

Types of economic voting in regional elections: the 2012 Catalan election

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The standard assumption that economic voting (EV) is 'jurisdiction-specific' inevitably leads to a breakdown between 'national EV' and 'regional EV'. This paper challenges this overly simplistic distinction by proposing a more complex typology, whereby national and regional incumbents may be assessed in both national and regional elections, according to either national or regional economic conditions. Accordingly, new and more sophisticated types of economic voting emerge, such as 'second order EV' or 'coattail EV'.

In this paper, some of these new types of EV are verified with a suitable case study. The 2012 Catalan election was carried out in the context of severe recession, but also under the impression – among many Catalans – that the economic policies of the Spanish government were harshly punishing Catalan economic interests. Binomial logistic regression models confirm that, under political circumstances such as these, voters may use regional elections to assess the national incumbents' economic performance, whereas regional incumbents may end up exonerated from poor economic performance. This case study may be illustrative for other regional elections around the world.