A multilevel model of Party Identification

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Theory: PID and Stereotypes

Stability in voting behavior → Partisanship

- Competing explanations for partisanship:
  - Michigan: Party Identification = Voters identify with party as „group object"
  - Rat. Choice: Party Evaluation = Voters have „running tally" of party performance
  - Concepts often mix in literature
    - Different roots in social psychology: PID → Social Identity, PE → Attitude
    - Greene: Partisanship is a social identity with partisan base in electorate
- Partisan stereotypes: Other identities are important, too
  - S. „describe" parties and partisan groups
  - S. link parties to attitudes and social groups (stable, public) → partisan coalitions
  - S. seem to guide individual to link personal identity to politics
    - Miller: Relation to groups influences relation to parties
    - Parties „care for" groups is modal way of thinking about politics

Theory: Interpersonal effects

- Most electoral research assumes individual choice
  - Many allusions of interpersonal effects → Resurgent interest
  - No unified framework yet → most work draws on Lazarsfeld
- Party Identification mainly treated as individual choice
  - „Traditional" interpersonal effect: Inheritance from parents
  - Growing evidence of continuous, wider social influence:
    - Spouses influence each other (Kohler, Zuckerman, Schmitt-Beck)
    - Children also influence parents (Zuckerman)
    - PID adjusts after spatial mobility (Brown, MacDonald/Franko)
    - Stability of PID depends on PID in circle of friends (Ikeda, Liu)

Theory: Interpersonal PID

- Social identity theory and social categorization
  - Social Identity: Part of self-concept derived from knowledge about group-membership; SI divides people into „us" and „them"
  - Groups are captured as prototypes of categories („types of people" → fuzzy set of attributes, including attitudes)
  - Prototypes obey metacontrast
  - Main effects of Prototype-Salience:
    - Depersonalization → Changed perception of self and others
    - Acceptance of prototypical attitudes as own → convergence
- Relating PID to small groups:
  - SIT can be applied to small groups and large groups alike
  - „TAV": group exerts interpersonal influence but identity rests with large group
  - Identity may be inferred from observing others and via communication
  - Prototype describes **group** → no idiosyncracies → relates to large groups
  - Walsh: prototype = „lens" to view politics through and basis of political talk

Model: Categorization

Formalization of social categorization theory:
Salzarulo (2004, 2006)

- Individuals as points in space

- Categorization based on distance

- Given a prototype → Group-membership depends on average group size w

- Metacontrast: Prototypes should optimally describe groups

  - Miminize average distance of members to prototype

  - Maximize average distance of non-members to prototype

- Both functions joined in prototypicality function P, weighted by repulsion a

- Prototypes = Maxima of P

- Group = all individuals whose closest prototype is the same
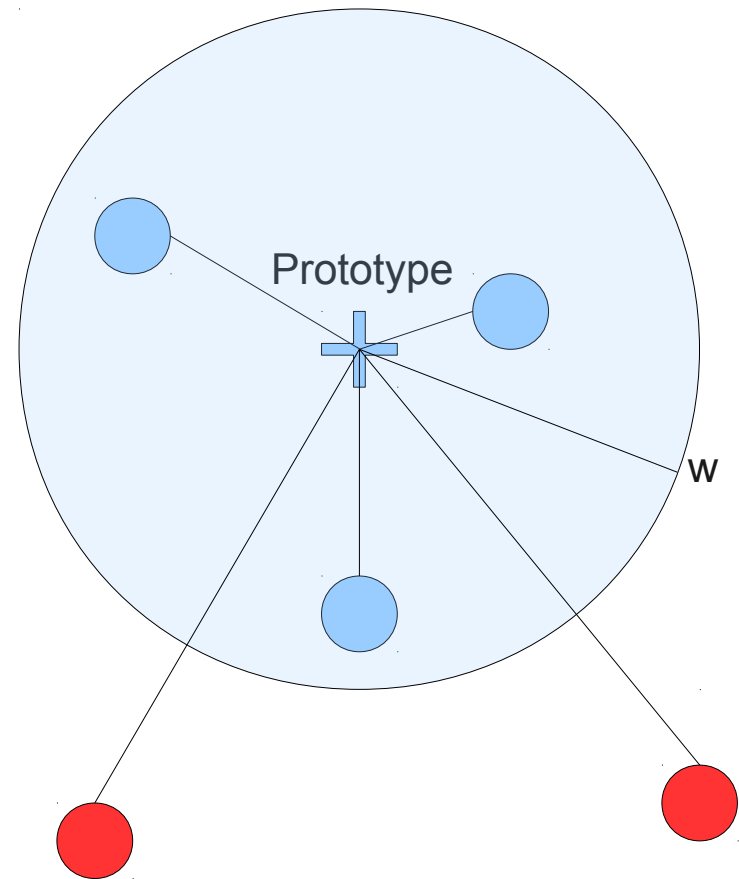
Model: Implementation

- Two levels: Agents define identities, signal attachment to parties on second level
- Agents
  - Vector of uniformly distributed elements → can be mutable („opinions") or immutable („traits")
- Social network (current implementation)
  - Square grid with periodic boundaries, Moore neighborhood
- Simulation algorithm
  - Agents picked randomly → find prototype, adopt opinions (not traits)
  - After each round
    - All agents signal attachment to parties based on prototype
    - Parties determine new stereotype for next round
- Parties
  - Parties act as hunters (good = repeat, bad = turn around) by modifying their stereotype
  - Agents attach with probability proportional to distance party from own prototype
  - Movement of parties traces out the partisan stereotypes feasible on agent population

Analysis: Preliminary results

- Currently exploration of model behavior

  - Two phases identified by Salzarulo (2006) in 1D for opinions:

    - Homogeneous phase: Agents converge around central opinion

    - Polarized phase: Agents diverge to extreme ends of opinion scale

  - Analysis compares 2D-baseline case (two opinions) with PID-like situation (one trait, one opinion)

- Main focus: Is model able to produce partisan coalitions, i.e. can we find situations in which parties try to appeal to subpopulations (esp. described by trait)?

Analysis

- **Opinion/trait space**
  - Baseline: Homogenization and polarization as in 1D → Agents move to center of opinion space and four corners, respectively
  - Comparison: Homogenization and Polarization affect opinions but not traits → two dimensions act independently on agent level

- **Partisan stereotypes**
  - Baseline: Stereotypes adapt to agent opinions
    – Homogeneous phase: Parties are drawn to the center
    – Polarized Phase: Parties follow agents to four corners
  - Comparison:
    – Homogeneous phase: Parties are drawn to center → Traits do not enter partisan stereotypes as distinguishing element
    – Polarized phase: two distinct maxima on trait dimension → Parties gain from appealing to subpopulations = coalition potential

Partisan stereotypes

Prob. of finding party with given stereotypes, homog. phase
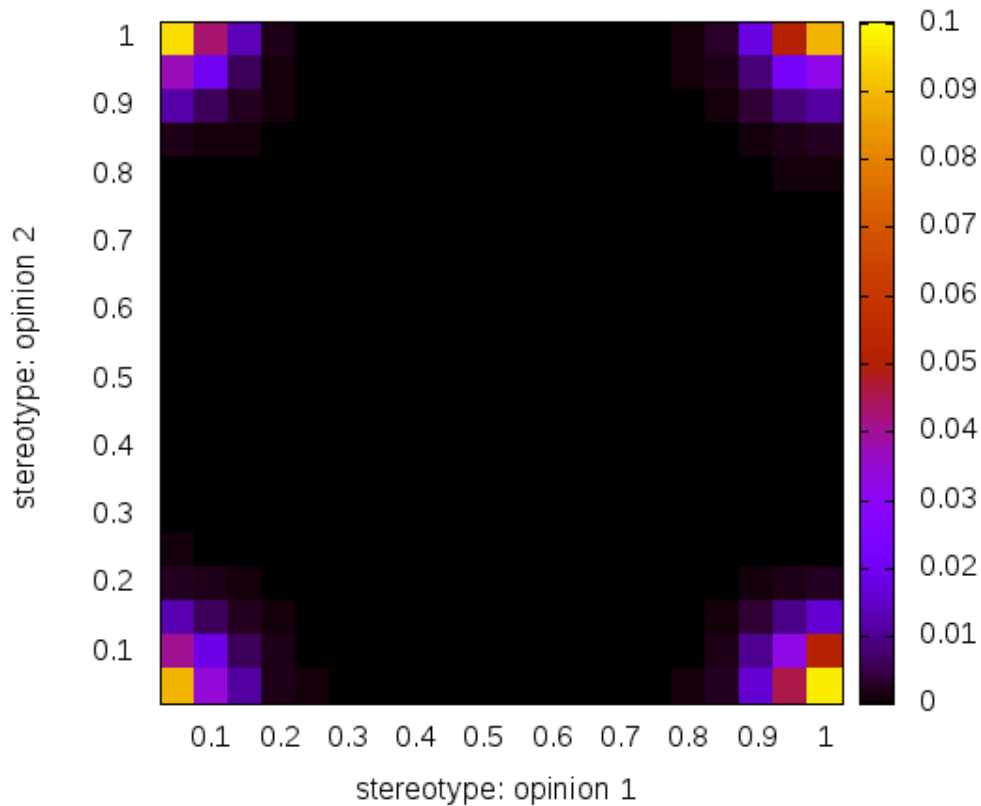
Prob. of finding party with a given stereotype, polar. phase
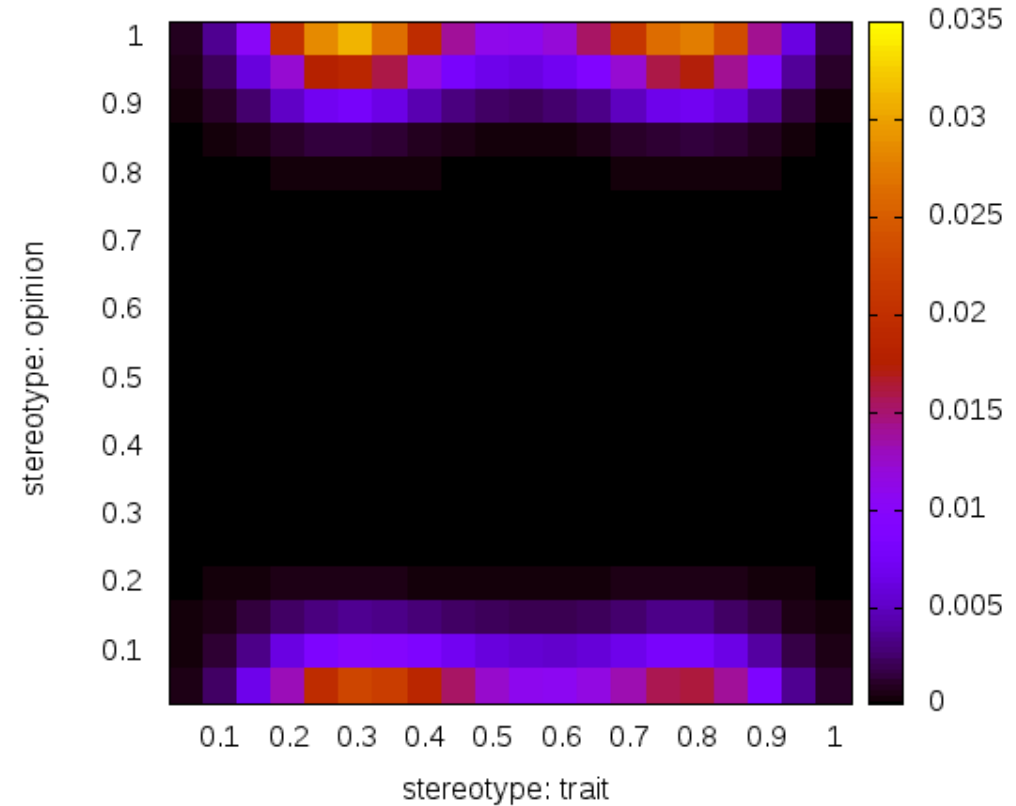
Baseline case, polar. Phase
a = 0.20, w = 0.40
Two opinions

Comparison case, polar. Phase
a = 0.20, w = 0.40
One trait, one opinion

Analysis

- **Prototypes**
  - Baseline cases: Agents get opinion from prototype → identical → no separate effect on signalling
  - Comparison case:
    - Agents only adopt opinion → Prototype differs from agent position → group can affect agent signaling
    - Prototype depends on joint evaluation of all distances → Polarization → opinion dominates prototypicality function → trait aspects of prototype reflect this
  - Small group causes emergence of coalition potential

Discussion and outlook

- Central theoretical aspects

  - Concrete mechanism: Party Identification from face-to-face contacts

  - Includes frequent observation of attitude convergence

- Central aspects from analysis

  - Polarization may induce effects on seemingly unrelated areas
    → Parties fit to social structure may interact with attitudinal processes

  - Issues easier to control → Possible mechanism for „Cleavage politics"?

- Currently: Traits forced into stereotypes

  - Forceless mechanism lacking → Homophily, status reproduction etc.

Thank you for your attention

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