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Exchange rate and macroeconomic adjustment in southern eurozone

countries

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Abstract

In this paper, we estimate panel cointegration and VEC models to show that, during

the pre-euro period, devaluation and/or depreciation of the domestic currency were a recurrent

weapon for macroeconomic adjustment in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal. Moreover, we

perform panel Penn-effect regressions using a sample of 114 countries to prove that during

the period 1970-2011 the four countries incurred misalignments of remarkable size and

variability in their real exchange rates. All in all, our results reveal that for several decades the

four countries needed to use their nominal exchange rate as a tool of macroeconomic

adjustment. Since variations of the nominal exchange rate within the EMU are no longer an

option, the four southern eurozone countries should accomplish the necessary structural

reforms to avoid new and painful internal devaluations in the coming years.

Keywords: Real exchange-rate misalignment, Panel cointegration and VEC models,

Cross-sectional dependence, Penn effect

JEL classification: E32, F02, F04

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