Irrelevant at Best
Celebrity Endorsements and Voter Mobilization in the Run-Up to the 2009 European Election in Germany

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Some recent examples ...
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Even more common: Turnout
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Does it work?
„Answers“ Given in the Literature

- Some work done in the US
  - Mixed results
  - Underlying Mechanisms far from resolved
  - „Brute Force“-Designs

- Hardly any (if any) work done in Germany

**Our Starting Point:**
Cover Germany, but also extend existing literature by improving research designs
Data
Online Survey Experiment

• Online survey experiment conducted (in cooperation with YouGovPsychonomics, based on their online panel)

• Survey was fielded from June 3-6, n=1.351, including eight experimental conditions

• Dependent Variable (Baseline Version):
  – „The European Election will take place on June 7th. How likely is it that you will turnout to vote?“
  – Possible answers ranging from 0 („will definitely not vote“) to 10 („will definitely vote“)
Experimental Condition 1 (Control Group):

„The European Election will take place on June 7th. How likely is it that you will turnout to vote?“
Experimental Condition 2/3:

„The European Election will take place on June 7th. Celebrities – like Oliver Kahn [Johanna Klum] – have called on people to cast their vote. How likely is it that you will turnout to vote?“
Experimental Condition 4/5:

„The European Election will take place on June 7th. How likely is it that you will turnout to vote?“

„BRUTE FORCE“–APPROACH
Unobtrusive Experimental Condition 6/7/8:

Klum kreischt Sara zum Sieg

Unterwäsche, Stöckelschuhe und Scheinwerfer: Vor 15.000 Zuschauern in Köln und Millionen vor den TV-Geräten hat Heidi Klum die 19-jährige Sara zur Siegerin der Model-Castingshow ausgerufen. "Ich bin so überglücklich", freute sich die frischgekrönte Gewinnerin.

Results
Results: Likelihood of Voting by Exp. Condition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Likelihood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kahn verbal</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahn visual</td>
<td>7.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kahn hidden</td>
<td>7.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Klum hidden</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral hidden</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Sig. Difference p<0.05
Data II
Online Survey Experiment

- Panel Survey

- In a first wave, we have a baseline measurement of the likelihood of turnout, in addition we have ratings for the celebrities in terms of ...
  - ... Fame (in the sense of being known)
  - ... Popularity (in the sense of being liked)

- We also have a third wave after the election to test for the stability of possible effects.

- The experimental conditions were part of the second wave
Results: Difference in the Likelihood of Voting

Condition 4 is the only one to yield a significant difference from zero.
Stability of Effects (Reported Turnout from Wave 3)
Further Research

• Subgroup Analysis
  - ... by age
  - ... by popularity of celebs
  - ... by prior level of certainty
  - ... by response latencies

• Additional experiments in the run-up to the federal election (with celebrities endorsing parties)

• Thanks a lot for your attention!