

Voters' Political Conversations during the 2005 German Parliamentary Election Campaign: Causes and Consequences

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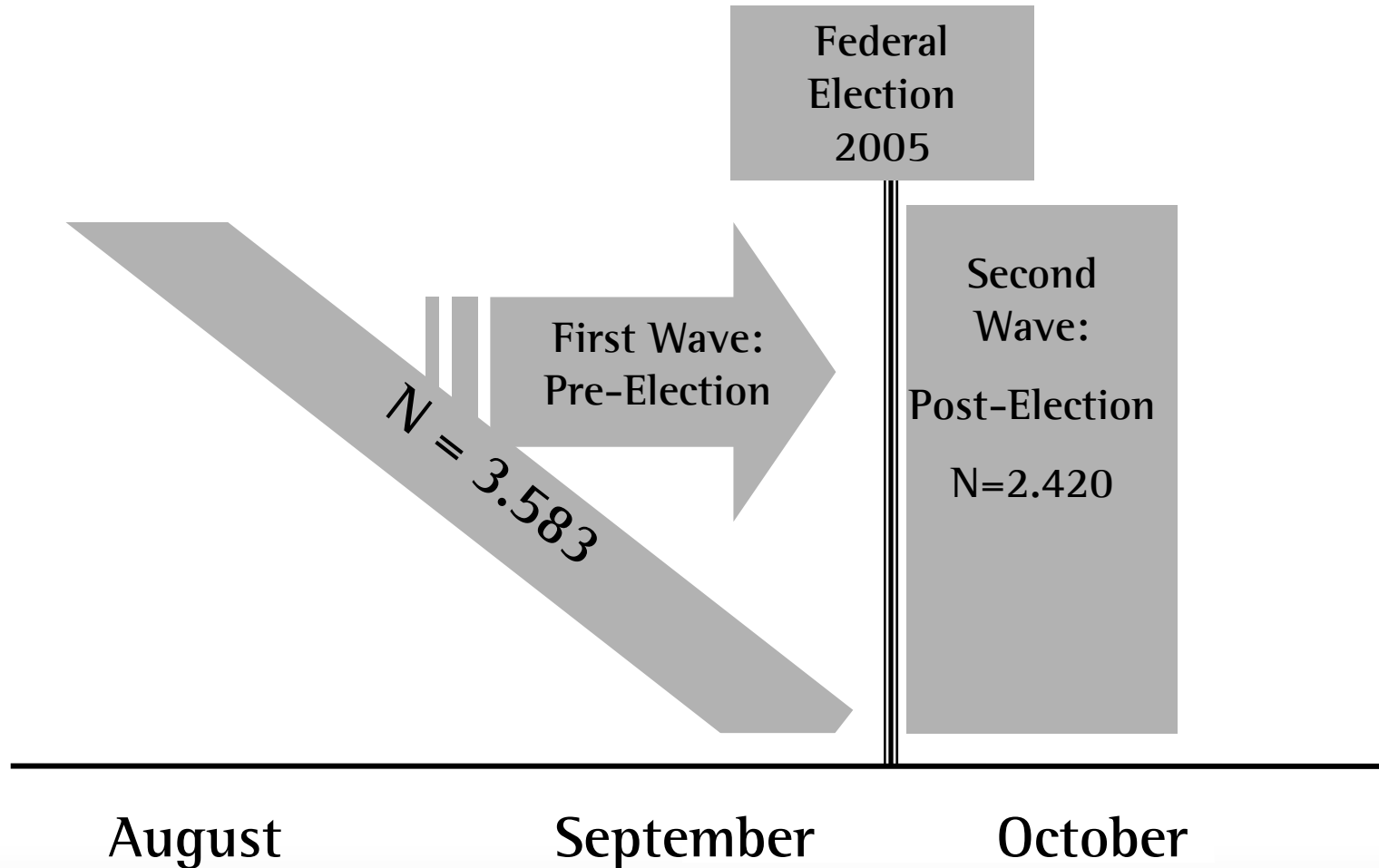
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

1

- “word-of-mouth communication that occurs in face-to-face interaction between two or more individuals”
- But: not all (political) talk is the same; differences exist ...
 - ... in the frequency of occurrence
 - ... in the level of disagreement
 - ... with regard to the relationship between talking individuals („strong“ vs. „weak ties“; „primary“ vs. „secondary relations“)

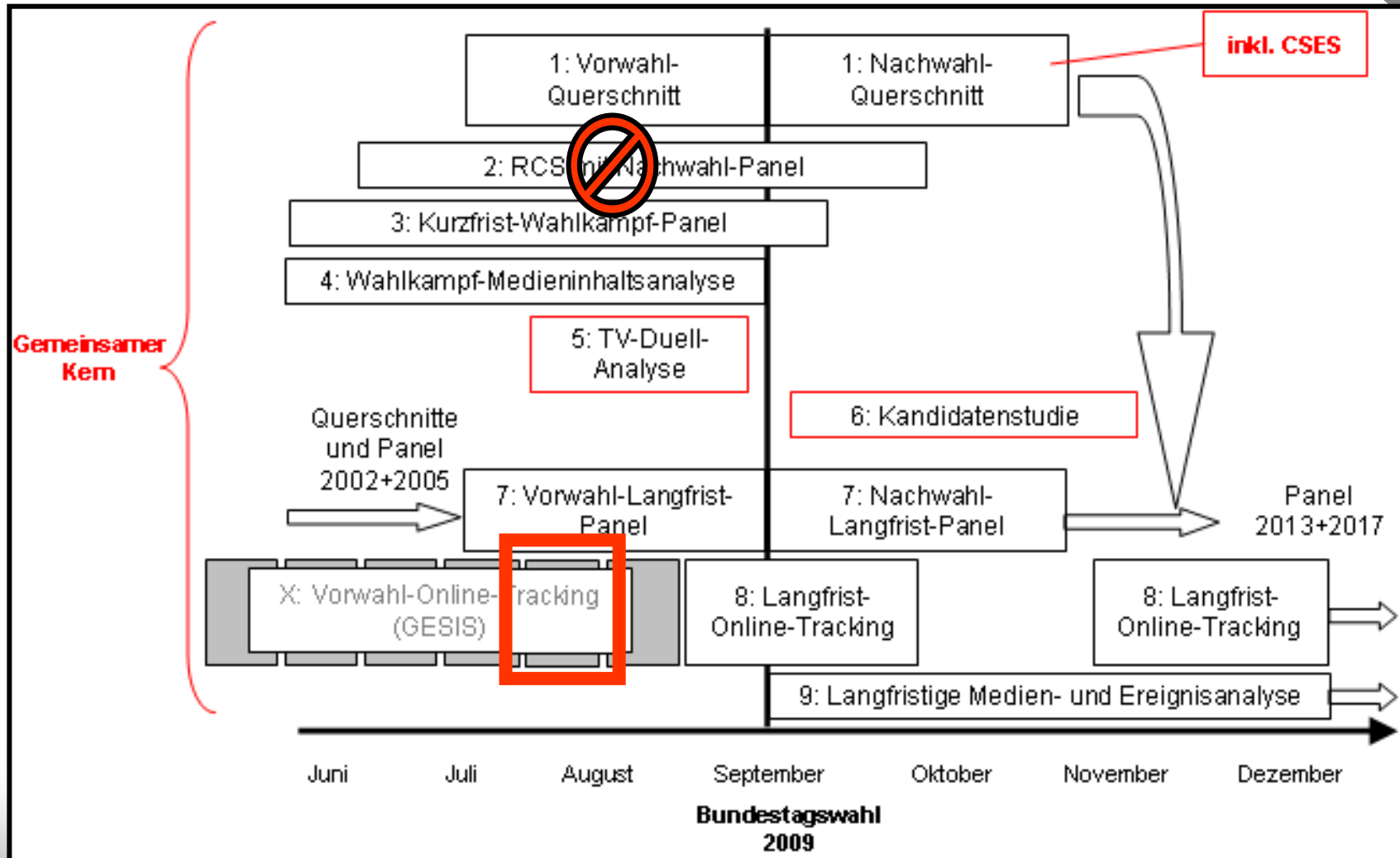
- Analysis of the causes and consequences of (the different dimensions of) interpersonal communication
- Special attention is paid to the dynamics of interpersonal communication in the course of a campaign, as our data for 2005 is especially suitable to do so
- Put results to a first test to see whether we find similar results for the 2009 election

2005 DATA: ROLLING CROSS-SECTION SURVEY

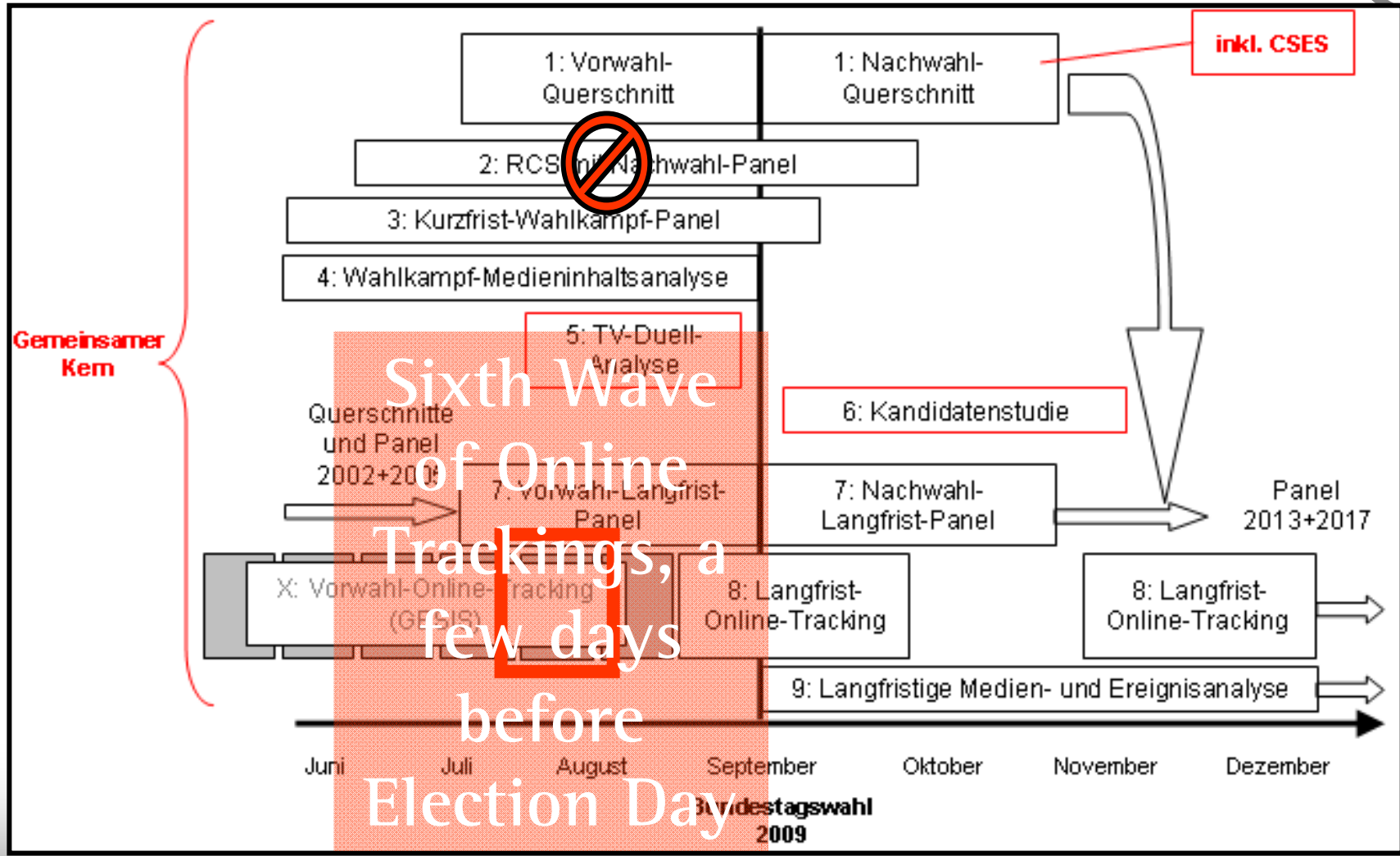


2009 DATA: THE GLES

4



2009 DATA: THE GLES



QUESTIONS INCLUDED

6

- Do you talk to your family and friends about politics? [If so] On how many days have you done so during the last week?
- What would you say, how often have you had different opinions in these talks – very often, often, sometimes, rarely or never?
- And do you talk to your colleagues and neighbors about politics? [If so] On how many days have you done so during the last week?
- What would you say, how often have you had different opinions in these talks – very often, often, sometimes, rarely or never?

DETERMINANTS OF FREQUENCY

- Three prerequisites for having a discussion:
 - willingness to talk
 - someone to talk to
 - something to talk about

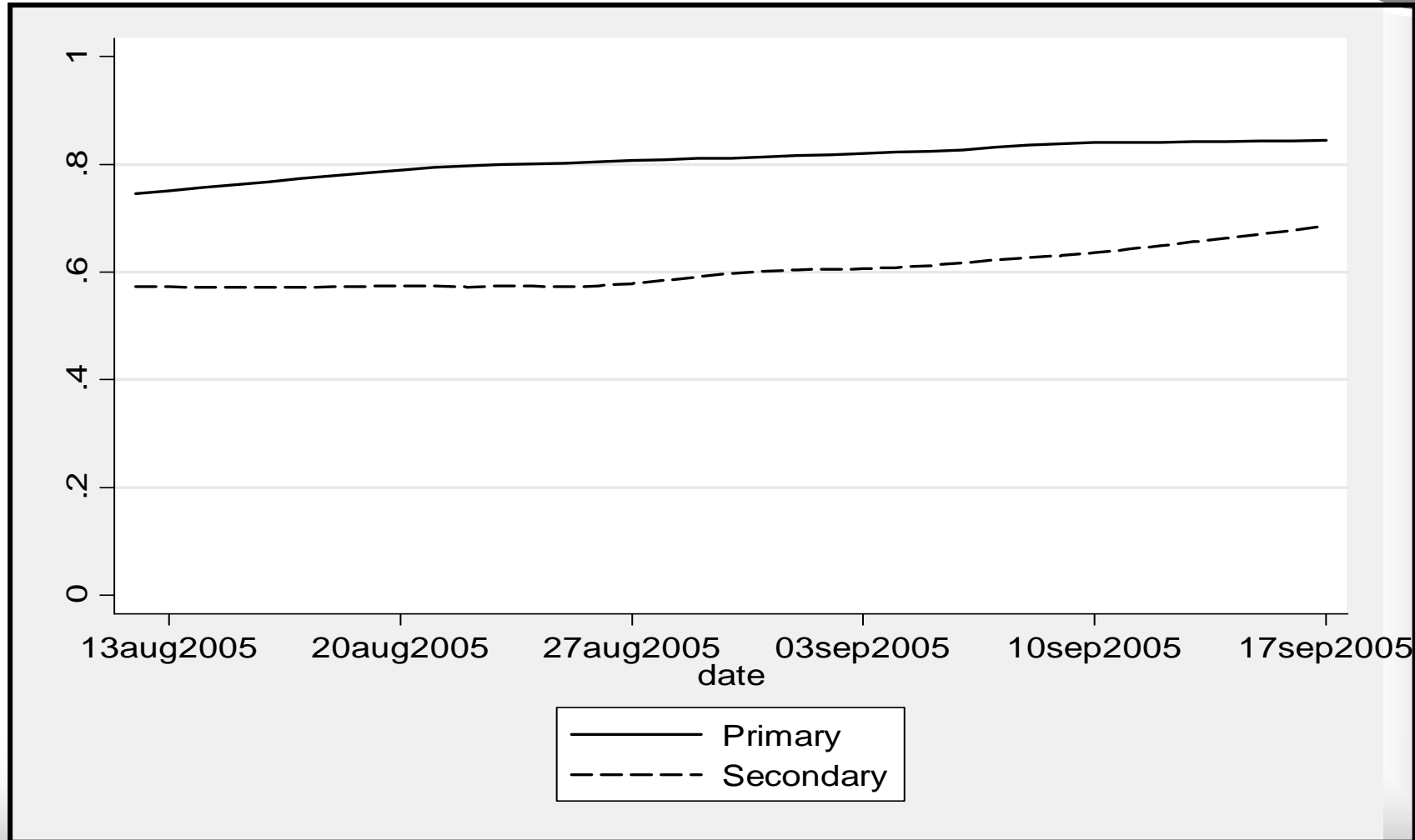
- So what can be expected?
 - Motivational variables (interest in politics, party identification) should increase the frequency
 - Talk in primary groups as a function of household composition, talk in secondary groups as a function of employment situation and wider setting
 - Mass media (esp. quality media) as content providers

DETERMINANTS OF FREQUENCY

- Dynamics?
 - As Election Day approaches, the pressure on voters to make up their mind increases, increasing need for information

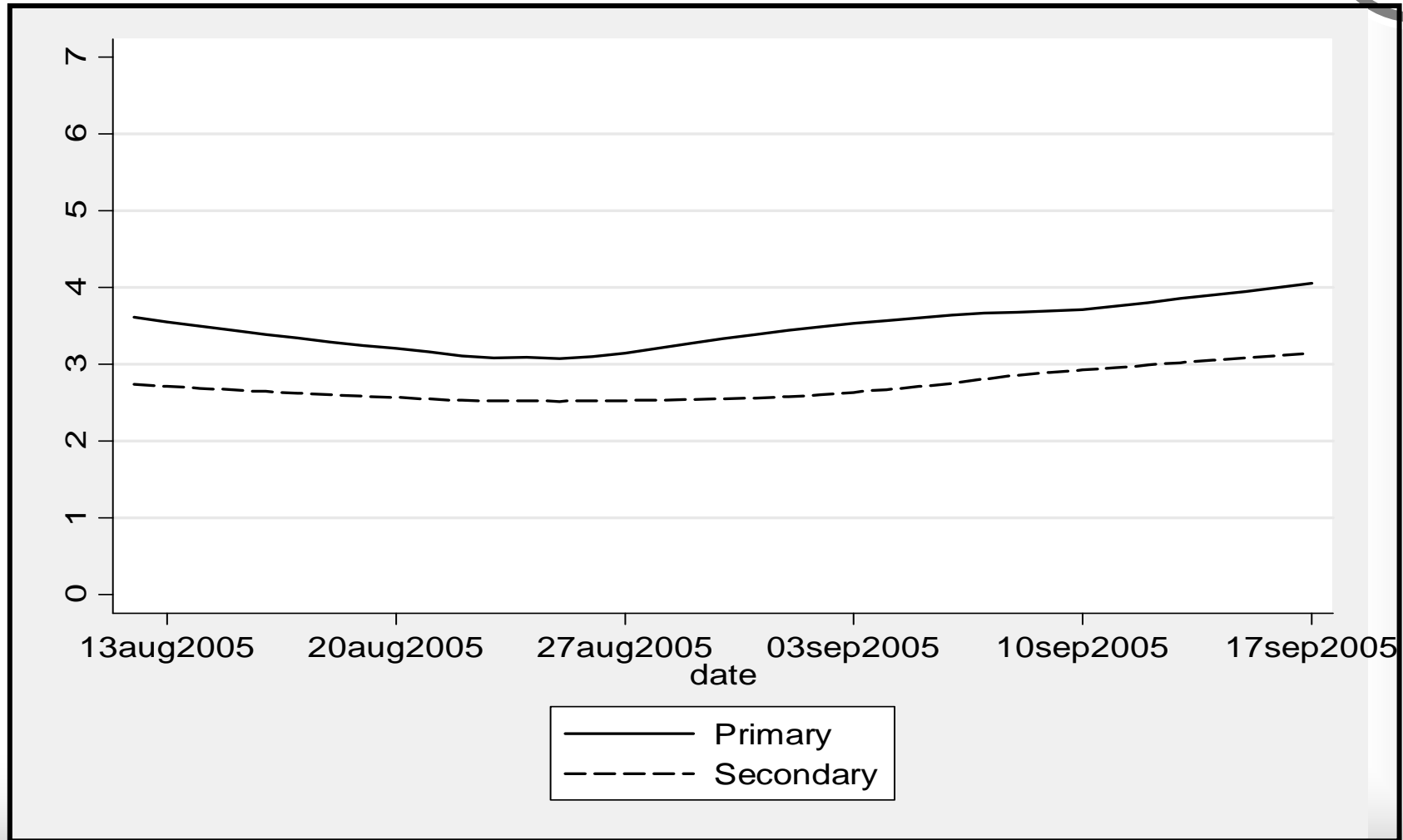
TALK DURING THE 2005 CAMPAIGN: OCCURENCE

10



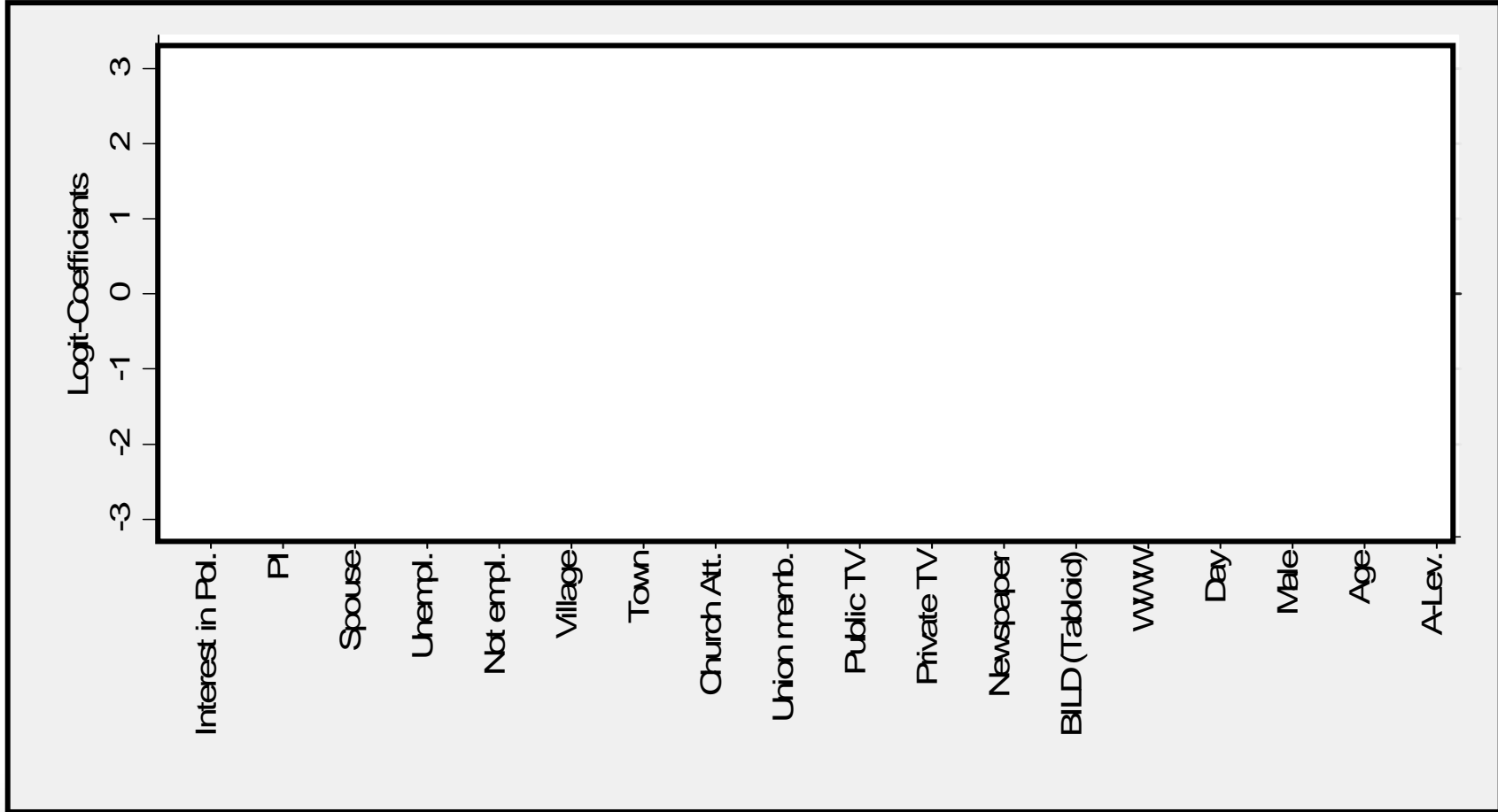
TALK DURING THE 2005 CAMPAIGN: FREQUENCY

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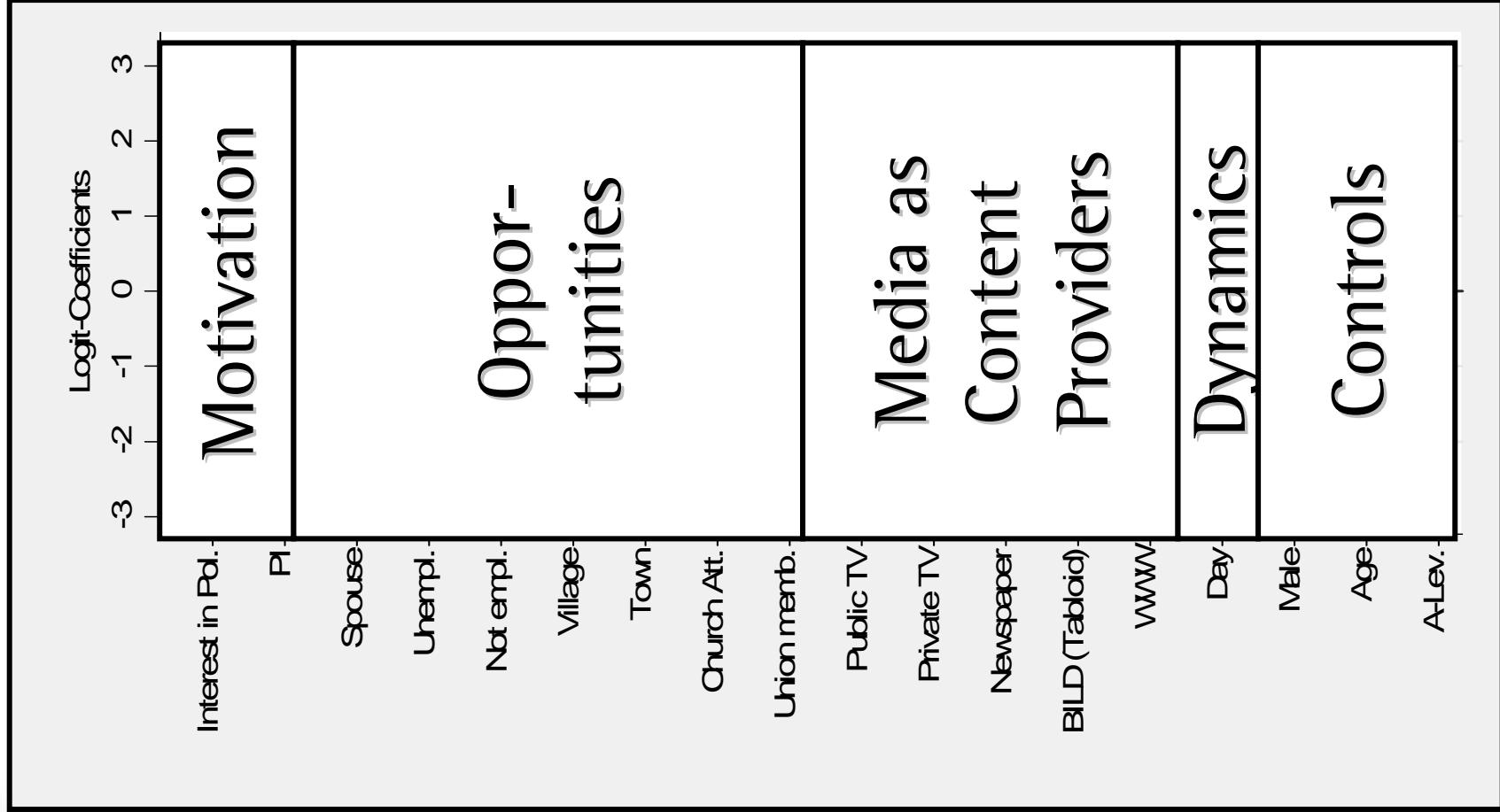
LOGISTIC REGRESSION: WHO DID TALK IN 2005?

Unstandardized coefficients (rescaled to 0/1), primary



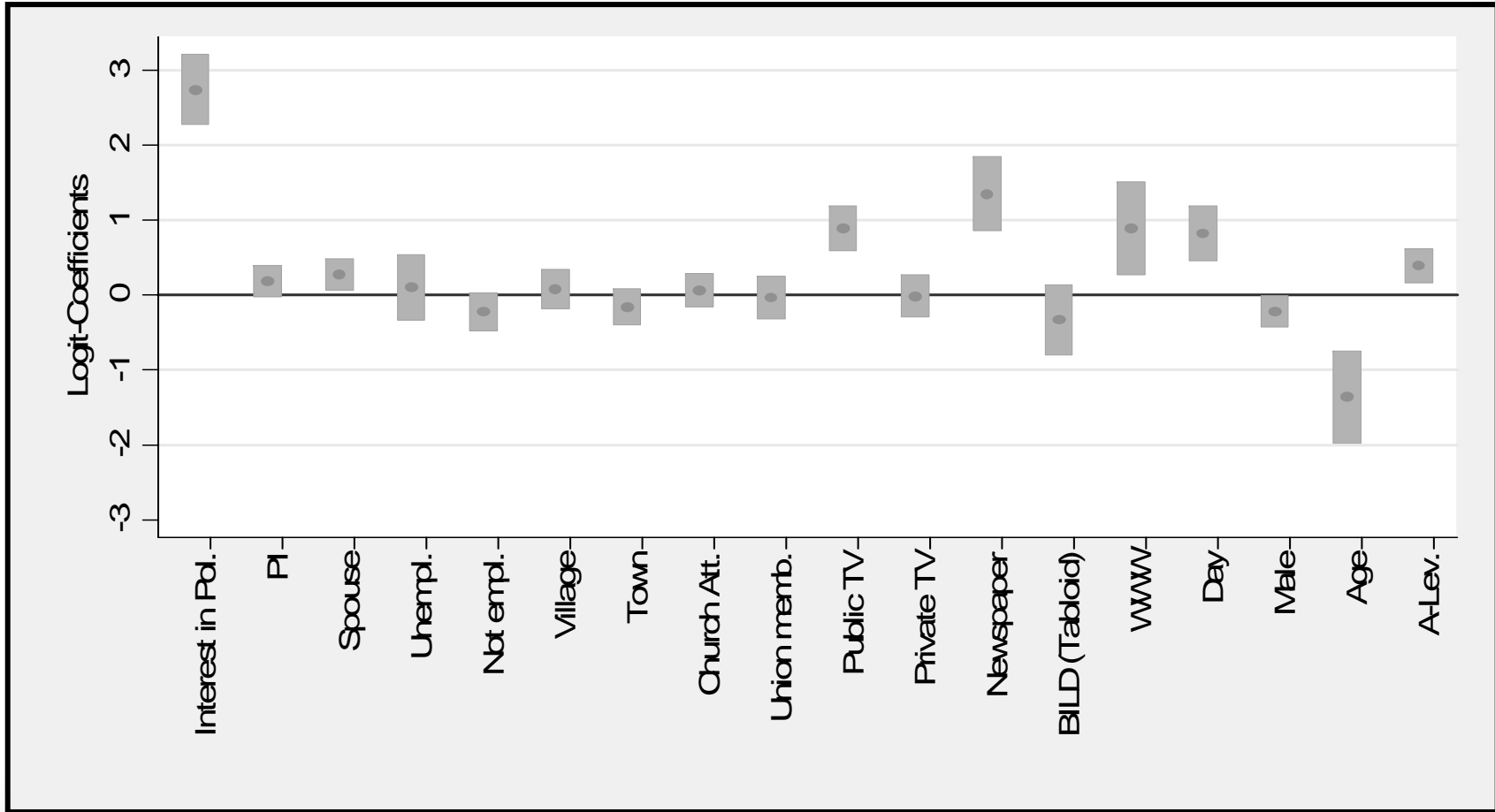
LOGISTIC REGRESSION: WHO DID TALK IN 2005?

Unstandardized coefficients (rescaled to 0/1), primary



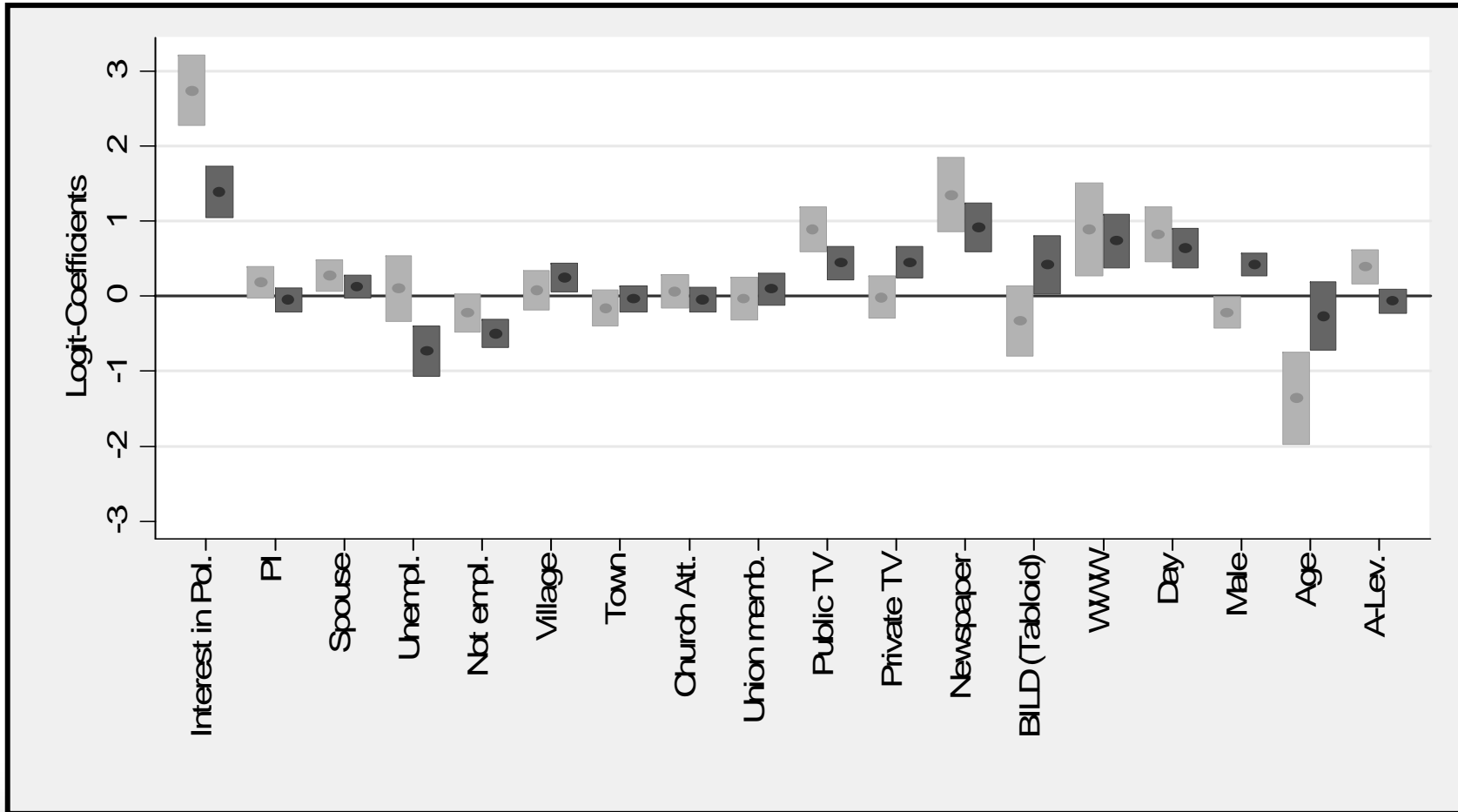
LOGISTIC REGRESSION: WHO DID TALK IN 2005?

Unstandardized coefficients (rescaled to 0/1), primary



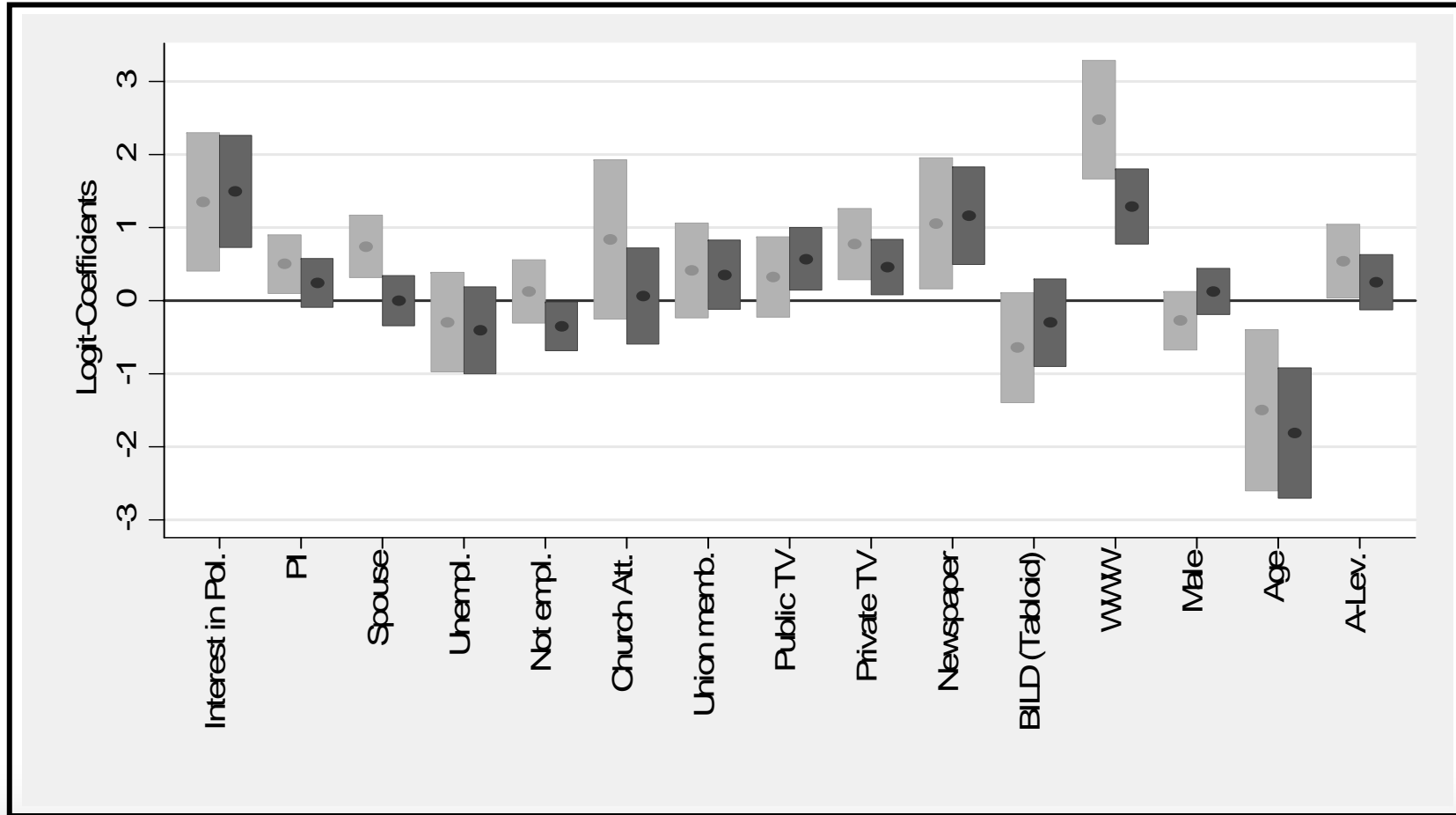
LOGISTIC REGRESSION: WHO DID TALK IN 2005?

Unstandardized coefficients, primary and secondary



AND IN 2009?

Unstandardized coefficients, primary and secondary



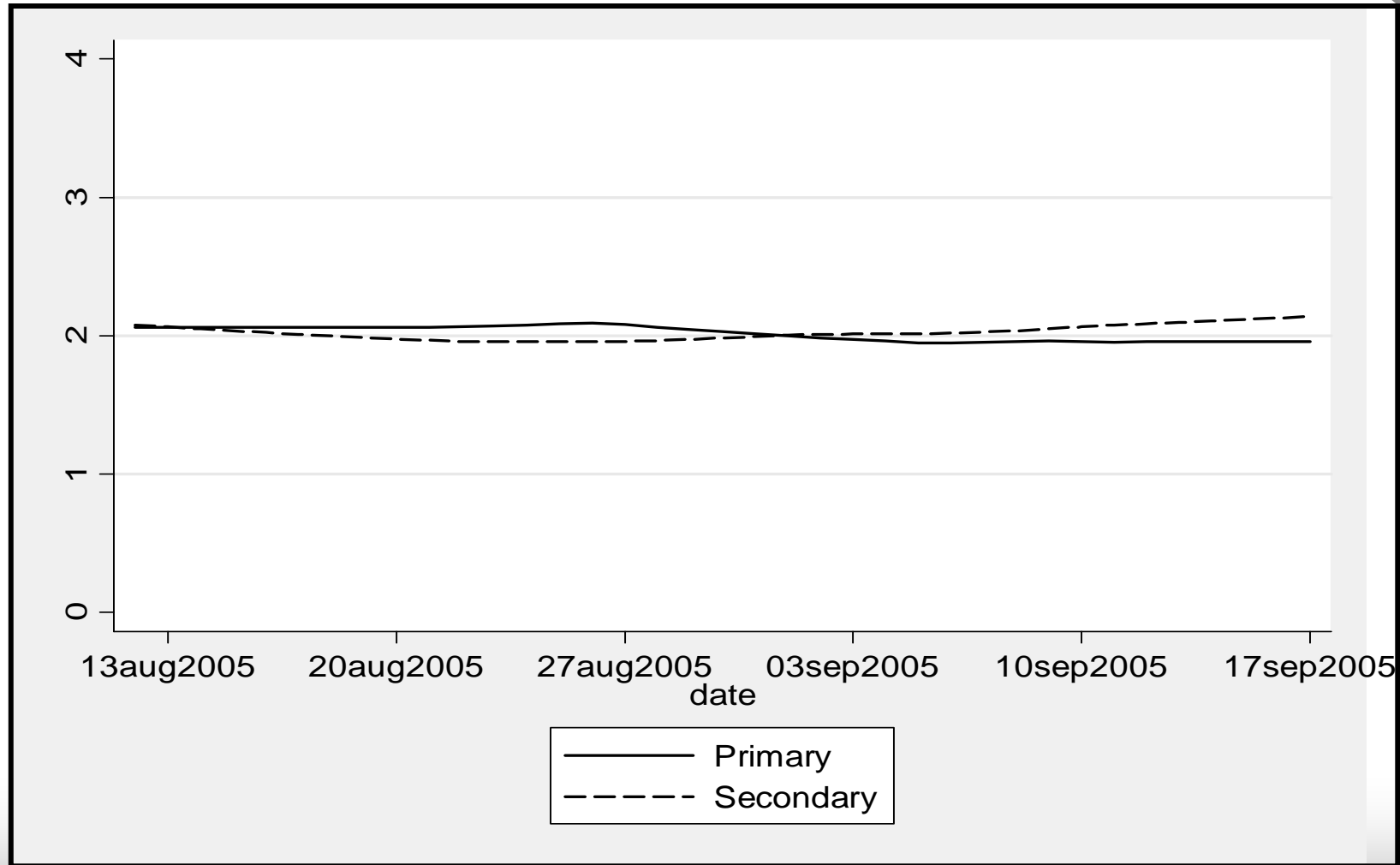
DETERMINANTS OF DISAGREEMENT

17

- Motivational and structural variables likely to be less important
- Mass media as provider of arguments for discussions, to be aware of differences
- More disagreement in secondary relations („crossing lines of difference“ compared to homogenous primary groups)
- Dynamics: „disambiguation“ as a consequence of campaigns vs. increasing polarization in the course of a campaign

DISAGREEMENT DURING THE 2005 CAMPAIGN

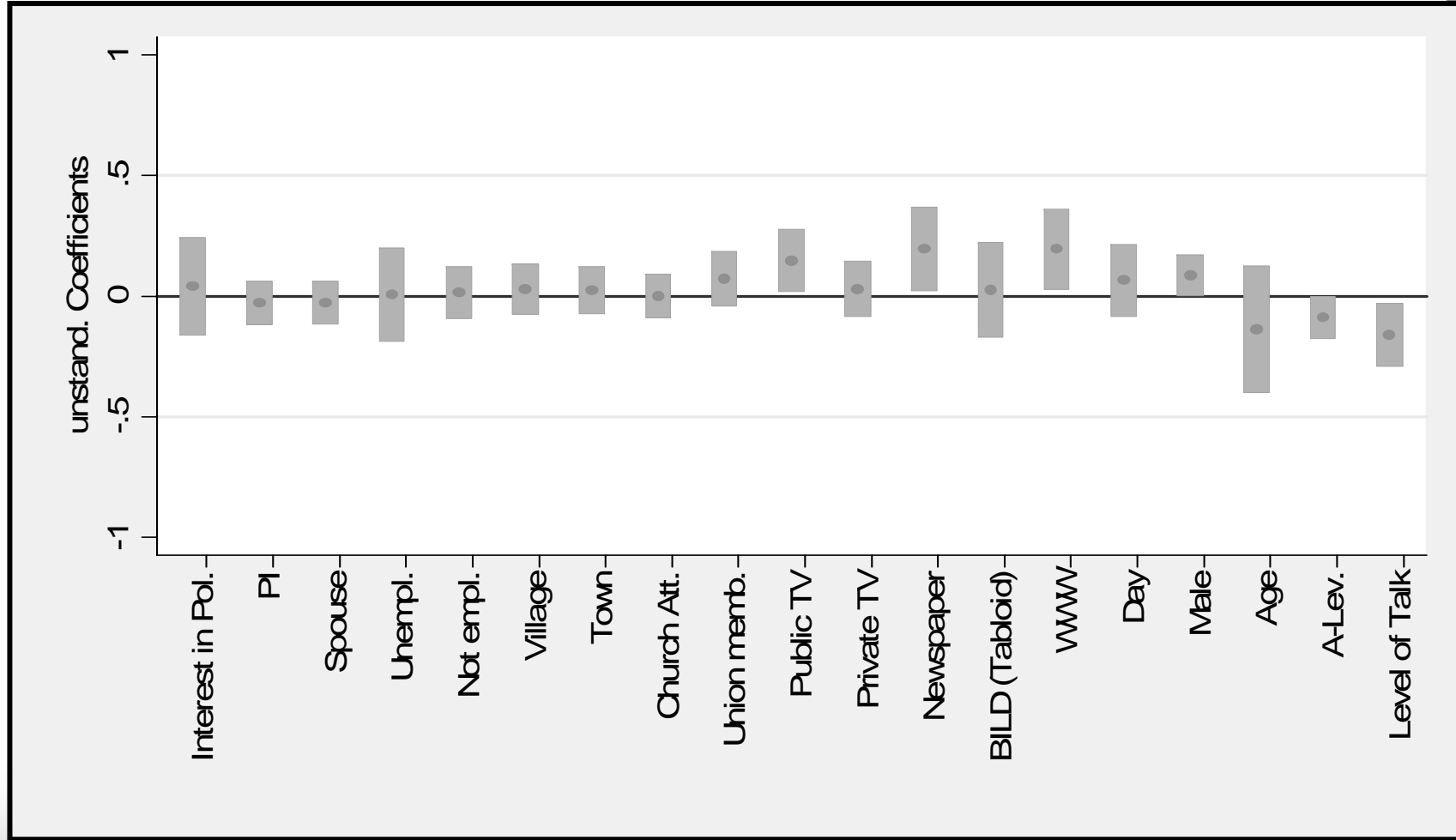
18



OLS REGRESSION: WHO DID DISAGREE IN 2005?

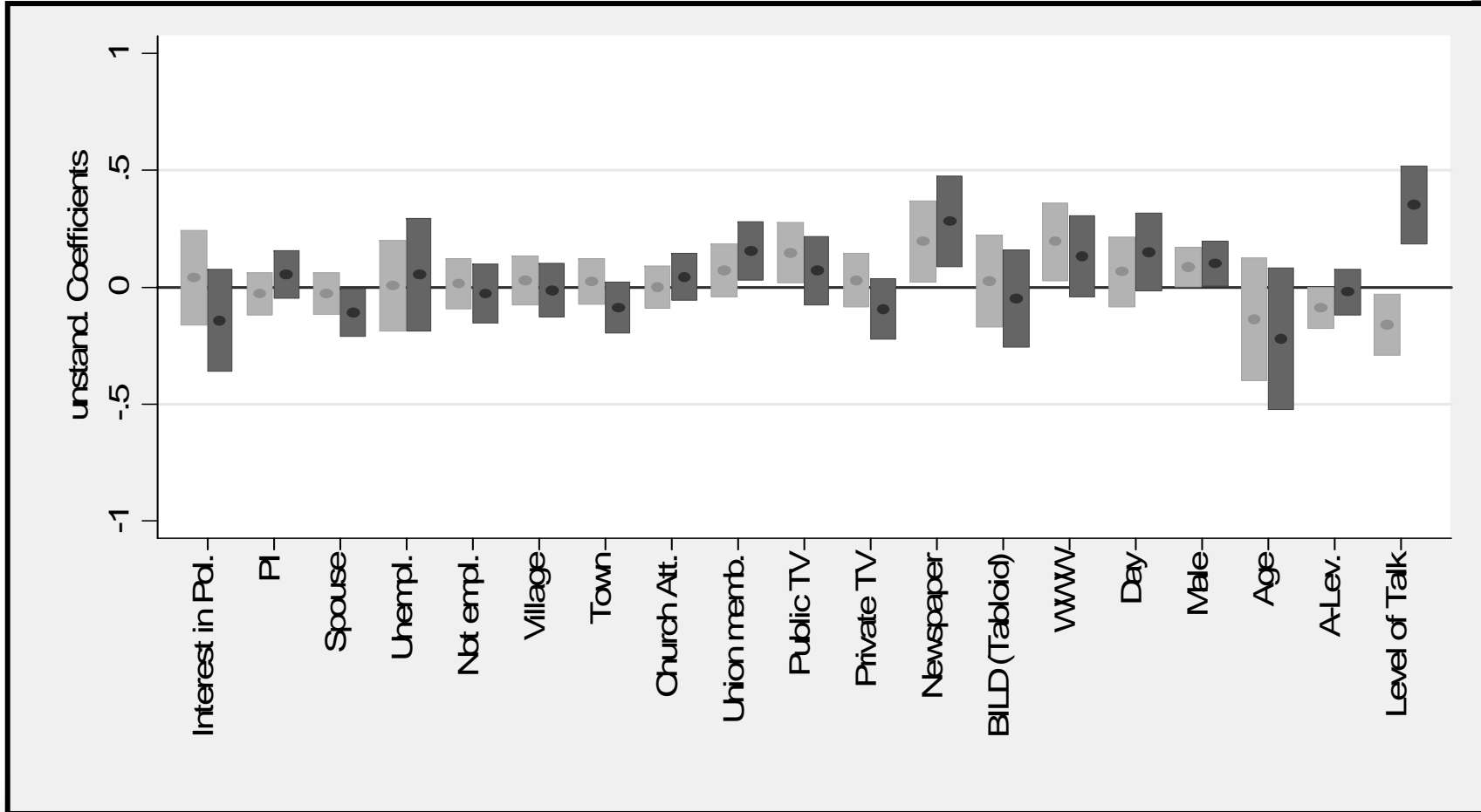
19

Unstandardized coefficients, primary



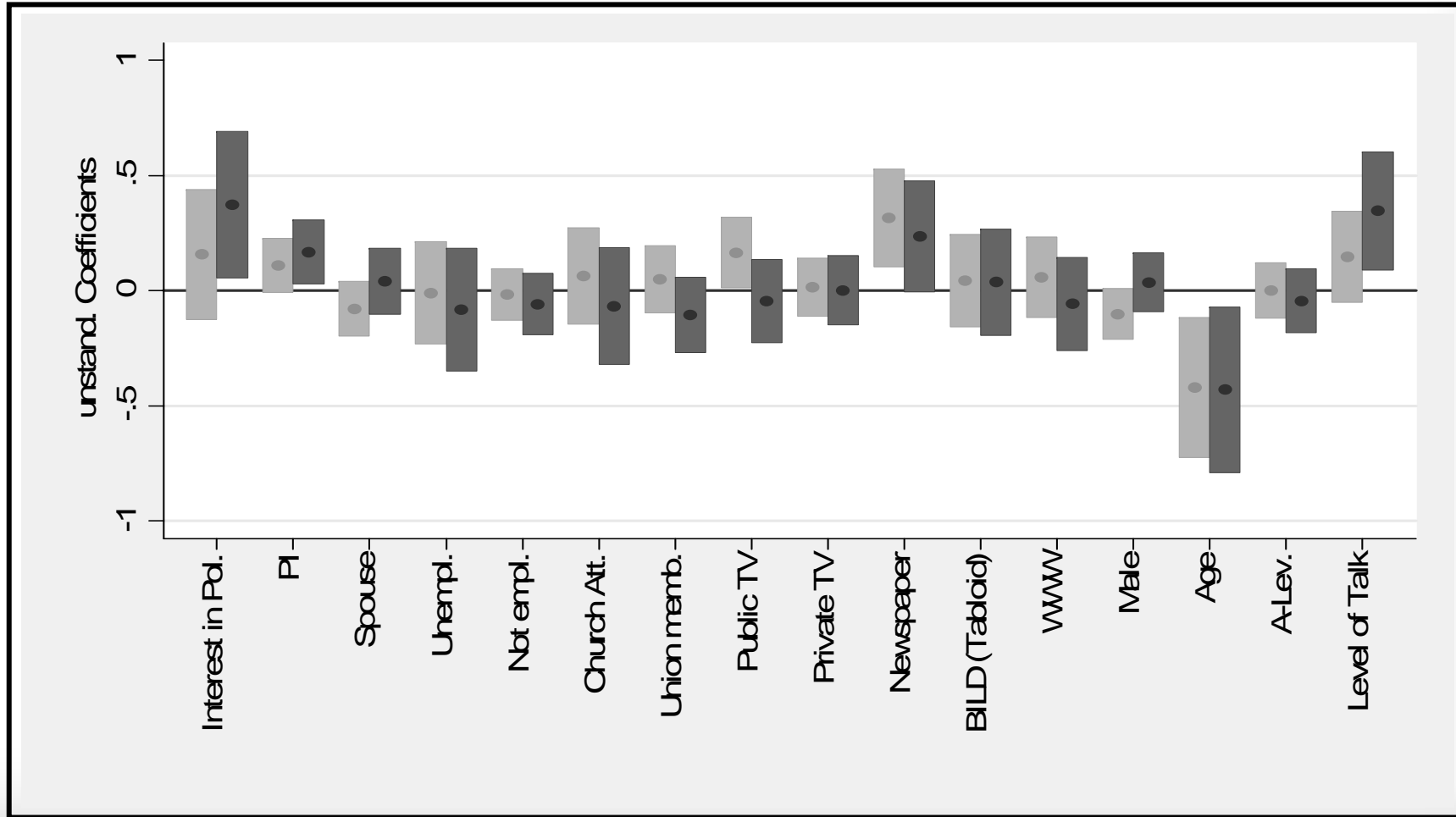
OLS REGRESSION: WHO DID DISAGREE IN 2005?

Unstandardized coefficients, primary and secondary



AND IN 2009?

Unstandardized coefficients, primary and secondary



- „The basic idea is straightforward: Interactions with others enhance one’s likelihood of political participation“ (Manza et al. 2005: 209)
- Mutz (2002): political talk possibly causes „political ambivalence“ and „social accountability“ if disagreement is encountered
- Scheufele et al. (2004) expect that heterogeneous network have stimulating effects

- Turnout Intention (2005 and 2009)
- Response latencies for vote intentions (2005 only)
- Perceived difficulty of making up one's mind (in retrospect, post-election wave, 2005 only)

DID TALKING MATTER IN 2005?

24

	Turnout	“Vote Choice was easy”	Response Latencies
Level of Primary Talk	0,027	0,021	0,046
Level of Sec. Talk	-0,032	0,022	-0,039
Level of Primary Disagreement	-0,126	-0,134*	-0,121*
Level of Secondary Disagreement	0,375***	0,147*	0,076
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N	1935	1359	1941
R ²	0,316	0,075	0,053

AND IN 2009?

25

Turnout

Level of Primary Talk	0,337**
Level of Sec. Talk	-0,335*
Level of Primary Disagreement	-0,507#
Level of Secondary Disagreement	0,364

N	563
R ²	0,297

NEXT STEPS

26

- For the 2009 study, we also have dyadic network data for up to two discussion partners
 - Frequency of Discussion
 - Relationship
 - Perceived Expertise
 - Level of Disagreement
 - Perceived Vote Intention
- Methodologically: Which approach is better suited to study such research questions?
- Substantially: Also include effects on party choice