

SYSTEMATIC STAGES OF GROUP REALIGNMENT
CASE STUDY: BLACK GROUP REALIGNMENT 1912-1964

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ABSTRACT

The literature on secular realignment theory has generally explained ‘party systems.’ Scholars have primarily been interested in broad predictive models that explain both past and future changes in party competition. Consequently, the groups that form party coalitions are only acknowledged passively, as a means to justify conclusions. This thesis endeavors to enhance the concept of realignment by focusing on groups within party systems. Here, I fuse Burnham’s (1970) model of punctuated equilibrium with Nichols’s (2009) “reimagining” principles of realignment to create a four-stage model of systematic causes of group realignment. This model includes two phases and two critical elections. In this thesis, I apply this four-stage model to a case study of black group realignment (1912-1964).