Department of Economics and Finance

Course of Microeconomic Analysis

DETERMINANTS OF REELECTION
IN PORTUGUESE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

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Determinants of Reelection in Portuguese Municipal Elections

Abstract

This Work Project investigates the determinants of reelection using data on the 278 Portuguese mainland municipalities for the period 1976-2009. We implement a logit fixed effect model to control for the municipalities’ unobserved characteristics that remain constant over time. Political variables, such as the vote share of the incumbent’s party in previous election, the number of mayor’s consecutive mandates and abstention rate, are found to be relevant in explaining incumbent’s reelection. Moreover, as to the mayor’s individual characteristics, age and education contribute to explain reelection prospects. We also provide weak evidence that a higher degree of fiscal autonomy increases political turnover and that the good economic prospects of the municipality positively affect reelection. Finally, the residents’ level of education and the size of the municipal population have an explanatory power on mayor’s reelection. We perform several robustness checks to confirm these results.

Keywords: Reelection, Portuguese municipalities, Mayor, Local elections, Fiscal decentralization, Panel data, Logit fixed effect model.
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