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**Political preferences in times of crisis.**  
**Economic motives for voting in the Polish elections of 2011**

The article is a case study of a single election in a single state and focuses on the theory of economic voting in the 2011 parliamentary elections in Poland. Seen from the perspective of this theory, the elections were quite remarkable. First, they were held at the time of global economic crisis. Second, for first time since the fall of communism, they were won by the party in power which, by the same token, remained in government for a second term. The article tests the classic version of the theory of economic voting, which is to say, a model based on reward and punishment, in accordance with which, the voters satisfied with economic situation support the ruling parties, while those dissatisfied with it support the parties in opposition. An empirical test was carried out using two analytical techniques; a discrete model of choice and an approach based on the propensity to vote. Multiple regression models were applied in our analyses, with the impact of the economic situation on a voting decision being tested while a series of other independent variables which may be significant to a respondent’s electoral decision remained under control. In the light of the analyses carried out, the main hypotheses derived from the theory of economic voting have been confirmed. Positive assessments of the economic situation favoured voting for the incumbent ruling parties. In turn, negative evaluations favoured voting for the largest opposition party.

**Key words:** Theory of economic voting, assessments of economic situation, discrete model of choice, propensity to vote, government impact on the economic situation.