

Region, The Economy, and The Government

Do economy-based evaluations of the government depend on region?

Overview

Introduction

Different ethno-religious and cultural groups settled in different regions of the country. These deep-rooted cultural differences-coupled with an American tendency towards local government-have created legitimate regional differences. If find that these differences translate into political differences through perception and outlook on the economy. In an increasingly divided political climate, any understanding of the issues that divide us- and the root of these issues- is useful.

Model

Dependent Variable: Congress, President, Federal Government Feeling Thermometers
Independent Variable: Interaction between region and economic concern
Controls: Year, Race, Gender, Party Identification

OLS regression using NES data from 1980-2012

economic perception:
"think about the past year. would you say the economy has gotten worse or better?"

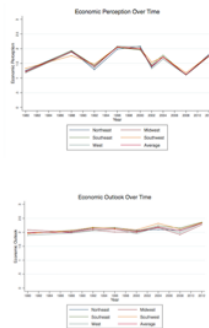
economic outlook:
"how about next year? do you think the economy will get worse or better?"

Regions
Northeast: CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA, DE, DC, MD
Midwest: IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MS, NE, ND, SD
Southeast: FL, FA, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN
Southwest: AR, LA, OK, TX, AZ, NM, NV
West: ID, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA, CO

Interaction between Region and Economy

Economic concerns have an undeniable affect on evaluations of the government: the more positive people are about the economy, the more positively they rate the government. I tested whether this relationship varies across region.

The Economy Over Time



Results

Overall Effects

Variable	Economic Perception			Economic Outlook		
	Coefficient	Standard Error	Significance	Coefficient	Standard Error	Significance
Constant	1.4175	0.8901	(0.000)	1.1700	0.8901	(0.000)
Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Male	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Outlook	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Male	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * White * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Male * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * White * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * White * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Male * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Male * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * White * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * White * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * White * Democrat * Year * Region	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)

Economic Perception

Just one interaction term was significant in any model. Economic Perception alone is always a significant predictor of government popularity, but there is little evidence that the relationship between economic perception and ratings of the government is affected in a significant way by region.

Economic Outlook

There were significant differences between regions for the relationship between economic outlook and ratings of the federal government. This indicates that the way people think about the government based on the way they think about the future economy may be significantly impacted by the region in which they reside.

Implications

My paper offers new insights into the role of region and the economy within political behavior, and prompts new questions.

- ▶ What are the psychological differences between economic outlook and economic perception?
- ▶ Why is the relationship between the economy and government popularity different across region?
- ▶ Could this help explain the surprising-to-some election of Donald Trump?

Direct Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	Significance
Constant	1.4175	0.8901	(0.000)
Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
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Region * Perception * Outlook	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Male	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * White	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * White * Democrat	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Male * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Outlook * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Male * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * White * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * White * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * White * Democrat * Year	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)
Region * Perception * Male * White * Democrat * Year * Region	0.0000	0.0000	(0.000)

