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Press Release

Bundestag Elections: Researchers Predict Outcomes at Federal and Local Level

The Zweitstimme.org project, co-directed by Prof. Thomas Gschwend, Ph.D., is gearing up for election day. Initial projections can be found online and will be updated regularly, including information relevant to each constituency.

Polling results point to a high-stakes election night set for February 23. Some parties that are currently represented in the Bundestag may be concerned about their chances of reaching the five percent threshold, while a newcomer, the BSW, is eager to make its parliamentary debut. As a result of the electoral law reform, it is likely that constituencies will experience their first instance of not being represented in the Bundestag through a direct mandate, even with a candidate who has been directly elected.

But how reliable are the latest polls? What changes can be expected from now until election day? What are the odds of independent candidates securing a mandate? Researchers have been working on these questions in the *Zweitstimme.org* project since the 2017 general election. For this year's Bundestag elections, a team of interdisciplinary researchers led by Prof. Thomas Gschwend, Ph.D. (University of Mannheim), Prof. Dr. Simon Munzert (Hertie School) and Prof. Dr. Lukas Stötzer (University of Witten/Herdecke) has joined forces.

This week, the research team will start conducting multiple surveys to gauge public predictions regarding the electoral race in different constituencies, along with other queries. But what are public predictions? "It is not just about finding out how people are going to vote, but also their predictions about how individual parties and candidates at the local level are going to fare in the election," Thomas Gschwend explains. "Combining insights on voting behavior and election outcome predictions leads to enhanced projection accuracy."

Besides making projections, the team is tackling two important inquiries that are gaining significance due to inaccurate forecasts and misunderstandings about data and statistics: What is the best way to convey polling results and predictions to the general public? And what effects do election polls have on political decision-making and campaign strategies? To better grasp these concerns, hundreds of reporters and candidates from different constituencies, along with their teams, will be interviewed.

The project *Zweitstimme.org* is being carried out at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), the Hertie School and the University of Witten/Herdecke and is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Further information
Project website: Zweitstimme.org
MZES project website: Wahlvorhersagen für die Bundestagswahl 2025

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