

The development of socio-economic and political cleavages in Germany and Sweden 1949-2017

Fabian Kosse¹ and Thomas Piketty²

¹University of Munich & Institute on Behavior and Inequality (briq)

²Paris School of Economics – EHESS & World Inequality Lab



Introduction

- Income and wealth inequalities have been rising in most developed economies since the 1980s (Alvaredo et al. 2018)
- Yet, the political responses to these evolutions have been very diverse. European countries have been much more successful at containing inequality than the US (Piketty, Saez & Zucman 2018; Blanchet, Chancel & Gethin 2019)
- More recently , democratic countries seem to be moving away from distributive conflicts and turning towards identity-based politics (Le Pen, Trump, Bolsonaro, Modi...)
- “Why do the poor not expropriate the rich in democracies?” (Roemer 1998)

Related literature

- **Historical evolution of electoral behaviors in old democracies** (Lipset & Rokkan 1967; Evans et al. 2012; Evans & Rennwald 2014...)
- **Rise of “populism” in Western democracies** (Moriconi et al. 2018; Becker & Fetzer 2017; Autor et al. 2017; Colantone & Stanig 2018; Rodrik 2018; Algan et al. 2018; Becker et al. 2017...)
- **Demand and supply for redistribution** (Pontussen & Rueda 2010; Iversen & Soskize 2015; Bonica et al. 2013; Tavits & Potter 2015; Roemer 1998; Roemer et al. 2007)
- **Connecting cleavage structures to distributive politics** (Piketty 2018; Banerjee et al. 2019; Jenman & Gethin 2019)

This presentation

- A new database on the long-run evolution of electoral behaviors in Germany and Sweden.
- Focus on the division between ‘left-wing’ and ‘right-wing’ parties which has historically structured party politics in a majority of old democracies → follow-up of Piketty’s (2018) study on the emergence of multiple elites party systems in France, the UK and the US.
- Disclaimer: very preliminary results. Suggestions welcome!

Data coverage

Germany

- **Source A:**
Bundestagswahlstudien
1949-2005 (Arndt & Gattig
2005)
- **Source B:** German
Longitudinal Election Study
(GLES) 2009-2017
- **Number of Elections:** 19
- **Average sample:** $N = 1300$

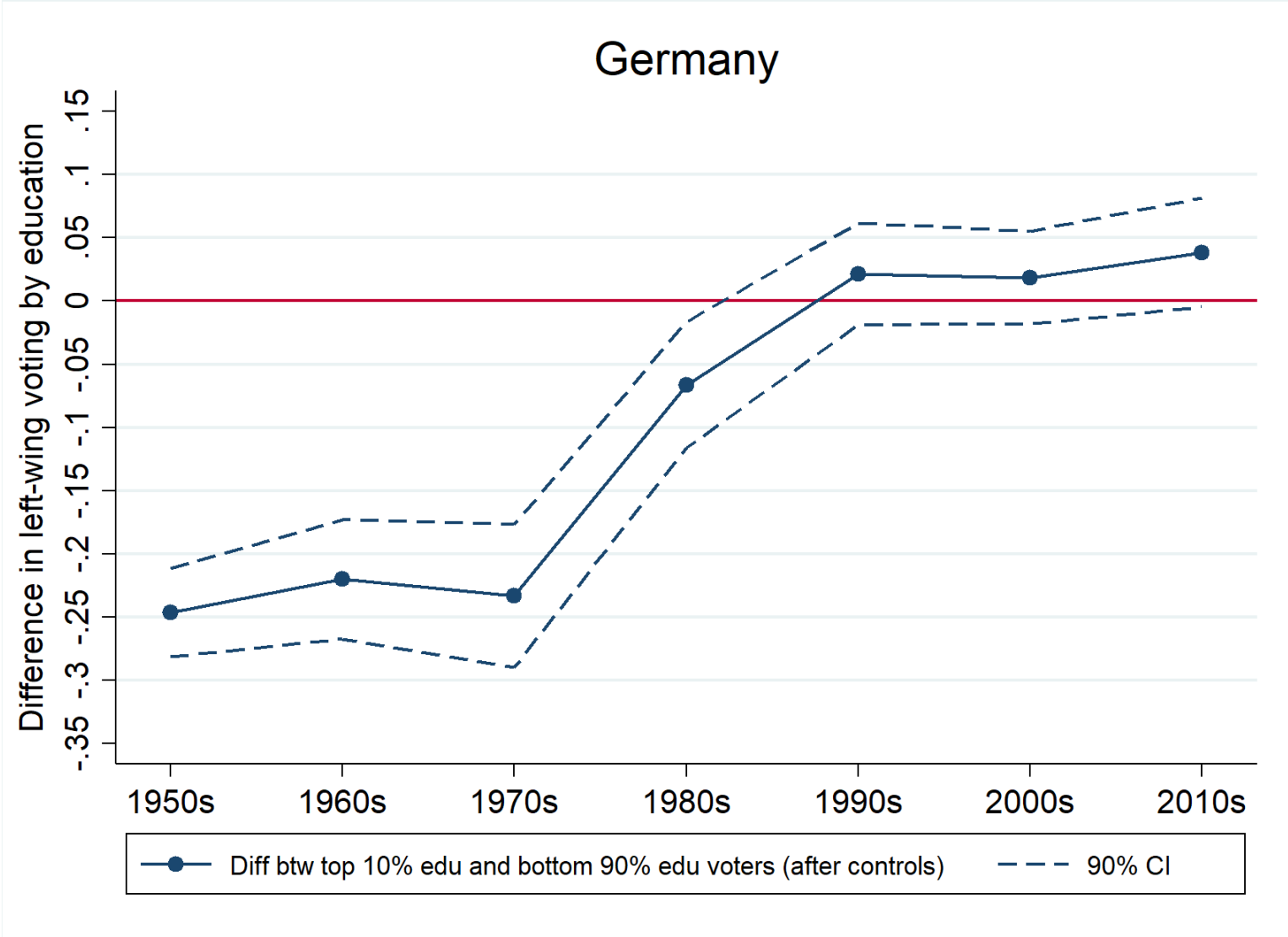
Sweden

- **Source:** Swedish Election
Studies 1956-2010
- **Number of Elections:** 17
- **Average sample:** $N = 2000$

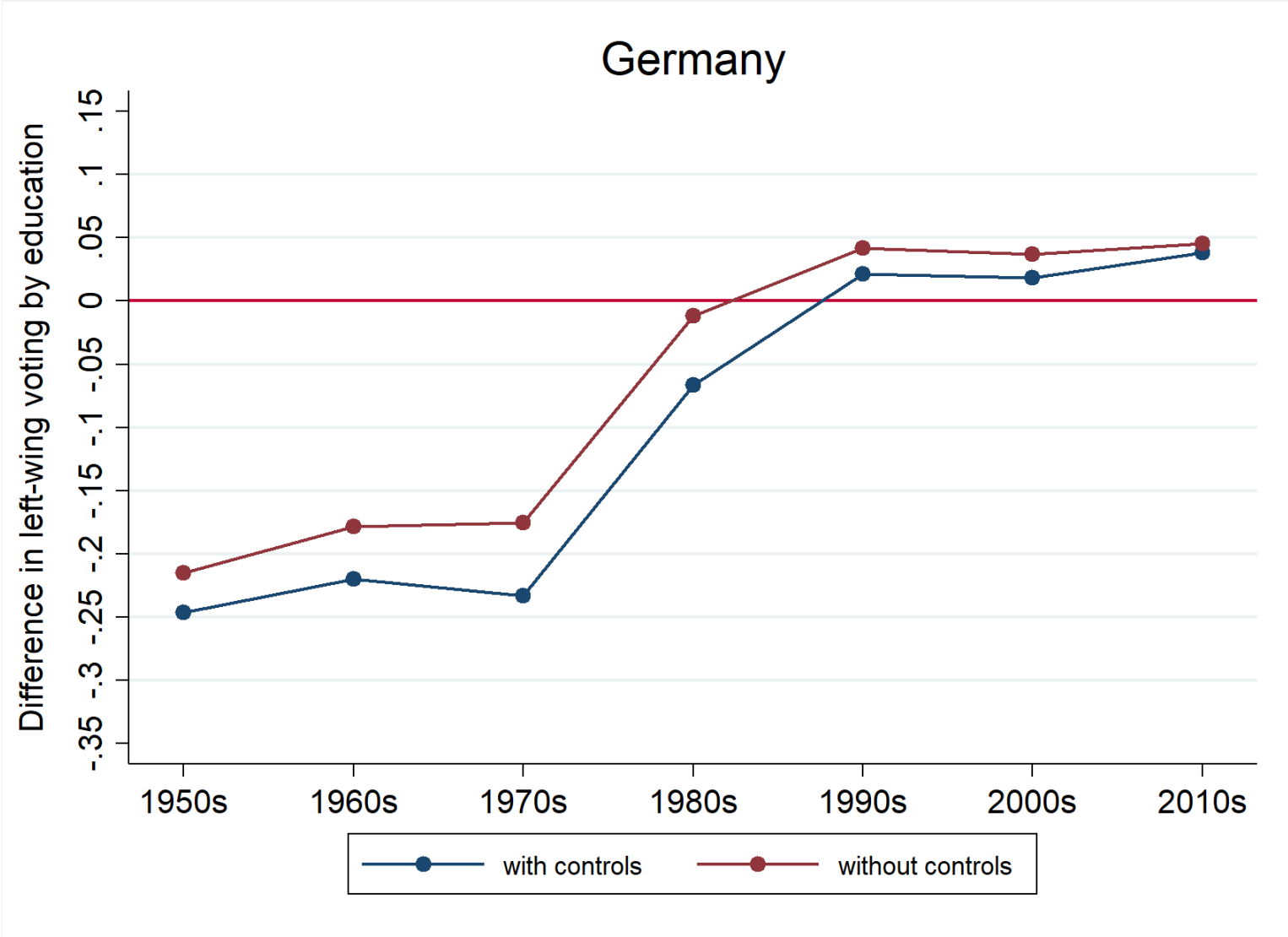
Germany: data description

- Left-wing parties: SPD, Greens, Die Linke, KPD, and others
- Until 1990 only data on FRG
- Restricting post 1990 sample to former FRG territory does not affect pattern
- Often no information on Uni graduation available, just school leaving degree
- Controls: age, gender, and confession
- So far: no weights to match actual voting outcomes

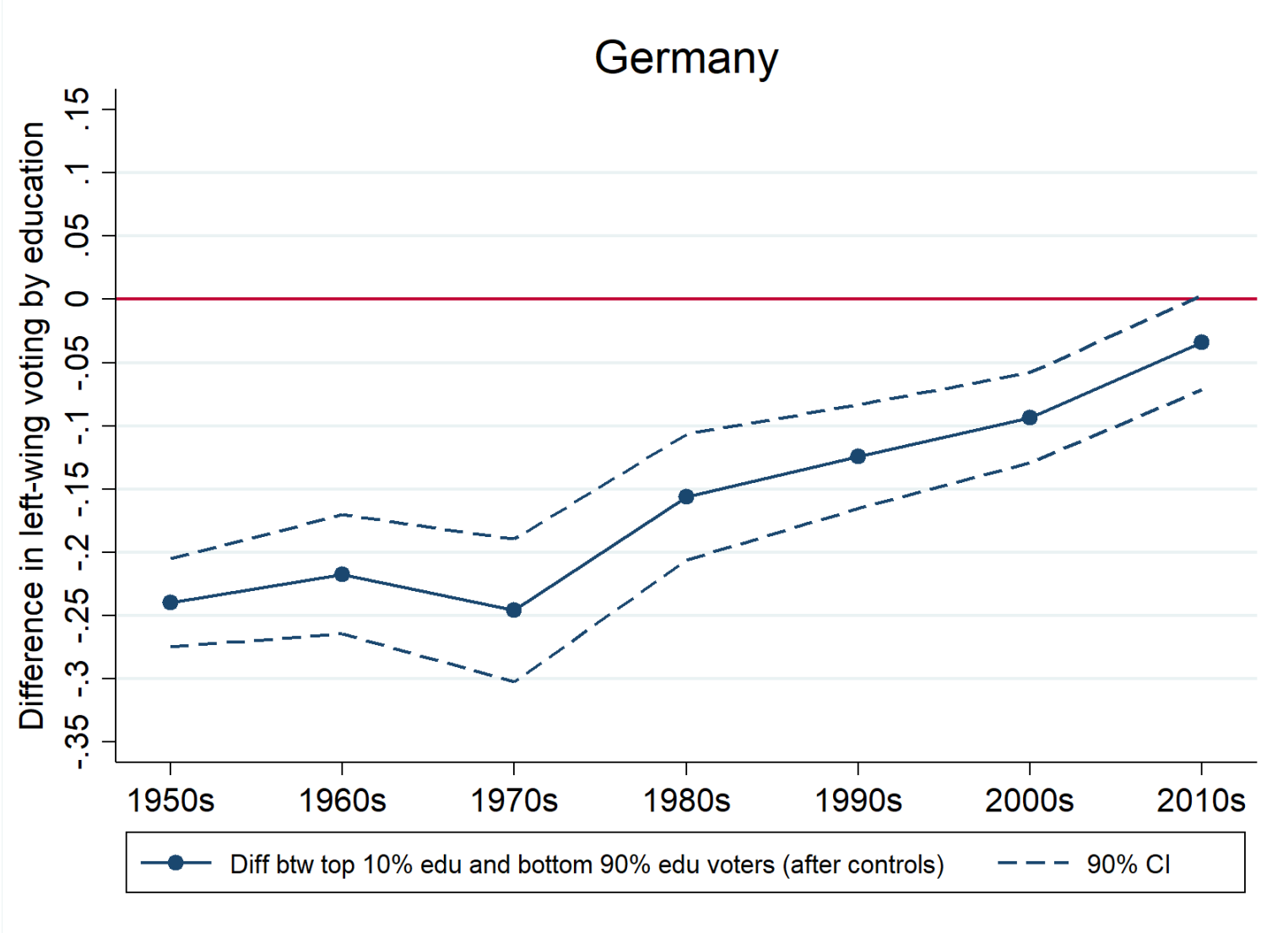
Germany: all left-wing parties



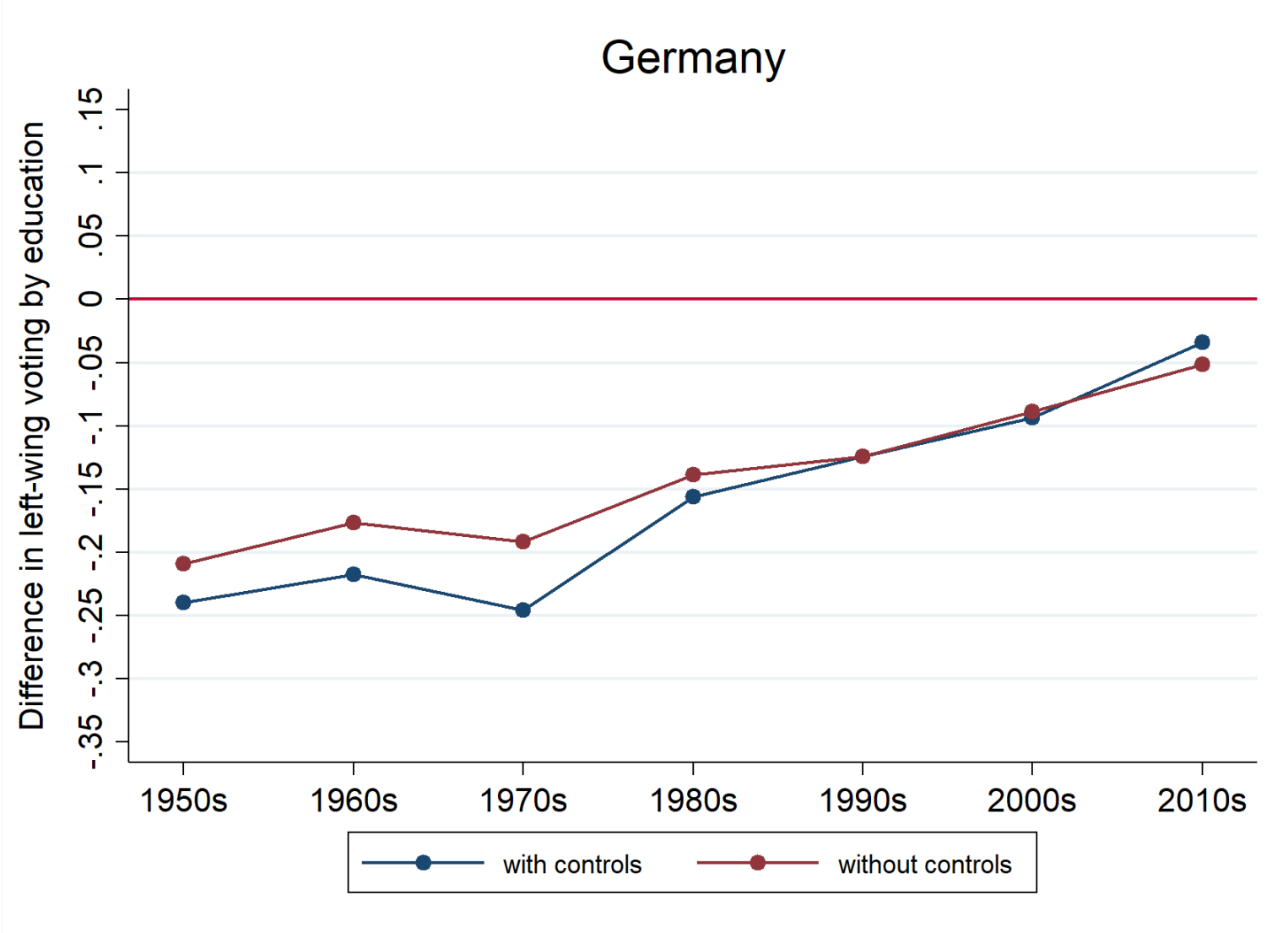
Germany: all left-wing parties



Germany: SPD only



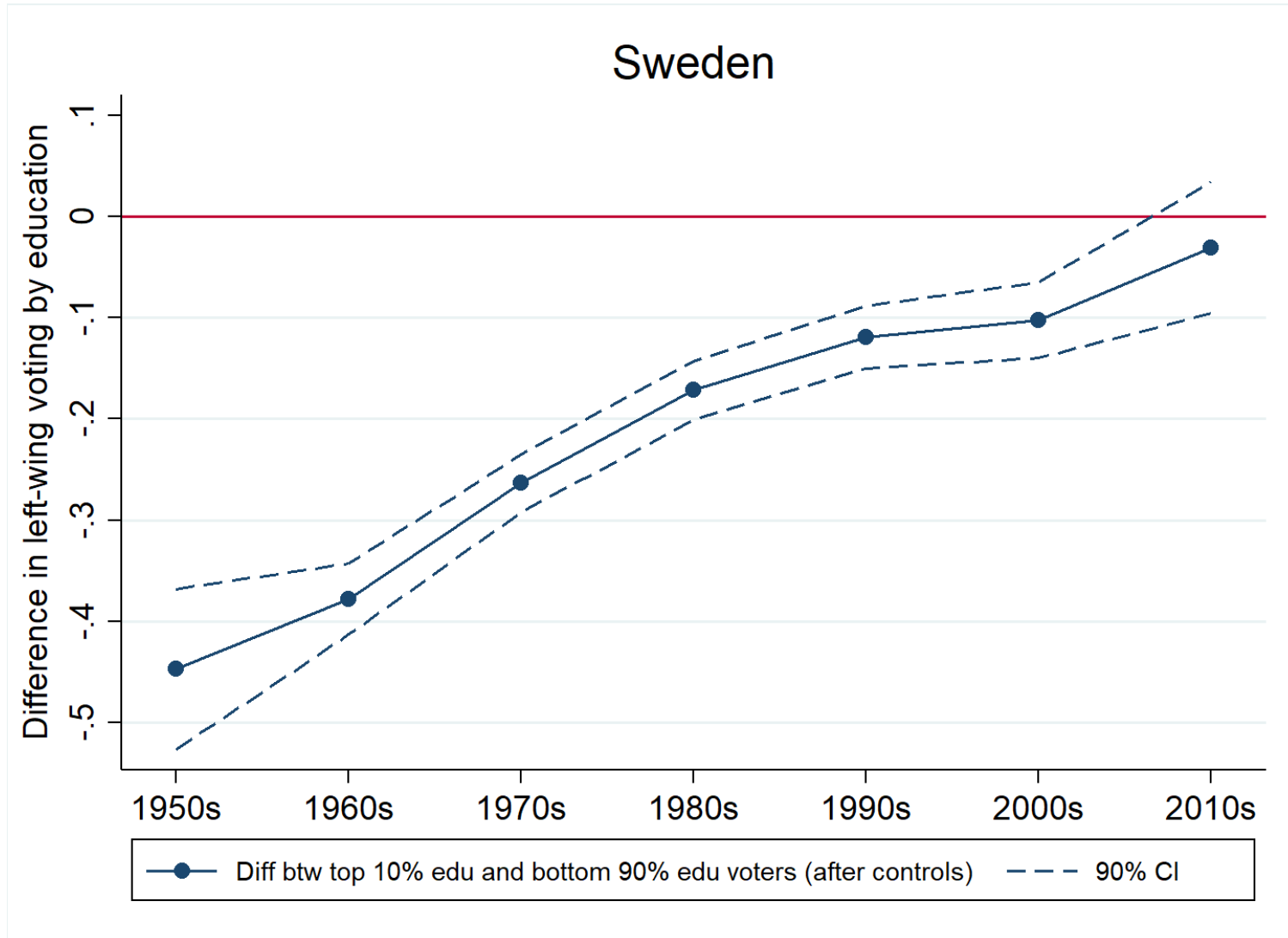
Germany: SPD only



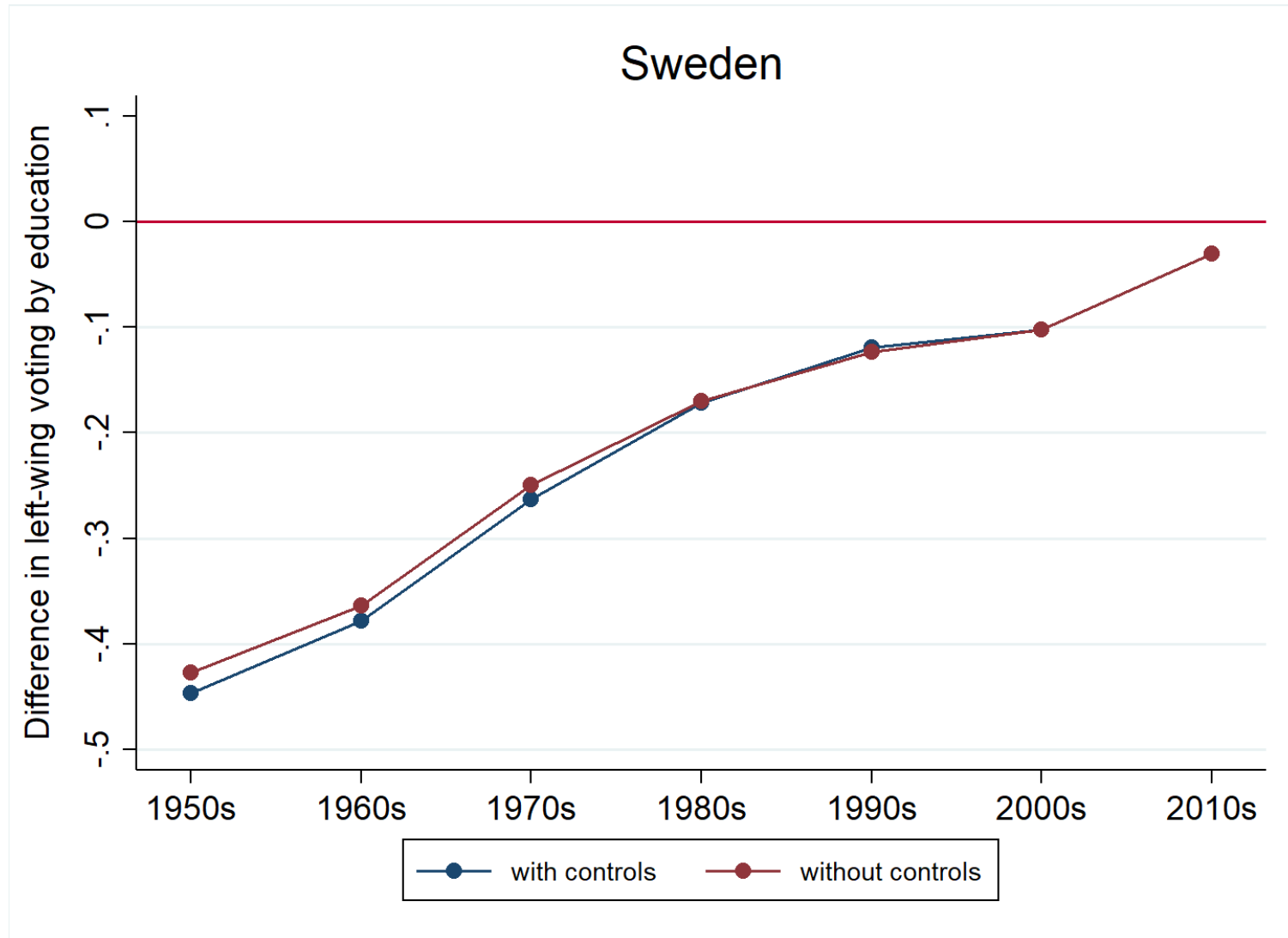
Sweden: data description

- Left-wing parties: SAP, Kommunisterna, Greens, and others
- Controls: age, gender, and frequency of going to church
- So far: no weights to match actual voting outcomes

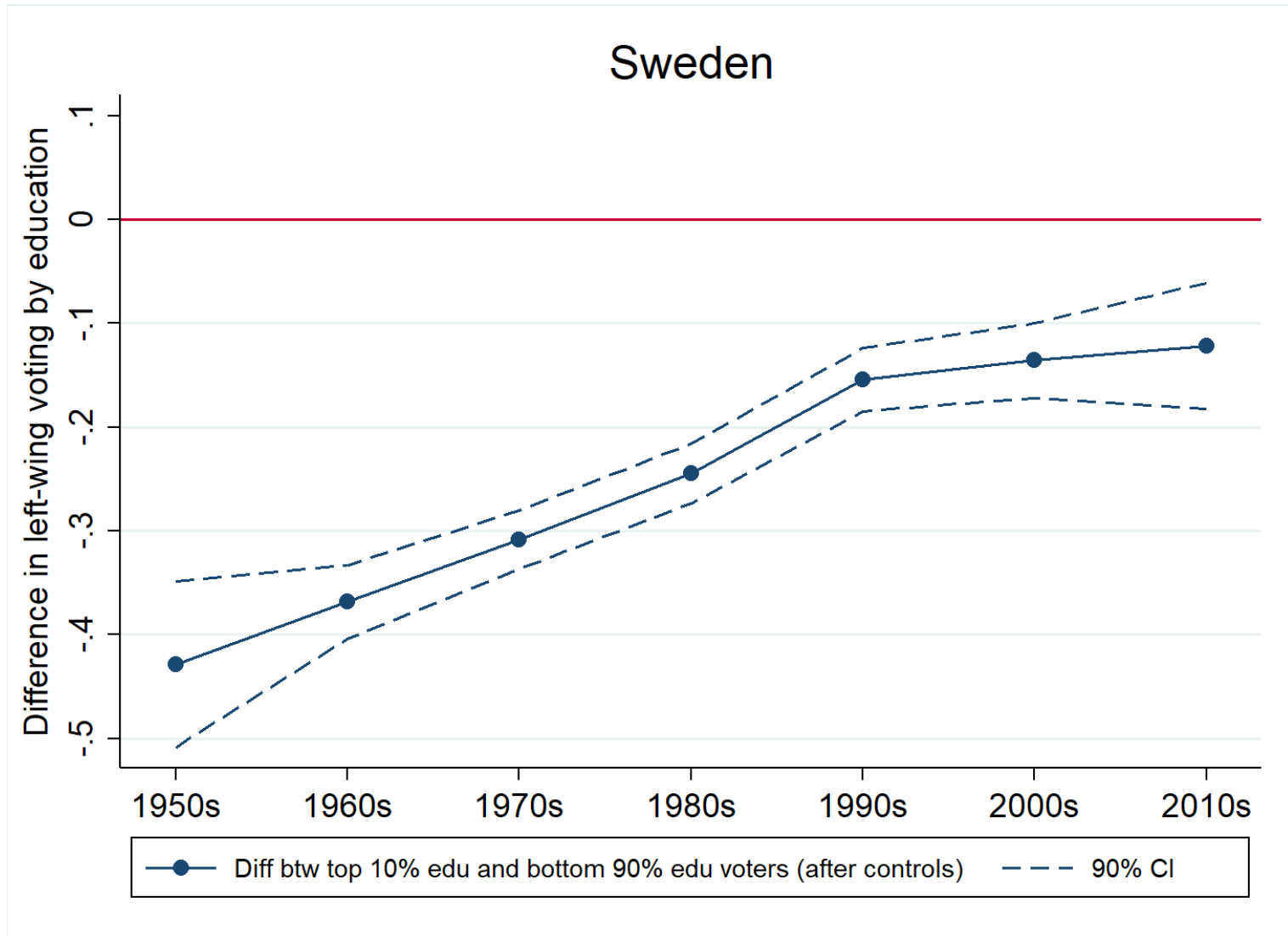
Sweden: all left-wing parties



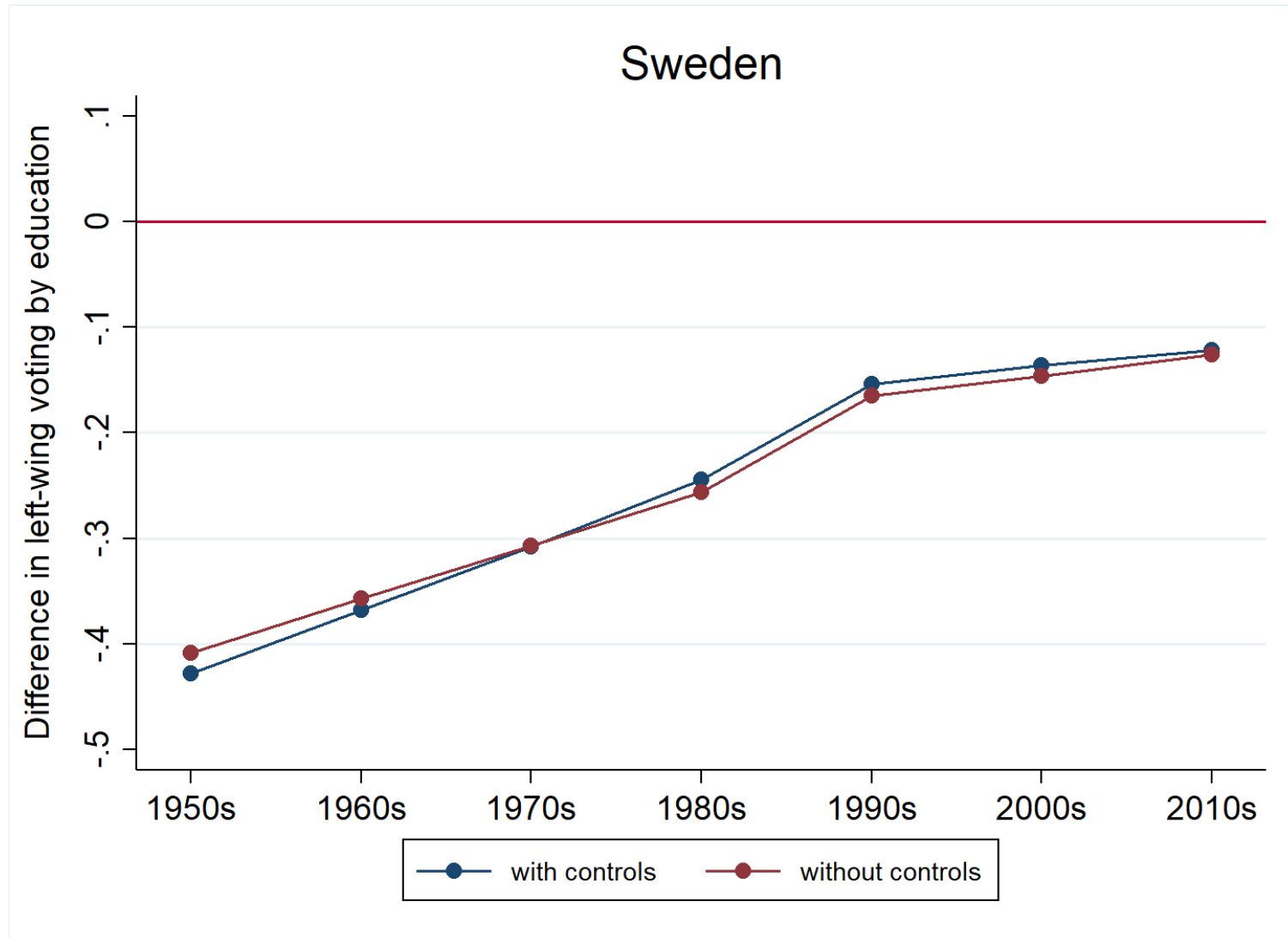
Sweden: all left-wing parties



Sweden: SAP only

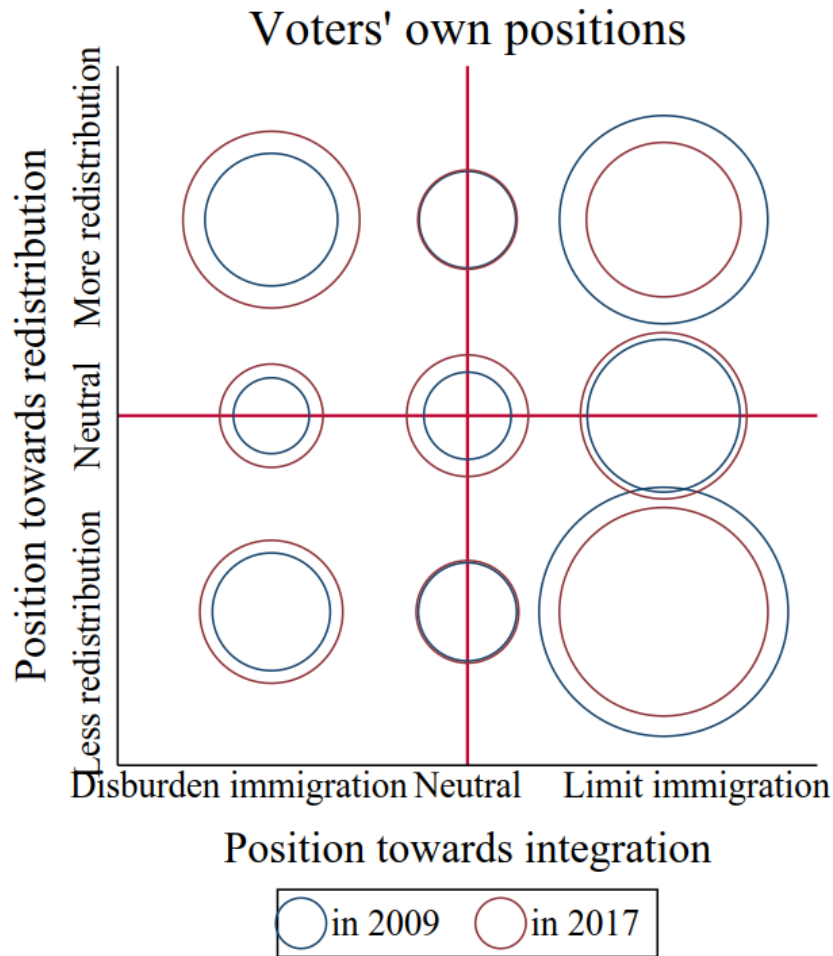


Sweden: SAP only

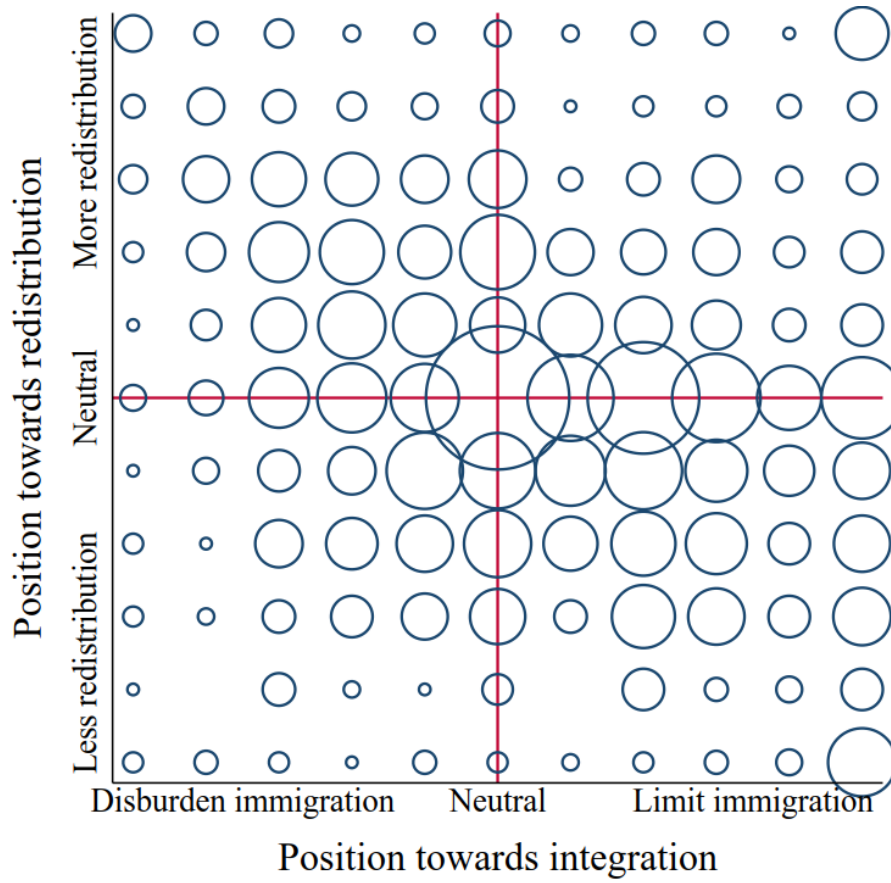


Germany: recent developments

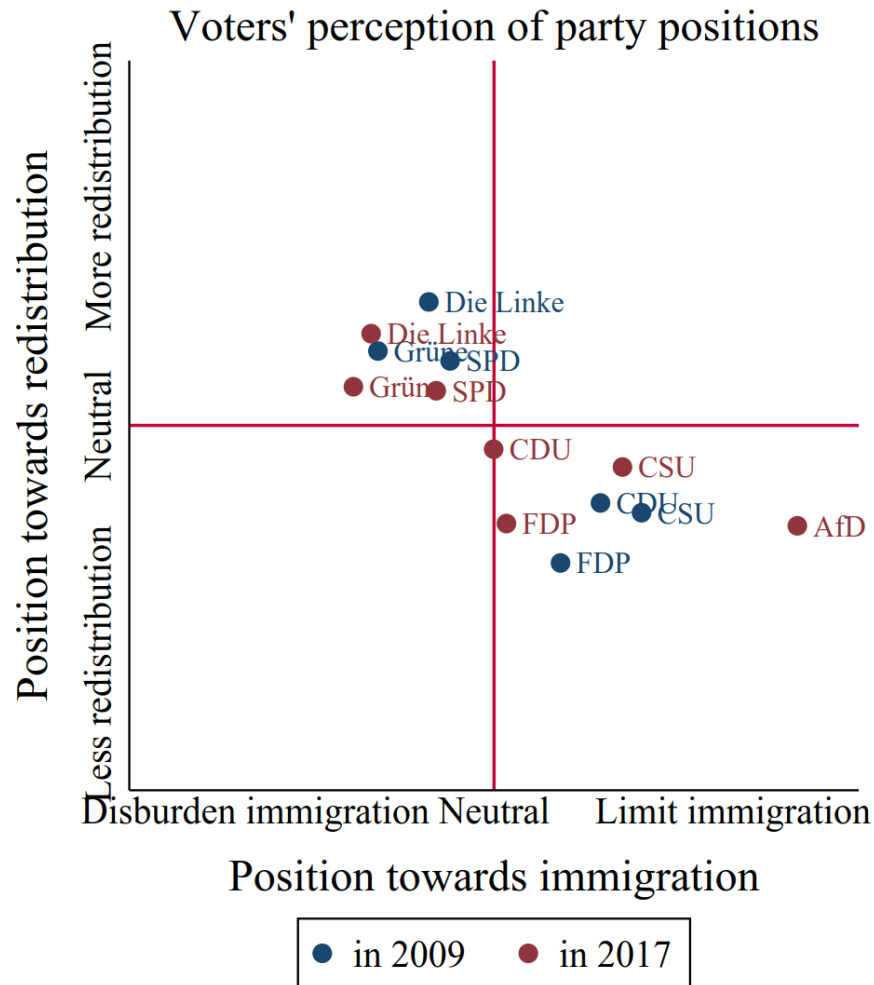
Development of Voters Attitudes from 2009 to 2017



Voters Attitudes 2017



Development of Voters Attitudes from 2008 to 2017



Changing socio-economic and political cleavages in Germany and Sweden 1949-2017

Fabian Kosse¹ and Thomas Piketty²

¹University of Munich & Institute on Behavior and Inequality (briq)

²Paris School of Economics – EHESS & World Inequality Lab

