

ECONOMIC VOTING IN NEW DEMOCRACIES

Byong-Kuen Jhee

Dr. James W. Endersby, Dissertation Supervisor

ABSTRACT

This study investigates economic voting in 70 new democracies that have experienced regime transition since 1974. By incorporating the analysis of elections in virtually all new democracies, this study shows how electorates react to changes in economic conditions under various socio-economic, institutional, and political circumstances. This study addresses a series of questions related to the nexus between economics and elections in new democracies and makes several important findings.

The findings are, first, economic performance under an authoritarian regime affects electoral support for authoritarian successors in founding elections. However, the vote share of an interim government is not affected by economic performance in the period of democratic transition. Second, electorates respond to economic performance of incumbents in post-founding elections. Contextual variables, such as economic development, level of democracy, and democratic consolidation have a weak relationship with economic voting. Third, the institutional clarity of responsibility for incumbents over economic performance does little to influence the relative strength of economic voting.