

Electoral Consequences of Unemployment Experiences

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Cornell Institute for European Studies

Thorsten Faas
University of Mannheim

Email: Thorsten.Faas@uni-mannheim.de

Schlozman/Verba 1979: Injury to Insult

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General Model	Objective Condition	Subjective Strain	Politicization of the strain	Policy preferences and programs	Level and direction of political activity
Specific Model	Unemployment and/or low socio-economic status	Sense of economic dissatisfaction and deprivation	Perception that government is responsible	Preference for economic policies designed to ease problem	Issue voting; electoral activity

I Unemployment Experiences

II Perceptions of Economy

III Attributions of Responsibility

IV Electoral Consequences

Unemployment ...

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graph TD; A[Unemployment ...] --> B[... as a discrete characteristic of individuals]; A --> C[... as a characteristic of social/regional units];
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- ... as a discrete characteristic of individuals
- ... ranging from short-term to long-term experiences
- ... also fear of unemployment as a relevant experience

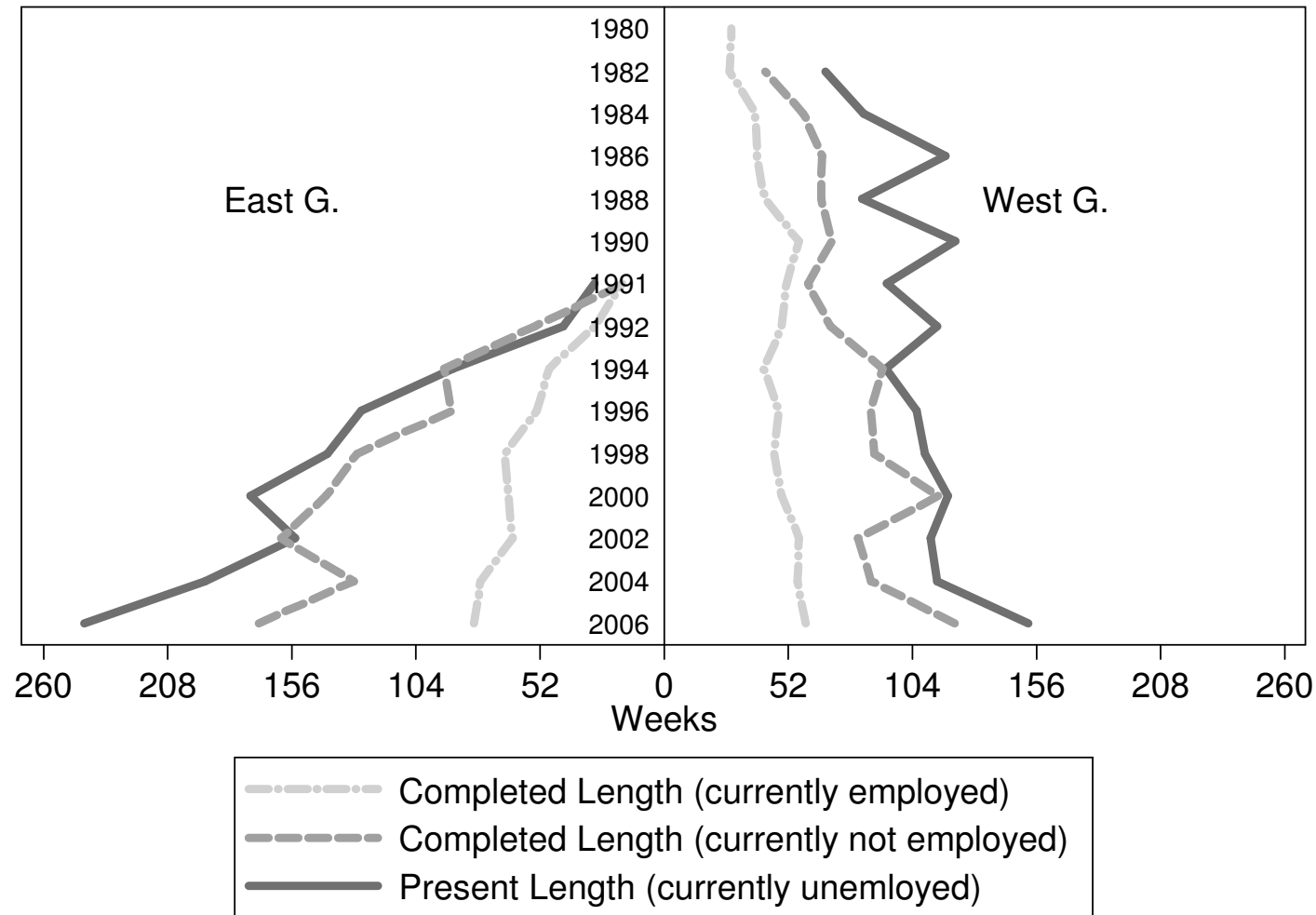
- ... as a characteristic of social/regional units
- ... ranging from individuals' household to network to regional contexts to the national economy
- Concentric circles

Unemployment Experiences: Being Unemployed



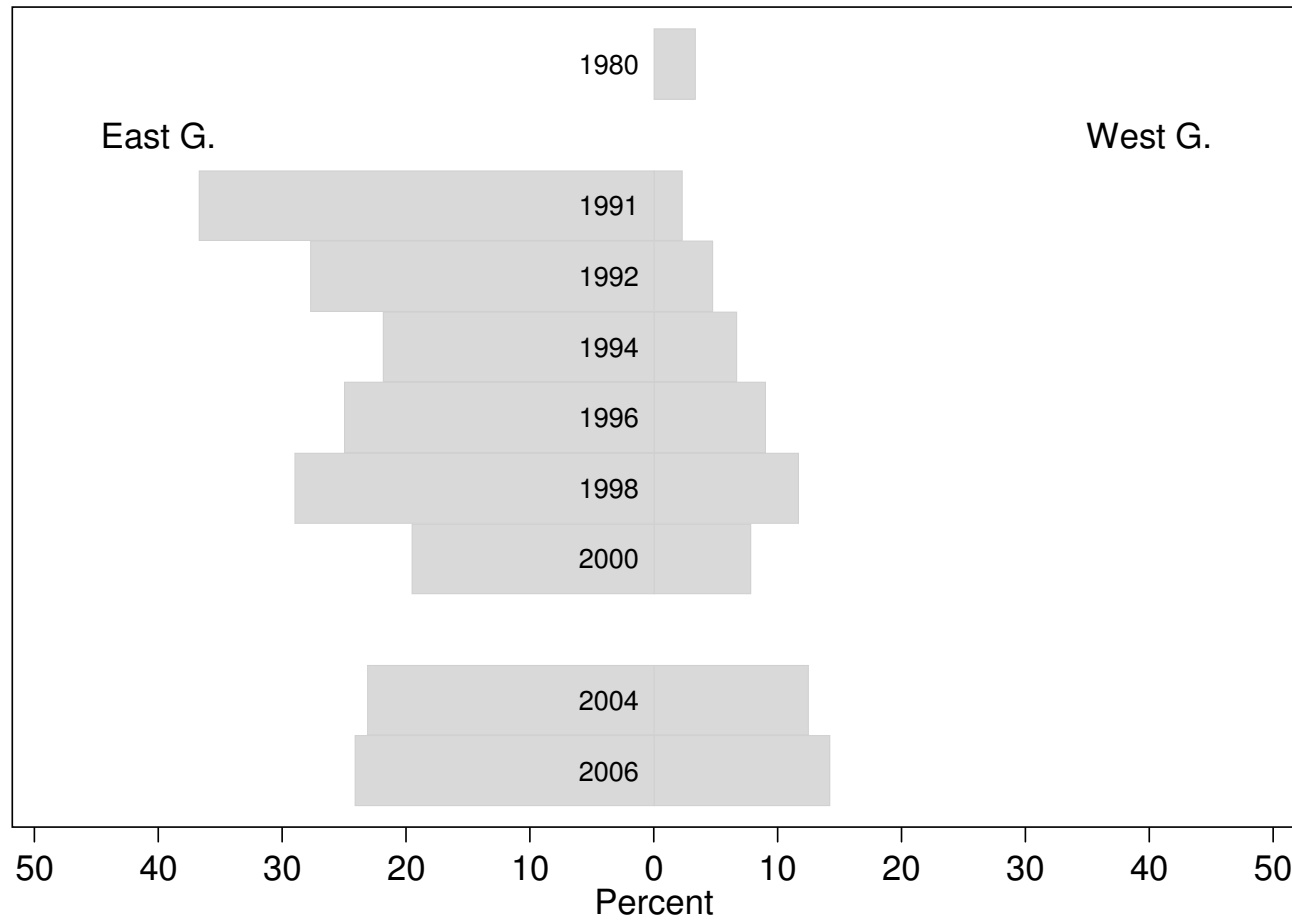
Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+ only

Unemployment Experiences: Staying Unemployed



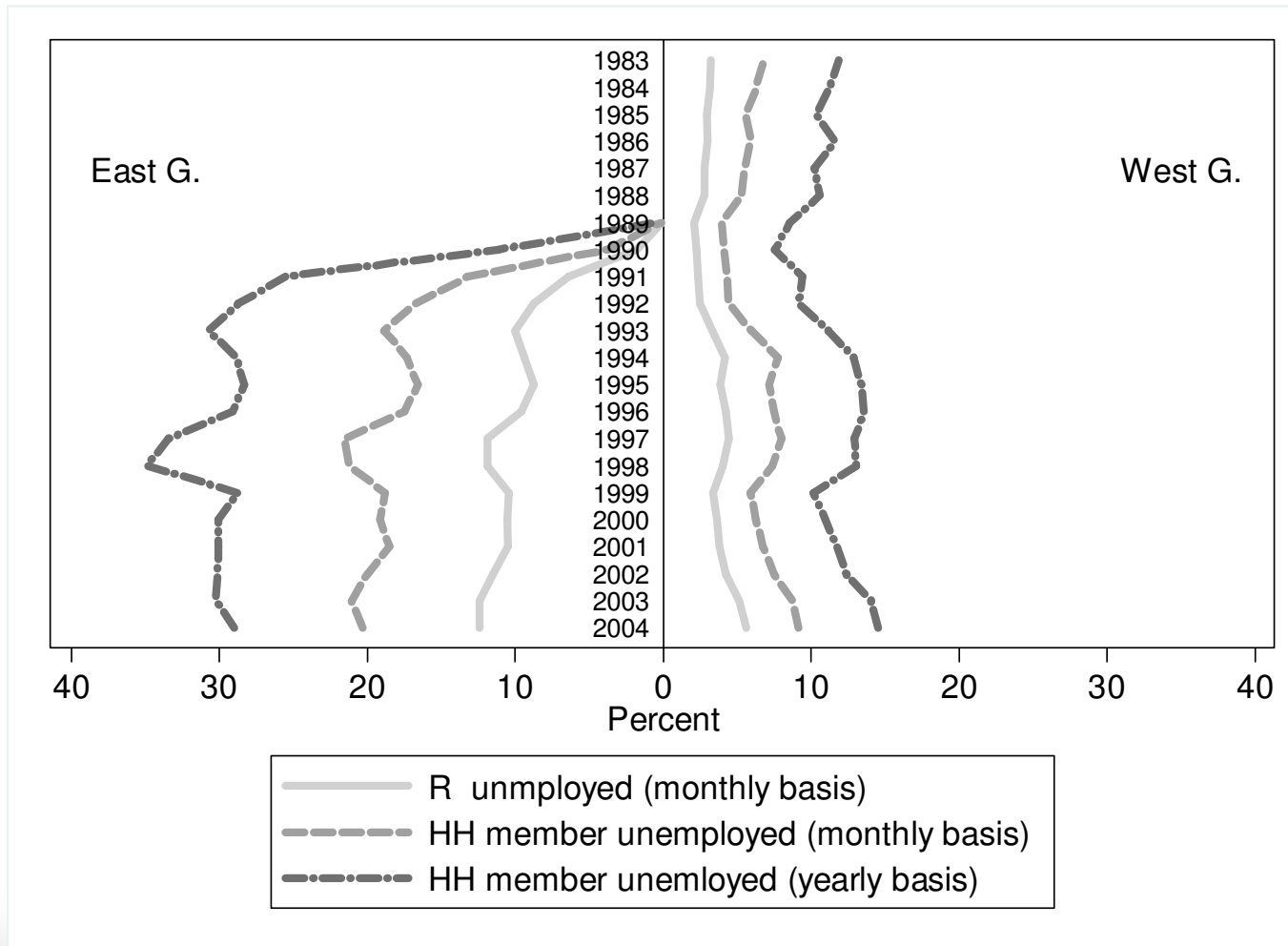
Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+, who have been unemployed during the last 10 years only

Unemployment Experiences: Fear of Unemployment



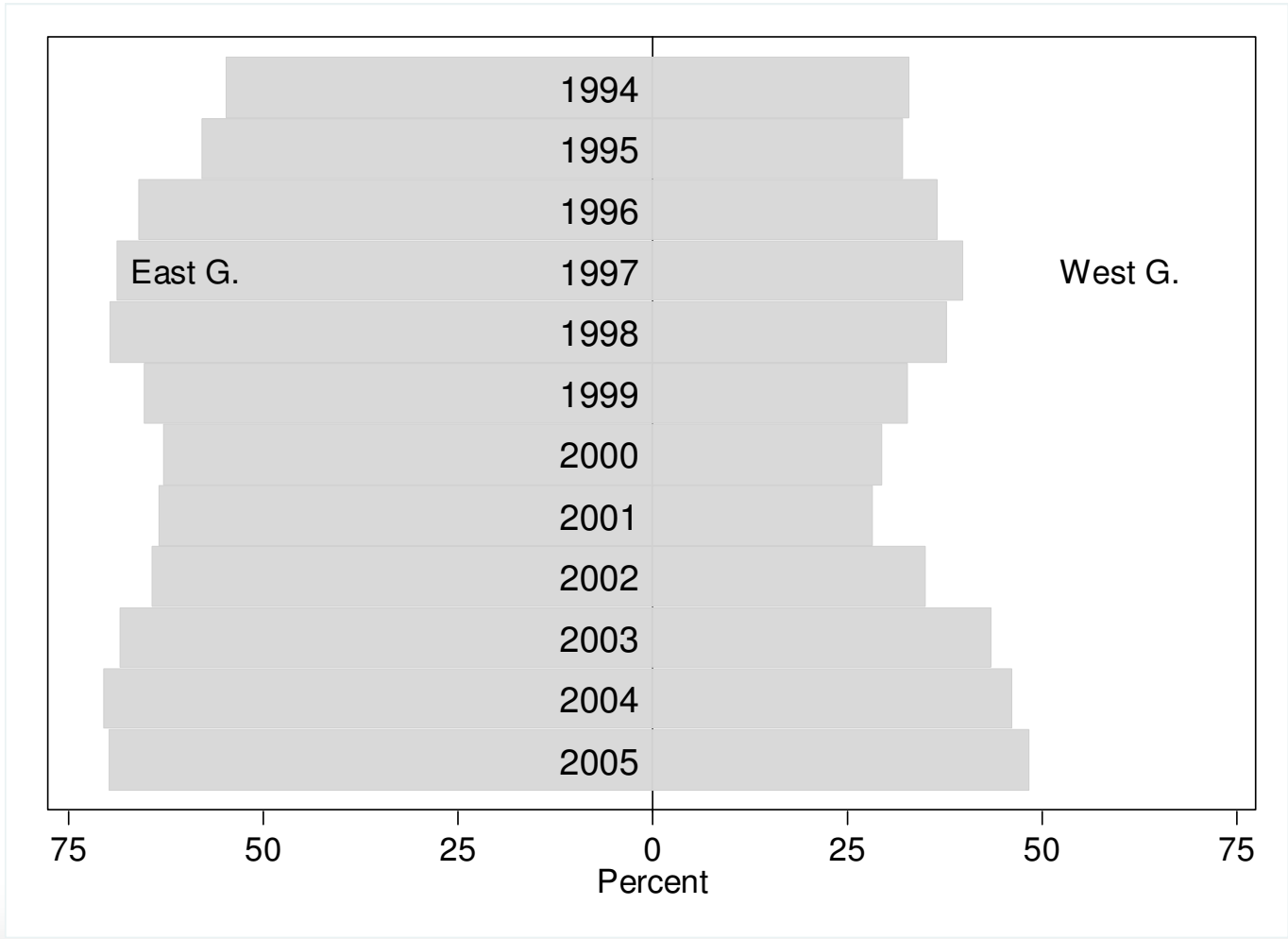
Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+, who are currently employed

Unemployment Experiences: Household Perspective



Source: German Socioeconomic Panel (GSOEP), German citizens aged 18+ only

Unemployment Experiences: Network Perspective



Source: Politbarometer, German citizens aged 18+ only

Unemployment Experiences

- To fully understand the relevance of unemployment from a political science perspective, but also a political perspective, one should apply a differentiated view
- Simply focusing on the number of people currently unemployed is too short-sighted

I Unemployment Experiences

II Perceptions of Economy

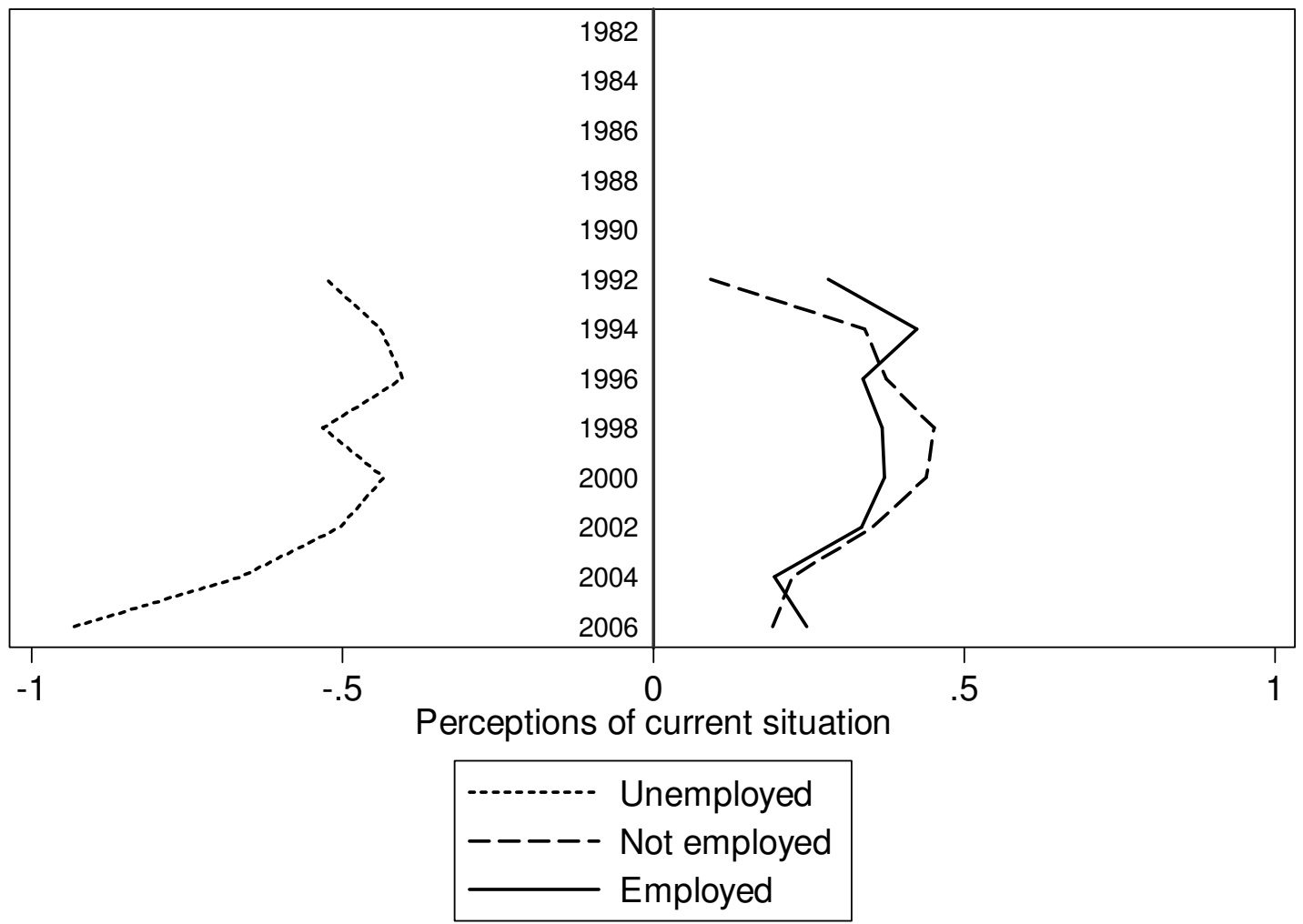
III Attributions of Responsibility

IV Electoral Consequences

Perceptions of the Economy

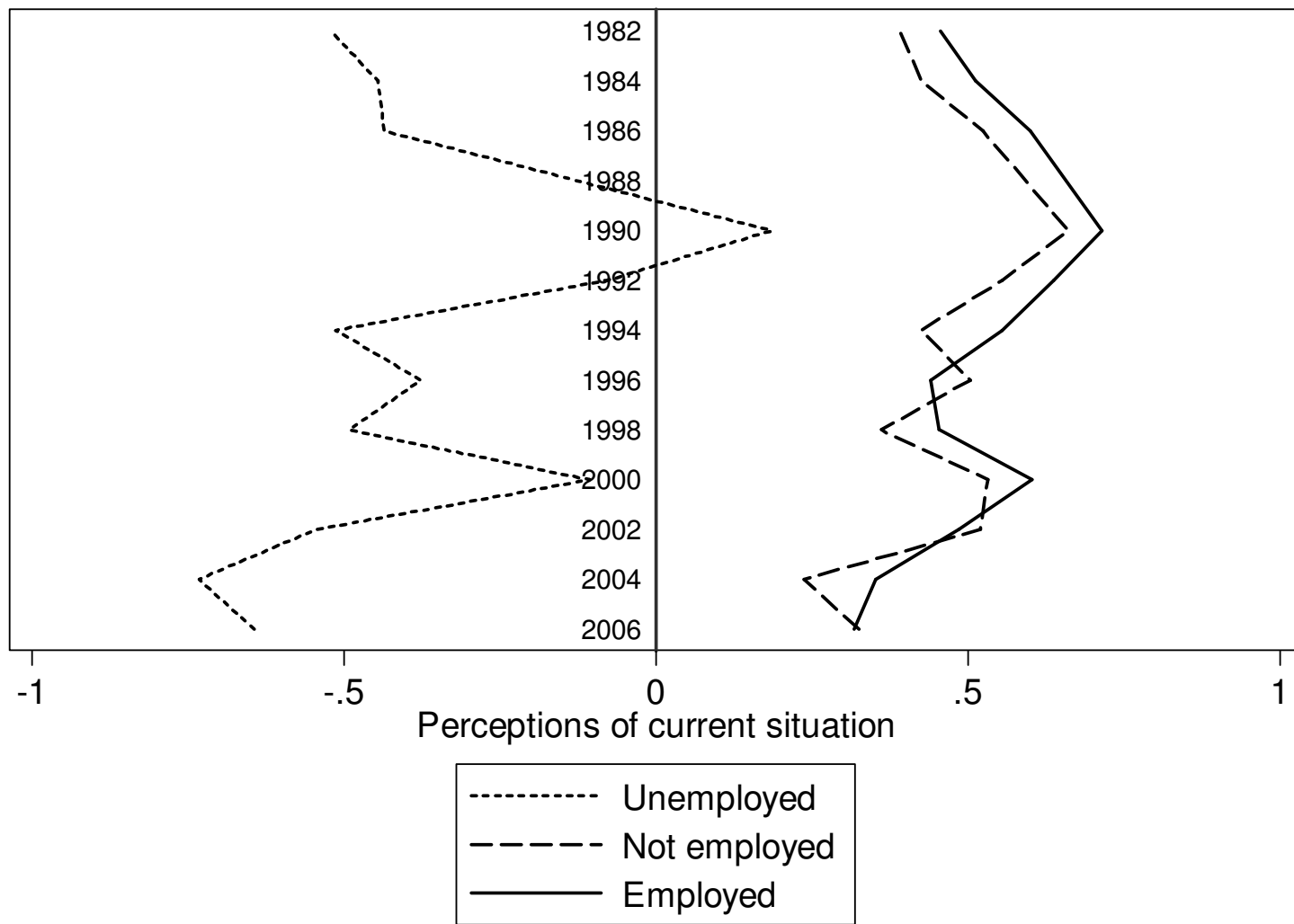
- „How does the electorate internalize the objective economy and transform it into a subjective economy?” (de Boef/Kellstedt 2004: 633)
 - and what is the role of unemployment experiences?
- Concerning such perceptions, one should (in line with the literature) distinguish ...
 - by the time frame used (retrospective, present, prospective)
 - by the object that is being evaluated (individual, regional, national economy)
- Unemployment experiences should have a strong impact on perceptions of the retrospective development and the present state of the economy (pertaining to an individual's situation, but also the national situation); fear of unemployment should have an impact on prospective ones

Perceptions of Individuals' Situation (East G.)



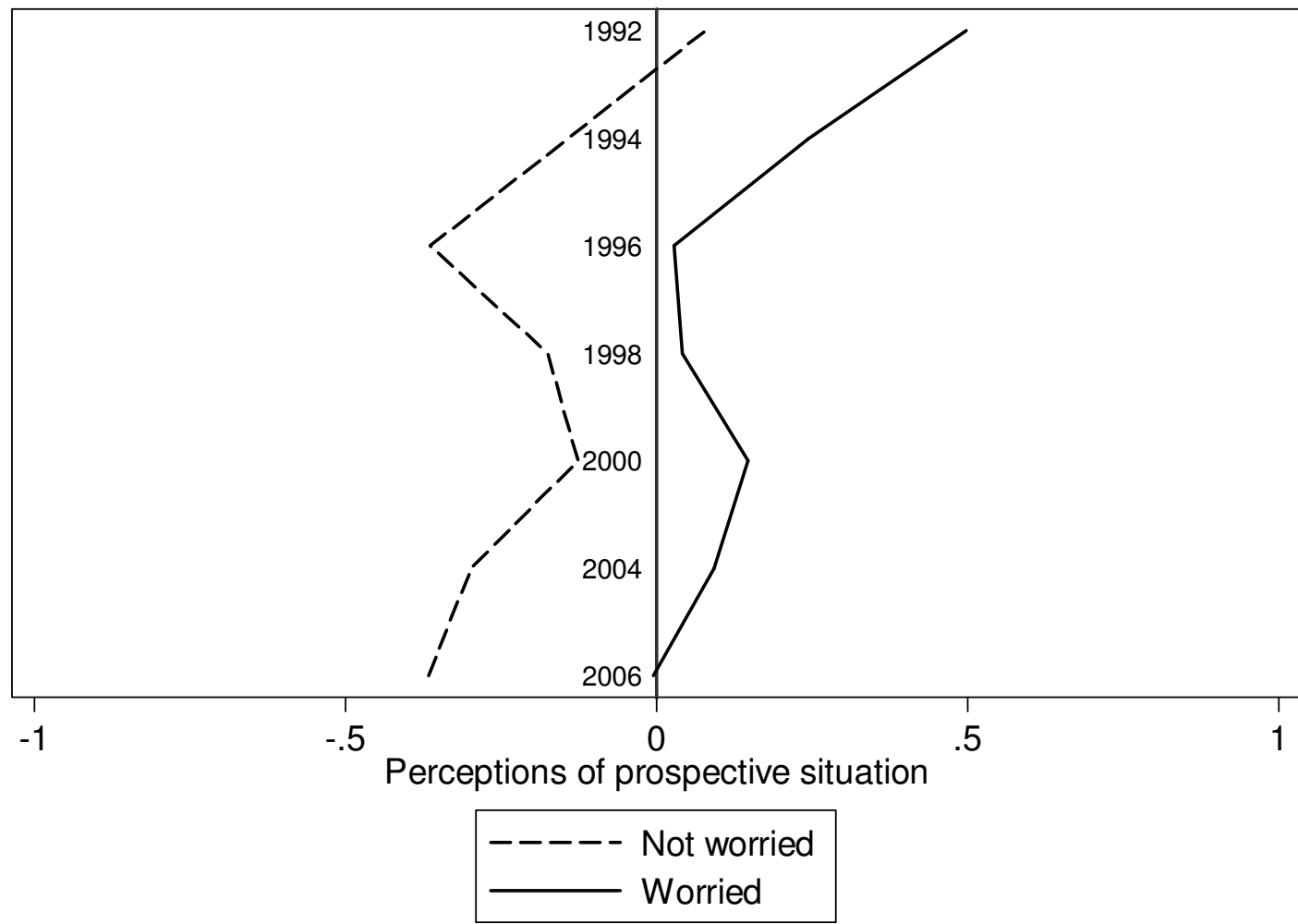
Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+ only

Perceptions of Individuals' Situation (West G.)



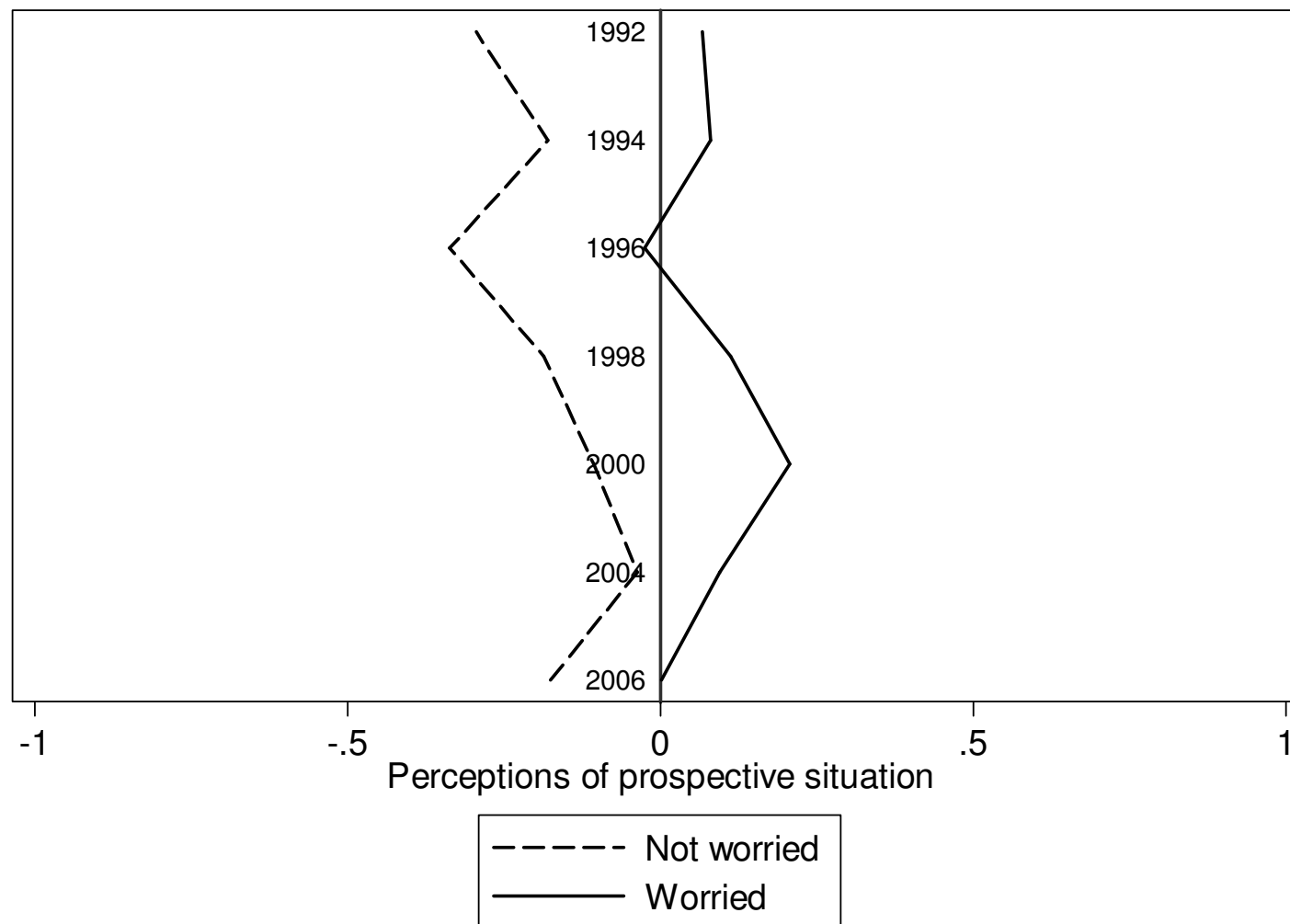
Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+ only

Perceptions of Prospective Situation (East G.)



Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+ only

Perceptions of Prospective Situation (East G.)

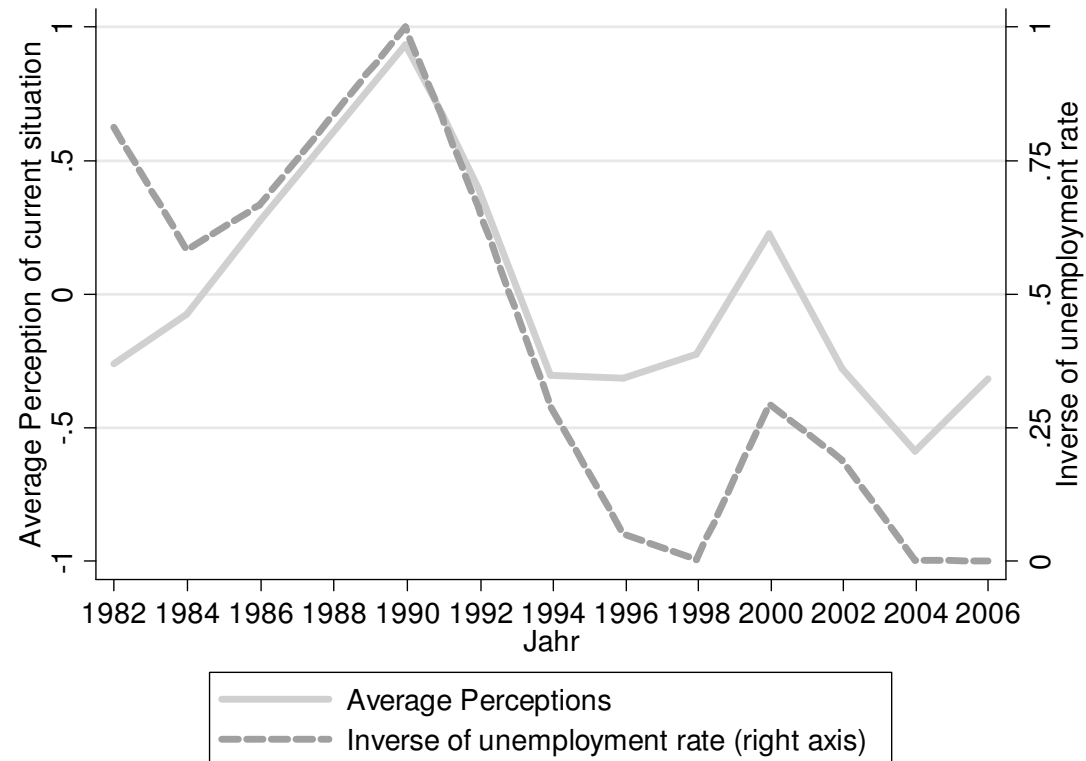


Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+ only

Perceptions of National Economic Situation

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- In relation to national unemployment
- Multilevel model (using the temporal context as level 2)
- Strong and significant effect of national employment rate on perceptions of the national economy



Source: German General Social Survey (Allbus), German citizens aged 18+ only

I Unemployment Experiences

II Perceptions of Economy

III Attributions of Responsibility

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Attributions of Responsibility

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- Are individuals willing to and capable of linking perceptions of economic situations to governmental action
- Do they attribute responsibility?
- → institutional as well as psychological contingency dilemmas
- What are the determinants of attributed responsibility?

Determinants of Attributions of Responsibility

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- „Defensive attributions“
- „Morselizing“
- „Contextualization“
- Political sophistication, partisan rationalizations and cultural predispositions
- Campaigns

- Rolling Cross-Section Survey covering the final 41 days of the 2005 German Federal Election campaign (n=3,583)
- Items:
 - “What do you think, to what extent is the ruling government responsible for the development of this economic situation: to a large extent, to some extent or not at all?”
 - „this economic situation“ refers to
 - Individual’s own economic situation
 - Situation of the national economy

- „Defensive attributions“

Perceived State of
own and national economic
Situation

- „Morselizing“

- „Contextualization“

Interaction term

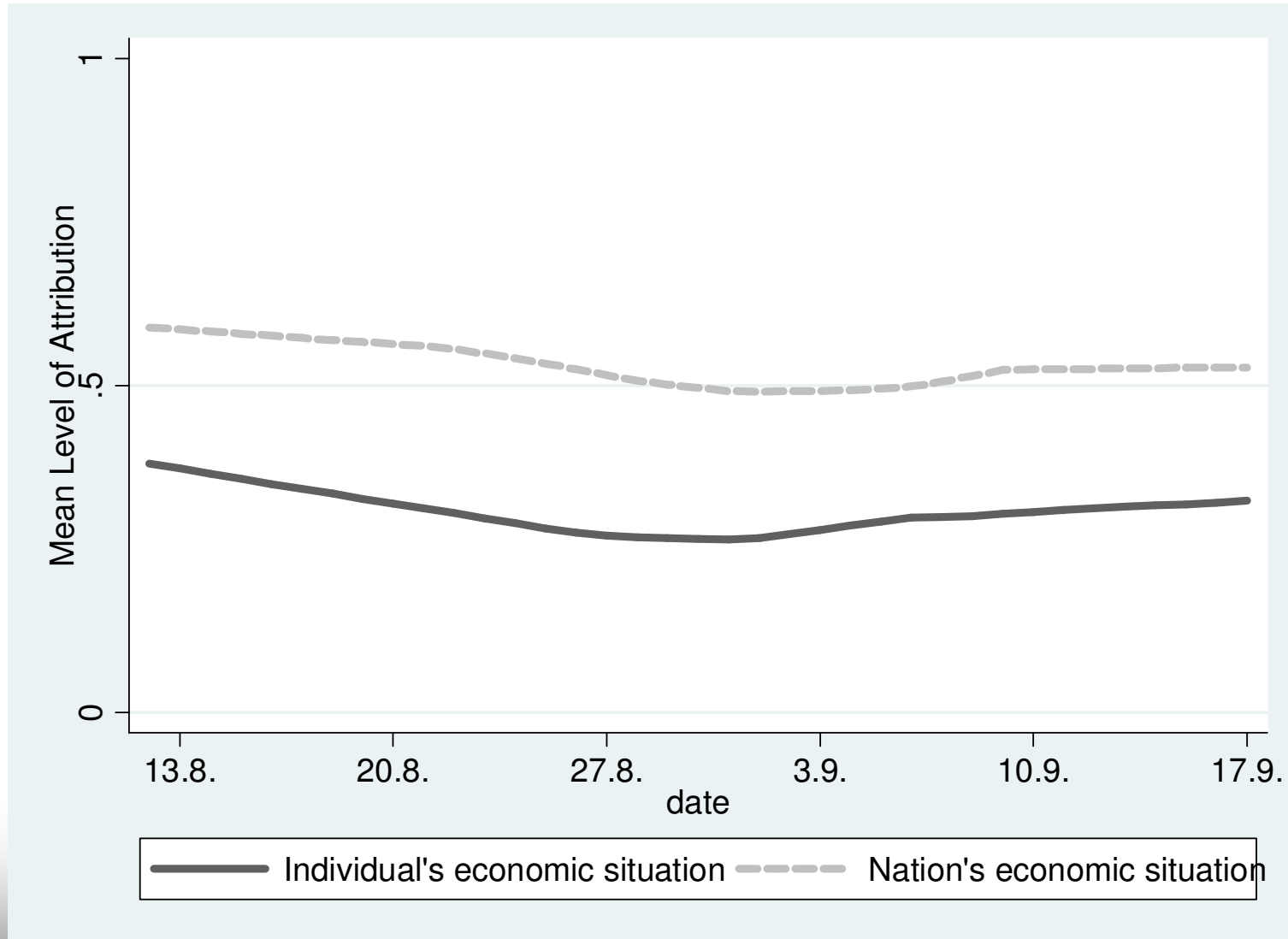
- Political sophistication, partisan rationalizations and cultural predispositions

Interest in Politics,
Party Identification,
Left-Right-Placement

- Campaigns

Time

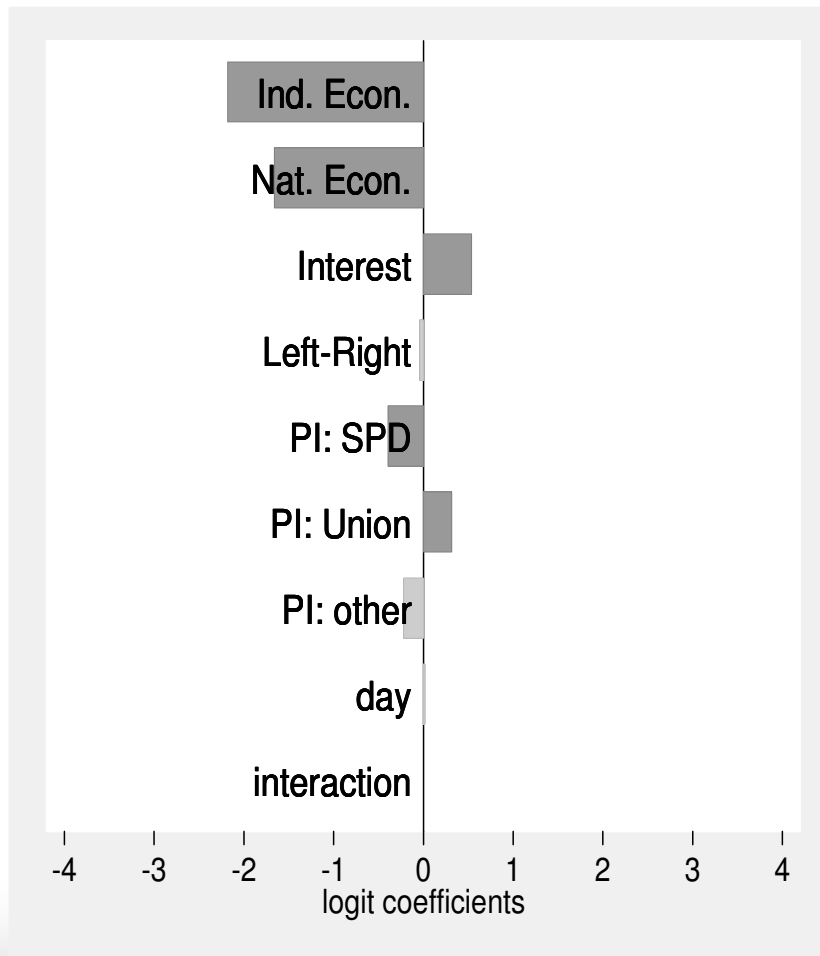
Development of Level of Attributed Responsibility



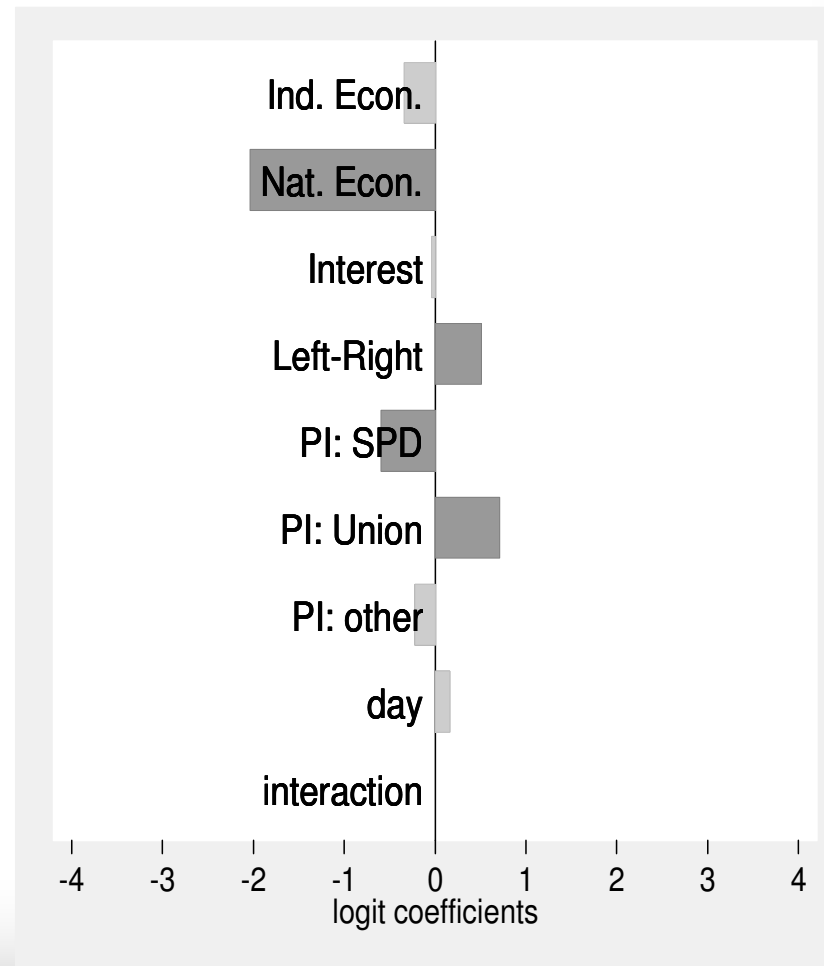
Determinants of Attributed Responsibility for ...

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... Individual Economic Situation

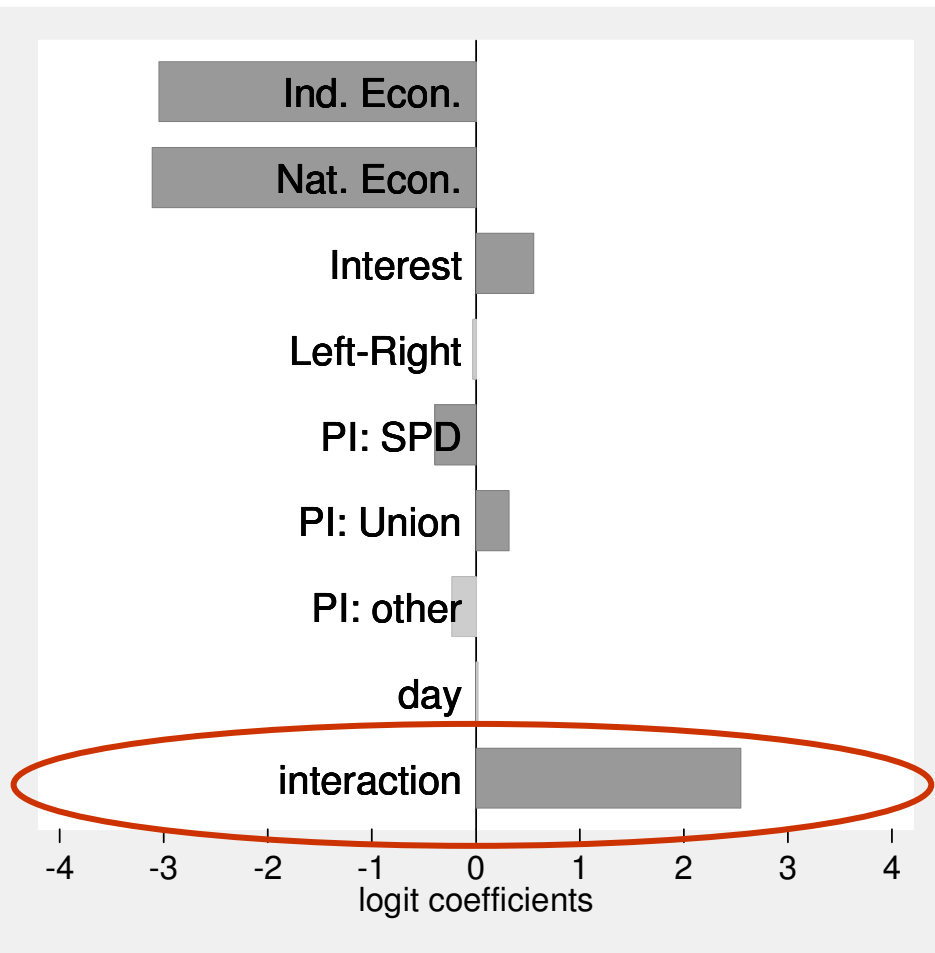


... National Economic Situation

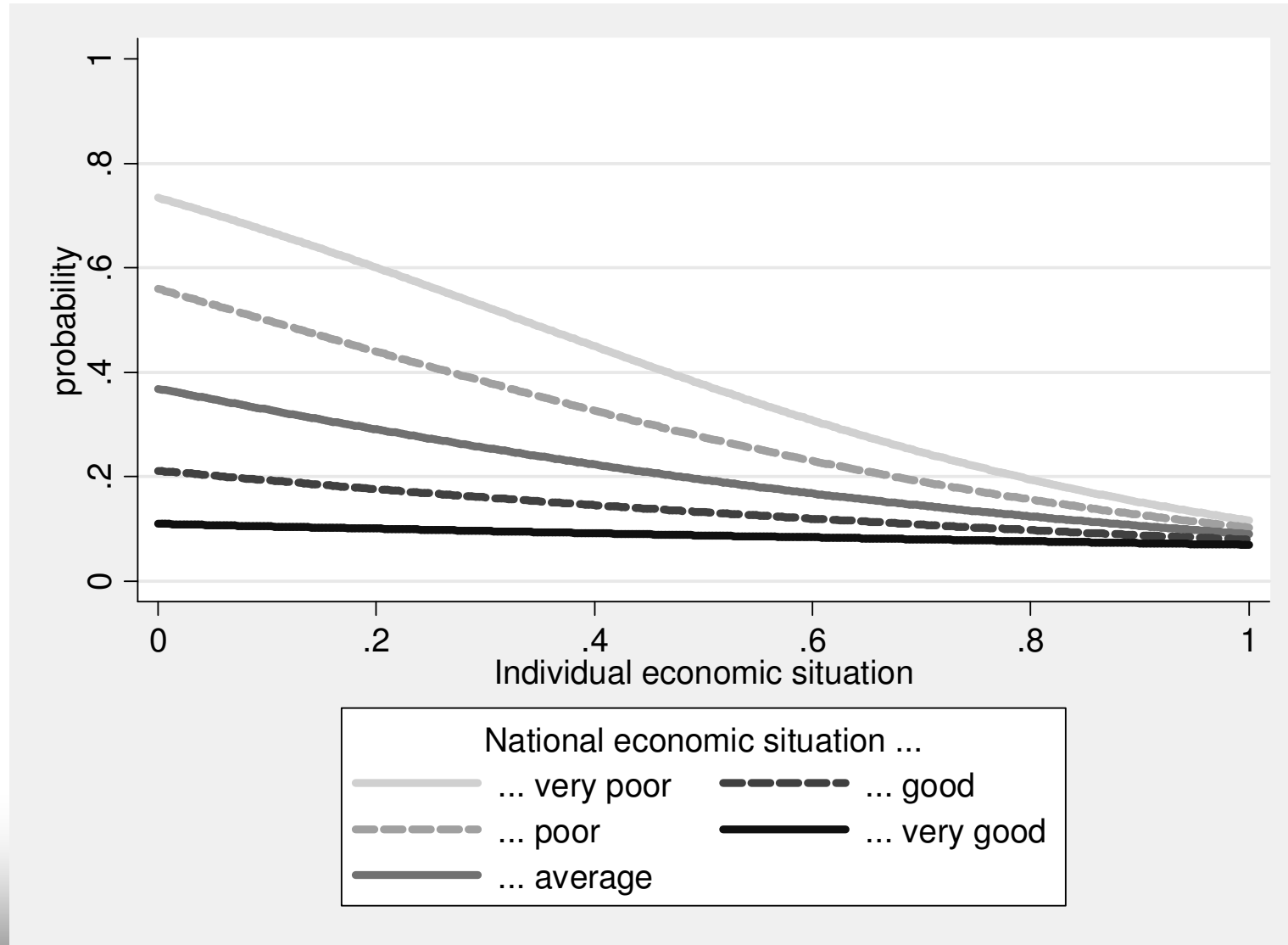


Determinants of Attributed Responsibility for ...

... Individual Economic Situation



Predicted Probabilities



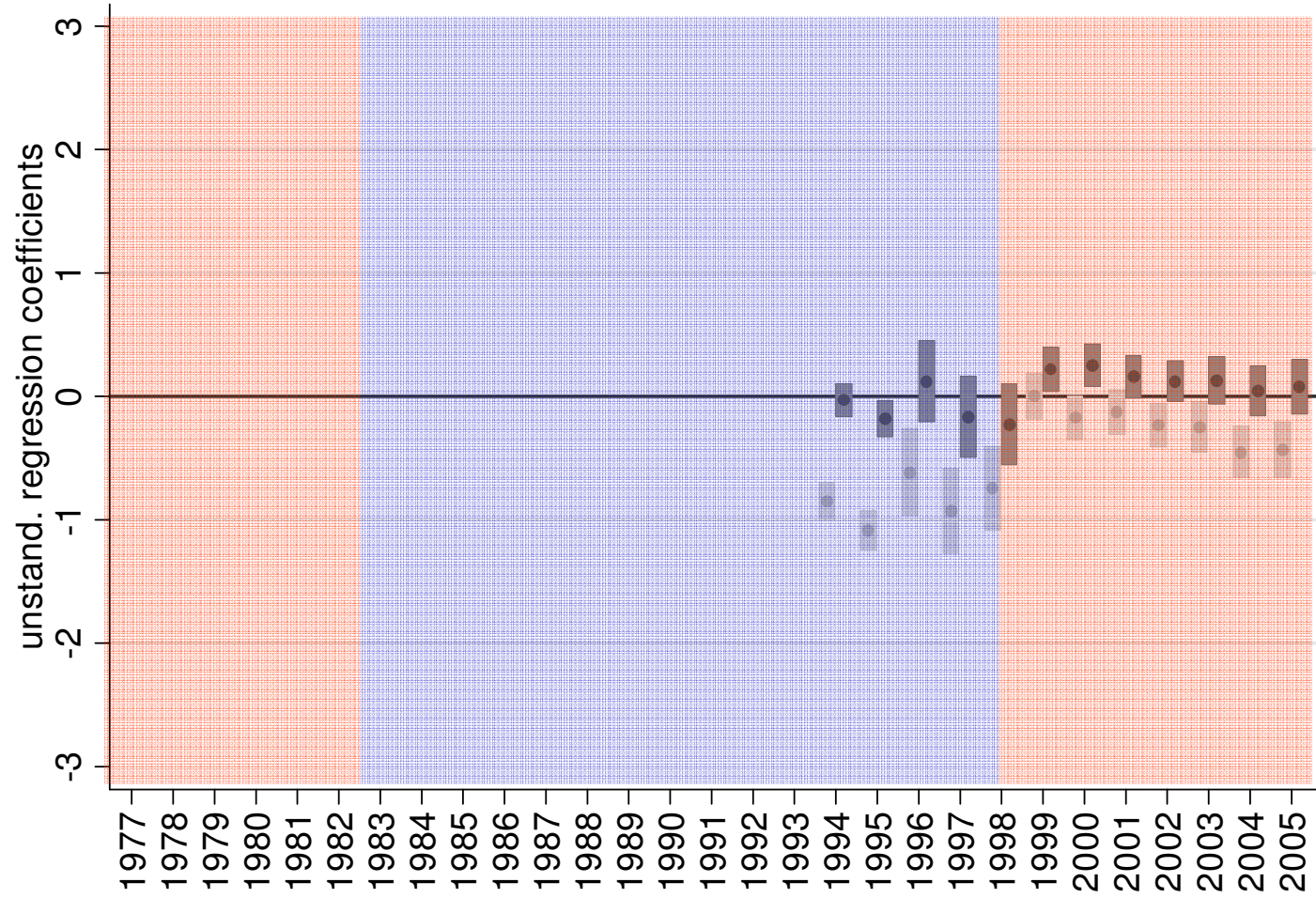
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Consequences of Perceptions of Economic Situations

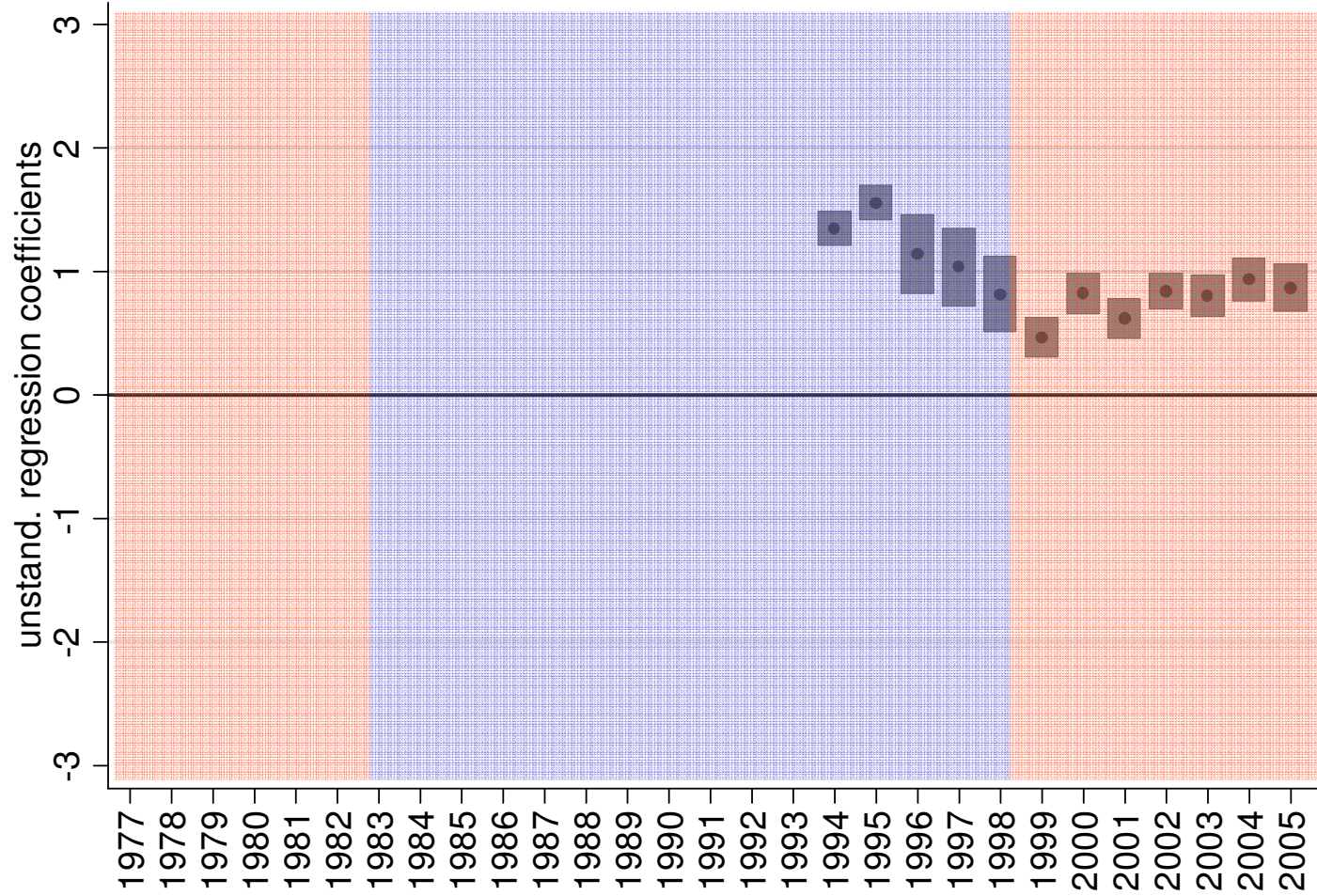
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- Kinder/Kiewiet (1979): sociotropic vs. pocketbook voting
- Empirically, sociotropic voting prevails
- Additionally: policy-oriented voting according to which certain parties “own” specific issues, e.g. left parties “own” unemployment issue, tend to be supported by people making unemployment experiences

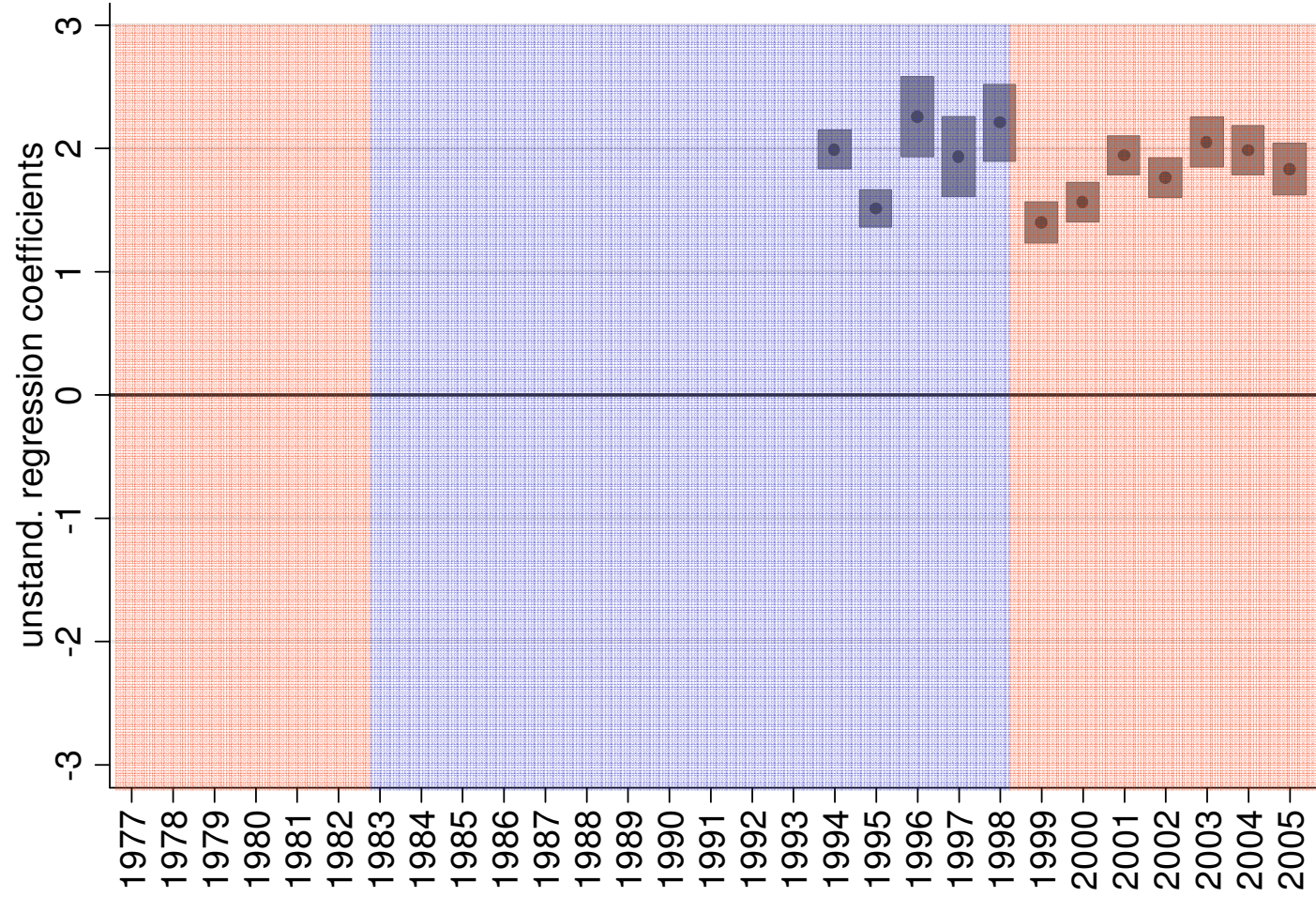
Government Approval: Individual Unemployment



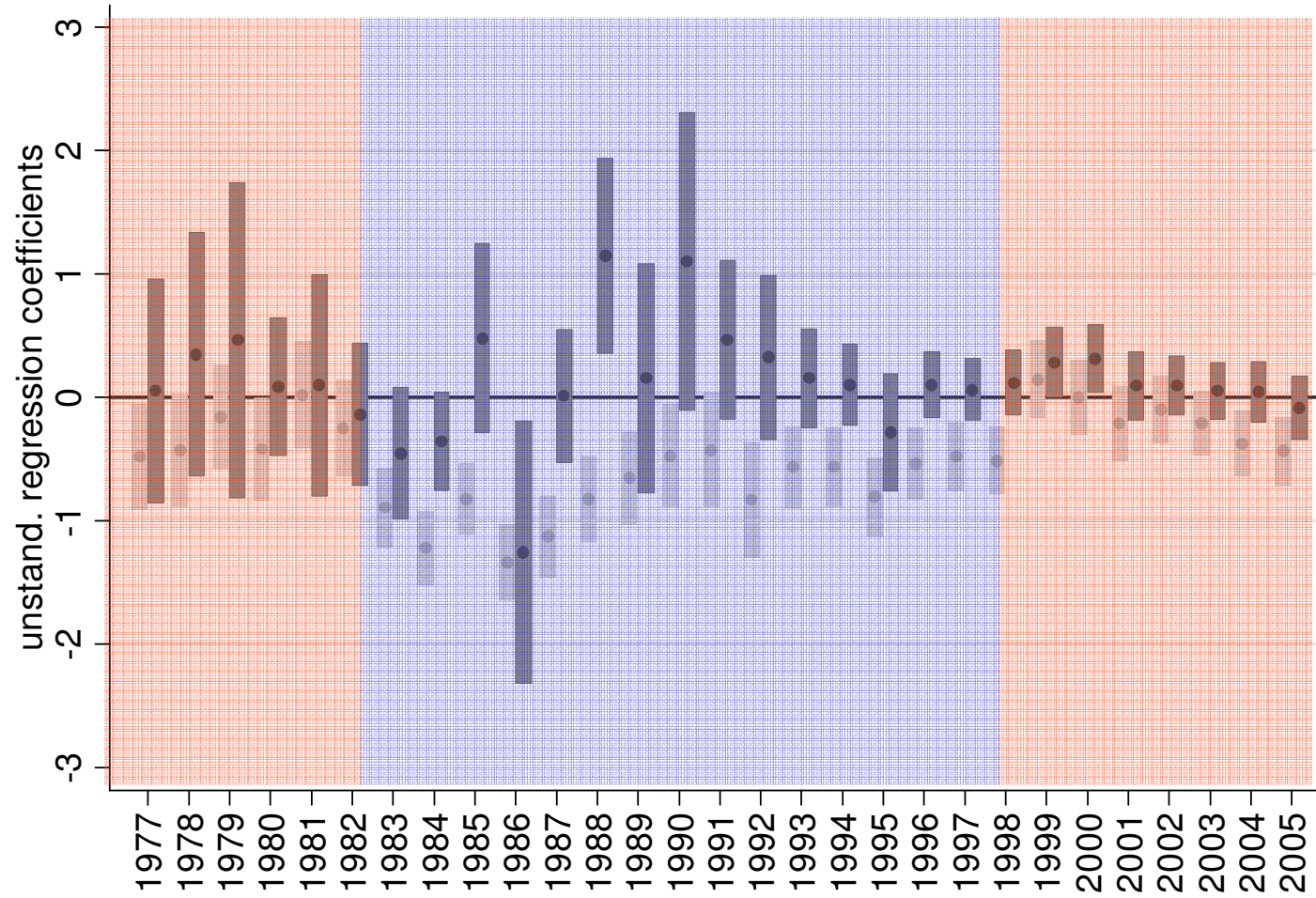
Government Approval: Perceptions of Ind. Economy



Government Approval: Perceptions of Nation. Econ.

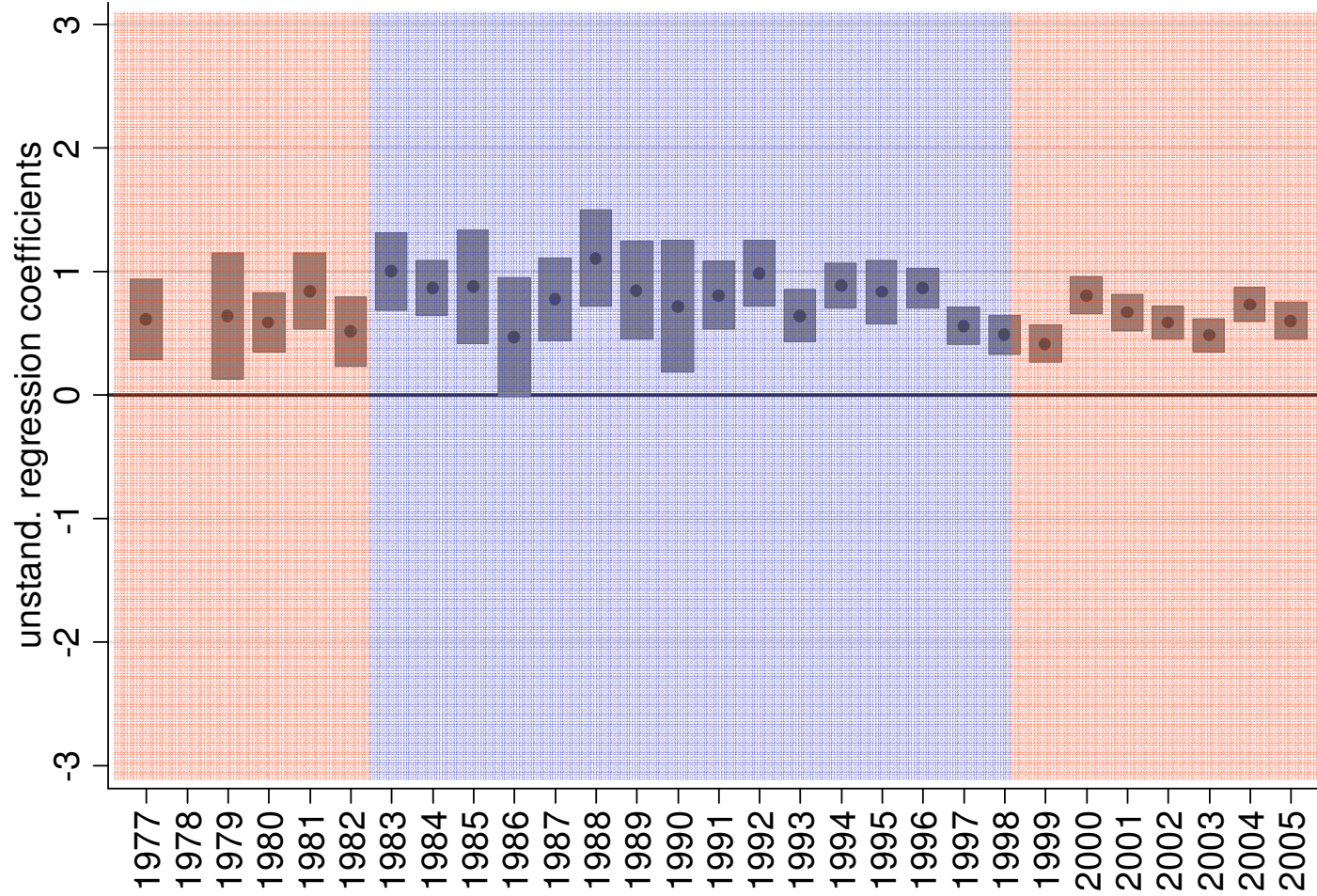


Government Approval: Individual Unemployment

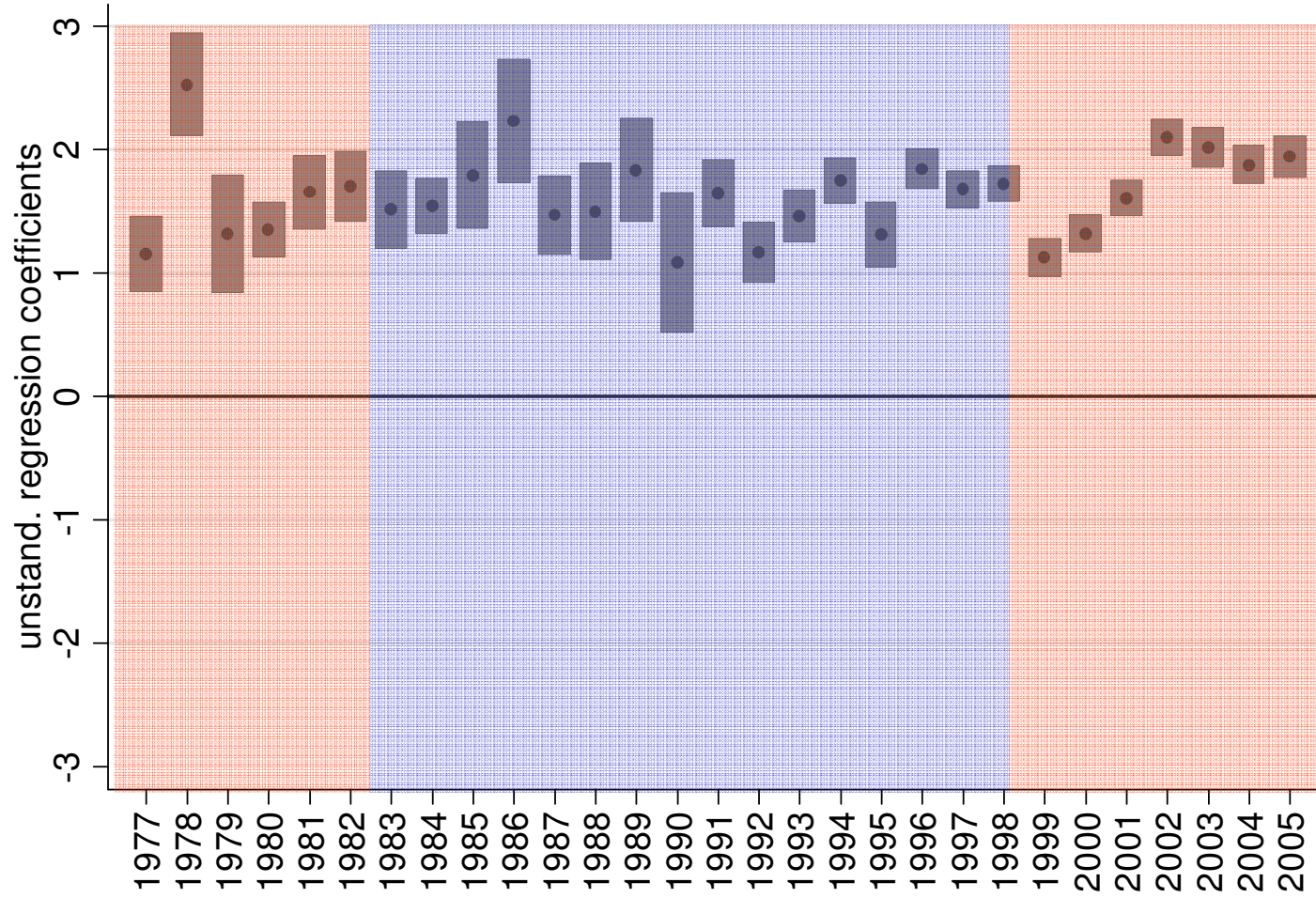


Government Approval: Perceptions of Ind. Economy

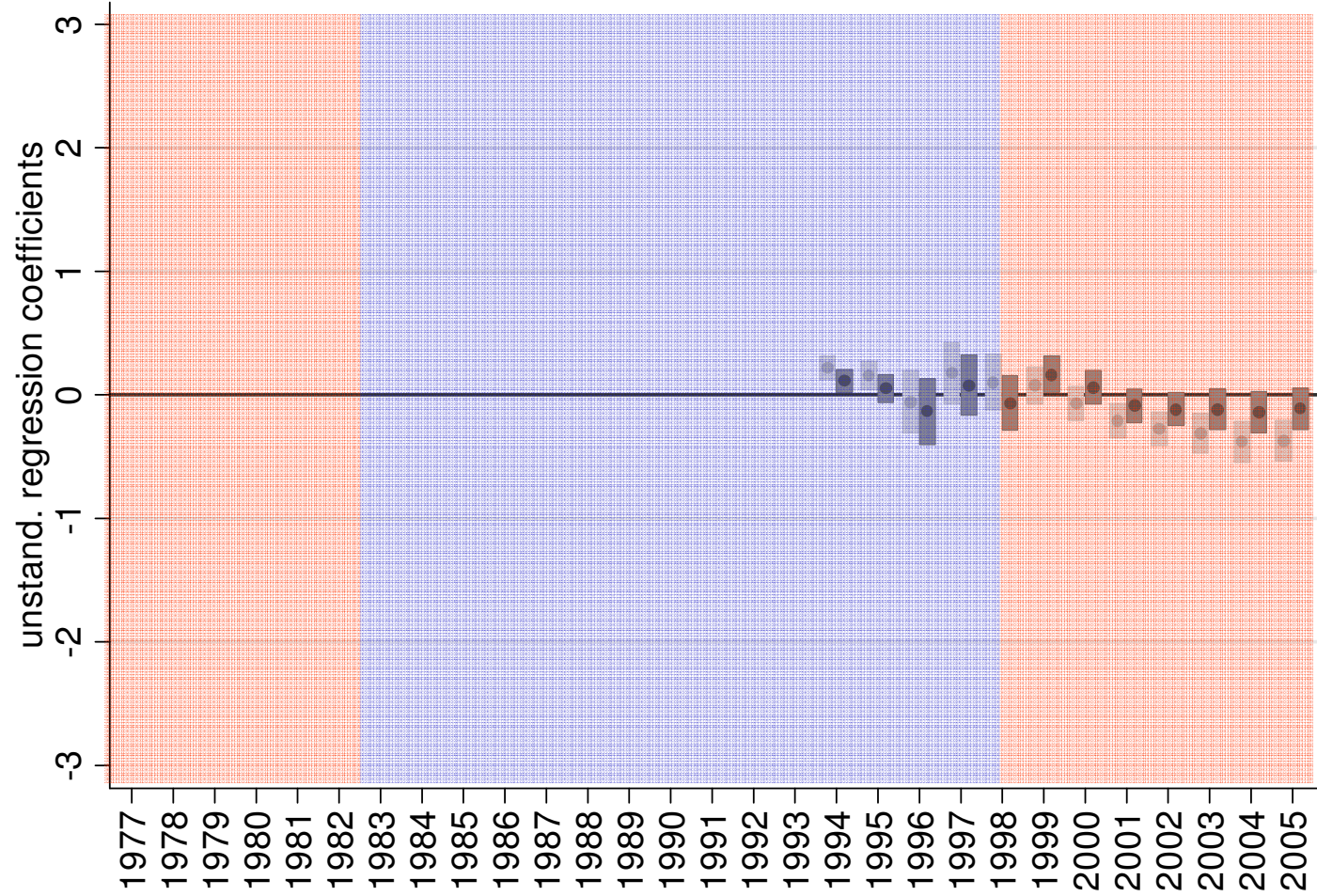
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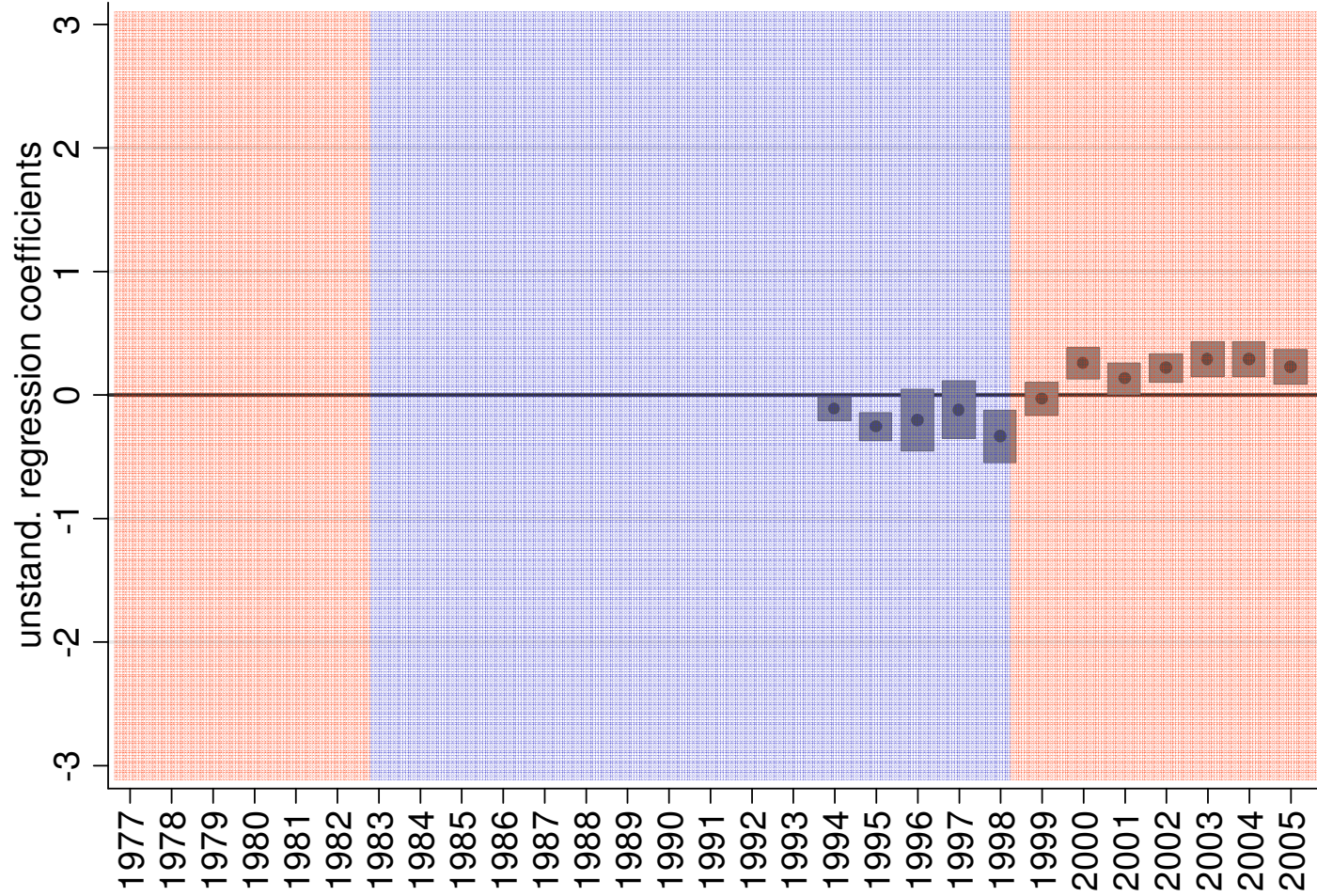
Government Approval: Perceptions of Nation. Econ.



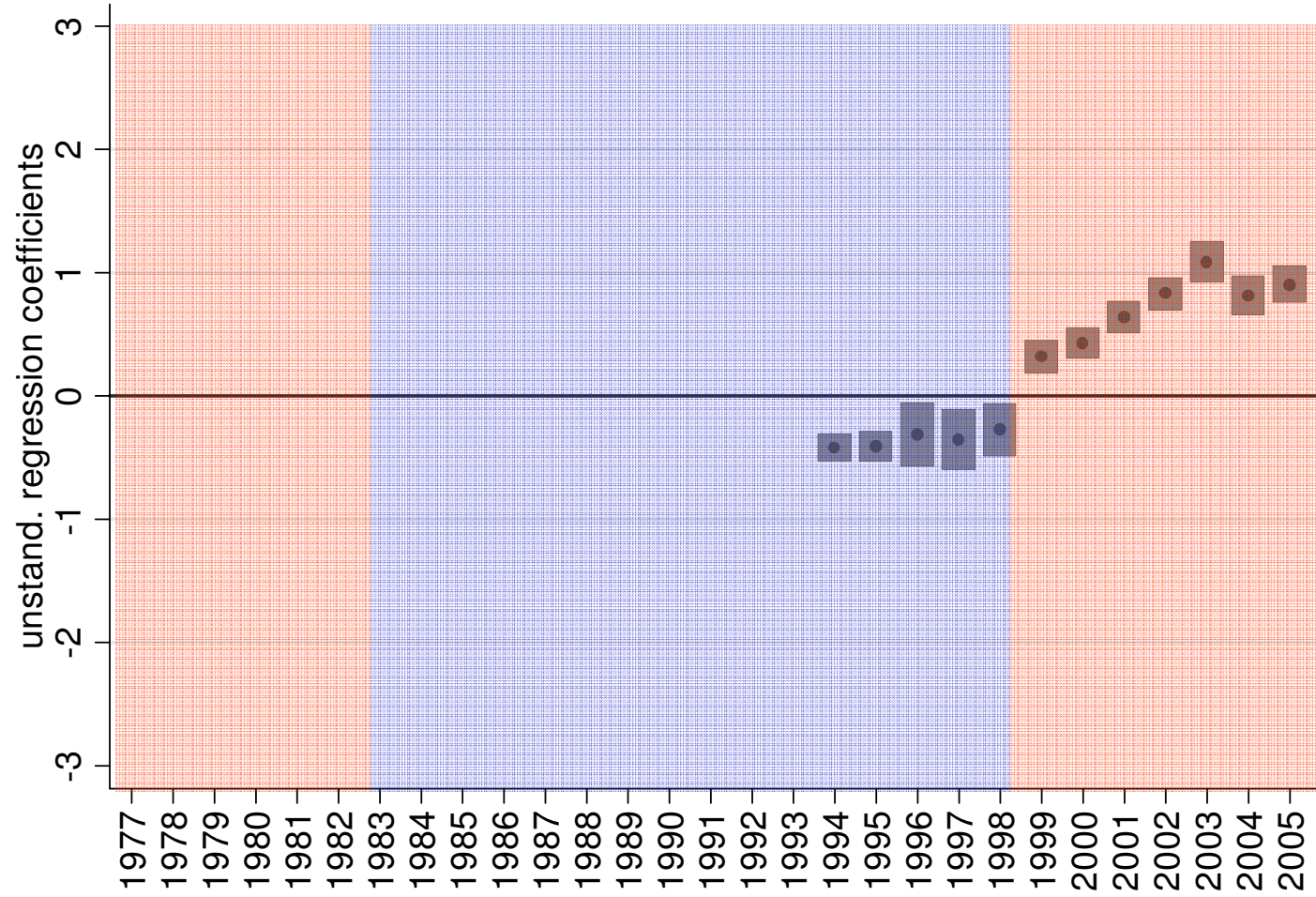
Social Democrats: Individual Unemployment



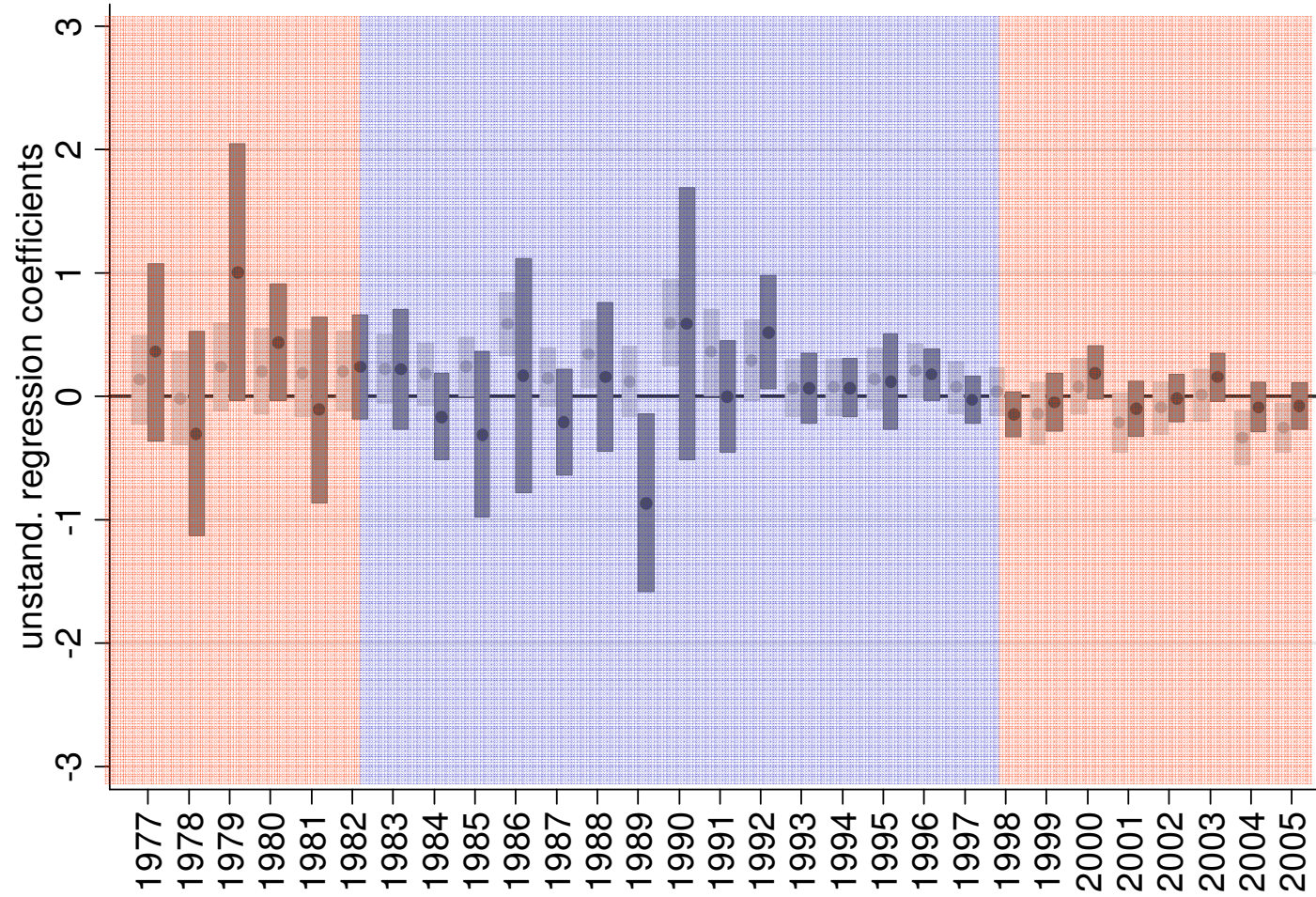
Social Democrats: Perceptions of Ind. Economy



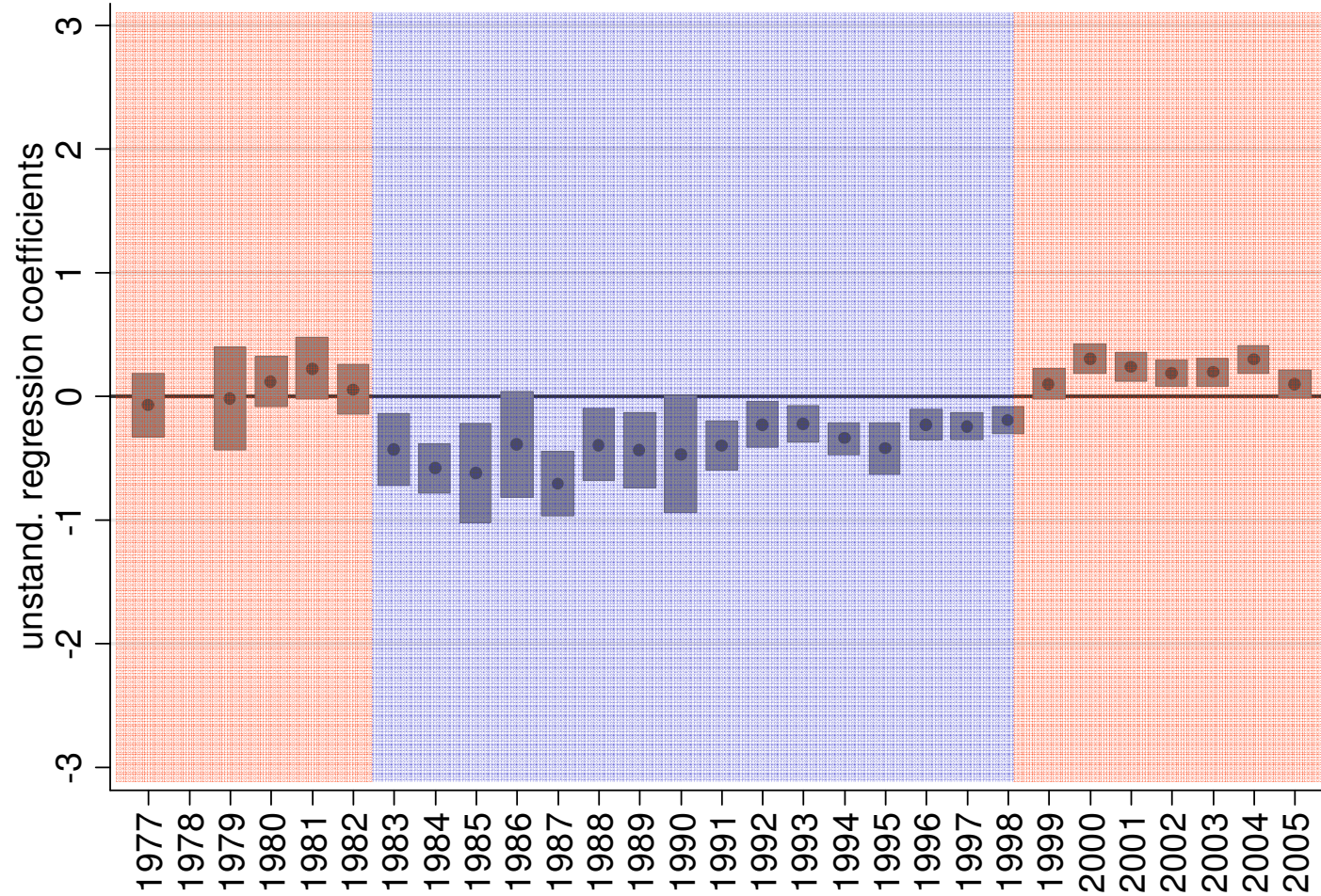
Social Democrats: Perceptions of Nation. Econ.



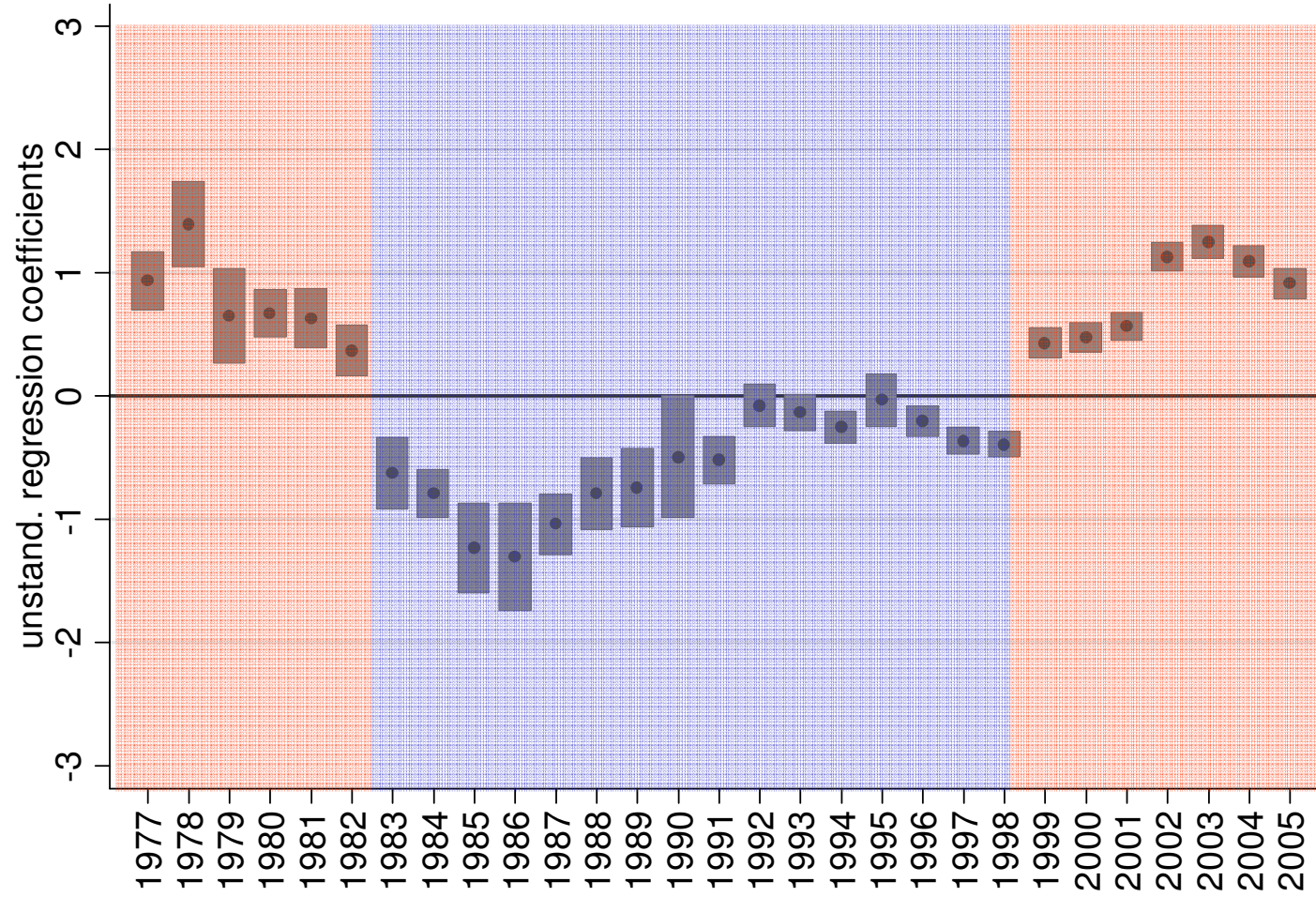
Social Democrats: Individual Unemployment



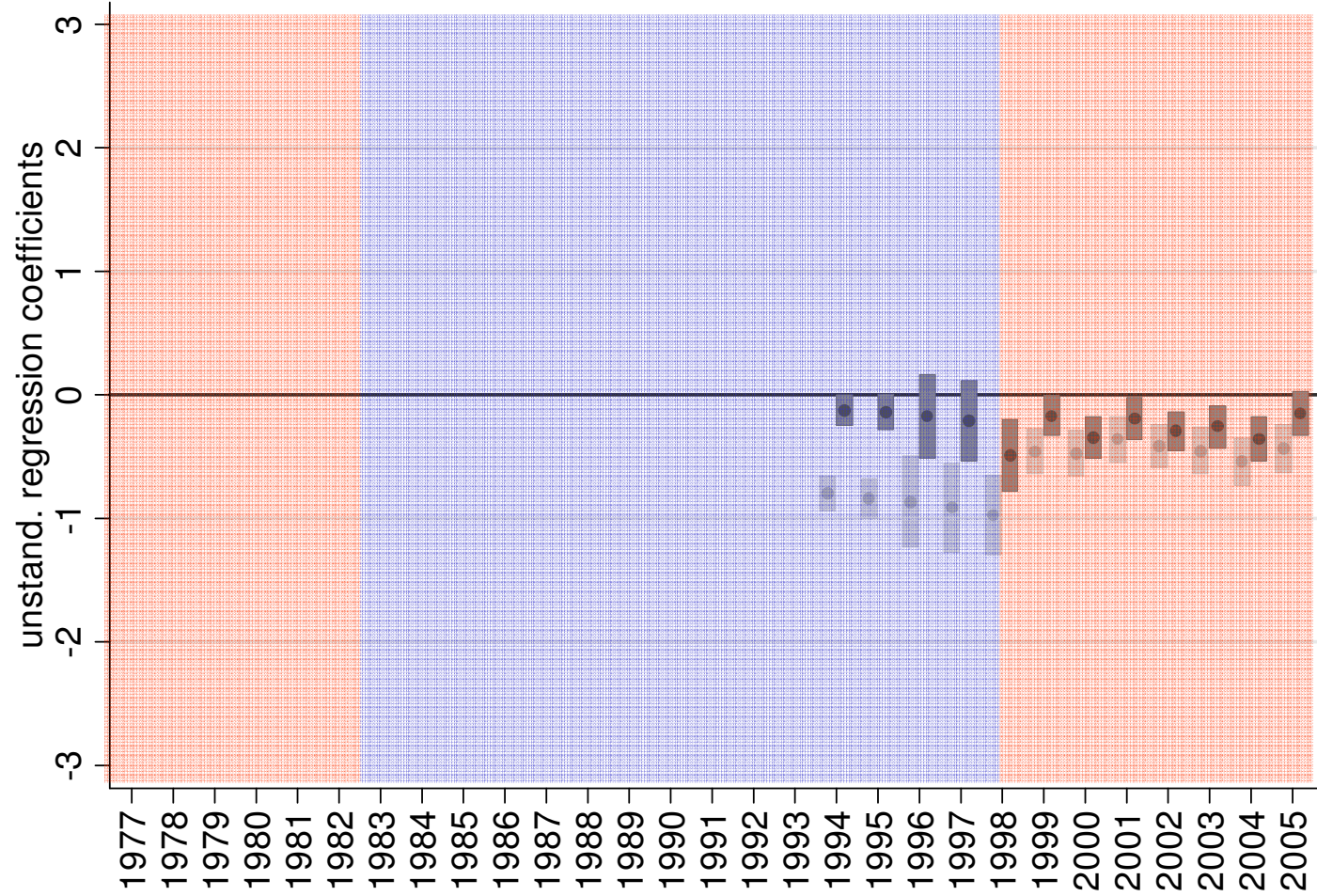
Social Democrats: Perceptions of Ind. Economy



Social Democrats: Perceptions of Nation. Econ.

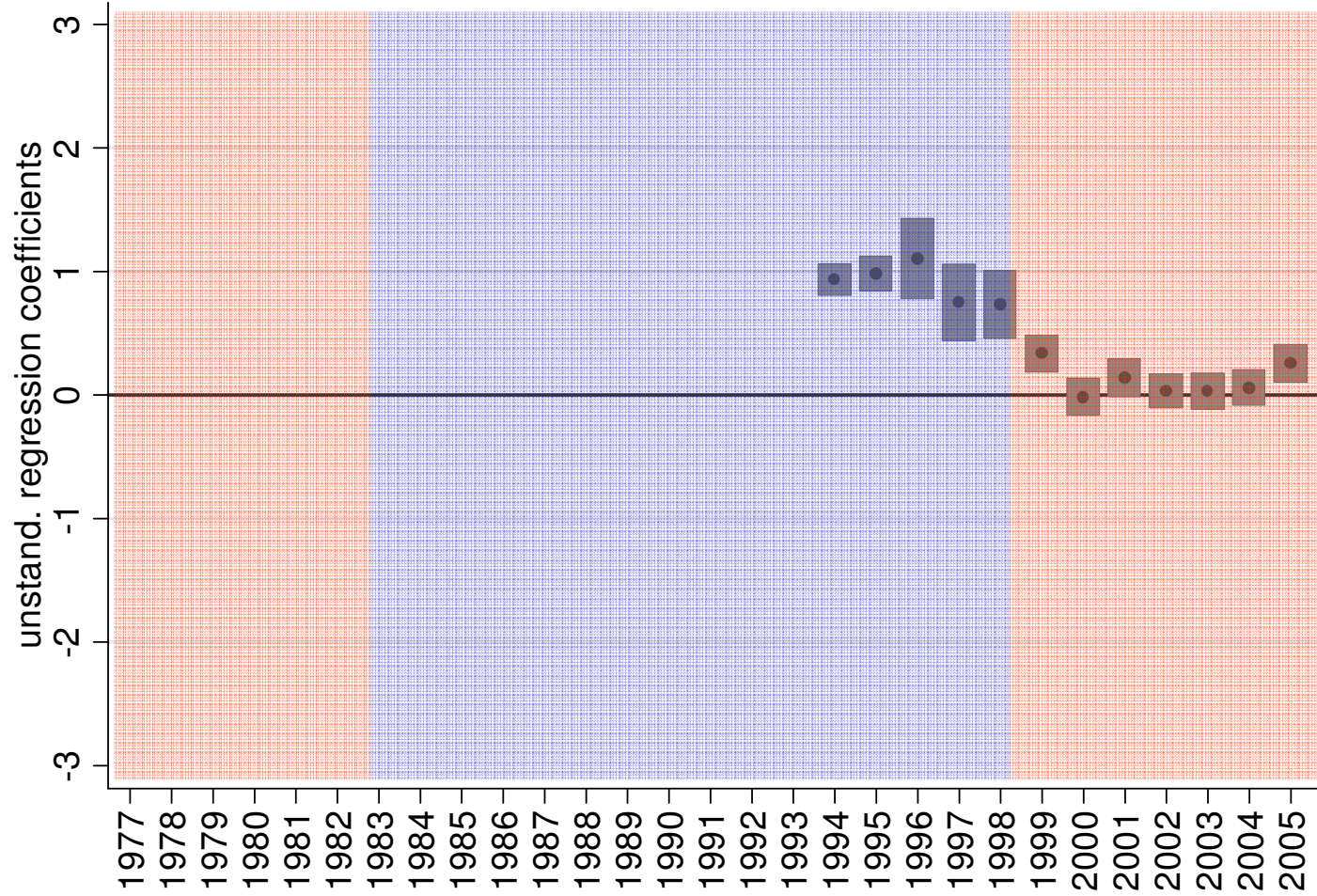


Christian Democrats: Individual Unemployment

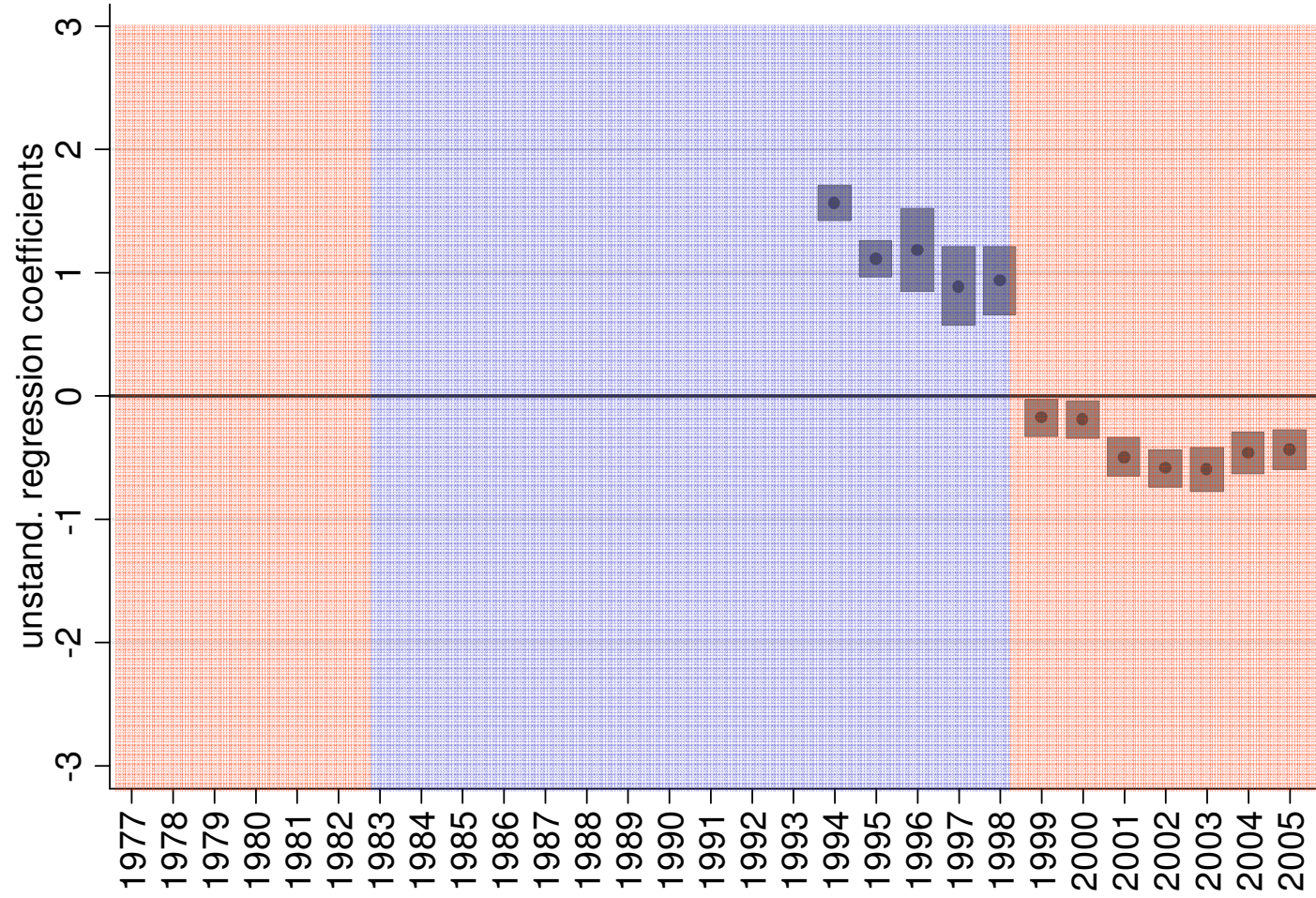


Christian Democrats: Perceptions of Ind. Economy

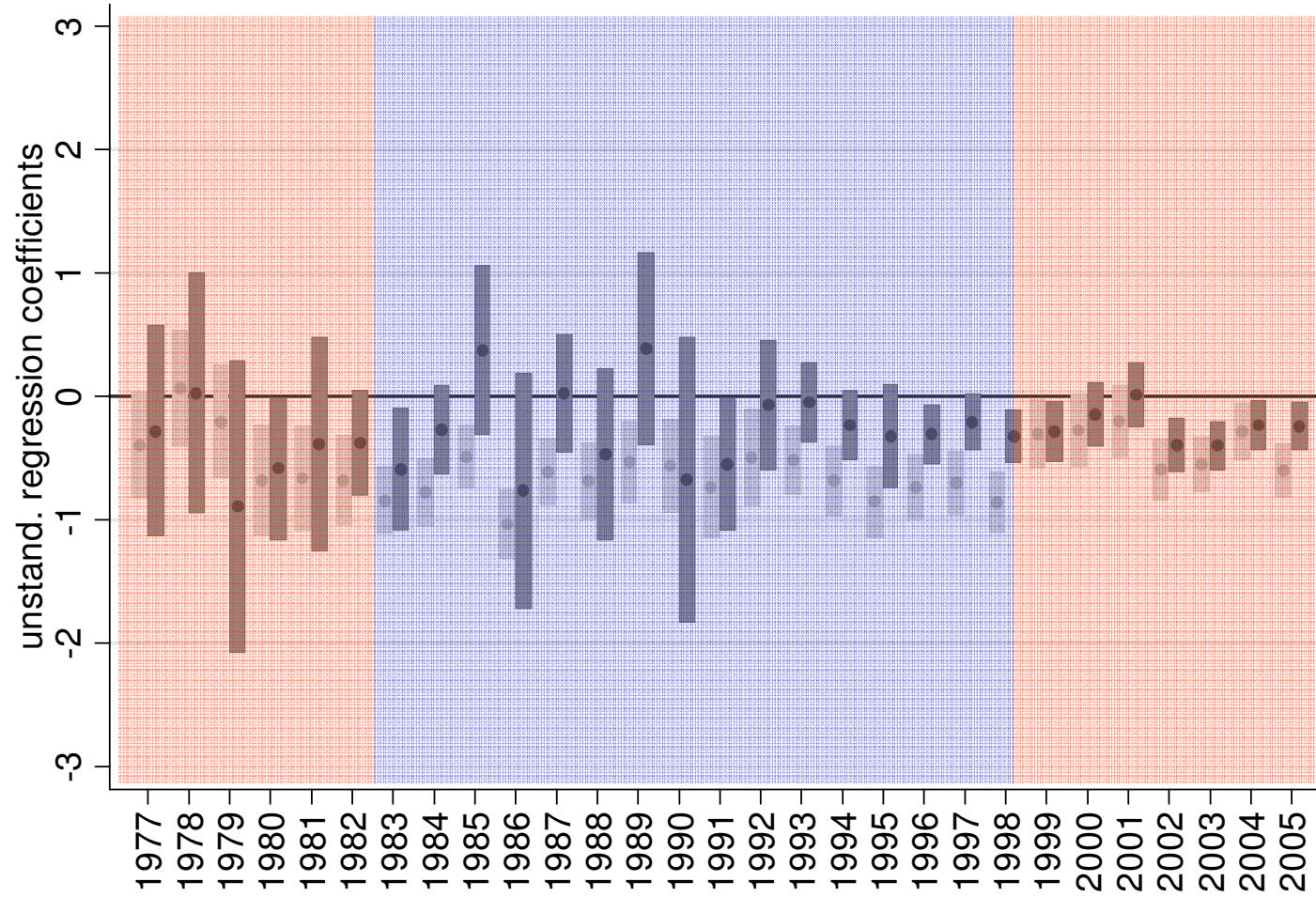
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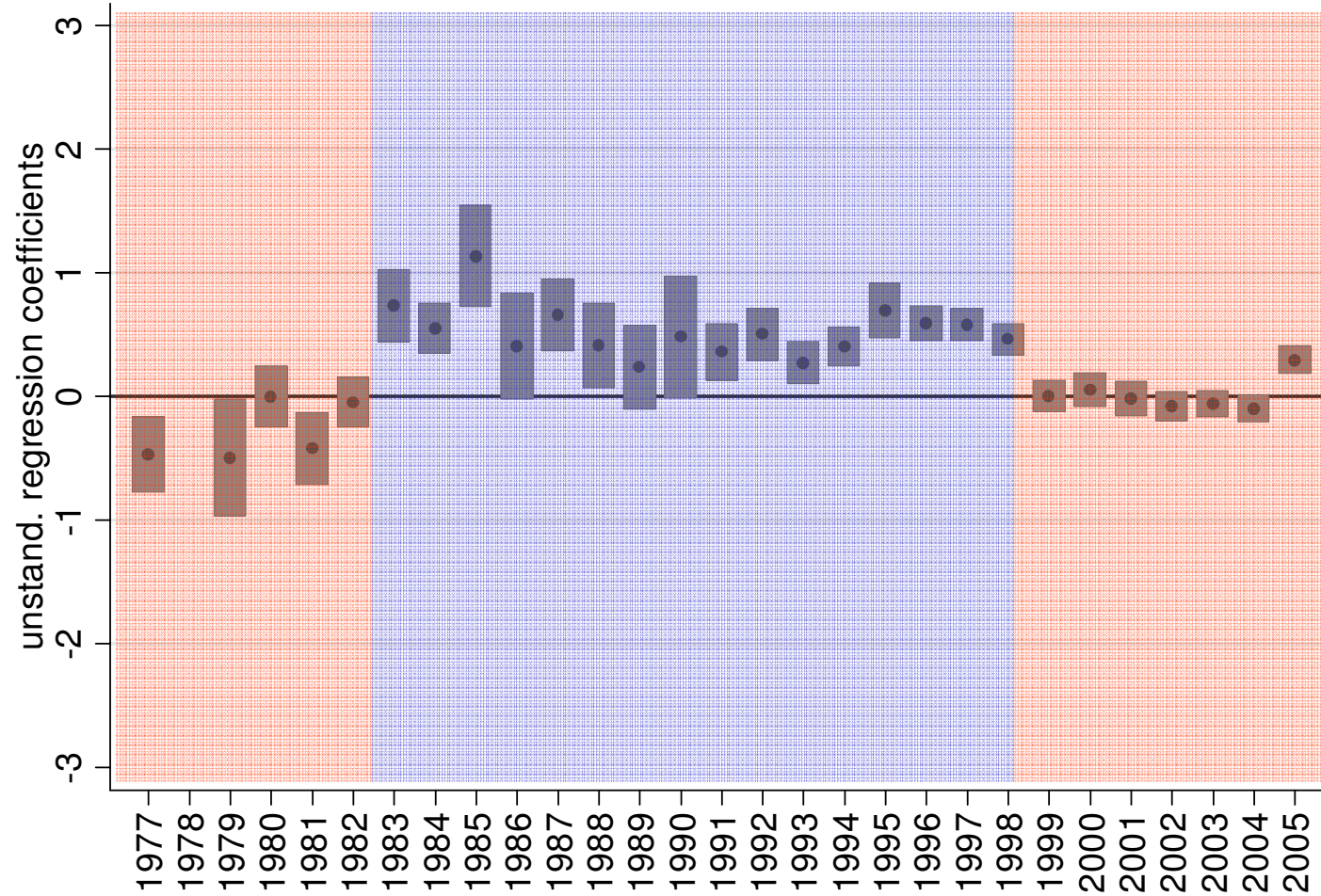
Christian Democrats: Perceptions of Nation. Econ.



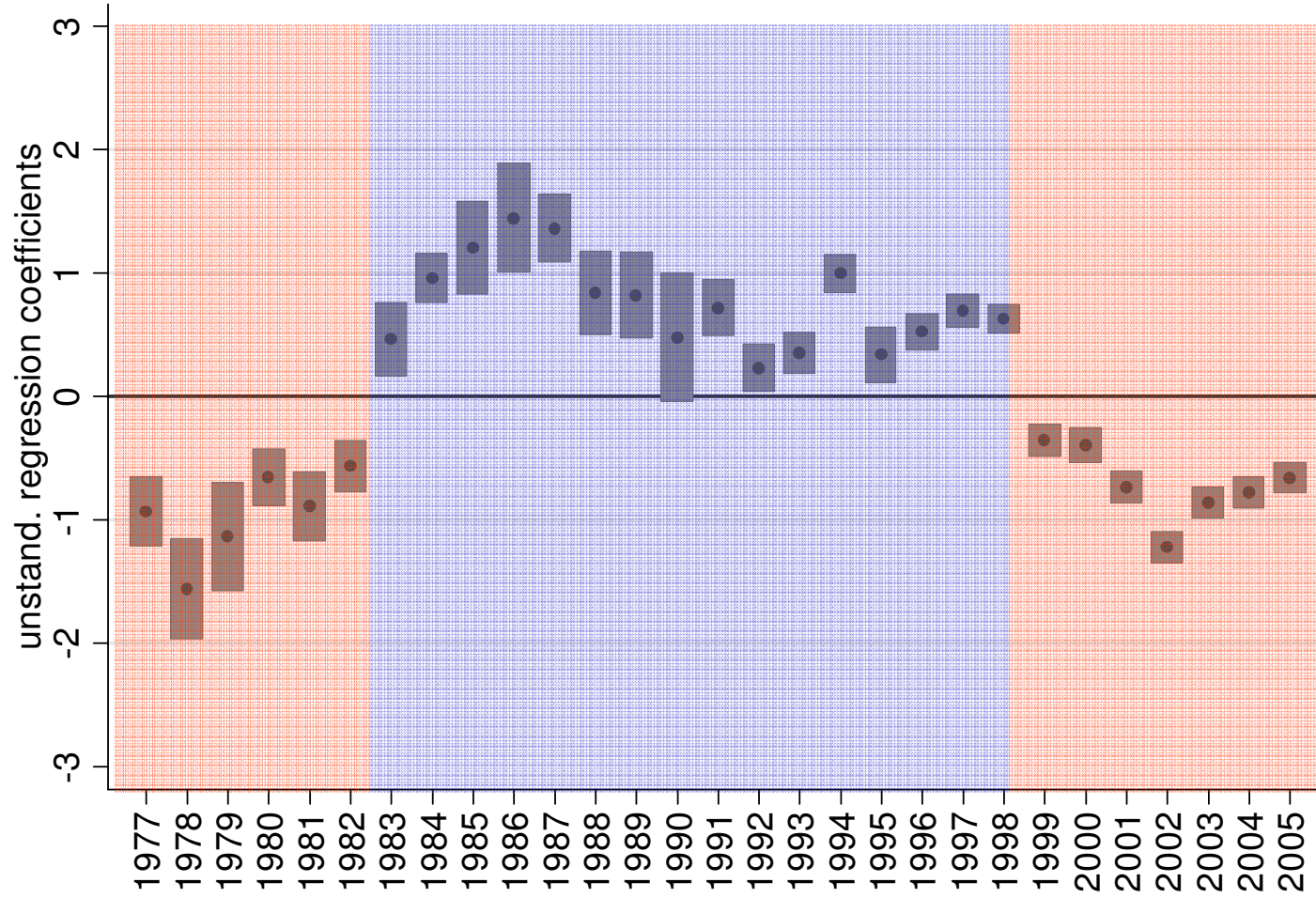
Christian Democrats: Individual Unemployment



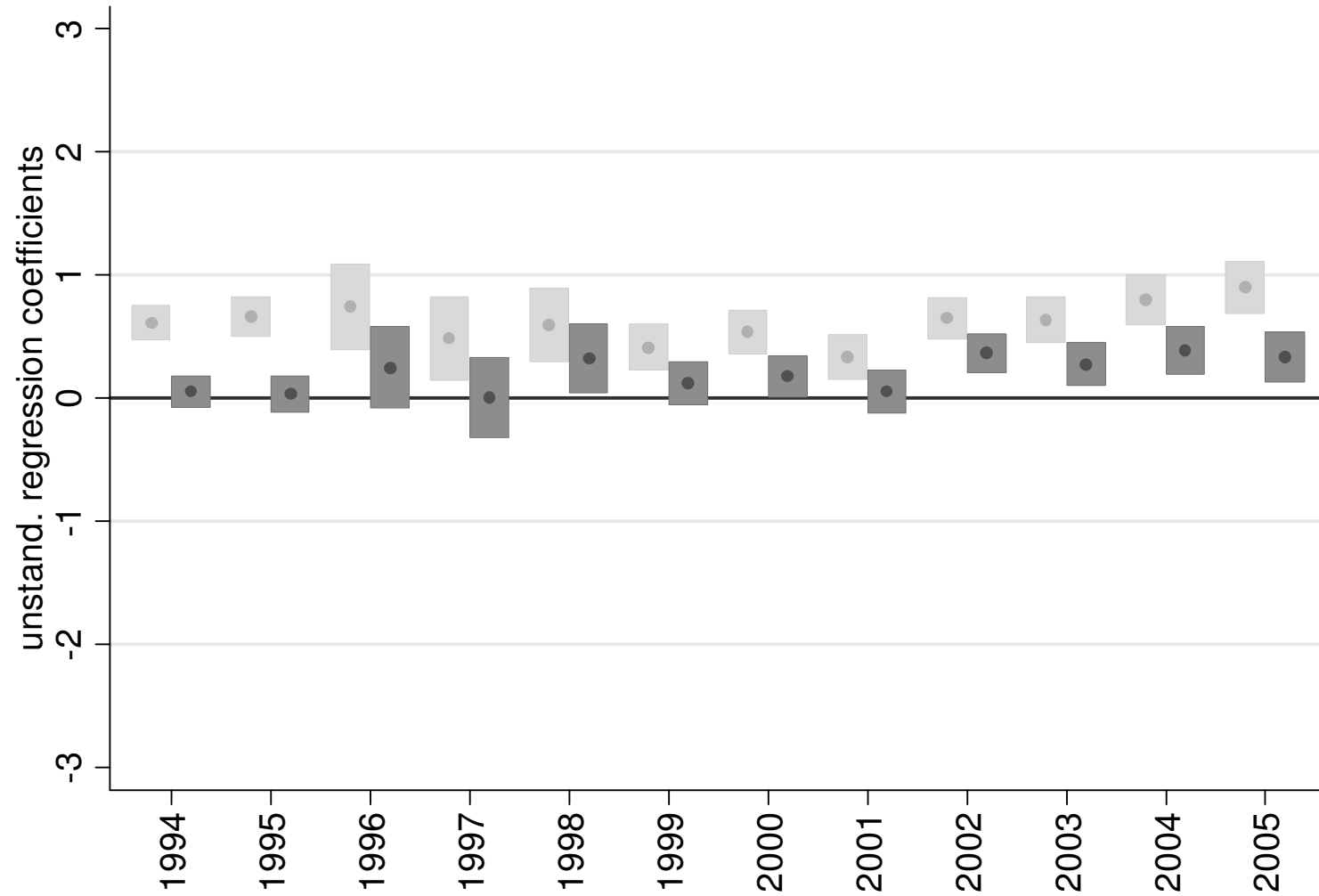
Christian Democrats: Perceptions of Ind. Economy



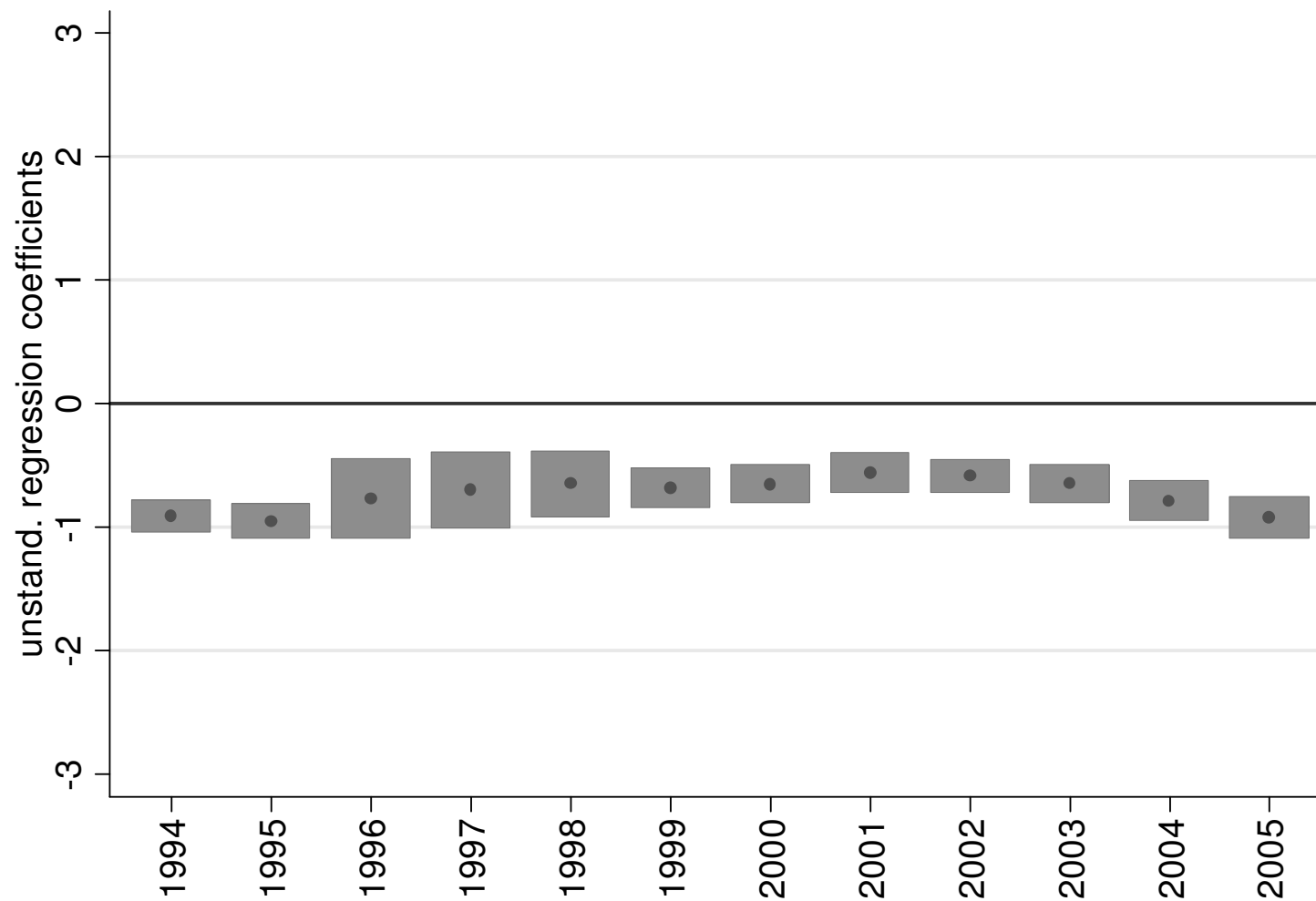
Christian Democrats: Perceptions of Nation. Econ.



Leftist Party/PDS: Individual Unemployment (East G.)

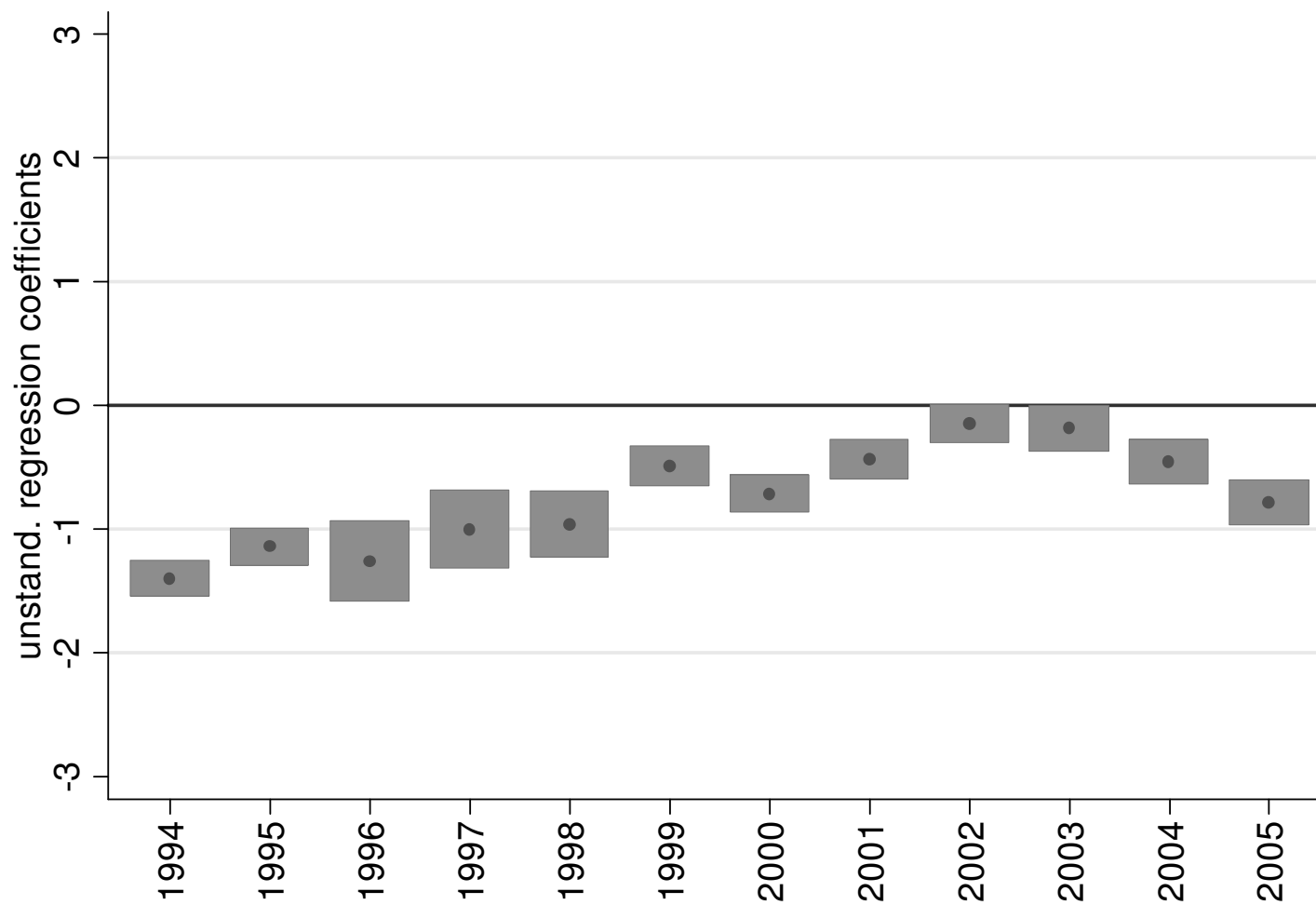


Leftist Party: Perceptions of Ind. Economy (East G.)

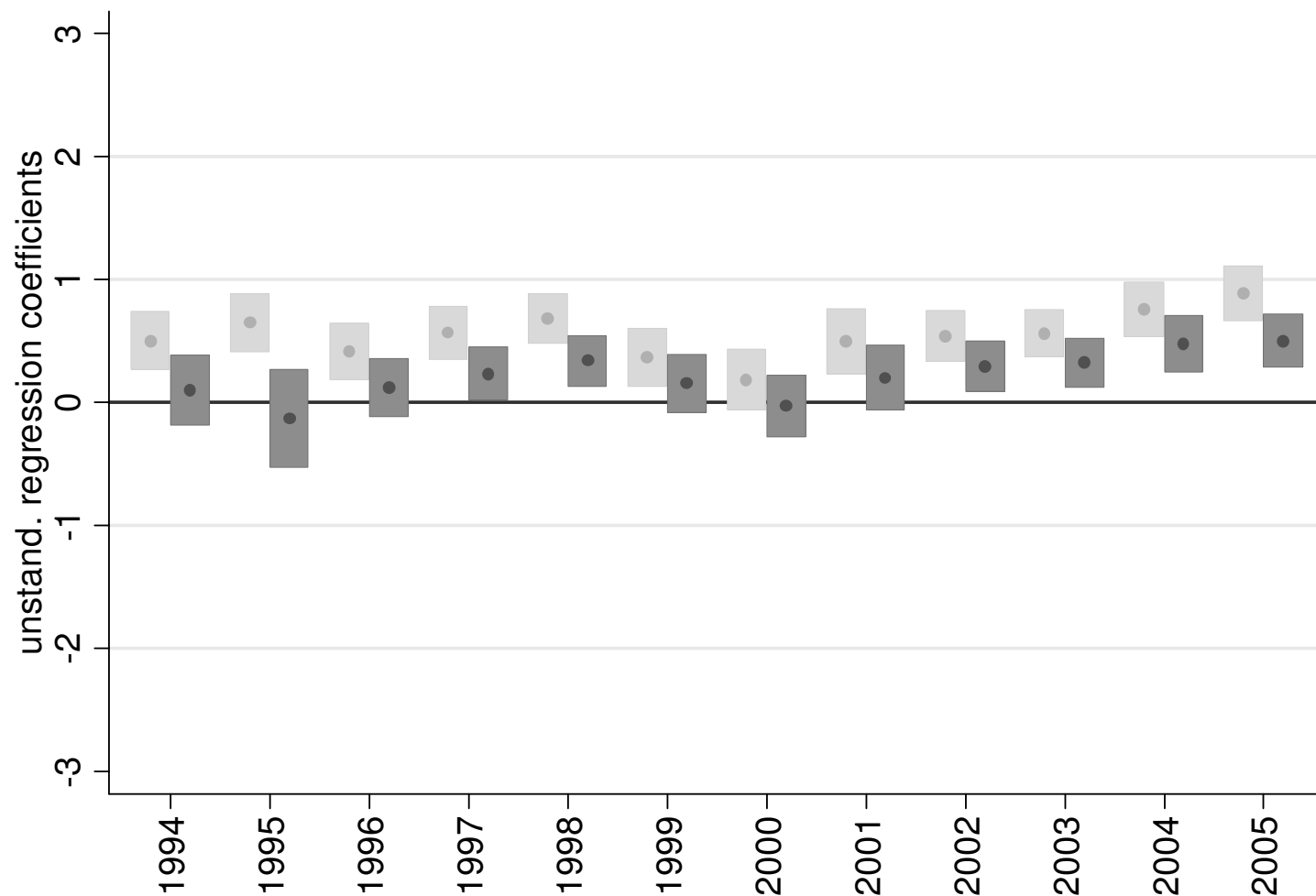


Leftist Party: Perceptions of Nat. Economy (East G.)

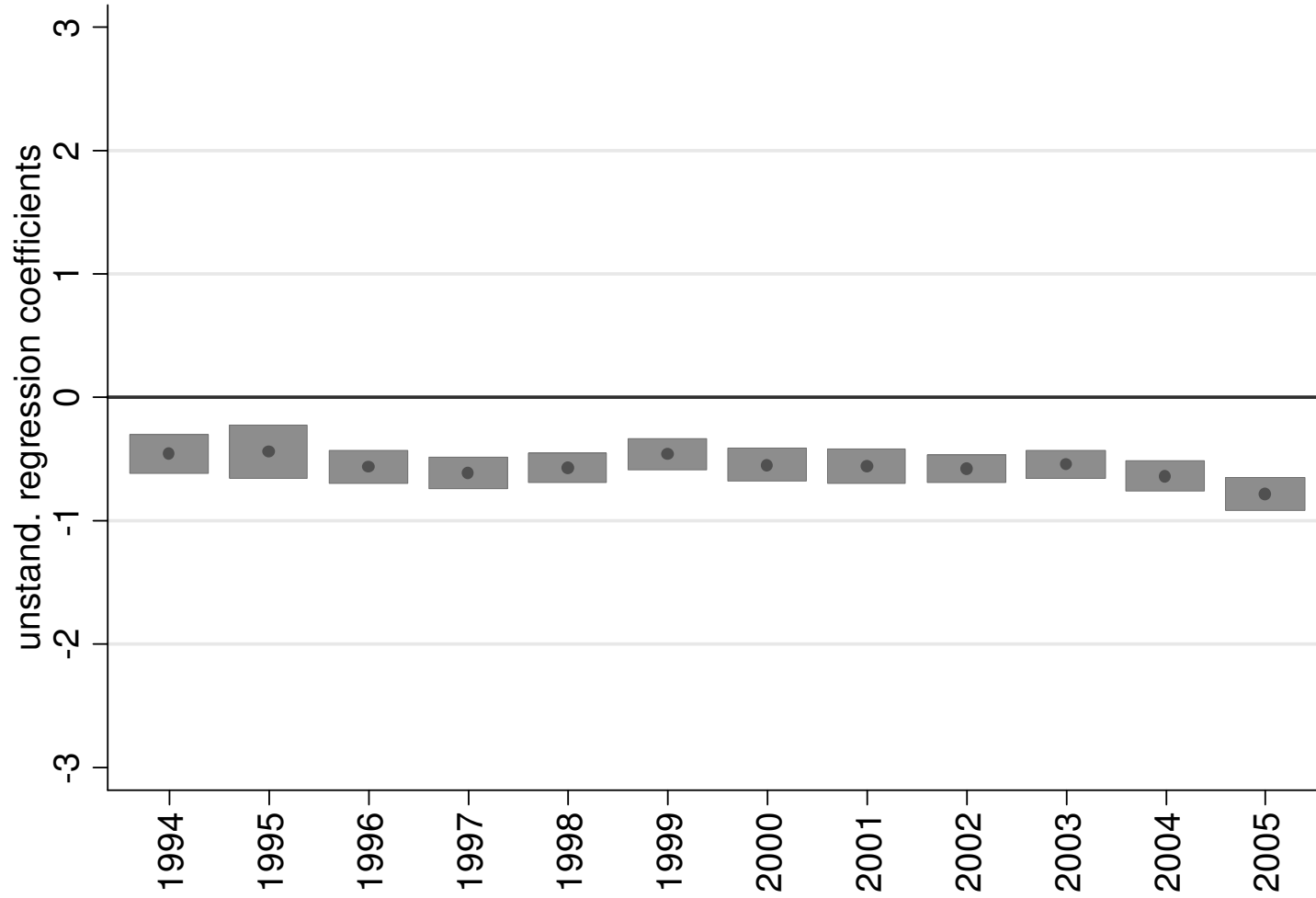
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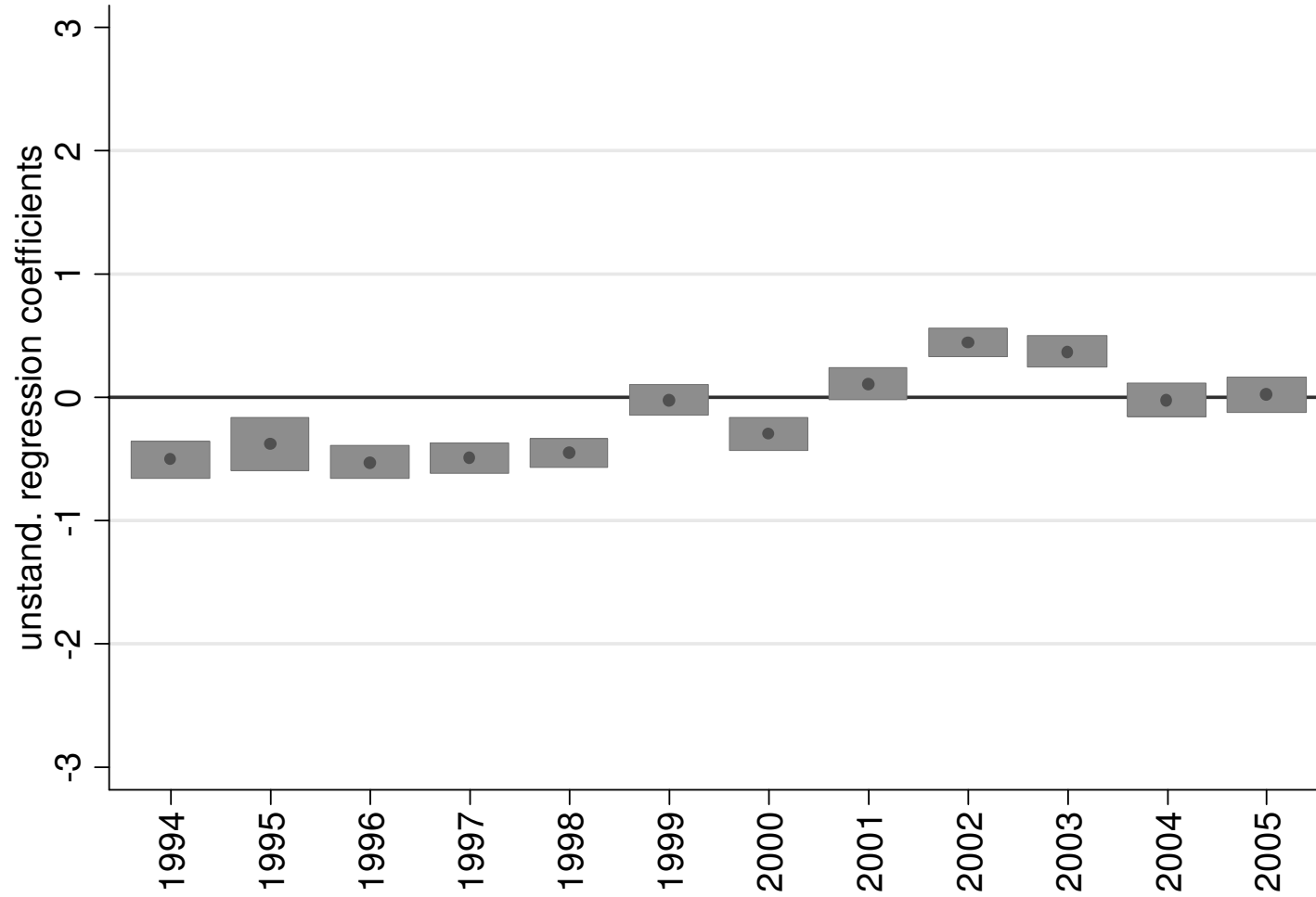
Leftist Party: Individual Unemployment (West G.)



Leftist Party: Perceptions of Ind. Economy (West G.)

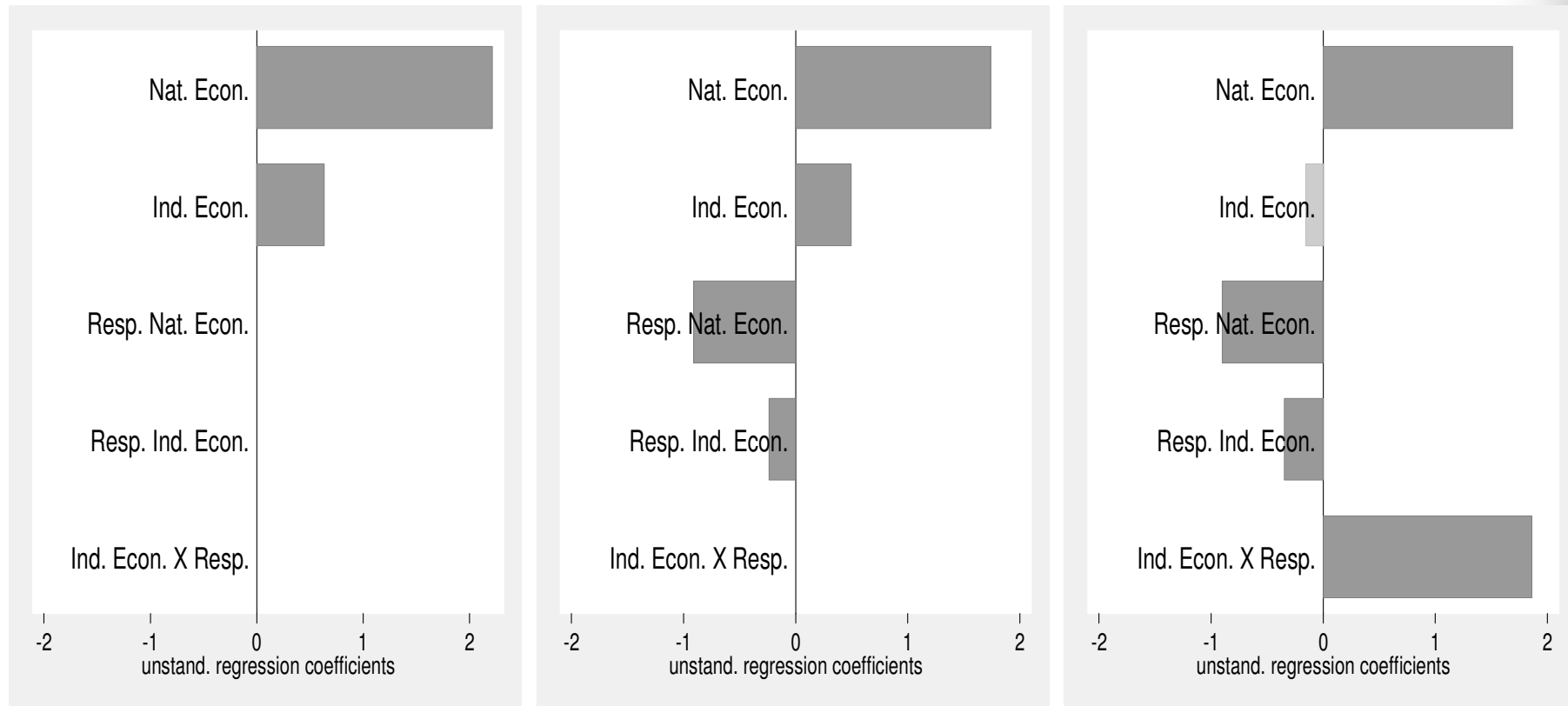


Leftist Party: Perceptions of Nat. Economy (West G.)



But when including attributions of responsibility ...

... feelings towards Social Democrats



- Unemployment experiences can take on several forms and should be studied in a differentiated way
- Unemployment experiences leave their imprint on perceptions of economic situations on different layers
- Attributions of responsibility:
 - Should be studied as dependent variables to understand the mechanisms that lead to attributions of responsibility
 - Should be included in economic-voting models due to their nature as intervening variables
- Policy-, but also incumbency-oriented effects of unemployment depending on party and political context

Thank you!

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- Contact:
Thorsten Faas
University of Mannheim
A5, 6
68131 Mannheim
Germany

Thorsten.Faas@uni-mannheim.de
www.thorsten-faas.de