



Realignment in American Politics: Toward a Theory

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To have a voice in shaping government policy has been a goal of the American people since the nation's founding. Yet, government seems even less accessible now than in the past. An increasing rate of incumbency in Congress, the unwieldy committee system that controls legislation, and the decline of political parties have all weakened representation and alienated Americans from the seat of power. The one remaining way to produce major and coherent change in national policy is through partisan realignment—a sharp, enduring shift in voter support of the two major parties.

This book is about the phenomenon of realignment in American politics. It not only brings together and assesses previous work in the area but also breaks new ground in the analysis of the effects of realignment on political elites and public policy. In addition, it is the first study to present an integrated theory of realignment that can be applied to the understanding of mass, elite, and policy change in times of social crisis.

Contributors include Lawrence McMichael, David Nexon, Louis Seagull, Robert Lehnen, Philip Converse, Gregory Markus, Lester Seligman, Michael King, David Brady, Kenneth Meier, Kenneth Kramer, David Adamany, Charles Stewart, Susan Hansen, and the editors.

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