

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Politics and Communication

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## BATTLGROUN

*Asymmetric Communication  
Ecologies and the Erosion of Civil  
Society in Wisconsin*

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## Battleground

### Asymmetric Communication Ecologies and the Erosion of Civil Society in Wisconsin

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**Abstract:** *Battleground* models Wisconsin's contentious political communication ecology: the way that politics, social life, and communication intersect and create conditions of polarization and democratic decline. Drawing from ten years of interviews, news and social media content, and statewide surveys, we combine qualitative and computational analysis with time-series and multilevel modeling to study this hybrid communication system – an approach that yields unique insights into nationalization, social structure, conventional discourses, and the lifeworld. We explore these concepts through case studies of immigration, healthcare, and economic development, concluding that despite nationalization, distinct state-level effects vary by issue as partisan actors exert their discursive power.

**Keywords:** Democracy, political communication, polarization, computational social science, qualitative methods

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