Social Network Theorizing Using Ideal Types

Scott L. Feld suggests that one approach to network theorizing is to identify a useful “ideal type,” carefully specify its defining properties, derive important implications of those properties, and consider how deviations from the defining properties affect the relevant implications.

Professor Feld will illustrate this approach by considering the ideal type of a robust network hierarchy, distinguish it from other similar patterns (e.g. a transitive hierarchy or simple core-periphery), provide an empirical illustration, and consider some causes and consequence of this type of network pattern.

Scott L. Feld is Professor of Sociology (and Political Science) at Purdue University, and a Visiting Scholar at NICO. This presentation is part of his current effort to explicate the theoretical strategy in his earlier works on the focused organization of social ties, on friends of friends, and on the robust network hierarchies found in academia.