

The Effects of Permitless Carry Laws on Crime

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Overview

- 1 in 5 Americans say that they, a family member, or a close friend experienced gun violence directly in the past 5 years (AP-NORC, 2022).
- During this timeframe, states adopted more permissive laws regulating carrying a concealed weapon in public.
 - Since 2015, over twenty states enacted a permitless carry policy.
- Research Question: What are the effects of permitless concealed carry policies on crime?

What is Permitless Carry?

- Permitless carry removes the need to undergo a background check to obtain a license to carry a concealed handgun in public.

	May Issue	Shall Issue	Permitless
State exerts discretion?	YES	NO	NO
License Required?	YES	YES	NO
Background Check?	YES	YES	NO
Training Required?	MOSTLY	MOSTLY	NO

Source: Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence; Everytown Gun Law Navigator

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What we know & contribution

- The majority of concealed handgun research focuses on concealed handgun licensing policies, but **not permitless carry**
- Loosening licensing restrictions increases violent crime and homicide
(Colmer et al. 2021, Donohue et al. 2022, Donohue et. al. 2019, Siegel et al. 2019)

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What we know & contribution

- We know much less about permitless carry laws
 - Limited geographies (Smith & Petrocelli 2019; Lundstrom et al. 2023)
 - Finds reductions or null effects on yearly measures of homicide and violent crime (Bondy et al. 2023; Doucette et al. 2023; Moody and Lott, 2022)
- This paper:
 - Focus on short-term, dynamic effects

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Conceptual Framework

Permitless carry takes effect instantaneously; therefore, **observed effects should take effect swiftly.**

Permitless carry conceptually may take effect through several channels:

- Public gun carrying
 - No change —> **no effect**
 - Increase —> **increase crime**
 - Intensive vs. extensive margin of concealed handgun carrying
- Perceptions of encountering armed individuals in public —> **deter crime**

Data & Sample

- **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Report Program's Summary Reporting System (SRS)**
 - “UCR Reports”
 - Most comprehensive source by population of crime data until 2020
- **Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Uniform Crime Report Program's National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS)**
 - Less than 60% of the nation is able to report to NIBRS
 - Detailed measures: crime location, victim characteristics, more accurate firearm reporting (Parker 2022)
- Remove states undergoing licensing policy change (IL, WI) and states that do not report data well (FL, AL); preferred specification omits restrictive licensing states (CA, NY, MA, DE, MD)

Methods

- Difference-in-differences strategy comparing outcomes in states that did and did not adopt a permitless carry policy
- Observations at police agency by 2-month level
- Treatment at month-level (15th day+ takes effect in next month)
- 8-month post-period - rapid effects, more states, avoid pandemic
- DiD Event study: effects relative to ten months prior to treatment as no anticipation assumption unlikely to hold in this setting

Methods: Poisson Dynamic Difference-in-Differences Estimator

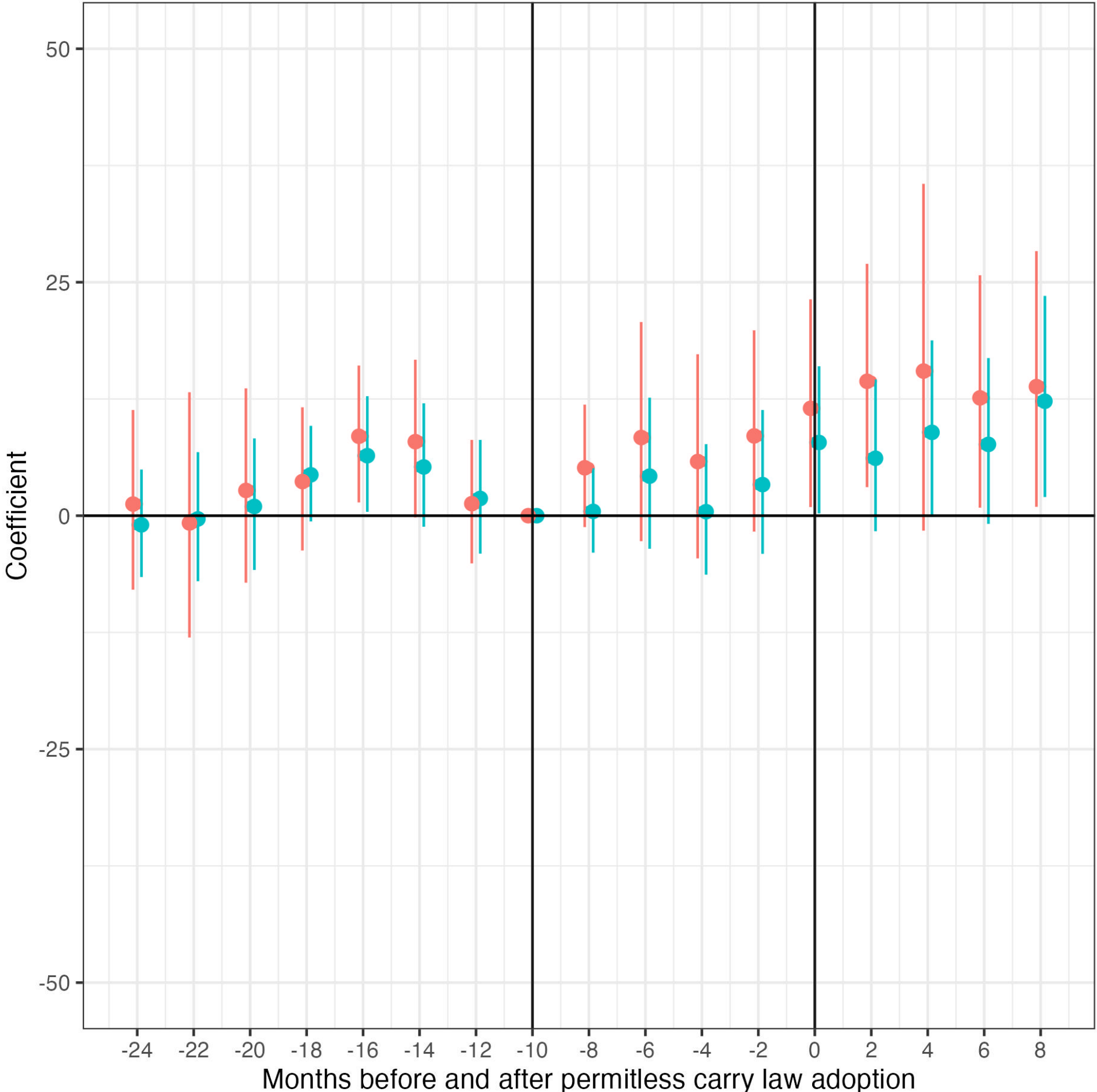
For crime and victimization outcomes, I estimate:

$$Y_{imy} = \sum_{k=-24; k \neq -10}^8 \beta_k \times Treat_{imy} + \gamma_i + \delta_m + \phi_y + \log(population) + \epsilon_{imy}$$

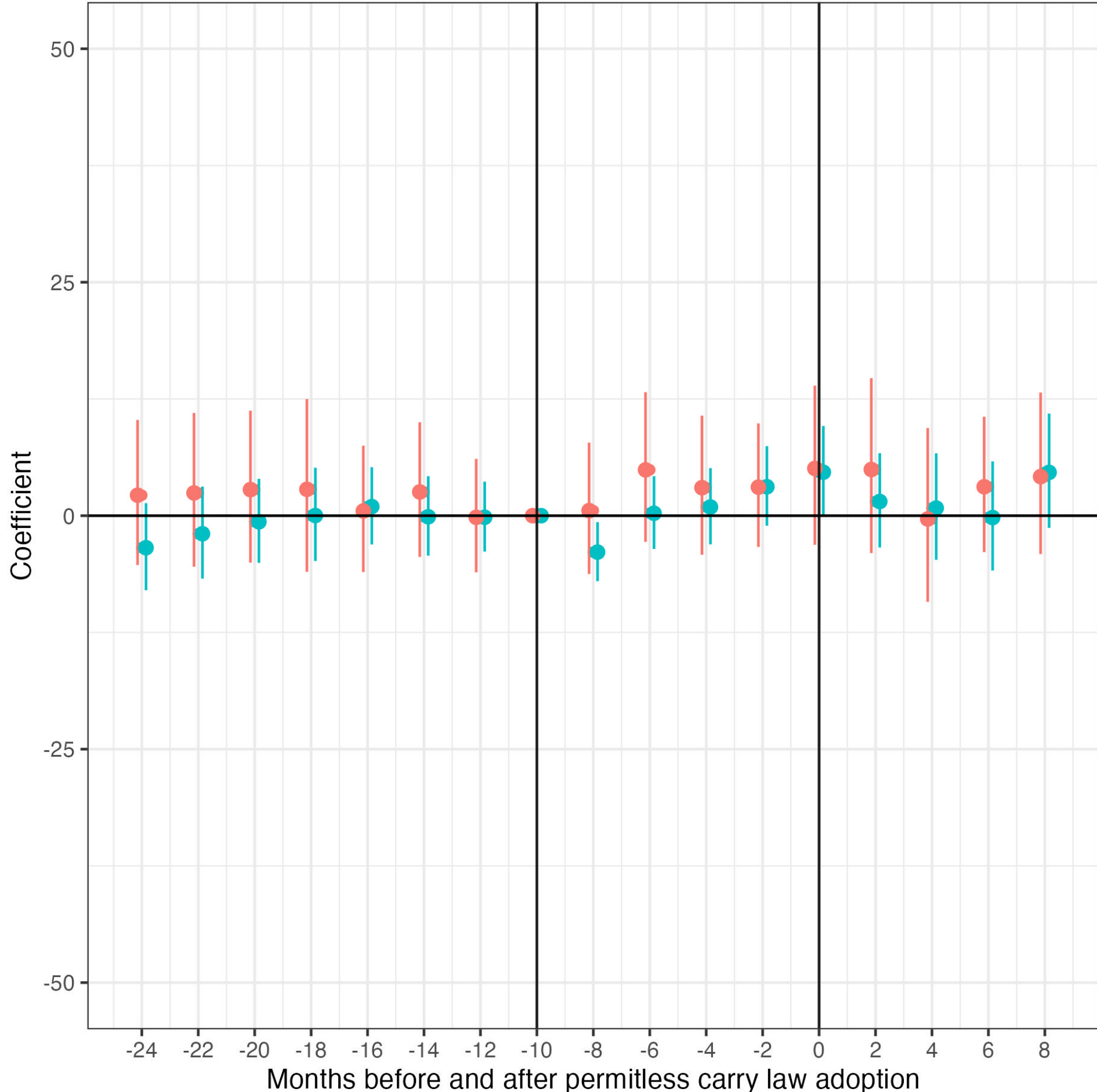
- Where Y_{imy} is the crime or victimization outcome in police agency i in month m in year y .
- $\gamma_i + \delta_m + \phi_y$ are agency, month, year fixed effects.
- β_k are coefficients of interest which capture the change in the outcome in a state that adopted permitless carry relative to those that did not in months leading and lagging $k=-10$
- Estimates of $100 \times (exp(\beta_k) - 1)$ interpreted as percent change in the number of crimes
- Models are estimating using a Poisson fixed effects estimator with 8 months post-treatment relative to 10 months prior to treatment.

Effects of Permitless Carry Laws on Crime

Index Violent Crime

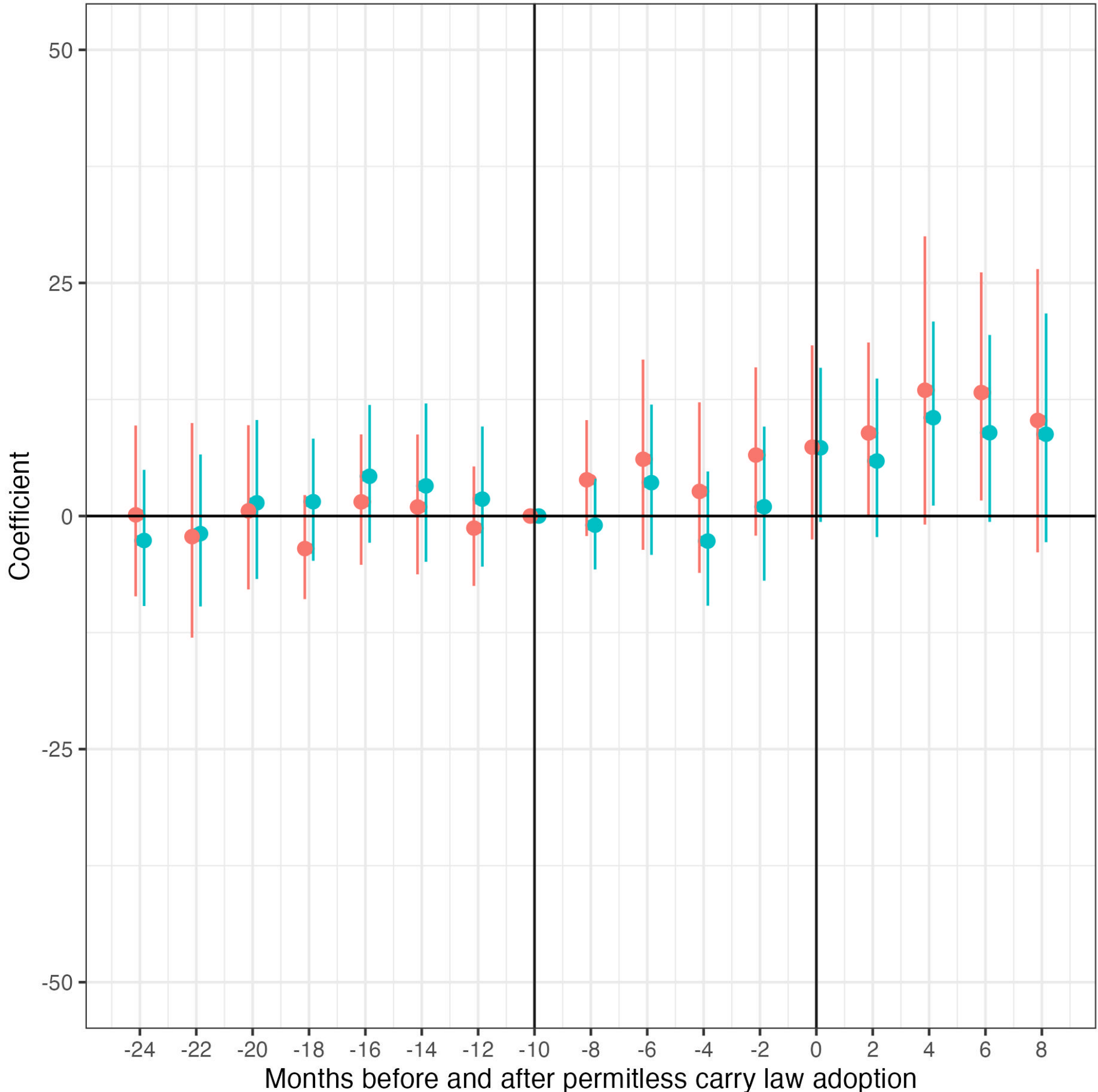


Index Property Crime

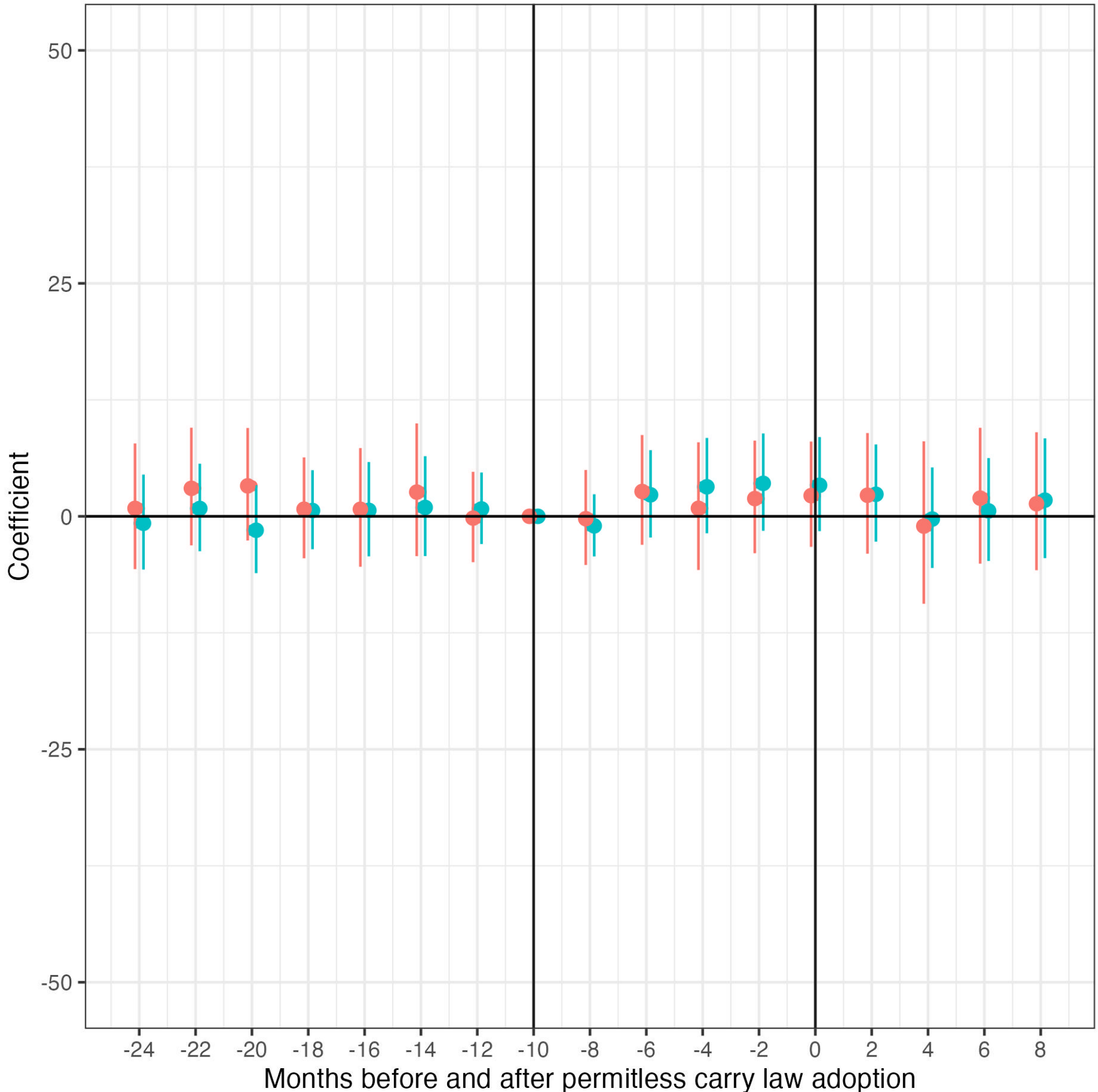


Effects of Permitless Carry Laws on Crime

Aggravated Assault

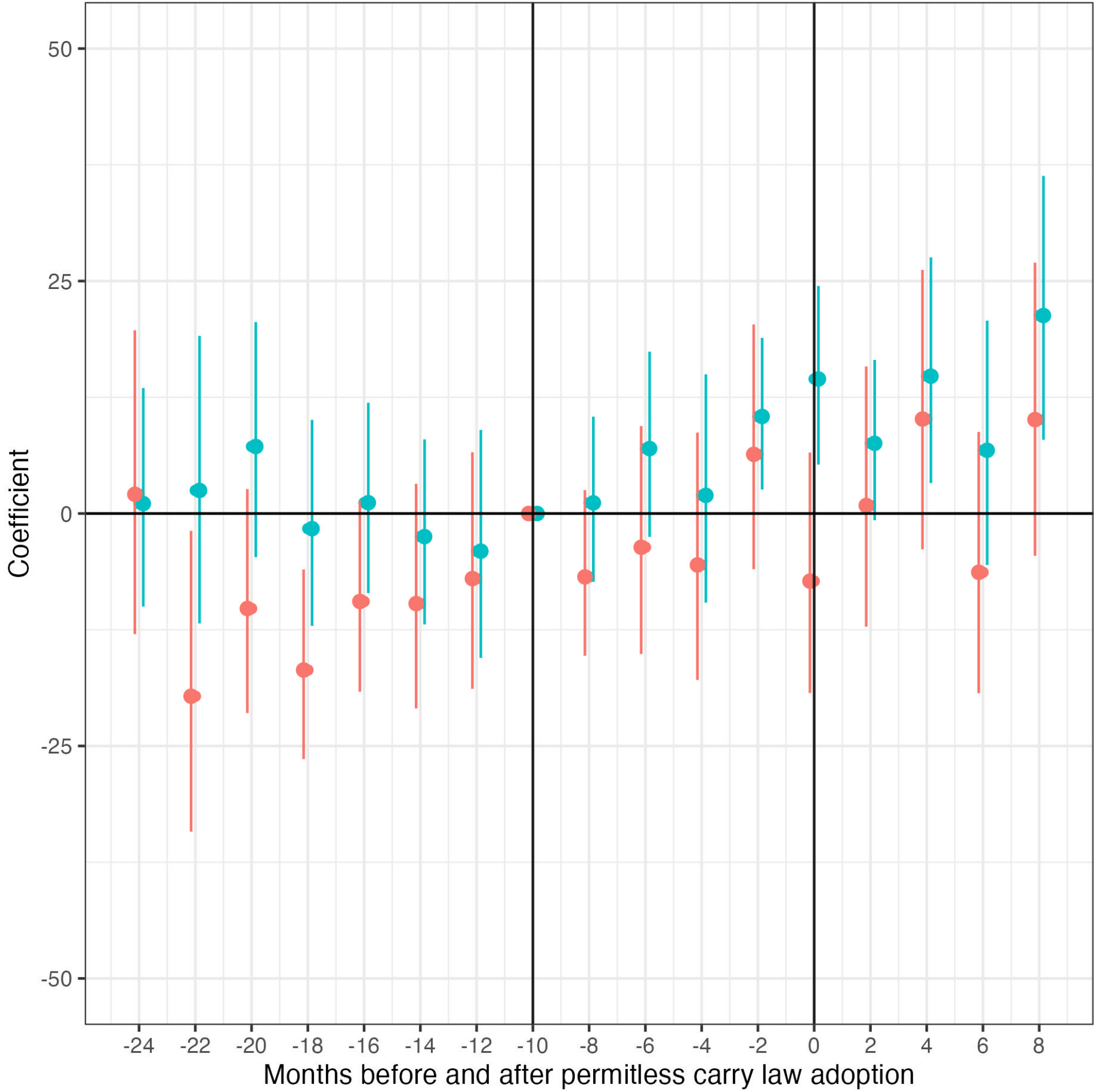


Simple Assault

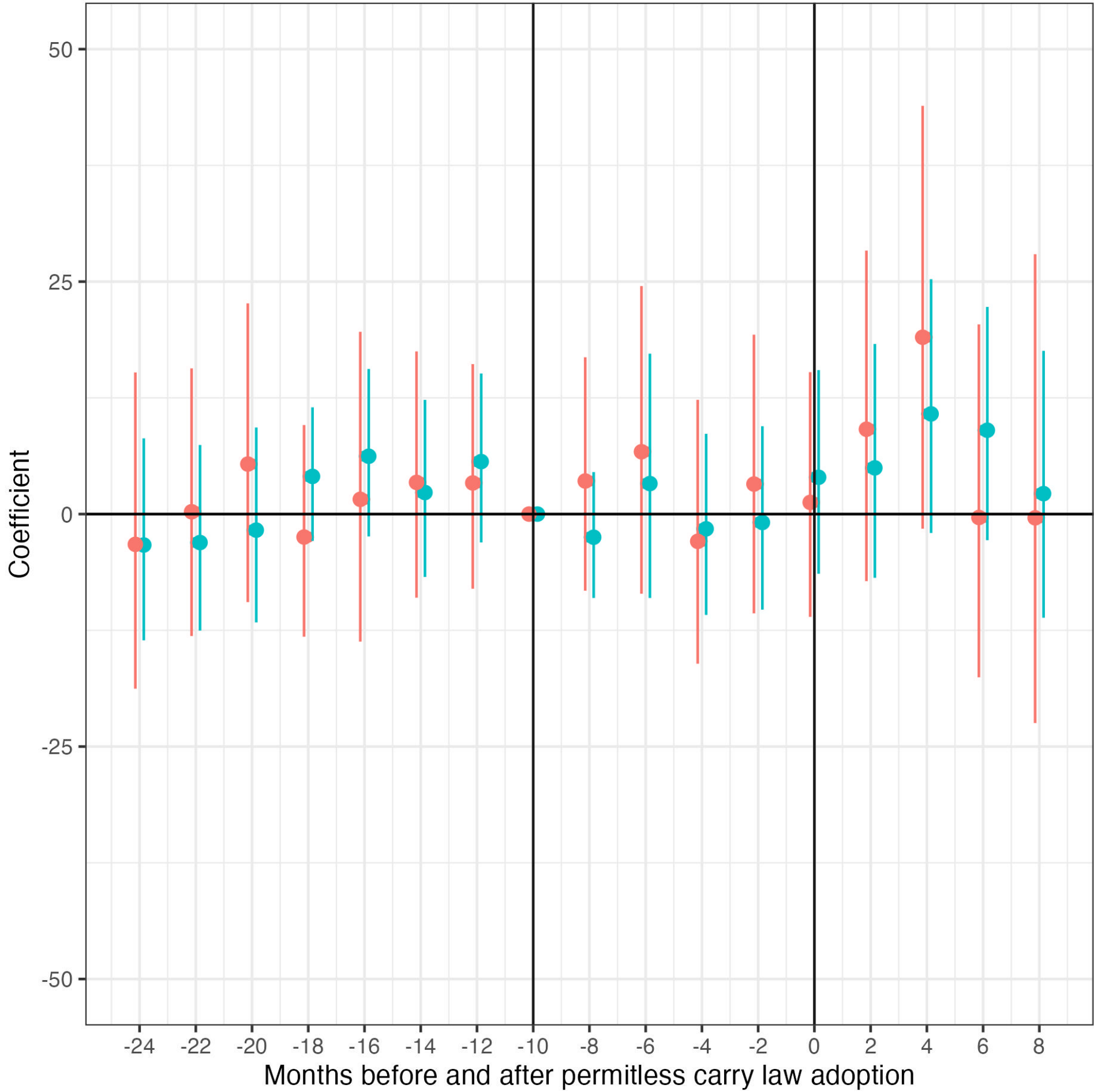


Effects of Permitless Carry Laws on Crime

Aggravated Assault - Gun



Aggravated Assault - No Gun



Effects of Permitless Carry Laws on Victims



Findings

↑ Interpersonal violence driven by aggravated assaults

X Property crime

Short term effects —> imply little change in gun ownership

- Effects are likely driven by increasing frequency of carrying among existing gun owners

Thank you!

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