

Spatial Structure in Social Sciences Colloquium Series

The Social Logic of Bounded Partisanship: Dynamic Patterns in Britain and Germany

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Abstract: Drawing on data from long-term British and German panel surveys, we show that partisanship is bounded. Most citizens vary their support for one of the major parties, but never prefer its opposition. Rather, they move between one of the other of the major parties and no party; hardly anyone ever selects each of the major parties at different points in time. A social logic underpins the choice and consistency of party support.

Immediate social networks -as portrayed by the partisan preferences of household members -join with social class and religious factors to structure partisanship in Britain and Germany. The more that a person receives consistent political cues and the more interested is the person in politics, the greater is the rate by which the person selects the same party over time.

Keywords: partisanship, Britain, Germany, social contexts, partisanship in households, zero-inflated negative binomial model.