Who Is driving whom

The media, voters and the bandwagon

Stolwijk, S.B.

Creative Commons License (see https://creativecommons.org/use-remix/cc-licenses):
Other

Citation for published version (APA):
Opinion polls of vote intentions play a prominent role in today’s political campaigns. When positive opinion poll results trigger additional support for a party, this is denoted as a “bandwagon effect”. This dissertation has added a communication science perspective to the study of the bandwagon effect, by evaluating how poll ratings influence party coverage, and how exposure to poll coverage across a campaign influences a voter’s campaign interest, emotions about parties, turnout and vote choice. These questions have been investigated using panel surveys in combination with content analyses of media coverage and poll data relating to the German 2013 general (Bundestag) election campaign and the Dutch 2014 election campaign to the European Parliament. Results show that:

1. Party coverage of a front runner party increases with a decrease in its poll ratings.
2. Exposure to poll coverage increases campaign interest and turnout.
3. Exposure to more favorable poll coverage about a party increases the odds of voting for this party, partly because of the increase in enthusiasm and decrease in anxiety felt about this party.

The effect of polls on election outcomes is found to be a participatory act, resulting from the influence of various actors including pollsters, journalists, and voters themselves. Polls do incite emotions, which in turn influence attitudes towards parties. However, this is more likely an indication that voters are actively responding to campaign information, rather than that they are mindlessly following their herd instinct.

Who is driving whom: The media, voters and the bandwagon

Sjoerd B. Stolwijk
Who is driving whom:
The media, voters and the bandwagon

Sjoerd B. Stolwijk
Who is driving whom: The media, voters and the bandwagon

Cover and layout by Citroenvlinder DTP & Vormgeving, my.thesis.nl and Hidde Stolwijk
Coverphoto: unknown

Printed by GVO drukkers & vormgevers B.V.

© 2017 Sjoerd B. Stolwijk

ISBN: 978-94-6332-141-9

Amsterdam School of Communication Research / ASCOR
Department of Communication, University of Amsterdam
Nieuwe Achtergracht 166
1018 WV Amsterdam
The Netherlands
sjoerdstolwijk@gmail.com
Who is driving whom:
The media, voters and the bandwagon
Promotiecommissie:

Promotor: Prof. dr. C.H. de Vreese
Copromotor: Dr. A.R.T. Schuck

Overige leden: Dr. J.E. Möller
Prof. dr. P. Moy
Prof. dr. C. Reinemann
Prof. dr. T.W.G. van der Meer
Prof. dr. R. Vliegenthart

Universiteit van Amsterdam
University of Washington
Ludwig-Maximilians-
Universität München
Universiteit van Amsterdam
Universiteit van Amsterdam

Faculteit der Maatschappij- en Gedragswetenschappen
# Table of contents

Introduction  
Chapter 1: All in the Game: Effects of Opinion Polls on Party Coverage in the 2013 German Election Campaign  
Chapter 2: More Interest in Interest: Does Poll Coverage Help or Hurt Efforts to Get Young Voters into the Ballot Box?  
Chapter 3: How Anxiety and Enthusiasm Help Explain the Bandwagon Effect  
Discussion and Conclusion  
References  
Appendix A  
Appendix B  
Appendix C  
Appendix D  
Appendix E  
Appendix F  
Appendix G  
Appendix H  
Appendix I  
English summary  
Nederlandse samenvatting  
Acknowledgement/Dankwoord  
Acknowledgements on authorship