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I. Introduction

The question about the level of government, or the decision-making level which is or should be the most appropriate to deal with different policy areas, is multifaceted and has been posed by political philosophers since centuries. The question of level of government is one of the aspects of the political system that is supposed to affect strongly its legitimacy (Thomassen and Schmitt, 1999).

Therefore, the legitimacy of a given level of government in democratic polities is largely based on the evaluation of the citizens whether a certain division of power is right or not. In the framework of the problematic of governance in the EU, the question of the appropriate level of governance has been dormant for a long time given the permissive pro-European consensus. The introduction of the subsidiarity debate has turned it into one of the hot issues in the debate on the legitimacy of and democratic deficit within the EU.

This paper will first examine to what extent European citizens allocate decision-making responsibilities to the European Union, the national state, or the regional level. Second, we will test a set of hypotheses (distilled from the theoretical discussion in the following section) concerning the socio-demographic, attitudinal and structural characteristics that affect differences in preferences for government levels. Third, we will suggest tracks of future research.

II. Theories on scope of government

The concept of the scope of governance deals mainly with two related items. First, to what extent can government formulate binding decisions regarding the organization of human behaviour in certain sectors of life (economy, education, health care, etc.) and with sectors have to be reserved to non-public actors (the market, civil society, the nuclear family, the individual citizen, etc.). Second, in the sectors where government regulation is considered legitimate, there is the question at which territorial level of government this regulation should occur: local, regional, national, European or global.

Regarding the first question, there is a large body of theoretical and empirical research. The rapid expansion of the welfare state and the fiscal crisis of the 1970s have turned the “scope of government” a hot issue ever since (Borre & Goldsmith, 1995:1). Political philosophers, democratic theorists, political economists and political sociologists, from the left to the neo-liberal spectrum¹, have

¹ O'Connor 1973, Niskanen 1973, Bell 1976, Brittan 1975, Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki, 1975, Wilensky 1975, 1981, Douglas 1976, King, 1975 & 1987, Rose & Peters 1978, Baker, Dalton & Hildebrandt, 1981, Clark & Ferguson, 1983, Birch 1984, Flora 1986, O'Conner & Brym 1987, Inglehart, 1977 & 1997, Luhmann 1990, Castles, 1998, etc.

made substantial theoretical contributions. Also comparative empirical survey research has flourished^{2,3} identifying determinants of attitudes about the scope of government to their systemic consequences, culminating in the huge “Scope of Government” volume of the Beliefs In Government project (1995).

However, we will only focus in this paper on the territorial part of the scope of governance problématique, although the first aspect regarding the role of government in steering society may influence choices made regarding the second.

A. Contributions to the scope of government debate beyond the EU

Already the ancient political philosophers (like Aristoteles) raised the question of the territorial scope of governance and it has been prominent in the works of classics like Thomas Aquino, Althusius, Hegel, Mill, De Toqueville, Montesquieu, etc.

The debate has been expanded and deepened in the 19th and 20th century. First, it was and still is at the heart of theories of federalism (especially in the early decades of the US and later in Germany). The oldest problem is posed in federal states and concerns which competencies should be dealt with at the national and which at the level of the federal entities. In the formerly unitary states that are currently undergoing a process of federalisation, regionalisation or devolution (Spain, Belgium, France, the UK, Italy) this question figures high on the political agenda, opposing maximalists demands voiced by ethno-regionalist parties and the desire of the state-wide parties and institutional actors to keep this transfer of competencies to the sub-state level to a minimum (Keating, 1995; De Winter & Türsan, 1998). Also in consolidated federal countries like Germany and the US, the question is nourished by the increasing dependence of states on the federal government for financial aid, which has enabled the federal government to influence policies which are nominally within the control of the state government. Yet, even in stable non-federal countries, the question about the desirable degree of autonomy of the sub-national level is recurrently posed in many democracies (Hesse & Sharpe, 1991)³.

Second, the disastrous effects of the industrial revolution on the living conditions of the working class raised the question of government intervention in the laissez-faire economy. The spectacular but uneven growth of industrial production also raised the question of government steered protectionism of the national economy vs. global market-guided free trade.

Third, the emergence and expansion of the state (all levels confounded) threatened civil society bodies that performed in the Ancien Régime certain public functions (Rokkan & Lipset, 1967) and the relevant intermediary organisations (trade unions, employers associations, mutual health organisations, cultural and youth organisation, non-public educational networks, and even the family) (Wilke and Wallace, 1990). Often these civil society organizations were linked with the (Catholic) church. It was in fact the Catholic Church that developed a comprehensive theory of subsidiarity first (cfr. the encyclicles Rerum Novarum, 1891 and especially Quadragesimo Anno, 1931), in order to delimit the role of the state and non-state bodies (“natural groups” such as the family, church and guild) in organizing society (especially in pillarised or consociational societies). Here, the concept is used in order to prevent the state to become too active in certain sectors of social life (industrial relations, public health, education, culture, socialisation, etc.). The Christian doctrine of personalism enshrined in four papal encyclical letters states in fact that each person is invested with legitimate power, whose first

² Mainly based on ISSP, EB, Political Action and EES surveys.

³ See for instance the European Charter of Local Self-Government, drafted by the Council of Europe, Strasbourg, on October 15, 1985 (Duff, 1993).

constraint is the legitimate power of others. The second constraint is the delegation of his power to social groups, local collectivities, or the state. Hence, the power of the state and other social bodies is only legitimate when the individuals agree to be subject to the political bodies that they have chosen to transfer their personal power to (Million-Delsol, 1992). The introduction of the principle of subsidiarity into the debate thus aims at fixing a set of rules with regard to governing bodies (independent from their territorial level) and civil society. By widening the issue of level of government to scope of governance, it introduces the element of consent of citizens and civil society in the debate.

Fourth, the emergence and empowerment of organized labour raised the question of the role of social partners in organizing the welfare state (cfr. neo-corporatist arrangements promoted by Social- as well as Christian-Democrats) (Schmitter).

Fifth, the participatory revolution triggered “May 68” coined the slogan of Small is Beautiful (Schumacher). Decision should be taken as closest to the people as possible (towns, small communities), as this would guarantee more citizen participation (indirect or semi-direct), make citizens aware of the impact of their actions, enhance the accountability of decision-makers, and thus legitimacy of decisions and the wider support for the political system.

The Club of Rome report underlined the global dimension of sustainable growth and environment, stressing the needs for global public intervention in order to save the earth’s natural resources and long-term survival. The latter two currents found themselves in the strategy “Think Globally, Act Locally”.⁴

The replacement of Weberian concepts of public administration by the New Public Administration paradigm redefined the role of public administration in running the res publica, pleading for more public-private-partnership, multilevel involvement of public bodies and civil society, policy networks, comitology, alternative normative instruments (convenants, soft law, benchmarking, open method of coordination) etc. (Brans 1997).

Since the 1970s economic and fiscal crisis, neo-conservatism and ultra-liberals use subsidiarity in their critique of the welfare state and rolling back “big government”, stressing minimal state intervention (only tolerated when markets fail), favouring privatization of most classical government functions (including minimal state functions like law and order, like prisons) and thus maximalising individual freedom.

B. The scope of government problématique in a multilevel Europe

⁴ Think Globally, Act Locally refers to the argument that global environmental problems can turn into action only by considering ecological, economic, and cultural differences of our local surroundings. This phrase was originated by Rene Dubos as an advisor to the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. In 1979, Dubos suggested that ecological consciousness should begin at home. He believed that there needed to be a creation of a World Order in which “natural and social units maintain or recapture their identity, yet interplay with each other through a rich system of communications”. In the 1980’s, Dubos held to his thoughts on acting locally, and felt that issues involving the environment must be dealt with in their “unique physical, climatic, and cultural contexts.” ([Eblen and Eblen, 1994, p. 702](#))

In the beginning the scope of government question was only posed in terms of EC/EU⁵ governance vis-à-vis the sovereignty of the national states and was basically treated as a problem of postwar expansion of forms international governance (UN, Nato, etc). International organisations historically emerged, expanded in number and scope precisely due to the fact that more and more issues are inherently transcending national borders, and therefore can only be dealt with through some form of permanent international co-operation. In the European context, this question has focused on the policy issues and sectors in which European institutions can operate more effectively than national member-states. Here several theories are competing. Neo-functionalist integration theory states that internationalised governance of inherently supra-national issues is to be achieved by starting internationalisation of the less political sectors (like transport and communication, economy, finance and culture exchange), and that the benefits of internationalisation made in these sectors should entice national government to slowly expand international co-operation into sectors of 'high politics', like foreign affairs, defence and judiciary and police that are all at the heart of the sovereignty of the nation-state (Haas and Schmitter, 1964).⁵

Within the specific internationalization context of European integration, the scope of government question was already present in Rome Treaty, giving member states the choice between the mean for achieving Community-fixed objectives. It became politically salient in the traditional two-level debate between intergovernmentalist (sovereignists) and supranational (federalists) conceptions of international organizations, voiced on the one hand by sovereignists (British Conservatives) and on the other hand regionalists (German Länder).

Growing critique of "creeping federalism" with the European integration process led pro-European leaders (Tindemans report 1975; Spinelli report 1984 and finally Delors) to revive the concept of subsidiarity, in order to appease the growing tension between national governments and the European Commission. Hence, the focus was on the vertical (territorial) dimension of subsidiarity, not on the horizontal (relations between public authorities and non-public actors).

The federalist ambitions of the founding fathers of the European Community were to some extent tempered by the Maastricht treaty, which puts a strong, albeit only symbolic constraint on this progressive and deterministic vision on creeping internationalisation. The inscription of the principle of subsidiarity in the Maastricht treaty aimed at explicitly installing a set of rules covering the division of competencies between member-states and European institutions. Art. 3 states that:

"In areas which do not fall within its exclusive competence, the Community shall take action, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, only if and in so far as the objectives of the proposed action cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States and can, therefore, by reason of scale or effects of the proposed action, be better achieved by the Community'

Hence, only those policy sectors that cannot be dealt effectively at a lower level of government are eligible for Europeanisation. Still, this principle is so vague that it serves predominantly political objectives, i.e. putting the Eurosceptics at ease⁶ rather than it can serve as practical guideline for stipulating which policy sectors should remain national or not (Estella de Noriega, 1997: 249-270). Nor

⁵ For an overview of the other factors that may explain the expansion of the EU, see Schmitter (1996).

⁶ The president of the Commission, Jacques Delors, launched this possibility of introducing the principle of subsidiarity in the discussion on the division of competencies.

was it in the beginning ‘justiciable’ (Schilling, 1995) although by now, but only rarely, questions of violation of the subsidiarity principle are brought before the ECJ.⁶

The subsidiarity principle was then successfully seized by the regions, promoting a “Europe of the Regions” with a third, regional, layer within the EU system of “multilevel governance” (Hooghe and Marks, 1996). The principle of subsidiarity implicitly also recognises the potential role of the regional and local level of government. The creation of the Committee of the Regions in 1994 illuminates the fact that also the regional level is willing to contest the irreversible evolution towards gradual increasing the decision-making prominence of European institutions, implicitly and explicitly referring in its opinions to the principle of subsidiarity or ‘proximity’ (du Granrut, 1994; Hooghe & Marks, 1996; Dony, 1997; De Bruycker, 1997, Vandersanden, 1997).

Finally, the growing disaffection of EU-citizens with the EU and their national governments (Norris, 1999), as dramatically expressed by the referenda on the Maastricht Treaty and the EU Constitution, has pushed the European Commission to seek more involvement of different levels of government (“as closely as possible to the citizen”), and of the wider civil society at different levels (Prodi’s White Paper on Governance), therefore also addressing the horizontal aspects of the subsidiarity principle as one of the ways to cope with the “democratic deficit”.

The EU debate has raised many questions about the scope of EU-governance:

- 1) which territorial levels of government should be recognized and endowed with authority?
- 2) who should decide, and on the basis of what grounds (type of arguments), that the central unit would ensure higher comparative efficiency or effectiveness (in other words, who carries the burden of proof of what the “proper” level is: the lower or higher level)?
- 3) should a “competence catalogue” or “no-go areas” be defined or does the current open-ended listing of community goals suffice? (Schmitter, 1997; Swenden, 2004)
- 4) should the EU allocate more resources to lower level units in order to bolster their capability and potential for efficient public intervention?
- 5) should EU decision-making only deal with setting objectives, letting the sub-units decide how to achieve these ends of their own accord (administrative vs. legislative federalism)?
- 6) which institution(s) should deal with conflicts about the application of the subsidiarity principle, and who can introduce a case (ECJ, CoR, CoM, EP, policy experts) ?
- 7) should opt-outs be allowed, and if so, how can one prevent free-riding?

Note that in most of these debates, also a third question is sometimes raised: not only what can and should government do, where is the most appropriate level of decision-making, but also how should government actions be prepared, decided and implemented?

C. Political theory contributions to the debate on scope of EU governance

Apart from federalism studies, political science has up until now not contributed much to the discussion of the scope of governance (Dahl and Tufte, 1973). Dahl even argues that it is difficult to

⁷ For an overview of the meaning of subsidiarity in the context of European integration, see EIPA (1991), CEPR (1993), Maillet (1993), Hrbek (1995); Centre for Economic Policy Research (1993), Lourau (1997), Wilke and Wallace (1990), Estella De Noriega (1997).

deduce the legitimacy of the appropriate level of government from normative political theory, as he argues that democratic theory can not sufficiently provide for grounds of justification of the appropriateness of different level of government (Dahl, 1989:204)⁸.

Within the Beliefs In Government project, Sinnott (1995) proposes three criteria for deciding on the question of which level.

The first basis for deciding the appropriate level of governance is the very nature of issues. Some issues are intrinsically international, as they penetrate or transcend national borders, and therefore cannot effectively be dealt with at these levels. Others require a larger than national scale in order to mobilise the resources necessary to solve the problem. Likewise, some problems (like improving traffic security at an accident-ridden crossing in a particular neighbourhood) are so narrow that local government should best tackle them. These arguments fall under what we will call “endogenous” attribution of levels of governance.

Second, the level of governance can be attributed in an “exogenous” way, when a given level of governance simply claims that a particular issue or policy sector is explicitly (or implicitly derived from the main institutional principles or general function as enshrined in constitutions or treaties) lying within its legally defined sphere of competence.

Last but not least, issues can be attributed to a given level of government because the citizens, the media or political elites simply believe that this problem ought to be tackled at that level (“normative” attribution of level of governance). This level attribution obviously has a subjective basis, since it does not matter whether the preferred level of government does have the legal competence to deal with these issues, nor does it matter whether the nature of the issue in fact does makes this level most appropriate to solve the issue. However, as subjective this basis may be, it is central to the question of the legitimacy of government levels attributed in an exogenous or endogenous way.

Hence the principle of subsidiarity in its broad sense stipulates that the competencies of a given decision-making level follows not only from the proven and but also from the accepted insufficiency of other decision-making levels as well as of civil society organisations. The intervention of a political body therefore should not only provide for an added value in the search for the common good. Also the opinion of represented about the level to which they want to delegate their sovereignty should be fully taken into account for a specific division of competencies to be legitimate.

Hence, under the principle of subsidiarity, the endogenous attribution of level of government should be complemented by the evaluation of the represented, while exogenous attribution as such is considered illegitimate. However, the question of which issues or policy sectors are eligible for endogenous internationalisation is not easy to answer. There is no consensus on the range of problems that due to the nature of the issue belong to the remit of local, regional, national, European and international governance.⁹ The degree of endogenous internationalisation of a particular issue can vary between countries due to structural constraints. First, certain countries can be considered being the cause of the problem suffered by others, like would be the case for a strongly air polluting country surrounded by cleaner neighbours. For the latter, the problem of air pollution is endogenously international, for the former it is in the first place a problem that can and should be solved by the

⁸ “In other words, whether the scope and domain of majority rule are appropriate in a particular unit depends on assumptions that the majority principle itself can do nothing to justify. The justification for the unit lies beyond the reach of the majority principle and, for that matter, mostly beyond the reach of democratic theory itself” (Dahl, 1989: 204).

⁹ For an interesting attempt at a definition, see the Giscard d’Estaing report (1990) prepared for the Institutional Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, which applies criteria of effectiveness of task accomplishment of the Community vis-à-vis the member states, and transnational nature of the task, whose dimensions or effects extend beyond national frontiers. The Council has drafted a similar set of criteria (cited elsewhere).

national government.¹⁰ Second, in some countries, a particular level of governance (national, regional and local) can be better equipped to deal effectively with an issue. This can be due to economy of scale effects, depending on the size of the territory covered and material resources and expertise different levels of governance have at their disposition. The Luxembourg national state is probably too small to issue its own currency and conduct an effective monetary policy. In strongly federal states like Germany, the state governments are much better equipped to deal with environmental problems than the sub-state level in non-federal states (Massart, 1998). Third, the degree of interdependency of economic and social systems may vary considerably: in a closed, autarchic economy, the need for international collaboration and governance may be less strong than in open economies where prices, wage, interest rates, etc. are highly dependent on the policies and economic fortune of the main trading partners. To conclude, establishing the endogenous European character of a given policy problem is a hazardous exercise, as this character may objectively vary considerable from one member state to another.

III. Hypotheses

In this paper we work grouped our hypotheses around four groups of variables: first the classical socio-demographic and socio-political variables, second general political attitudes, third political attitudes towards the EU, and finally structural characteristics of groups of countries.

A. Socio-demographic and socio-political variables

We can derive from the different chapters in the Niedermayer and Sinnott volume (1995) on Public Opinion and International Governance a number of individual socio-demographic and socio-political characteristics that can be expected to exert an impact on preference for different government levels:

- education : respondents with higher levels of education may tend to grasp more easily the international dimension and interdependency of problems;
- age: we expect young people to give more preference to the European level given their more open attitude to the world than older generations (Reimer, 1992; Gabriel, 1994:112; Elchardus, 1997).
- Gender: if we consider the scope of government preference an indicator of a more general latent pro-European attitude variable, then we can expect women to opt for the national level, as is the case with European identity (Eurobarometers);
- Subjective social class: the Eurobarometers indicate that workers, unemployed, homemakers, pensioners a weaker European identity then employers and cadres (and higher educated). Hence we can expect that the higher the level of subjective class identification, the stronger the preferences for the European level;
- Union membership: similar reasoning as above

¹⁰ Fight against drugs has stronger international or cross-border dimension in Belgium, France and Germany than in Portugal or Austria, given the permissive Dutch policy on soft drugs. Pollution matters in case of rivers is more an international issue in Holland, as all their rivers pass other countries, whereas in the insular GB and Ireland this would be much more a national issue. Immigration maybe more of European issue in Schengen countries than in others.

- Religion: Catholicism is traditionally associated with internationalism, while protestantism with national democracy. Thus we expect Catholics to opt more for the European level than Protestants.

B. General political attitudes

We can derive from the different chapters in the Niedermayer and Sinnott volume (1995) on Public Opinion and International Governance a number of individual attitudinal and socio-demographic characteristics that can be expected to exert an impact on preference for different government levels:

- the degree of political interest in national politics: those that display a relative high degree of interest in national politics will more easily prefer national decision-making, as only political levels of which one has a minimal degree of understanding can be expected to be considered appropriate as a level of government.¹¹
- Political information seeking behaviour, in terms of watching news on TV and reading newspapers;
- left-right attitudes: one can expect that left-oriented people, given the association between internationalism and socialism, will give more preference to the European level, while right wing respondents will more favour the national level, given the general association between national conscience and a conservative outlook (Gabriel, 1994:112; Huber and Inglehart, 1995:84).
- support for the national authorities, measured by the degree of satisfaction with democracy in one's own country, trust in national political institutions.¹²
- Retrospective and prospective sociotropic economic evaluations: as national governments usually still claim credit when the economy fares well (but blame Europe if things go bad), we can presume that positive sociotropic economic evaluations (retrospective as well as prospective) would lead to a higher preference for the national level;
- Ethnocentrism (expressed in fear for scarcity of jobs and social welfare benefits): as for many Europe is associated with economic globalization, leading to dislocation of enterprise and jobs, which puts the welfare state under pressure), we can expect that those with stronger fear for loss of job and of social welfare benefits would opt more for the national level.

C. Political attitudes towards the EU

As the wider definition of the subsidiarity principle introduced the notion of support of citizens for the political system, one can expect that legitimacy of the EU governance to be determined not only by the endogenous nature of policy problems but also by citizens' consent with the rules of the game of this regime, including the division of labour between different levels of governance in the EU. Therefore we can expect that this consent will be facilitated by on the one hand a general positive evaluation of EU integration process and on the other hand, by general and diffuse disaffection with the national or regional decision-making bodies (Easton, 1965). In fact, since the supposedly ebbing away of the permissive consensus on European integration (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1970:41-42; Niedermayer, 1995), the legitimacy of the European Union as an increasingly important decision-making level has become a 'variable', fluctuating in time and space, between but also within member

¹¹ The questionnaire included the common question on the degree of interest for politics in general.

¹² For a discussion on the substantive meaning of this variable and its impact on European integration attitudes, see Martinotti & Stefanizzi (1995).

states.¹³ Therefore, we can expect that the preference of European citizens for different decision making levels for solving their most important problems will be related to the general support for the different regime levels and to their democratic legitimacy (Dahl: 1989: 109).

With the data at hand, we will operationalise generalised support for the European regime by the following variables (for a similar procedure, see Schmitt and Scheuer, 1996):

- feeling a European citizen;¹⁴
- pride in EU citizenship;
- interest in EU politics;
- belief that EU membership is a good thing;
- support for further European unification
- satisfaction with democracy in the European Union.

As argued in the introductory chapter in this volume, there could be a spill-over between specific policies and the way in which different levels of decision-making are considered legitimate. Hence we can expect that citizen preferences for levels of government are affected by their evaluation of the performance of EU institutions for one's personal well-being and that of one's country and/or with incapacity of national or regional governments to produce satisfactory policy outputs. This 'specific' support for the outputs of the EU will be operationalised by the following variables:

- the perception that one's country has benefited from EU membership¹⁵;
- the degree of trust in EU political institutions (Commission and Parliament).

D. Structural characteristics of groups of countries

Finally, the Niedermayer and Sinnott volume (1995) contains a number of structural features of each country that can be expected to affect preferences for government levels:

- the size of a country: the smaller the country, the less appropriate the level of the national state objectively is and will be perceived as such, as this level will be less adequate for conducting an effective policy with respect to major problems in society¹⁶;
- the duration of EU membership (Niedermayer, 1995): the transfer of competencies from the national level to the European Union is a unique but also painful learning process. The transfer of competencies from the national to the European level has created a democratic deficit that the expansion of the role of the European and national parliaments has not managed to bridge. This deficit is more likely to be tolerated when the transfers are gradual in time and span (which has been the case for the six founding members of the European Community for Coal and Steel) as they have been socialised for nearly half a century into the process of dismantling national sovereignty 'slice by slice'. The democratic deficit costs are higher and denser in the case of newcomers that in a short span of time are asked to carry over large parts of competence hitherto falling under national sovereignty;
- the openness of a country's economy¹⁷: the more an economy is open, the more people will be aware of the necessity of international co-operation, for instance in order to better face the challenge of internationalization of economic decision-making in the private sector;

¹³ In some countries like Spain, Belgium and Italy also sub-national actors and authorities challenge the legitimacy of the nation-state as decision-making level.

¹⁴ Operationalised through the variable of the degree of feeling European (in addition to one's belonging to a nation).

¹⁵ For a discussion on the substantive meaning of this variable, see Bosch and Newton (1995).

¹⁶ See the introductory chapter on the trade-off between size and the scope of democracy.

¹⁷ Measured by the share of exports in the Gross National Product in 1994 (OCDE, 1996: 192-195). The import shares correlate strongly with export shares, so either one could be used. We do not use the difference between imports and

- GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) (EU-25 = 100),
- the level of economic development: in 2004 per capita GNP in \$,
- human development/ quality of life (UN, World bank, etc),
- Annual harmonized index of consumer prices (2004),
- General government deficit as % of GDP (2004),
- Eurozone membership,
- Schengenland membership,
- degree of decentralization (unitary, federal, regionalized, decentralized),
- General government expenditure as % of GDP,
- demographic structure (% under 18 and over 65),
- sectors of employment (primary, secondary or tertiary sector of society in 2004,
- types of welfare states.

IV. First empirical results

A. Some remarks regarding the data used

Regarding the countries included in the empirical analyses of this paper, we had to exclude Luxembourg and Lithuania (for lacking of dependent variable, i.e. “preferred scope”), Sweden (too many lacking variables) and Northern-Ireland (not a country).

We also dropped the income variable, given its high number of cases in Italy with monthly net income between 12000 euro en 820000 euro! If we would include income in the equation Italy had to be dropped. Since income seemed not to be a significant predictor of preferred level of governance when a model was tested without Italy it was decided to omit income as predictor variable and gain more information by including Italy in the equation.

This leaves us with 21 countries (table 1). Listwise deletion of missing values reduces in 16 countries by more than half the number of cases retained (overall 9474 valid vs. 13365 missing) in the analyses, and in 8 by more than two thirds!

exports (as used by Wessels and Kielhorn in the second book) because the absolute degree of openness can be expected to have the major impact on citizen attitudes, not the balance of payments (mostly unknown to most citizens). When a country imports and exports range around a fifth of the GNP, which is the case in Greece, France and Germany, the necessity for being internationally competitive (and all its consequences in terms of wage and price setting) is less a constant ordeal and worry than in countries where imports and exports constitute three fourth or more of the GNP (like in Belgium and Luxembourg).

Table 1: Valid and missing cases per country withheld for analyses

Country	N in analysis	N in survey	% retained
AUSTRIA	713	1010	70,59%
BELGIUM	278	889	31,27%
BRITAIN	601	1500	40,07%
CYPRUS	226	500	45,20%
CZECH REP	188	889	21,15%
DENMARK	500	1317	37,97%
ESTONIA	397	1606	24,72%
FINLAND	480	900	53,33%
FRANCE	1026	1406	72,97%
GERMANY	253	596	42,45%
GREECE	240	500	48,00%
HUNGARY	533	1200	44,42%
IRELAND	785	1154	68,02%
ITALY	410	1553	26,40%
LATVIA	289	1000	28,90%
THE NETHERLANDS	860	1586	54,22%
POLAND	210	960	21,88%
PORTUGAL	450	1000	45,00%
SLOVAKIA	303	1063	28,50%
SLOVENIA	290	1002	28,94%
SPAIN	442	1208	36,59%

B. Scope preferences over time and in space

TABLE 2: Perceived and preferred levels of decision-making for three most important issues in 1994 and most important issue in 2004¹⁸

Level/	1994		2004			
	Perc/12	Pref/12.	Perc/12	Pref/12.	Perc/21	Pref/21
Sample						
Regional	16%	14%	17%	23%	17%	22%
National	66%	47%	64%	54%	64%	56%
European	18%	39%	19%	23%	19%	22%

¹⁸ The answers to the first, second and third problem and the decision-making levels in 1994 are aggregated using the multiple response technique as this makes the percentages add up to 100% (rather than to 300%) and are therefore more easy to seize in terms of relative importance. Percentages are based on responses, not on respondents. This method makes the percentages add up to 100%, rather than to 300%. In 2004, we have scope perceptions and preferences only for THE most important problem.

If we compare over time the results of the 12 countries that were included in 1994 as well as the 2004 survey, we notice little difference with regard to the perception of the decision making currently takes place for the most important problem(s). There are however major shifts for the preferred level of decision-making. The European level tumbles from 39% to 23%, while the regional and national level gain importance (+9% and +7 % respectively). Note also that it does not make much of a difference whether we consider the 12 countries included in our 1994 analysis or 21 countries included in the 2004 analyses.

The overwhelming demand for more europeanisation of decision-making levels of 1994 has been reduced to a small yet positive difference (19% perceived to 23% preferred), while the national level still shows a deficit (64% perceived vs.54% preferred). Contrary to 1994, the regional level enjoys also a positive difference (17% perceived to 23% preferred).

This dramatic loss of popularity of the European level can be due to several factors, that will have to be tested in a later stage of this project, drawing on comparisons over time of the other contributors. First, it is possible that the EU level effectively lost attractiveness, as the referenda on the Constitution and hesitation of ratification by other countries seem to suggest. This loss can be due to the current enlargement and prospects for further enlargement, the pressure of globalisation and the failure of a “social Europe”, shifts in EU expenditures between policy sectors and countries, etc. Second, there may be a shift in the nature of the most important problems perceived, towards more endogenously national or regional issues, such as traffic security and fight against petty crime.

Table 3: Perceived and preferred levels of decision-making for most important issue per country in 2004

	Perceived			Preferred		
	Regional	National	European	Regional	National	European
Austria	16,69%	61,44%	21,87%	13,03%	52,99%	33,98%
Belgium	24,2%	50,71%	25,09%	19,29%	43,78%	36,94%
Britain	26,5%	58,59%	14,91%	34,76%	53,14%	12,1%
Cyprus	4,37%	73,14%	22,49%	5,27%	56,26%	38,46%
Czech Republic	17,32%	59,45%	23,23%	15,09%	63,26%	21,65%
Denmark	20,1%	67,51%	12,39%	26,47%	60,2%	13,33%
Estonia	29,42%	61,83%	8,75%	15%	74,05%	10,95%
Finland	18,47%	63,82%	17,71%	26,75%	62,06%	11,2%
France	17,39%	58,74%	23,87%	30,24%	43,44%	26,33%
Germany	24,9%	51,46%	23,64%	25,4%	46,8%	27,8%
Greece	12,11%	51,76%	36,12%	14,87%	60,99%	24,14%
Hungary	13,3%	80%	6,7%	9,95%	78,12%	11,92%
Ireland	16,98%	65,59%	17,43%	25,11%	56,61%	18,28%
Italy	8,82%	79,55%	11,63%	10,42%	74,29%	15,29%
Latvia	22,37%	61,51%	16,12%	10,86%	57,13%	32,02%
Netherlands	5,34%	78,19%	16,47%	11,55%	57,8%	30,65%
Poland	22,31%	64,71%	12,98%	21,41%	67,82%	10,77%
Portugal	7,64%	58,71%	33,65%	17,39%	56,52%	26,09%
Slovakia	17,85%	64,3%	17,85%	20,37%	57,44%	22,2%
Slovenia	24,49%	65,15%	10,36%	12,53%	81,75%	5,72%
Spain	8,88%	76,25%	14,87%	19,17%	49,6%	31,23%

Amongst the member country populations that prefer most the European level, we find in decreasing order Cyprus, Belgium, Austria, Latvia, Spain and the Netherlands, while the those that

prefer least the European level we find Slovenia, Estonia, Britain, Finland and Hungary. Amongst the member country populations that prefer most the national level, we find in decreasing order, Slovenia, Estonia, Hungary and Italy. The most region-oriented countries are Britain, France, Denmark and Finland, not exactly countries with a strong regional tradition...

C. Bivariate relations

For exploring the potential explanatory power of our independent variables (perceived and preferred scope), we ran spearman correlations (see table 4). Amongst those significant at the 0.001 level, we find amongst the socio-demographic variables gender and subjective social class. Amongst the attitudinal variables, we find “feeling European citizen”, “pride in EU citizenship”, trust in European political institutions, EU membership good or bad, support for further unification, “decisions of Europe are in country’s interest”, “decisions of Europe are in my own interest”.

Note that the bivariate relationships are very weak (best $r=0.079$ for “feeling European citizen”) Also we find some expressions of pro-EU attitudes as well as expressions of anti-EU attitudes.

Table 4: spearman correlations between independent variables and preferred scope of government

Variabelen	Spearman corr met Gewenste niveau (Q04)	Sign.
Age	-0,013	
Gender	-0,038	***
Education	0,003	
Subjective social class	0,050	***
Union membership	-0,014	
Religion	0,007	
Retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation	0,006	
Prospective sociotropic economic evaluation	-0,013	
Ethnocentrism : scarcity of jobs	0,020	*
Ethnocentrism : social welfare benefits	0,031	**
Feeling European citizen	-0,079	***
Proud of EU citizenship	-0,043	***
Days a week watch TV	-0,012	
Days a week, read newspaper	-0,012	
Left-right self placement	-0,002	
Satisfaction with democracy in own country	-0,028	**
Approval of government’s record	-0,021	*
Interest in politics	-0,007	
Trust in national political institutions	0,028	**
Interest in European politics	0,022	*
Trust in European political institutions	0,086	***
EU membership good or bad	-0,061	***
Unification	0,077	***
Satisfaction with democracy in Europe	0,004	
Decisions of Europe are in country’s interest	-0,049	***
Decisions of Europe are in my own interest	-0,048	***

*p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

D. Multivariate analyses

1. General multinomial logistic model

Table 5 offers an overview of the strength of the effect of each of the potential determinants on the choice of government level. The strength can be deduced from the ratio L^2/df , i.e. the larger the ratio, the stronger the effect.

Table 5: Multinomial logistic model for choosing government model (European, national, regional) for solving most important problem.

Variabelen	DF	X ²	Sign.	X ² /df
Age	8	44,21	0,000	5,53
Gender	2	10,85	0,004	5,42
Education	2	2,10	0,350	1,05
Subjective social class	8	20,71	0,008	2,59
Union membership	2	8,97	0,011	4,48
Religion	8	22,11	0,005	2,76
Retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation	2	62,74	0,000	31,37
Prospective sociotropic economic evaluation	2	17,04	0,000	8,52
Ethnocentrism : scarcity of jobs	2	9,55	0,008	4,77
Ethnocentrism : social welfare benefits	2	10,78	0,005	5,39
Feeling European citizen	4	32,83	0,000	8,21
Proud of EU citizenship	2	6,57	0,037	3,29
Days a week watch TV	2	1,91	0,384	0,96
Days a week, read newspaper	2	2,90	0,234	1,45
Left-right self placement	2	4,01	0,135	2,00
Satisfaction with democracy in own country	2	6,09	0,048	3,05
Approval of government's record	2	2,24	0,326	1,12
Interest in politics	2	47,80	0,000	23,90
Trust in national political institutions	2	27,81	0,000	13,91
Interest in European politics	2	4,33	0,115	2,16
Trust in European political institutions	2	60,20	0,000	30,10
EU membership good or bad	4	6,88	0,142	1,72
Unification	2	33,94	0,000	16,97
Satisfaction with democracy in Europe	2	35,64	0,000	17,82
Decisions of Europe are in country's interest	2	32,12	0,000	16,06
Decisions of Europe are in my own interest	2	7,86	0,020	3,93
COUNTRY	40	672,17	0,000	16,80
Likelihood ratio	18832	21971,04	0,000	

The results tell us first that the “model” does not fit the data well, as the likelihood ratio is significant (0.000). Note however, if the model is run on un-weighted data (not taking country size into account), we do obtain a perfect fit (sign. = 1, table not reported). This suggests that the dataset is quite unstable. This is mainly caused by the German data. If we include Germany and run the model for the remaining 20 countries weighted by population, the model does fit as well as with the unweighted data. As the German sample we use is quite small (253 cases remaining from the survey of only 596), and then is blown up in our weighted data set by the huge size of the German population, potential deviance of Germany from European trends strongly affected the overall European results.

The main explanatory variables (controlling for the effect of all the other variables in the model) are (in decreasing order of importance) retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation and trust in European institutions (Commission and Parliament scores added). Then we find, interest in politics, satisfaction with democracy in the EU, support for unification, trust in national political institutions, the feeling that EU decisions are in one’s countries interest, prospective sociotropic economic evaluation, feeling an EU citizen, and, country..

Do not seem to have any effect (controlling for the effect of all the other variables in the model): education, watching TV and reading newspapers, left-right self placement, approval of government’s record, interest in EU politics, and approval EU membership.

2. Net effects of significant categorical variables

On the basis of the parameter estimates of the “model” above (table 5), we can now estimate the net effect of each of the significant categorical variables, i.e. age, gender, subjective social class, membership union, religion, feeling European, and last but not least, country (see table 6).

In this table, the “effects” are expressed as the difference in percentage vis-à-vis the average percentage of respondents that chose for a specific government level (i.e. 23.26 % regional; 53.92 % national; 22.82 % European). Once again, the effects are “net effects”, the chance for choosing a specific level while taking into account the effect of all other categorical determinants retained in the model.

Note also that when interpreting the strength of the effect, i.e. the difference vis-à-vis the average, one should be take the size of the average choice for a government level into account. For instance, a difference of 8% in favor of the national level (chosen on the average by 54% of respondents) is less important for an equally large difference of 8% for the European level (chosen on the average by 23% respondents). For instance, in table 6 we can notice that Danish choose 8.15 % less for the European level than the general European average (22.82%). Speaking in relative terms, this is about 35% “less than average” ($-8.15 / 22.82$), or in other words, Danes chose about 1.5 times less for the European level than the average European. If we look at the Germans, we notice that they choose 8.44% less for the national level than the European average (53.92%). While in absolute terms, the difference from the overall average of choice for a level is about the same as for the Danish vis-à-vis the EU (-8.15 and -8.44), speaking in relative terms Germans choose only about 15% “less than average” ($-8.44 / 53.92$).

Table 6: Net effects of determinants on the choice of government level.

Preferred level of government		Regional	National	European
European Mean		23.26%	53.92%	22.82%
Age				
	<25 year	1,12	-0,72	-0,40
	25-34 year	3,54	0,30	-3,84
	35-49 year	-1,70	0,47	1,24
	50-65 year	-2,04	-0,61	2,65
	65 +	1,85	0,15	-2,00
Gender				
	Male	-1,16	0,37	0,78
	Female	1,42	-0,46	-0,96
Subjective social class				
	Working class	-0,62	1,32	-0,70
	Low middle class	3,53	-1,98	-1,55
	Middle class	-0,59	0,08	0,52
	Upper middle class	-2,00	0,53	1,48
	Upper class	4,89	-3,38	-1,51
Membership Union				
	No member	-0,54	0,88	-0,33
	Member	1,67	-2,70	1,02
Religion				
	Catholic	-0,01	0,53	-0,52
	Protestant	4,54	-2,70	-1,84
	Orthodox	-9,39	6,65	2,74
	Other	-2,28	1,65	0,63
	None	-0,09	-1,43	1,52
Feeling European citizen				
	Often	-2,52	-0,37	2,90
	Sometimes	-1,22	0,87	0,35
	Never	3,40	-0,80	-2,60
Country				
	Austria	-12,20	-2,16	14,36
	Belgium	-3,55	-8,98	12,52
	Britain	4,01	3,23	-7,24
	Cyprus	-14,03	4,10	9,94
	Czech Republic	-9,30	4,48	4,82
	Denmark	-5,73	13,89	-8,15
	Estonia	-4,09	13,40	-9,31
	Finland	-4,37	14,26	-9,89
	France	8,93	-11,90	2,97
	Germany	4,89	-8,44	3,54
	Greece	1,14	0,75	-1,89
	Hungary	-13,67	24,47	-10,80
	Ireland	0,54	5,59	-6,14
	Italy	-12,98	23,96	-10,98
	Latvia	-12,02	-1,46	13,47
	The Netherlands	-13,46	0,47	13,00
	Poland	-0,70	13,97	-13,27
	Portugal	-5,20	3,92	1,29
	Slovakia	-1,77	3,56	-1,78
	Slovenia	-13,16	31,86	-18,70
	Spain	-2,22	-4,42	6,64

Regarding the socio-demographic variables included, we find that age seems to make a noticeable difference only for the 25-34 category: they choose clearly more for the regional level (+3,5) and less for the European (-3,8) level. Men choose marginally less for the regional level and more for the European level, while women display the opposite pattern. Regarding subjective social class, the lower middle classes as well as the upper classes opt clearly more for the regional level (respectively +3,5 en +4,9). The latter also choose significantly less for the national level.¹⁹ Trade union members choose clearly less for the national level (-2,7). Finally, protestants choose less for the national level (-2,7) as well as for the European (-1,8) and prefer the regional level (+4,5). Orthodox respondents opt in the first place for the national level (+6,5) but also more for the European (+2,74) while they shun the regional level (-9,4).

In terms of attitudes, those that often feel a citizen of Europe opt more for the European level (+2,9) and less for the region (-2,5). Those that never feel a European citizen display the opposite pattern: they opt clearly more for the regional level (+3, 4) and less for the European (-2,6).

While in all the previous cases the differences vis-à-vis the overall averages are generally weak (less than 10%), the impact of the country variable is very often above the 10% level, even controlled for all the previous socio-demographic and attitudinal variables. The Austrians (+14.3), Latvians (+13.5), Dutch (+13.00) and Belgians (+12.5) opt most for the European level (by more than 10%), followed by Cypriotes (+9.9), Spaniards (+6.4), Czechs (+4.8), Germans (+3.5) and French (+3.0). Amongst those that choose significantly less than average for the European level, we find in decreasing order, the Slovenes (-18.7), the Polish (-13.3), the Italians (-11.0), the Hungarians (-10.8), the Fins, (-9.9), the Estonians (-9.3), the Danes (-8.2), British (-7.2) and Irish (-6.1).

Opt significantly more (than 10%) for the national level than the overall average, we find in decreasing order the Slovenes (+31.9%), Hungarians (+24.5), the Italians (+24.0), the Finish (+14.3), the Polish (+14.0), the Danes (+13.9) and the Estonians (+13.4). Amongst those that opt clearly less for the national level than the overall average, we find in decreasing order the French (-11.9), the Belgians (-9.0) and the Germans (-8.4).

Those opt significantly more (than 10%) for the regional level than the overall average, we find in decreasing order the French (+8.9), the Germans (+4.9) and the British (+4.0). Most countries however opt significantly less (than 10%) for the regional level: we find in decreasing order the Cypriotes (-14.0), the Hungarians (-13.7), the Dutch (-13.5), the Slovenes (-13.2), the Italians (-13.0), Austrians (-12.2), the Latvians (-12.0), followed by lesser “anti-regionals” as the Czechs (-9.3), the Danes (-5.7), the Portuguese (-5.2), the Finnish (-4.4), the Estonians (-4.1) and the Belgians (-3.6).

Finally, the country that fits best the pan-European pattern of scope of government preferences is Greece!

The interpretation of these country effects is not always straightforward. Not only are they often much stronger than the socio-demographic and attitudinal effects, but in the groups that opt clearly for one or the other level we find strange bedfellows. The aversion of Italians for the European level and preference of the national level is quite surprising (Caciagli), as is the aversion of the French for the national level. The preference or aversion for the regional level is not clearly linked with the existence of regional or federal institutions, as shown by the anti-regional position of the Italians and Austrians, and the pro-regional position of the French.

¹⁹ Note however that the upper classes only represent 1.4% of the entire population, so it may be wise to merge them with the upper middle classes.

3. Net effects of significant metric variables

On the basis of the parameter estimates of the “model” presented in 5, we can now estimate the net effect of each of the significant metric variables. In table 7, the “effects” are expressed in the “additive logistic regression parameters” on the binary variables “regional vs. European” and “national vs. European”, with European as reference category. Hence, in both dichotomies, negative signs indicate a stronger option for the European level. Once again, the effects are “net effects”, the chance for choosing a specific level while taking into account the effect of all other metric determinants retained in this model. We also checked whether these effects hold when controlling for interaction effect with the country variable.

Table 7: Direct significant net effects of attitudes on the preference for the regional or national vis-à-vis the European government level (additive logistic regression parameters), controlling for all other variables included in the model.

	Regional vs. European	National vs. European
Retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation	0,11**	-0,12***
Prospective sociotropic economic evaluation		0,12***
Ethnocentrism : scarcity of jobs		0,08**
Ethnocentrism : social welfare benefits	-0,06*	
Proud of EU citizenship		-0,08**
Satisfaction with democracy in own country	-0,11**	-0,07*
Interest in politics		0,21***
Trust in national political institutions	0,05**	0,08***
Trust in European political institutions	-0,13***	-0,12***
Unification	-0,06***	-0,06***
Satisfaction with democracy in Europe	0,27***	0,20***
Decisions of Europe are in country's interest	-0,29***	-0,27***
Decisions of Europe are in my own interest	0,14**	0,12**

* p < .1; ** p < .05; *** p < .001

Regarding the opposition between the national and European level, we find as significant effects (*** p < .001) the retrospective as well as prospective sociotropic economic evaluations, but with opposite signs. The better one evaluates retrospectively the sociotropic economic situation, the more one prefers the European level, while the worse one evaluates prospectively the sociotropic economic situation, the less one prefers the European level. But if controlled for country interaction effects, both main effects disappear. The stronger the interest in politics, the less one prefers the European level (effect remains for controlling for country interaction effects). The more one trusts national political institutions, the less one prefers the European level, while the opposite is true for trust in European political institutions (both effects remain for controlling for country interaction effects). The more one agrees with the principle of further European unification, the more one prefers the European level (but if controlled for country interaction effects, the main effect disappears). The more one agrees that EU decisions are in one's country's interests, the more one prefers the European level (interaction effects could not be tested). However, the more one is

satisfied with democracy in the Europe, the less one prefers the European level! (interaction effects could not be tested).

Regarding the opposition between the regional and European level, we find the following significant effects (*** $p < .001$): the more one trusts European political institutions, the more one prefers the European vis-à-vis the regional level (the effect remains for controlling for country interactions). The more one agrees with the principle of further European unification, the more one prefers the European level (but if controlled for country interaction effects, the main effect disappears). The more one agrees that EU decisions are in one's country's interests, the more one prefers the European level (interaction effects could not be tested). But again, the more one is satisfied with democracy in the Europe, the less one prefers the European level! (interaction effects could not be tested).²⁰

4. Macro-analysis of impact of types of countries

Finally, we searched for the effects of types of countries, using a multinomial logistic multilevel model, that takes also into consideration micro-level effects. As multinomial logistic multilevel analysis often suffers from estimation problems if one includes too many macro-variables, therefore it was decided to test the effect of macro-variables by including only a limited number of macro variables in the equation per run.²² Significant effects were withheld. To test whether these effects remained significant after controlling for the micro-variables, the most important micro-effects (retrospective sociotropic economic situation & trust in national institutions) were included in the equation into the models (these tests are not reported here). Again, due to estimation problems, it was not possible to test a model with all the significant macro and micro variables. Controlling for the micro variables the effect of the macro variables remained.

²⁰ Note that we also get puzzling but less significant results for the belief that EU decisions are in one's own interests, for the national vs. European as well as the regional vs. European dichotomy. It also seems that the more one is satisfied with democracy in one own country, the less one opts for the regional and national vs. the European level.

²² The macro-variables that were included in our test were population size of country in thousands, duration of membership EU of country (in 1958-2004 period), GDP per capita in Purchasing Power Standards (PPS) (EU-25 = 100), the level of economic development: in 2004 per capita GNP in \$, human development/ quality of life (UN, World bank, etc), the openness of a country's economy (OECD data), Annual harmonized index of consumer prices (2004), General government deficit as % of GDP (2004), Eurozone membership, Schengenland membership, degree of decentralization (unitary, federal, regionalized decentralized), General government expenditure as % of GDP, demographic structure (% under 18 and over 65), sectors of employment (primary, secondary or tertiary sector of economy in 2004, types of welfare states, and Operating budgetary balance : % GNI Financial net-payer or net-receiver country.

Table 8: Multinomial logistic multilevel analysis of macro-variables on the preference for the regional or national vis-à-vis the European government level, controlling for retrospective sociotropic economic situation & trust in national institutions

		Regional vs. European	National vs. European
Welfare state			
	Liberal / Corporatist	.930***	.963***
	Mixed / Corporatist	.918***	1.406***
	Socio-Democratic / Corporatist	1.945***	1.822***
	South-European / Corporatist	-.243***	.564
Type of state			
	Regionalize unitary / Federal	,148	-,004
	Centralize unitary / Federal	-,291	-,127
	Decentralized unitary / Federal	-1.121***	-,566
Member Eurozone			
	Member / No member	,270***	,154***

*** $p < .001$

Three typologies of states seem to affect the preference for a level of government (table 8). The first typology is based on the type of welfare state.²³ Compared to the reference category of the corporatist states, we find that the liberal, mixed, and socio-democratic welfare states prefer the regional as well as the national level. Southern European states welfare state types prefer the European level above the regional level but prefer even more the national level (although not significant).

Regarding the degree of centralization, we find that, compared to the reference category of the federal states, that the decentralized unitary states prefer less the regional level and more the European level but prefer even more the national level (although not significant), while the regionalized and centralized types do not display significant links to either dichotomy.²⁴ Finally, member countries of the Euro-zone prefer more the regional level and to a lesser extent the national level.

V. Future trajectories of analyses

A. The impact of the nature of the most important problem

From our previous study (De Winter & Swyngedouw, 1999) we know that the preferences (and perceptions of current) for government levels vary strongly across policy sectors (see table 9). Also in our multivariate analysis of the 1994 data we find the endogenous nature of the most important problem emerged as the second most important factor. Hence, now that the recoding of the most important problems is finally available, we intend to classify this as before on the basis of their endogenous attribution:

1. Genuine national matters;

²³ Sources: Esping Andersen (1990), Scharpf (2002), MISSOC (2004) : "Social Protection in the Member States of the European Union, of the European Economic Area, and Switzerland. Situation on 1 January 2004, Brussels, European Commission", MISSCEEC (2002): "Study on the Social Protection Systems in the 13 Applicant Countries - Synthesis Report, European Commission").

²⁴ Source: Loughlin (2001), Loughlin and Delcamp (2003), Levrat (2005), Committee of the Regions Studies (2003)

2. Problems that are basically situated at national level but whose causes or solutions are partially related to similar problems and solution in other countries (and therefore may produce distortions of competition, weaken social and economic cohesion, or restrict trade). Amongst the problems mentioned in the survey, this category predominantly includes labour market and social security transfer issues and fiscal and public expenditures (as all these influence a country's competitive position);
3. Problems with main cross-border aspects as well as problems with international but basically bilateral dimensions. Some of these issues may have larger genuine international dimensions but these are not predominant.²⁵
4. Problems with predominantly genuine international dimensions. Sometimes this dimension is not due to the cross-border nature of the problem, but to long-lasting international co-operation in the policy sector like the Common Agricultural Policy.

TABLE 9: Most important policy sectors and preferred decision-making levels 1994 (percentages based on responses)

Level / Policy	Regional		National		European	
	Perc/12	Pref/12	Perc/12	Pref/12	Perc/12	Pref/12
Employment/Economy	16	14	67	48	17	39
Public finance	15	15	71	52	15	33
Europe	14	12	57	35	30	54
immigration	16	13	65	46	19	40
environment	18	12	59	37	22	51
criminality	16	13	65	48	19	38
welfare	15	16	71	52	15	32
centre-periphery	22	15	63	52	16	33
international	14	7	59	35	27	58
democracy	12	8	70	53	18	39
education	15	20	70	38	15	42

B. Identification with European party families and parties

Many authors have pointed to the differences of pro-European attitudes between European party families (Hix & Lord, 1998, Hooghe & Marks, Marks & Wilson). We could recode all the national parties into European party families, according to the typologies of von Beyme and others, and test whether (potential) voters for or identifiers with different party families display different preferences for the scope of government.

However, the within family variation is often very large. Therefore it would be better to use a finer classification instrument that is now available, i.e. the new Chapel Hill dataset on national party positioning on European integration, based on expert surveys (<http://www.unc.edu/depts/europe/chapelhillsurvey>). This would allow us to identify the pro-europeaness of every national party.

²⁵ For instance, with regard to environment, Golub (1996) rather convincingly argues that most issues of environmental protection can be solved at the level of the national state, as many do not have a significant cross-border character. Also in terms of market distortion, competitive strategies based on ecological dumping have negative effects for those member states that employ them, and therefore market distortion only occurs in the short run. .

C. Preferred scope of government as indicator of latent pro-EU variable

One can wonder whether the preferred scope of governance is an indicator of a latent more general “attitude towards the EU”, and less an expression of a reasoned calculation at which level the most important problem should be treated best.

VI. Conclusion

The question as to which decision-making level is most appropriate to deal with different policy problems is a central aspect of the legitimacy of a political system. With regard to the level of governance in the EU, the discussion is structured around the meaning and application of the principle of subsidiarity, permitting EU action when member-states or regions cannot sufficiently act to solve a problem, or when for reasons of scale or effects, actions could be better achieved by the EU. This question of which issues or policy sectors are subject to endogenous internationalisation is difficult to answer in the real world. In addition, international governance, like national or regional government, can only gain legitimacy when the public agrees with the rules of the game including the division of labour between different levels of governance. Therefore the opinion of European citizens regarding the appropriate level of government in the EU (European, national, regional) is crucial for a given or future division of power between these levels to gain or retain legitimacy.

Our analyses show that the European publics of the 12 countries included in the 1994 survey have clearly lost their enthusiasm for the EU as the most appropriate level for solving the most important problem they perceived in 2004. Notice that the inclusion of the 13 new countries does not make much of a difference, as they comprise eurosceptic and euro-enthusiasts equally.

The bivariate and multivariate analyses produced also much weaker findings than in 1994. Multinomial logistic analysis of all potential determinants produce significant effect for (controlling for the effect of all the other variables in the model) -- in decreasing order of importance -- retrospective sociotropic economic evaluation and trust in European institutions, followed by interest in politics, satisfaction with democracy in the EU, support for unification, trust in national political institutions, the feeling that EU decisions are in one’s countries interest, prospective sociotropic economic evaluation, feeling an EU citizen, and, country. If we only analyses categorical determinants, we find some effect of age, gender, subjective social class, religion, and feeling EU citizen. While all these differences vis-à-vis the overall averages are generally weak (less than 10%), the impact of the country variable is very often above the 10% level. In the country groups that opt clearly for one or the other level we find strange bedfellows.

When looking for the net effects of the metric determinants of the opposition between the national and European level, controlling for interaction effect with country, we find as significant effect that the stronger one is interested in politics, the less one prefers the European level. The more one trusts national political institutions, the less one prefers the European level, while the opposite is true for trust in European political institutions. Regarding the opposition between the regional and European level, we find that the more one trusts European political institutions, the more one prefers the European vis-à-vis the regional level.

Finally, we searched for effects of types of countries, using a multinomial logistic multilevel model, that takes also into consideration micro-level effects. Three typologies of states seem to affect

the preference for a level of government. Compared to the reference category of the corporatist states, we find that the liberal, mixed, and socio-democratic welfare states prefer the regional as well as the national level. Regarding the degree of centralization, we find that, compared to the reference category of the federal states, that the decentralized unitary states prefer less the regional level and more the European level. Finally, member countries of the Euro-zone prefer more the regional level and to a lesser extent the national level.

Further research is required, especially by including the endogenous nature of the most important problem emerged, data that has just become available. Second, we should add the EU-positions of parties voters identify with or vote for, by using the new Chapel Hill dataset on national party positioning on European integration.

VII. References (to be completed)