Heterogeneity in Individual Level Dynamics of Party Identification

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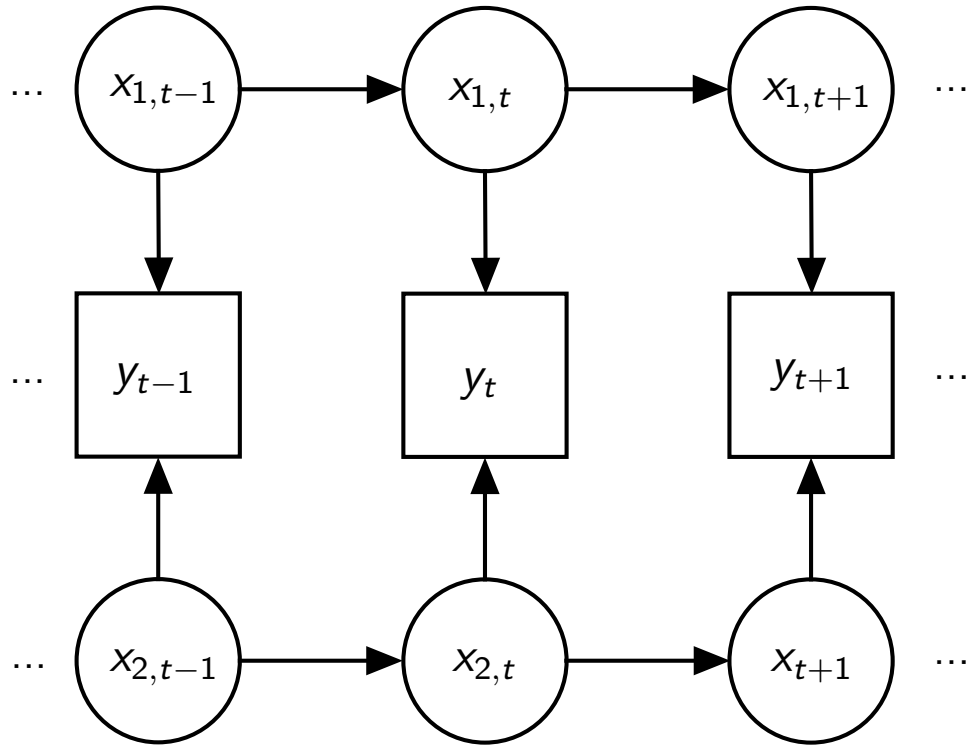
Comparing the Concept of Partisan Stability

Model	Party ID stable	Influence of time	Measurement error	Unobserved heterogeneity
Social-Psychological	yes	major events only	no	no
Latent Construct	yes	major events only	yes	no
Rational Updating	no	constant	no	no
Macropartisanship	no	constant	unimportant	no

Mixed Latent Markov Models



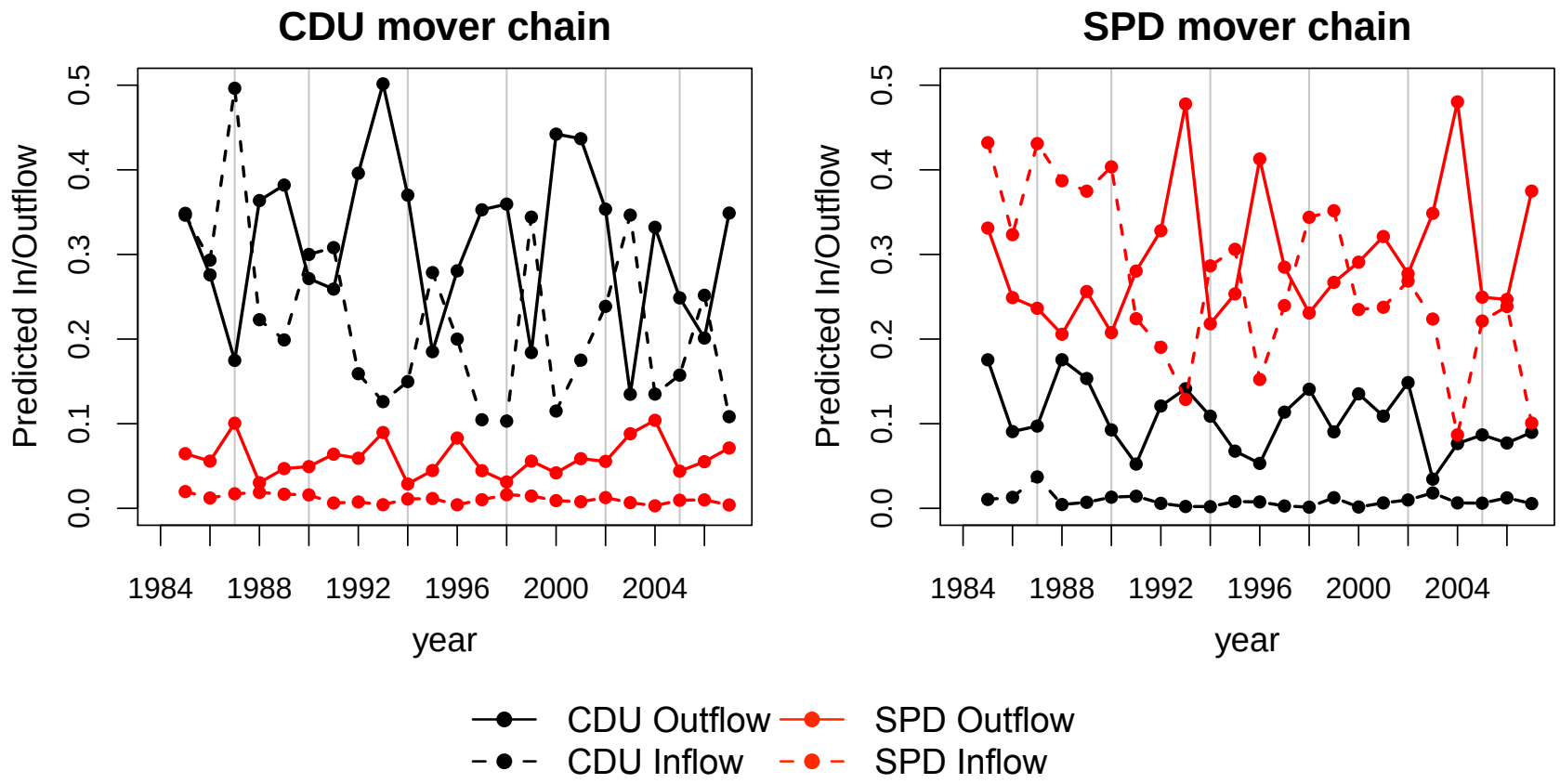
$$P(y_{it}) = \sum_{m=1}^{M} \sum_{x_0=1}^{3} \cdots \sum_{x_T=1}^{3} P(m)\ P(x_0) \prod_{t=1}^{23} P(x_t|x_{t-1}, m) \prod_{t=0}^{23} P(y_{it}|x_t)$$

Data

- German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP)
- West-German sample
- Annual data 1984-2007 (24 waves)
- Time period includes three major political events:

  German reunification (1990)
  Donation scandal of CDU (1999/2000)
  Major policy shift by SPD (2003)

In and Outflow of Two Major German Parties



(Proportion of Stayers: 50 per cent)

Conclusions

- Party identification is measured with error
- Only about 50 per cent of all respondents have a stable party (non) ID
- Party supporters follow different chains of movement
- Political events affect the stability of partisanship (but party specific)

"Stability of party identification" is a heterogeneous concept!