National Governments' Responsibility within a Multi-Level System of Governance: A Positive–Sum Game?

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Abstract

EU competences have grown over the years, reducing national governments' room for maneuver in many areas. Now, the EU has responsibilities over the state of the economy and partially replaces national governments' traditional authority. If European citizens are aware of this situation, they should partly transfer their satisfaction or dissatisfaction from the national to the European level of governance when their country entersthe EU. This articletests whether citizens' support towards the EU is more dependent on the state of the economy after EU accession and whether citizens' support towards national governments is impacted by EU accession. Based on Eurobarometer surveys which were carried out between 2001 and 2012, we analyze support for national governments and EU in the ten countries which joined European institutions during this lapse of time. We find that macroeconomic conditions did not alter EU support before accession and that only inflation altered EU support after accession, while it kept constant for unemployment. Therefore, EU seems to be punished on the basis of inflation when it is in charge.

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1. Introduction

In the European system of governance, national governments havean ambivalent position: while they cannot formally influence someimportant aspects of economic and monetary policies, due to the independentmandate of the ECB and the budgetary rules imposed sincethe Maastricht Treaty in 1992, national governments still have room for maneuver. First, they set out the conditions under which the ECBcan act.Second, they can voice their concerns within the Council of theEuropean Union, which is the institution deemed to be the most powerful executive and legislative body by intergovernmentalists (Moravscik 1993, 1998), to advance theirnational interests. Most importantly, they have not given up their fiscalcompetences at the national level. Nevertheless, nationalgovernments have undoubtedly lost some policy competences towards European Union institutions over the years. Now EuropeanUnion, alongside with national governments, is formally responsible forproducing a number of policies, notably in the economic area (Brouard et al. 2011).Also, negative integration has reduced member states' capacity to intervene in the economy and to regulate the capitalist economy (Scharpf 2000, 2009).

The first objective of this paper is to assess whether being governed by the EU leads citizens to reward orpunish the EU for macroeconomic performances. Second, we analyze how EU accession affects attribution of responsibility to the national governments and in which particular economic areas. This is not an idle question since evaluation of responsibility for policy outputs is a paramount feature in representative democracies: it is the basis on which people rely when they sanction or reward national governments for the macroeconomic conditions (Stigler 1973). Moreover, parties' strategies rely massively on being able to make citizens aware of what they have done for voter at the time of the election (Downs 1957).

In this framework, attribution of responsibility can be a zero-sum game where what is assigned to one level of governance (e.g. EU), is transferred to another level of governance (e.g. the national government). However, shared responsibility does not necessarily involve such a setting: within a multi-level model of governance where different actors affect domestic economic performance, it might be difficult for citizens to assess the extent to which actors are responsible for the state of the economy. This opacity can drive citizens to attribute less responsibility than in a more comprehensive system, because they do not clearly identify whom to punish or to reward (Whitten and Powell, 1993). Opacity might also lead citizens to deliver a positive sum of rewards and punishments, like a general who, when the culprit is unknown, punishes everyone. We know little about the extent to which EU actually challenges national governments' responsibility, i.e. a mechanism used by individuals to hold rulers responsible for their policy-making. Hence, we ask whether national governments' responsibility for the state of the economy is altered by the EU, understood as a rival ruler.

Literature focusing on this subject tends to confirm the idea that citizens view the EU as a relevant level of governance. Studies focusing on voting-behavior inform that perception of EU responsibility for the state of the economy diminishes the national economic vote (Costa Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2012) and that citizens punish and reward incumbent governments according to their EU positioning (De Vries et al., 2011). Furthermore, two recent studies demonstrate that citizens attribute responsibility to the EU. First, Hobolt and Tilley (2014) showthat citizens attribute responsibility to the EU in thesame fashion as experts do, and they find that citizens outsidethe Eurozone attribute less responsibility to the EU for the economicsituation in comparison with citizens inside a country belongingto the European Monetary Union (EMU), suggesting that the institutionalstructure in which citizens operate is taken into account whenassigning responsibility.Second, François et al. (2012) find that support for the EU depends on the macro-economic conditions only in member countries, and not in candidate countries, showing that citizens punish Europe when it becomes institutionally responsible. Although here aresome hints that citizens attribute responsibility to the EU for the state of the economy, no study has assessed the impact of the arrival of a new ruler on attribution of responsibility to the traditional ruler, i.e. the state. Moreover, no study expressly disambiguates how citizens modify their attribution of responsibility in different policy areas.

To assess the extent to which EU alters national governments' responsibility and in which particular economic areas, we apply the popularity function to EU support within the framework of the 2004 and 2007 accession waves which provide a good experimental setting to unravel this puzzle. Indeed, it allows us to compare situations in which the EU is an incumbent with situations in which the EU is not. Interestingly enough, EU enlargement has never been used to answer such a question due to the lack of data. However, Eurobarometer provides substantial data for the twelve countries which entered EU in 2004 and in 2007, before and after accession: these surveys include similar proxy measures of support towards incumbent governments and towards the EU from 2001 to 2012. Before 2004 and 2007, ECE countries, Malta and Cyprus were not EU members. Therefore, we expect that support towards the EU did not depend on the state of the economy.After accession, the EU was

included among the rulers. Thus, we expect the reward-punishment mechanism to be extended to the EU at this moment. Our empirical results confirm that individual support towards the EU is affected by the macroeconomic performance only in the post-membership period, i.e. when the EU is legally a ruler, and that national governments did not suffer from the arrival of this additional level of governance. More precisely, we show that EU support only depends on the level of inflation, while it is not affected by levels of unemployment. Our empirical analysis shows that multi-level governance is a *positive-sum game*. We can therefore generalize these results by showing that the sum of punishments in a multi-level system is higher than in a one-level system.
The results of our analysis contribute to threedebated issues in EU studies, i.e. EU so-called "democratic deficit" (Follesdal and Hix, 2006) and multi-level governance (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). First, we show that citizens who are subject to the European legislation consider the EU responsible for the macroeconomic situation. This suggests that, although no accountability regimes properly allow citizens to punish or reward European executives in order to go along with the increase of EU competences (Schmitter 2000; Hobolt and Tilley 2014), citizens can still punish or reward the EU for the state of the economy, by the prism of diffuse support. Second, we lend credence to the multi-level approach which asserts that perceived authority is shared across different levels of governments (Hooghe and Marks, 2001). Rather than being impacted by the presence of a new ruler, state sovereignty is kept constant and its responsibility is not blurred. Furthermore, it also seems that citizens seem to get it right when assigning responsibilities to different levels of government because our results show that they make the difference between unemployment which is a traditional competence of national governments and inflation which is one of the main EU tasks.
The next section presents our theoretical framework, which is based on models of government accountability and popularity function, from which we derive our hypotheses. The dataset used for the empirical work is displayed in the subsequent section and the estimations' results are presented in the penultimate section. Finally, we discuss more broadly our results and mention the implications of this study for future research.

2. Who is to blame for economic performance in a two-level system? Challengers vs. rulers.

The core principle of the European integration project is to pool resources and policy competencies together at the supranational level. Intergovernmentalists argue that sovereign states decide to pool resources to lessen coordination costs for issues which do not pertain to the core competences of the nation-state (Moravscik 1992), while neo-functionalists posit that the process of federalization should trigger a spill-over effect, and eventually decrease the possibility for European countries to compete in an armed conflict (Haas 1957). According to the two theories, European integration entails that member states, via national governments, deliberately accept to delegate some components of their sovereignty to another layer of government: stated differently, national governments intentionally agree to lose policy room to manoeuvre in some areas. For example, only the European Union can adopt legally binding acts regarding the Conservation of marine biological resources in the framework of the Common Fisheries Policies (CFP). To a lesser extent, EU member states have agreed to share some of their competencies to the EU in other areas such as Agriculture, Common Market or Environment.

In the economic and monetary area, the distribution of policy competences between member states and European institutions is clear: the EU has the objective and the instruments to control inflation since the creation of the European Monetary System in 1979, while member states have decided not to delegate too much power to the EU regarding employment policies.

Since the Treaty of Maastricht, the EU, via the European Monetary Union (EMU) and the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM), sets convergence criteria to ensure that inflation rates, interest rates and exchange rate stability are similar in the countries pertaining to the European Union. In turn, most of EU member states have lost the main instruments to control inflation rates, i.e. interest rates and the possibility to create money. In the meantime, EU member states clearly showed their preferences towards safeguarding their margins of manoeuvreswhen dealing with employment policies. Indeed, the decision-making process in this realm is Policy Coordination: the EU only has power to influence employment policies via the Open Method of Communication (OMC) which is a forum where only non-binding decisions are taken. Thus, policy competences between the EU and member states are clearly divided in the economic area.

Several studies highlight that individuals evaluate the EU based on macroeconomic performance, namely growth, inflation and unemployment (Dalton and Eichenberg 1993, 2007; Anderson and Reichert 1995; Gabel and Palmer 1995). But none expressly disambiguate between types of macroeconomic indicators. This is puzzling because rational individuals differentiate between policy competencies when voting in different types of elections (Stigler 1973). In fact, we observe that inflation usually better predict evaluations towards the EU, displaying higher explanatory coefficients (Dalton and Eichenberg 1993, 2007). This is probably because rational individuals evaluate the EU, not based on every aggregated macro-economic indicators, but by macro-economic indicators that the EU is responsible for.

EU studies provide diverse and contradictory explanations as tohow citizens attribute responsibility for policy outcomes between levels of governance. We can distinguish four different arguments. First, a state-centric line of reasoning explains that state sovereignty is kept constant or even strengthened through EU membership (Moravcsik, 1993). This model shows that governments are the most powerful agents in the bargaining process and that “no government has to integrate more than it wishes” (Hooghe and Marks 2001: 342). Although this state-centric point of view mostly relates to the policy-making process, it can be extended to attribution of responsibility and we can expect that no transfers of responsibility will be made towards the EU. Several empirical studies tend to support this idea: Anderson (1998) and Harteveld et al. (2013) found that the national government is the only political bodydeemed responsible for the economic situation since attitudes towards the EU are largely mediated by the evaluation of national governments. Therefore, we make the assumption that:

> *State-centric setting: the perception of national governments’ economic responsibility should stay the same in the pre and post- membership period while no responsibility should be attributed to the EU in both periods.*

A second line of argument explains that, in a multi-level governance setting, the national governments competes with other supranational or subnational actors within a zero-sum game alike setting where responsibility gained (or lost) by one actor is compensated by losses (or gains) by another actor. This hypothesis assumes that the complexity of political systems does not affect individual attribution of responsibility for economic performance and is coherent with studies highlighting that perception of EU responsibility for the state of the economy diminishes the national economic vote (Costa Lobo and Lewis-Beck, 2012). This is also coherent with studies dealing with the impact of globalization on voting behavior (Samuels and Hellwig 2007; Hellwig 2014). These studies show that globalization reduces national governments’ competences within the economic realm and that voters adapt by changing their voting strategies: in this framework, citizens take non-economic issues more into account when casting their ballots. This explanation is traditionally accepted in the study of multi-level system of governance, notably advocated by Hooghe and Marks (2001). In this setting, supranational and subnational actorsshare responsibilities within the decision-makingprocess alongside national governments. This entails that the EU alongsidesubnational actorsshare the burden for the state of the economy and that citizens, in turn, take this fact into account when evaluating policy performance given the actual division of power. In a nutshell, individual attribution of responsibility adapts to the addition of new levels of governance, indicating a transfer of responsibility in the policy-making process. The second hypothesis thus assumes that, when a country becomes an EU member, citizens should start attributing responsibility to this new level of governance. This responsibility gained by the EU as a new ruler should be compensated by losses of attribution of responsibility at the level of national governments. Stated differently:

> *Zero-sum setting: the perception of national government's economic responsibility should be undermined in the post-membership period due to the integration within EU institutions, while responsibility should be attributed to the EU in the post-membership period.*

The third argument is based on the idea that the diffusion of power among different authorities, i.e. decentralization or supranational integration, blurs governments' lines of responsibility (Leon, 2011). This situation can thus inhibit citizens to assign responsibility for economic performance. Hence, the increasing influence of the European Union on domestic policies ends up reducing national governments' responsibility for the economic situation (Veiga and Veiga 2004), without increasing European responsibility. The rationale behind is that the more complexity there is, the more citizens are discouraged to enter the political game or voice opinions (Hay 2008).

The third expectationdescribes a fall in the responsiveness of support for the national government to macroeconomic conditions after EU membership. However, this is not compensated by an increase in the variation of EU popularity function. In short, support for political institutions react less to the state of economy after membership.

> *Negative-sum setting: the perception of national government's economic responsibility reduces in the post- membership period while EU responsibility for the state of the economy remains null.*

Finally, opacity might also lead citizens to act in a slightly different fashion. In this setting, citizens deliver a positive sum of rewards and punishments: more complexity does not restrain citizens to voice their opinions, but citizens tend to display more negative or positive opinions towards the system as a whole. This situation is more clear-cut about punishments, but can be also extended to rewards. Therefore, we assume that the arrival of a new level of governance is perceived by citizens as responsible, but not to the detriment of the other rulers. In this situation, punishments and rewards would therefore inflate. Hence, we expect that:

> *Positive-sum setting: the perception of national government's economic responsibility should stay the same in the pre and post- membership period while EU responsibility for the state of the economy should gain responsibility only in the post- membership period.*

We have no analytical reasons to prefer one setting over another from a theoretical point of view. Only an empirical study can help us figuring out which situation occurs and, thus, in which way the perceived responsibility for the state of the economy is shared among actors. Nevertheless, since attribution of responsibility depends on the institutional setting individuals are embedded in (Hobolt and Tilley 2013), we postulate that some expectations will be triggered depending on the particular economic indicatorput under investigation. Basically, we expect that in the realms where the EU has fewer competences, i.e. employment,attribution of responsibility to the EU should be null, even when it is in charge. In contrary, we expect attribution of responsibility to the EU to be triggered when it is in charge in economic areas where the EU has more competences, i.e. inflation.EU competences are limited in employment policies, hence we expect that citizens will attribute no responsibility for the rate of unemployment in both periods. On the contrary, the EU has more policy competences to tackle inflation. Thus, individuals should be more likely to attribute more responsibility to the EU in this particular realm.

To advocate between these lines of arguments, we develop a test to measure how citizens differently attribute responsibility for economic outcomes in a two-level system of governance. More precisely,we apply the economic-voting hypothesis to both EU andnational governments by analyzing the variation of popularity function over time (Lewis-Beck and Paldam, 2000; Anderson 2000, Lewis-Beck 2006, Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier 2007, Bellucci and Lewis- Beck 2011). These studies show that the incumbent party or candidate obtains more (resp. less) support when the economic situation is good (resp. bad)within a bipartisan system. In this setting, the macroeconomic situation is assumed to affect incumbents'and challengers' popularity indicated by poll surveys. We extend this approach to EU support since it is demonstrated that levels of support for the process of integration are systematically higher when economic indicators such as unemployment or inflation are favorable (Anderson and Kaltenthaler 1996; Dalton and Eichenberg 1993, 2007). Indeed, a large body of evidence shows that citizens' support for the EU depends on the national state of the economy (Herzog and Tucker, 2010). This is particularly manifest within Eastern and Central European (ECE) countries where citizens are responsive to macroeconomic performance when they cast their ballots (Tucker et al., 2002, Tverdova and Anderson, 2004). A phenomenon of hyper-accountability with consistent punishment and a high electoral accountability is even unveiled by Roberts (2008). To sum up, economic conditions are important predictors of individual attitudes towards the European Union, understood as a political regime.

However, the mere statistical relationship between support for the EU and the state of economy does not imply that the EU is deemed responsible for economic outcomes. Indeed, EU support is also strongly predicted by the support for the national government (Anderson 1998; Ray 2003; Kritzinger 2003). This finding implies that the only ruler deemed responsible for policy outcomes is the national government. Hence, The EU cannot be treated as a genuine ruler because trust towards national executives is a decisive factor in the mechanism of causality when evaluating the EU as a polity (Harteveld et al. 2013).
To judge whether citizens actually hold the EU responsible for the economic outcomes, we need to isolate the specific variation of EU support from the variation of the national government support. This is paramount to detect a proper effect of the EU, rather than a mere logic of extrapolation from national to EU evaluation of performance, or to say it otherwise, to distinguish punishments and rewards. Indeed, the relationship between support for the EU and macroeconomic conditions can be interpreted as punishments or rewards only if we witness variation of EU support when the EU really takes part of the burden ofeconomic policies. Then, the EU is expected to beheld solely responsible if (i) citizens punish(resp. reward) the EU for bad (resp. good) economic performances, without punishing the national government when (ii) citizens live in countries constrained by the EU political system.

To analyze the distribution of attribution of responsibility within a multi-level system, we take advantage of the institutional evolution which occurred in 2004 and 2007, when twelve countries became EU members. According to the condition (ii), the EU is perceived by citizens as responsible for the state of the economy only when it becomes institutionally responsible for a set of policy areas, not merely when it pressures candidate states to apply the Copenhagen Criteria. So, the comparison of citizens' pre- and post- membership reactions makes it possible to infer the perceived responsibility of the EU because an institution begins to be perceived by citizens as genuinely responsible only when it is in charge. It could be argued that the EU has an impact on candidate countries' economies prior to EU accession because, within the context of the Euro convergence program and the European Exchange Rate Mechanism, it sets up strict criteria to achieve membership which affects candidate countries' economic performances. However, in this situation, the national government remains fully responsible regarding its choice to fulfill or not those criteria because of the hypothetical possibility of an opt-out: EU membership is eventually decided by a popular referendum. Basically, our assumption is that indirect institutional influence does not affect citizens' support and that only a genuine institutional ruler is seen as responsible because candidate countries remain theoretically able to exit the process of accession at any moment prior to accession. If this assumption proves to be right, we can conclude that the EU is perceived as an actual ruler, not merely as an agent of policy-making. In order to fulfill the condition (i), we need to identify how responsive EU support isto the state of economy in comparison with national governments' support. Therefore, our empirical design systematically compares support for the EU and for the government in the same analyses.
Combining the literature on multi-level governance and economic-voting literature, we make four concurrent hypotheses, which aim at depicting four different kinds of individual reactions to the macroeconomic performance and the impact on governments' support.

3. Data and Operationalization

The empirical literature uses different kinds of measurements to assess individual attitudes towards European integration. On the one hand, some studies have been based on poll surveys, especially on Eurobarometers as that they provide good indicators of support for the overall process of the European integration both within old member states (Gabel and Whitten 1997, Christin 2005) and within candidate countries (e.g. Cichowski 2000, Elgün and Tillman 2007). On the other hand, several studies have used the outcomes of elections to assess EU support, mainly via national referenda results on European issues (e.g. Christin and Hug, 2002, Glencross and Trechsel, 2011) and through the analysis of European Parliament Election results (e.g. Tilley et al. 2008, Hix and Marsh 2011). In the case of the EU, studies on voting-behavior do not help answer our initial question since EU executive powers are not elected and because European Parliamentary Elections (EPE) are generally considered as second-order consultations (Reif and Schmitt, 1980). Performance voting in EPE is diluted mostly because of the nature of the electoral contest itself. Indeed, EPE are typical second-order elections where MEPs are elected on considerations which are driven by national domestic factors rather than by considerations about European integration.In addition, due to the fact that EU politics in the EP are mostly driven by compromise-seeking behaviors, it is difficult for citizens to identify a clear governmental party and a clear opposition party. This eventually alters the possibility to hold rulers in the EP accountable for the policy-making (Hobolt and Tilley, 2014). Given this situation, we then prefer to focus on polls to assess change of attitudes towards EU and national governments. This is also convenient because it replicates several artificial situations of incumbency.

Therefore, we carry out an empirical analysis on twelve Eurobarometer surveys concerning twelve countries, three of them conducted before the EU accession in 2004, and nine afterward. In countries entered in 2007, we distinguish between the six years' time period before 2007, and the 5 years' time period after membership. More precisely, these surveys were conducted before and after the accession of the ten countries that joined the European Union during the 2004 accession wave, namely Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Romania and Bulgaria are added within the 2007 wave of accession. We decided to investigate thesurveys available during this period, conducted twice a year from 2001 to 2012. This allows us to view the situation with hindsight and it permits to limit differences between the levels of advancement of each country in the process of accession. In addition, investigating several dates limits the incidence of specific national debates or domestic events which can promptly modify EU support (Brinegar and Jolly, 2005).

4.1. The measurement of reward and punishment

The main difficulty is to find continuous and corresponding questions to measure support towards both national governments and the EU during the period under investigation (2001-2012). Unfortunately, questions measuring support for both organizations do not exist systematically in the Eurobarometer surveys. Instead, we have come upon a question which allows us to have information on the perception of both levels of governance for the 2001-2012 time-period by scrutinizing the Candidate Countries' Eurobarometer and the Standard Eurobarometer. This question measures individual trust towards national governments and EU and is worded as follows: "*For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it*" where tend to trust equals 1 while tend not to trust equals 2. We only retain *the European Union* and *the national government*. The latter has been already observed to be strongly correlated with national measurements of government's popularity (Magni-Berton 2008). Missing data (refusals and other non-responses) are excluded from our analysis. As a result, we have an indirect measurement of support towards the EU and national governments during the two periods, i.e. before and after accession.This gives us the opportunity to indirectly test the perceived responsibility of both national governments and the EU. We assume that an individual who does not support the EU or her national government punishes it, while those who support the political regimes, reward them.

Table 1 and 2 around here

Tables 1 and 2 give a description of the individual reward/punishment aggregated variation over time towards the EU and towards national governments. Table 1 indicates the overall distribution of respondents who reward and punish national governments and the EU per year. We observe that national governments' punishment occurs the most frequently. On the other hand, EU punishment is more unstable: it increases until 2005, and then it decreases. In 2008, it increases again. It is our first dependent variable.

Table 2 describes our dependent variable which computes simultaneously punishment of national government and EU. It includes four categories: (i) those who punish both their national government and the EU, who are, on average, the third most numerous group, (ii) those who punish only the national government, who are the second most numerous group, (iii) those who punish only the EU who are very rare and (iv) those who do not punish anyone, the largest group. These four items enable us to test our first hypothesis. We expect that, before membership, only the punishment for national government (associated or not with the EU) reacts to changes in macroeconomic indicators. After membership, four different settings may happen but we have no particular predictions except if we disambiguate between economic competences.

4.2. The explanatory variables

Our most important independent variables measure the country's macroeconomic situation. Following a standard vote-popularity function (Paldam 2008), we select two variables describing economic performance: the average annual rate of unemployment and the annual inflation rate. We exclude growth as an indicator to retain only two most-different variables. We consider that, given the distribution of competences in the European system of governance, inflation is more linked with the action of the EU while employment strategies remain in the realm of the states. Growth is a byproduct of the action of the two institutions and is impacted more decisively by exogenous and contextual factors such as the variation of energy prices. Therefore we choose to differentiate only between inflation and unemployment rates to make sure to see clear differences.All these variables are measured at the country level. To take into account the difference of impact of these variables according to the period (before and after EU accession), we implement interactive variables between the macroeconomic variables and dummy variables indicating the period after the European accession.

Drawing on studies on attitudes towards the EU (Belot 2010), we control for a classic set of individual control variables, namely gender, age, education (the age at which people completed their full time education), marital situation, household size, the size of the agglomeration where respondents live, respondent's professional situation and property ownership. These variables indirectly captureindividual structural factors explaining EU support. One of the assumptions in the literature regarding attitudes towards the EU is that objective impact of entering the common market has a positive impact on individuals' economic welfare, which is linked to their personal levels of income, to their professional activity and to their level of education (Gabel, 1998; 2000). Indeed, Gabel demonstrates that citizens with a higher level of education and with a high-skills profile who live in areas that benefit from EU membership tend to value their countries' membership of the European institutional framework more than others.

Besides, we introduce a variable likely to measure people's general satisfaction with their own personal situation. In doing so, we are able to control for the influence of individual subjective well-being on support for the EU. We also add two political variables, i.e. the frequency of discussion on political topics and the respondent persuasiveness. These two last variables are proxy measures which aim at evaluating respondents' degree of political sophistication. We include these variables in the model because individual capability to make causal associations regarding the state of the economy and vote for an incumbent is largely dependent on this political variable (Gomez and Wilson 2001). Unfortunately, Eurobarometer surveys do not provide questions allowing us to account for the role of identity. Undoubtedly, this shortcoming has an impact on the quality of our estimation as identity factors are good predictorsof individual support for the EU (Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2002; Marks and Hooghe, 2005). Nevertheless, as this study partly focuses on CEE countries which are more affected than others by economic factors because consolidation of the economic transition toward free-market and capitalism was linked to joining the EU (Tucker et al., 2002), we assume that identity factors play a minor role within these countries.

4.3. Methodology

To advocate between the lines of argument, we run a model, which estimates the individual probability to punish or reward the national government and the EU for the state of the economy by taking trust towards these two political institutions as proxy measures. More precisely, we craft a dependent variable which distinguishes between four different settings of attribution of responsibility that we distinguish accordingly (see table 2). The dependent variable is then a categorical variable: when people trust neither the EU nor the national government, i.e. they punish both of them, it equals 0. It equals 1 when respondents only trust (reward)the EU and 2, when they only trust (reward) national governments. Finally, it equals 3 when respondents trust both the EU and their nationalgovernment, and, therefore, do not punish anyone. Since this explanatory variable is categorical, we run amultinomial*logit*regression. Whatever the probability estimated, we implement the same empirical model containing the interaction between the macroeconomic variables and the dummy variable indicating the period, i.e. pre and post-membership.

The main statistical concern of our estimations is related to the fact that we introduced country variables in the model. These variables are identical for all the respondents living in the same country in a given year. This could perturb the errors because residuals might be correlated with unobserved features of the country. So, to avoid this potential concern of heteroscedasticity, we use two strategies. First, we introduce a dummy variable by country to account for other characteristics at the national-level as if we were introducing fixed effects associated with each nation. We also integrate dummy variables for each year within our estimation. Second, we correct the variance of errors using the cluster method (see Cameron and Trivedi, 2006). Finally, another statistical issue is linked to the independence of irrelevant alternative (IIA) assumption (see Cameron and Trivedi, 2006). To insure that our estimations are not affected by a potential convergence between the four items of the variables, we implement a Small-Hsiao test (Small and Hsiao, 1985).

5. Empirical Results

Table 3 synthesizes the results of the 8 specifications (4 for inflation and 4 for unemployment), in which the reference is "punishment for the national governmentonly" which eases results' legibility (Appendix details the results for the probability to punish both EU and national governments, including control variables, see Table 5 and 6). As mentioned in the previous part, punishment describes a situation where individual support towards political institutions is correlated with negative macroeconomic performance. We use punishments instead of rewards to ease legibility of the results. We first expect national governments to be the main recipients of the punishments in the pre-membership period because the EU is not institutionally responsible for the state of the economy at this time. Within this setting, we thus predict that the three variables of punishments, namely "no punishments", "punishments for the EU only", and "punishments for both institutions" will be negatively correlated to our landmark, i.e. "punishment for national governments only".

If this first assumption reveals to be empirically exact, we then expect four different configurations to happen in the post-membership period. First, H1 (State-centric expectation) predicts that punishments should stay the same in the post-membership period, i.e. only directed towards national governments. Empirically, we expect the two macroeconomic variables to display no significant results after performing an interaction with the moment of membership. Second, H2 (Zero-sum game expectation) predicts that "punishments for the EU only" should display a positive sign, while "no punishments"and "punishments for both institutions" should be not significant after performing the interaction between the two time-periods. H3 (Negative-sum expectation) predicts that"punishments for the EU only"should remainnull, while "no punishments" should display a negative sign. Finally, H4 (positive-sum game expectation) predicts that "no punishments" will display a negative sign, while

"punishments for both institutions" and "punishments for the EU only" will display a positive sign. Results do not validate the same hypothesis when inflation and unemployment are put under investigation.
The positive-sum game expectation (H4) is validated for inflation while the State-centric expectation (H1) is confirmed for unemployment. First, we observe that the EU is less punished for an increase of the inflation ratein the pre-membership period, when we take "punishment for national governments only" as the point of reference. Indeed, compared to this landmark, "punishments for both institutions" and "punishments for the EU only" display negative signs. Thus, it indicates that national governments are the main recipients of punishments for the deterioration of the inflation ratein the pre-membership period. In contrast, the results yielded when the EU becomes a ruler show a change in the distribution of punishments. When the EU is in charge, punishing both the EU and national governments becomes positive. In the meantime, punishing none of the two levels of governance turns negative, while "punishments to the EU only" becomes non significant. Thus, the results about inflation tend to support H4 because the sum of punishments expands after performing an interactive with the moment of accession. In comparison with the pre-membership period where the punishment is only assigned towards the national governments, we thus witness an increase of punishments towards both institutions. This suggests that individuals do not change how they perceive national governments to be responsible for the state of inflation. Rather, they just adapt to the new situation by adding a new agent responsible for the inflation rate. In the case of inflation, we empirically witness a positive-sum game situation.

Table 3 about here

Concerning the unemployment rate, results tend to confirm the State-centric hypothesis (H1). When we take "punishment for national governments only" as the reference, results first confirm that national governments remain the recipients of punishments in the pre-membership period. National governments associated or not with the EU are significantly more punished when unemployment is high. Indeed, the coefficients indicating "punishment for the EU only" or "no punishments" are significant and display negative coefficients at this time. In the post-membership, no results are significant, which indicates that attribution of punishments stays stable over time and are only directed towards national governments. This finding suggests that in both cases, punishing the EU is a byproduct of the governmental mistrust. These results stress an important fact: the positive-sum punishment consisting in a significant increase of punishment for the two level of governance depends on the type of macroeconomic variable. It appears for inflation, but not for unemployment.We shall return to the interpretation of the results in the discussion. Finally, our results are not altered by the IIA assumption as demonstrated by the Small-Hsiao test (see appendix).

6. Conclusive discussion

Empirical results first confirm that citizens seem to "get it right" when assigning punishments to different levels of governance as Hobolt and Tilley already suggested (2014). Indeed, when national governments have the upper hand on the policy-making process, they are punished accordingly. More precisely, other levels of governance, in this case the EU, do not suffer from punishments when they are not institutionally in charge. This suggests that attribution of responsibility first depends on the institutional framework individuals are embedded in as suggested by Hobolt and Tilley (Ibid). In addition, citizens do not assign punishments in the same fashion depending on which macroeconomic indicators evolve. Indeed, the results show that citizens solely punish national governments for a bad performance in unemployment. They do so, even when the EU is in charge of unemployment. On the other hand, inflation reacts to the arrival of the EU. Indeed, individual punishments for a bad performance in inflation rates increase towards both institutions, when the EU becomes an institutional ruler. This is coherent with the distribution of economic competences between national governments and the EU since monetary aspects tend to be devoted to the EU, while social systems and unemployment policies remain largely under the control of national entities.Hence,it seems that citizens have, at least, a broad idea of who is responsible for economic policies in the EU system of governance.

Furthermore, results show that citizens who are subject to the European legislation consider the EU responsible for the macroeconomic situation. This result suggests that citizens actually view the EU as a proper ruler because they punish it for the state of the economy, at least in areas where it has competences. Finally, we lend credence to both multi-level approaches and state-centric approaches in our study. In the case of punishments for bad economic performance in the realm of inflation, empirics show a situation which cannot be described as a zero-sum game where what is gained at one level of government is lost for the other level. Rather, it is a configuration similar to the multi-level governance approach (Hooghe and Marks, 2001), where the sum of punishments increases for both political regimes. In the case of unemployment, state sovereignty is kept constant and her accountability is not challenged. Hence, this setting is more coherent with the state-centric approach which explains that national governments remain relatively independent towards other political institutions and are the main actors in the policy-making process.

7. Appendix

Insert table 4 5 and 6 here

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