THE POWER OF CLIMATES OF OPINION

WAPOR - 60th Annual Conference
Public Opinion and the Challenges of the 21st Century
WZB, Berlin, Germany, September 19-21, 2007
The Influence of Published Polls on Voters’ Expectations and Voting Intentions in the 2005 German Bundestag Election Campaign: Evidence from a Rolling Cross-Section Survey

Thorsten Faas,
Christian Mackenrodt,
Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck

University of Duisburg-Essen

E-Mail: christian.mackenrodt@uni-due.de
Introduction

• 42 published polls within the last seven weeks before the federal election 2005 by the five major institutes (ifd-Allensbach, Forsa, FGW, Infratest dimap, Emnid)

• Horse-race journalism relies heavily on polls

• Polls are getting more and more attention, but also more and more criticised

Do polls matter?
Introduction

polls ? voting intentions
Introduction

- effects of published polls on voters’ perceptions?
- effects of published polls on voting intentions?
- „bandwagon-effect“?
- „underdog-effect?“
- „momentum?“
- …
Introduction

Data

Polls and Voters’ Perceptions

Polls and Voting Intentions

Conclusion
Data: Rolling Cross Section-Survey

- **federal election 2005**
- **pre-election RCS**
- **post-election wave**

- **N = 3,583**
- **N = 2,420**

- **August**
- **September**
- **October**

Fass/ Mackenrodt/ Schmitt-Beck: The Influence of Published Polls on Voters’ Expectations and Voting Intentions in the 2005 German Bundestag Election Campaign. Evidence from a Rolling Cross-Section Survey
Introduction

Data

Polls and Voters’ Perceptions

Polls and Voting Intentions

Conclusion
Voters’ Perceptions: Coalition Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>CDU/CSU + FDP (percent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 Aug 2005</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Aug 2005</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Aug 2005</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 Sep 2005</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sep 2005</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Sep 2005</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voters’ Perceptions: Coalition Expectations

- expectation of a black-yellow coalition
- polling shares CDU/CSU + FDP [lag 2 days]
- polling shares CDU/CSU + FDP
- coalition expectation CDU/CSU + FDP [lag 2 days]

N: 35

\[ \beta \]
\[ 0.33^+ \]
\[ 0.09 \]
\[ 0.23 \]

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; +p < 0.10

Fass/ Mackenrodt/ Schmitt-Beck: The Influence of Published Polls on Voters’ Expectations and Voting Intentions in the 2005 German Bundestag Election Campaign. Evidence from a Rolling Cross-Section Survey
## Voters’ Perceptions: Coalition Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation of a black-yellow coalition</th>
<th>beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>polling shares CDU/ CSU + FDP [lag 2 days]</td>
<td>0.33+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polling shares CDU/ CSU + FDP</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coalition expectation CDU/ CSU + FDP [lag 2 days]</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N | 35 |

***p < 0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05; +p<0.10
Voting Intentions: The SPD Momentum

![Graph showing voting intentions over dates from 13 August 2005 to 17 September 2005.]
Voting Intentions: The SPD Momentum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>SPD Voting Intention</th>
<th>SPD Polling Shares [lag 3 days]</th>
<th>SPD Polling Shares</th>
<th>( \beta ) (lag 3 days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 Aug 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Aug 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Aug 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03 Sep 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Sep 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 Sep 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**\( \beta \) values:**
- 0.51* for SPD voting intention [lag 3 days]
- 0.24 for SPD polling shares
- -0.06 for SPD voting intention

***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; *p < 0.05; +p < 0.10

Fass/ Mackenrodt/ Schmitt-Beck: The Influence of Published Polls on Voters’ Expectations and Voting Intentions in the 2005 German Bundestag Election Campaign. Evidence from a Rolling Cross-Section Survey
## Voting Intentions: The SPD Momentum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>beta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>polling shares SPD [lag 3 days]</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polling shares SPD</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voting intention SPD [lag 3 days]</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| N     | 34   |

* ***p < 0.001; **p<0.01; *p<0.05; +p<0.10
I. Introduction

II. Data

III. Polls and Voters’ Perceptions

IV. Polls and Voting Intentions

V. Conclusion
Conclusion

- Individual-level analyses (N=3,583) confirm findings of aggregate-level analyses.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Thorsten Faas,
Christian Mackenrodt,
Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck

University Duisburg-Essen

E-Mail: christian.mackenrodt@uni-due.de