

The political economy of mass media

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A roadmap

- ▶ The political position of the media: how to measure it

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(demand vs. supply)

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- ▶ Game-theoretic models on the political role of the media: commitment models vs. political agency models

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 - ▶ (1) the comparison approach: compare media outlets with political actors whose ideological position is known (e.g. congressmen and/or voters))
 - ▶ (2) the agenda approach: analyse the amount of coverage devoted to different policy relevant issues (*agenda-setting*) and/or the way those issues are covered (*framing* and *priming*)

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- ▶ Third idea: I code a newspaper as left leaning the more it provides endorsements on referenda that are aligned with the endorsements made by the Democratic party. Since voters vote on referenda (by definition!), I can compare newspapers to voters as well. Puglisi e Snyder [2009].

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- ▶ One can investigate whether and to what extent during presidential campaigns a given newspaper gives more coverage to issues on which Democrats or Republicans are perceived as more competent(*issue ownership*). E.g.: health care and civil rights vs. defense. Puglisi [2011]: issue coverage by the NYT during the 1946-1996 period.

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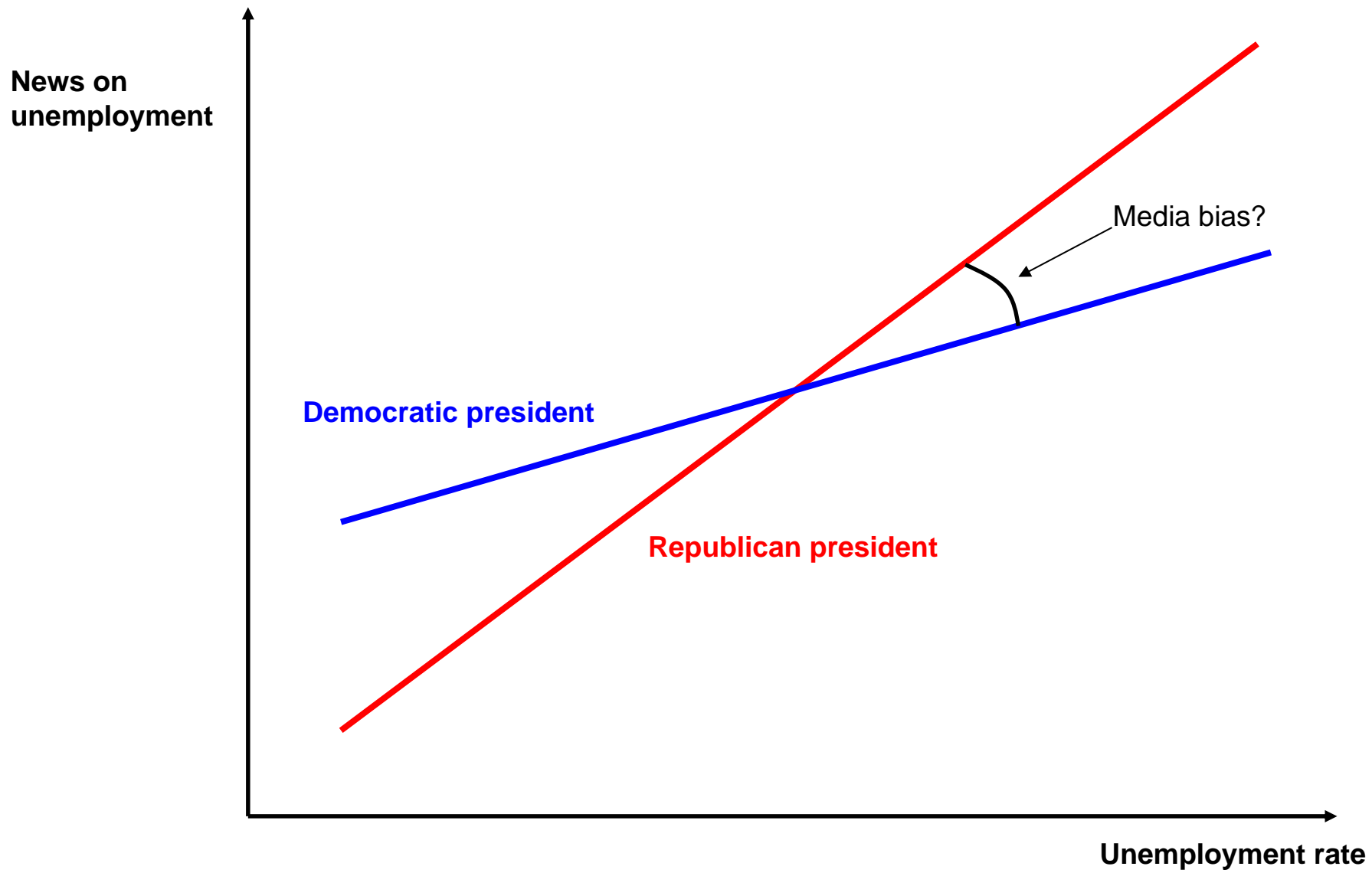
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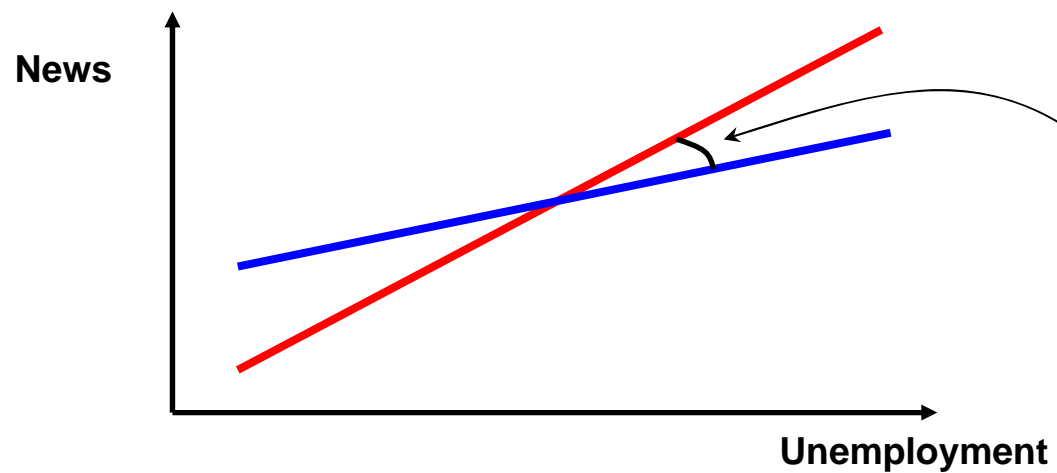
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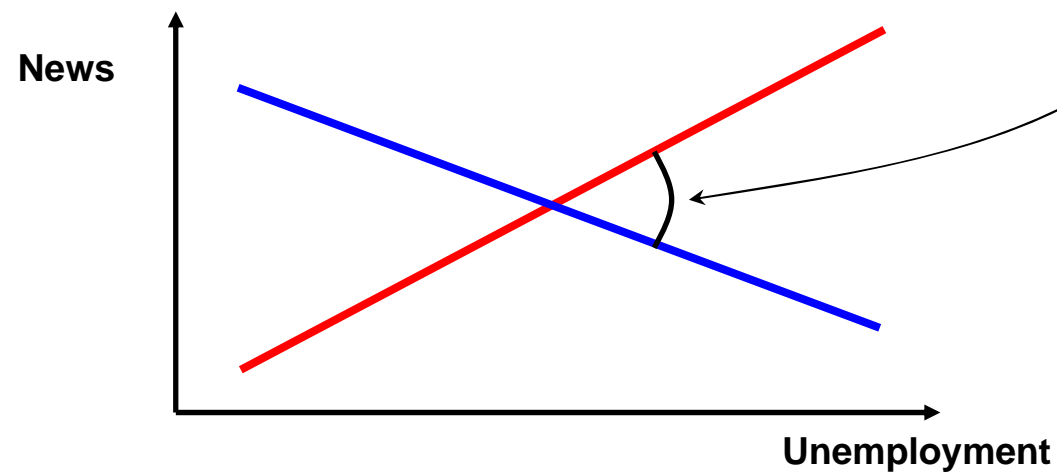
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- ▶ Analyse the variation in the tone of newspaper headlines about the release of macroeconomic figures, again as a function of the political affiliation of the incumbent president. Lott and Hassett [2004].





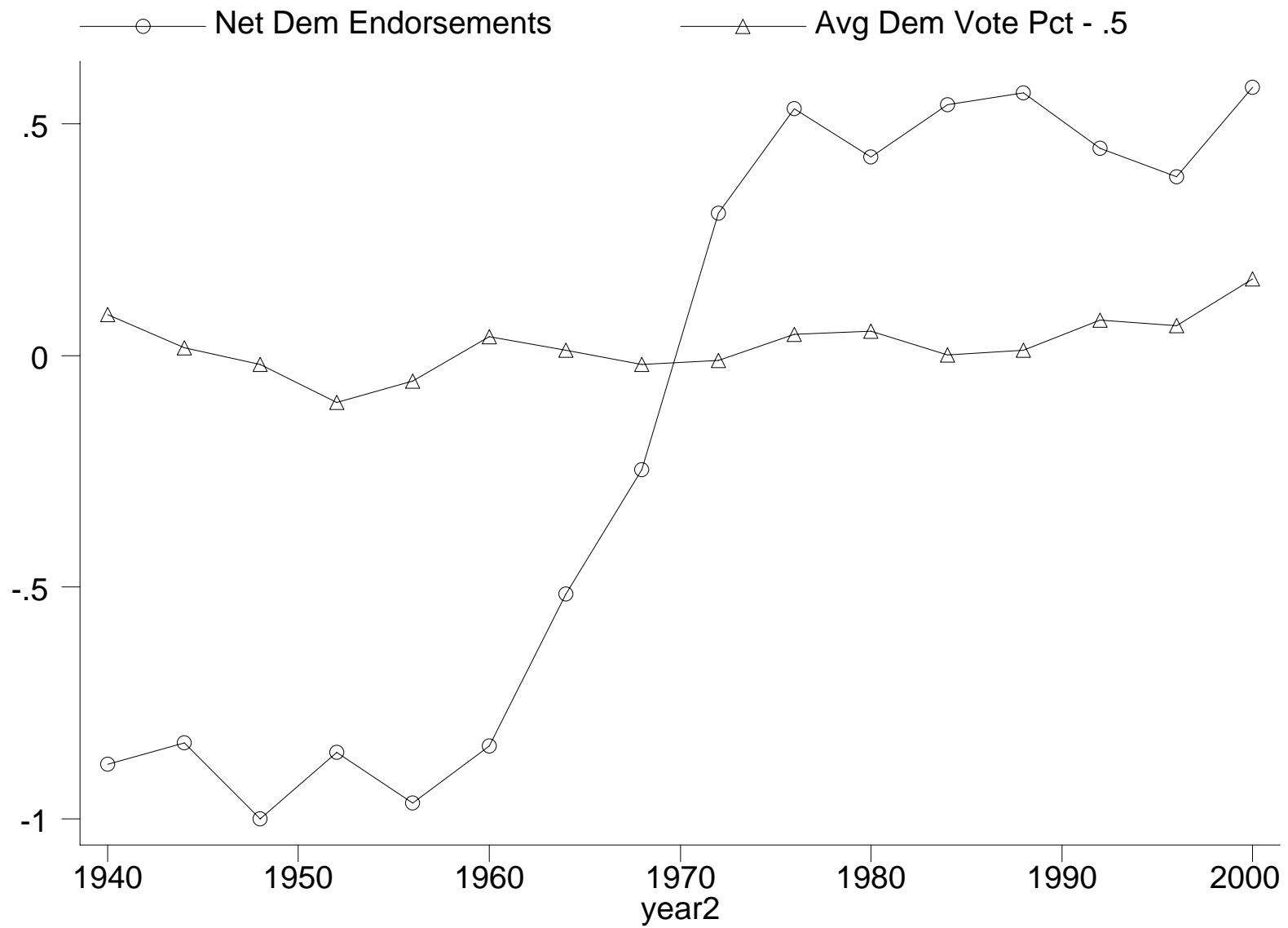
Republican newspaper

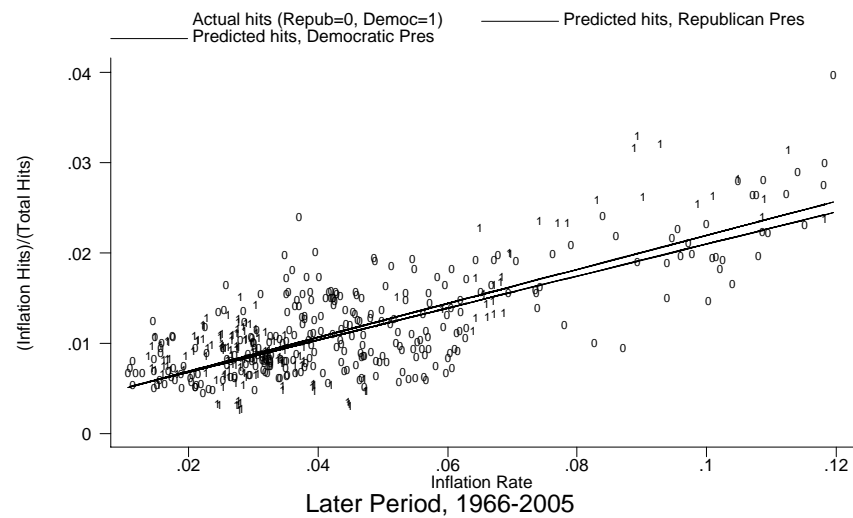
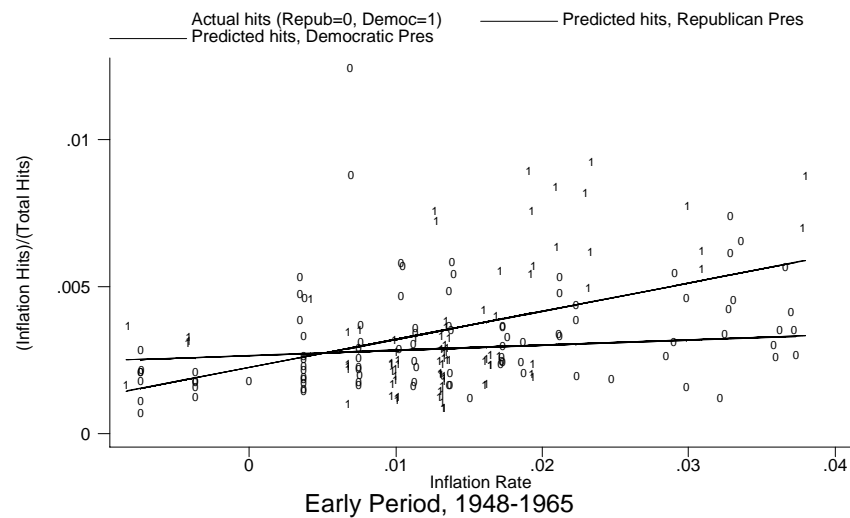
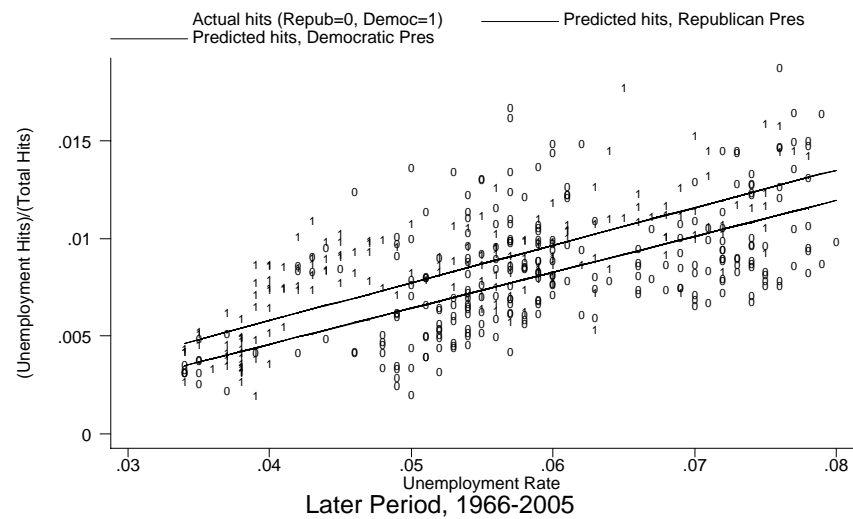
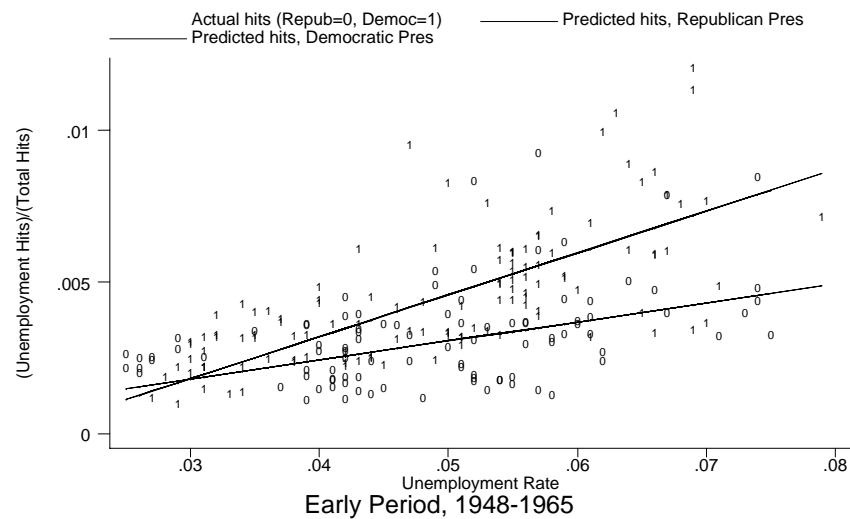
compare them!



Democratic newspaper

Time variation in net Democratic endorsements on the LA Times vs. Democratic vote in California

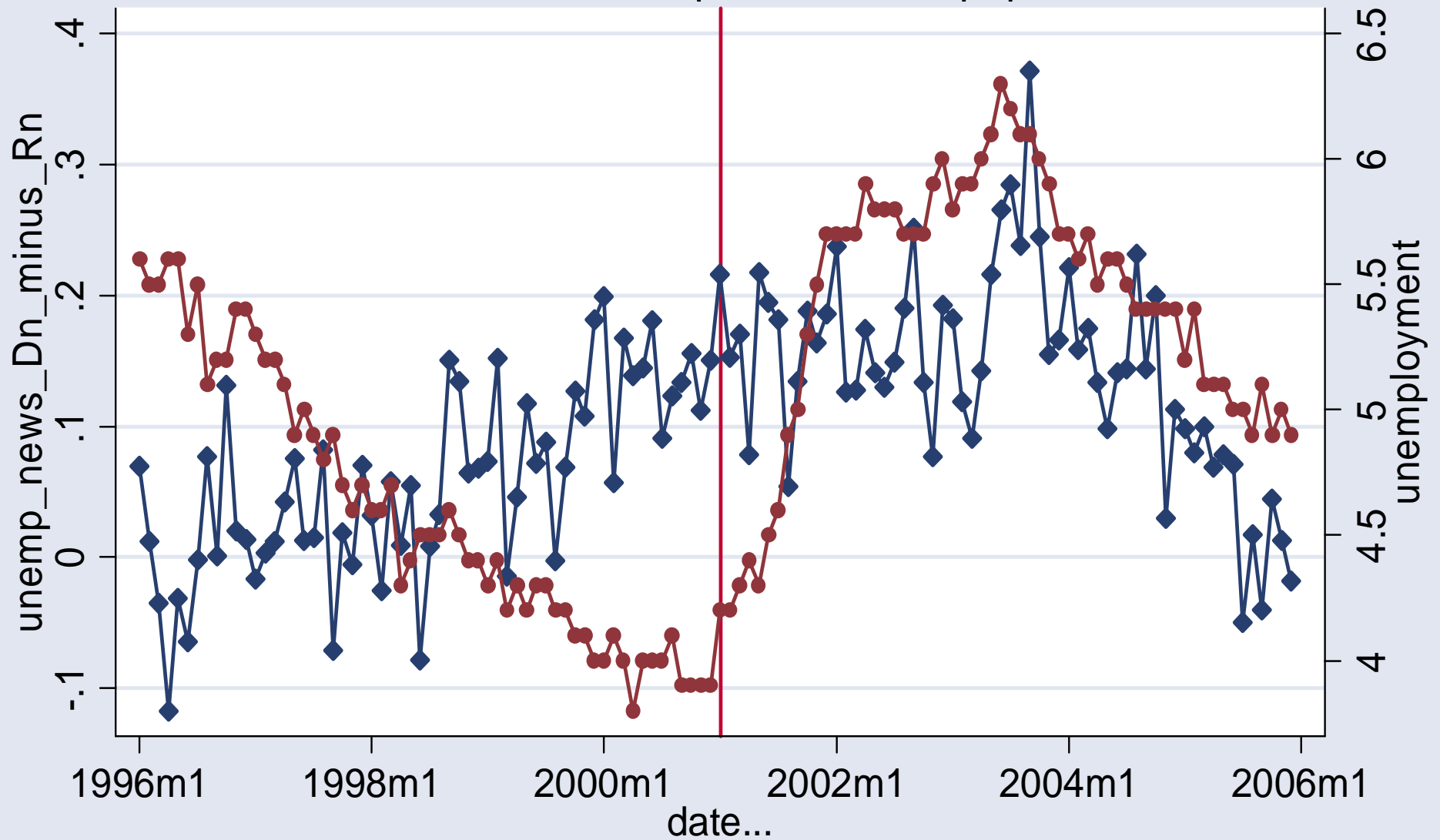




Los Angeles Times, Pre- and Post- Otis Chandler

Unemployment coverage, 1996-2005

Democratic vs. Republican newspapers



—◆— unemp_news_Dn_minus_Rn —●— unemployment

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- ▶ A case study on Italy (time devoted to politicians): Durante and Knight [2009].

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- ▶ Natural experiment: correlation between gradual introduction of Fox News in T cable markets and Republican vote in presidential elections. DellaVigna and Kaplan [2007].
- ▶ Persuasion and rationality of message recipients: only “surprising” endorsements have significant effects on propensity to vote for that candidate. Chiang and Knight [2011].

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- ▶ A comparative perspective: approaches to be applied to other countries.