIONS**

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# Electoral Patterns in Alabama

Local Change and Continuity Amid  
National Trends

Regina L. Wagner

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# Palgrave Studies in US Elections

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Regina L. Wagner

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*Dedicated to Alex*

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## Introduction

**Abstract** This chapter introduces the approach to studying Alabama’s electoral history post-WWII through the lens of county-level electoral shifts, and provides an overview and historical background of the three eras as well as an introduction to the data. Alabama’s deeply regional and long-running factionalism is introduced, and the ideological bases of the competing factions are presented.

**Keywords** Post-WWII politics · Alabama politics · Electoral shifts · Factionalism

Few developments have upended and restructured American politics over the past century as much as southern realignment. Uncontested Democratic hegemony, for decades regarded as an unshakable feature of southern political life, gradually faded in the aftermath of the Civil Rights Movement, and then abruptly disappeared with the surprise midterm election of 1994. At the heart of this transformation lies Alabama: a deep South one-party state, longtime bedrock of the Democratic Party, and self-described “heart of Dixie.” I trace the history of Alabama’s realignment and political transformation from 1945 through 2020 by looking at electoral shifts on the county level, and highlight the stark regional