

# **Ever Challenged Union: Exploring Ways Out of the Crises**

**Belfast, 29-30 June 2015**

Conference papers are works-in-progress - they should not be cited without the author's permission. The views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author(s).

**[www.uaces.org](http://www.uaces.org)**

***The Good, the Bad, and the Neutral? Discursive Actors Attribution Analysis of the debate  
about the Eurozone Crisis***

Angelos Loukakis<sup>1</sup>, University of Crete Research Fund  
Franziska Scholl, Freie Universität Berlin  
Konstantinos Kanellopoulos, University of Crete Research Fund

\*\*\*\*\* *Work in progress and not revised by a native speaker.* \*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* *Please do not cite without authors' permission* \*\*\*\*\*

Paper for the “*Ever Challenged Union: exploring ways out of the crises*” 16th annual UACES Student Forum Research Conference hosted by Queen’s University Belfast, 29-30 June 2015

**Abstract**

The severe crisis in various Eurozone countries has put the European integration project into question. Europe has divided into fiscally good and bad countries, and neutral Brussels. Opposing positions and intense conflicts are reflected in attributions of responsibility of major actors began when Greece came close to bankruptcy, and bailout mechanisms were formed and enacted to the vulnerable Eurozone economies.

---

<sup>1</sup> Angelos Loukakis (received his MSc in 2012) and Kostas Kanellopoulos (received his PhD in 2009) are researchers at the University of Crete, Franziska Scholl is researcher at the Freie Universität Berlin. Please address all correspondence to: [loukakisangelos@social.soc.uoc.gr](mailto:loukakisangelos@social.soc.uoc.gr)

Our analysis offers a systematic and comparative account of discursive attributions of responsibility raised by Greek (typical example of fiscally “bad” country), German (typical example of fiscally “good” country), and EU actors (typically “neutral”), from September 2009 to September 2013. We also discuss, which differentiations have been made into crisis debate regarding attribution senders and addressees and attribution issues.

The analysis of this paper relies on data about attributions of responsibility from 2009 to 2013 from a joint Greek-German research project “The Greeks, the Germans and the Crisis (GGCRISI <http://www.ggcrisi.info>)”. The data for this paper has been obtained from newspapers applying Discursive Actor Attribution Analysis (DAAA) in order to code: Who makes whom responsible, and for what (based on which reasons)? This kind of analysis has its roots in content analysis tools from social movement studies, i.e. protest event analysis, frame analysis and political claim analysis, and analysis of responsibility attribution.

## Introduction

The year 2008 was the starting point of an economic crisis for all the developed countries in the world. Europe and the Eurozone faced up the crisis but the countries with weak economies were the most affected. In Greece the financial crisis made its first marks in winter 2009 when the enormous public deficit (15.2% of GDP) was revealed. Gradually, until April 2010, the Greek Government bonds devaluated as Junk Bonds by the credit rating agencies and thus, capital markets were no more available for the Greek government. In the edge of a state bankruptcy, Greece signed a bailout agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Eurozone countries. The agreement was combined with a package of harsh austerity policy conditions and requirements, called Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which was supervised by the Troika (European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund).

The Greek national crisis became a severe Eurozone Crisis as more and more countries of the Eurozone (Ireland, Portugal, Spain and Cyprus) faced the same problems as Greece. They were forced to sign, pretty much the same memoranda as Greece in order to handle their crises. As a crisis we understand here *an unusual situation which is temporarily limited, in which societal structures of general impact are perceived to be unstable and questioned* (Hay 1999, Kreps 2001, Pearson and Clair 1998; see Roose et al. 2014). The enforcement of the austerity measures and policies that came from the bailout packages led to an unusual, for European Union, situation in which EU's officials, prime ministers of member states started to rise up demands or requests to other EU member states.

This kind of discourse, full of dos, don'ts, and should, was almost the reason for the creation of a new gap between countries of the debtors and the countries of the creditors or, given with different name, a division of rich North and poor South. The division into the interior of Europe is not something new (Loukas, 2013), but this economic split seems to have also political aspects. Those are reflected in the narratives of the crisis; like the word PIGS or PIIGS (when Italy is also included) for countries deep in debt. In order to show the significance of this split Ubide (2014) <sup>2</sup> points out that *"the recent financial and economic crisis has created first and second category countries.... This North-South divide is not sustainable politically"*.

The new North-South divide seems to put the whole European integration project in danger, which before seemed to be more stable than ever after the European Monetary Union and the introduction of a single currency in 2002. The possibility of a country's exit from the Eurozone put the integration project more in danger and made the crisis debate more "hostile". On the

---

<sup>2</sup> Article published online at Peterson institute's website. Available at <http://www.iie.com/publications/opeds/oped.cfm?ResearchID=2613> (last accessed at 26/05/2015)

other hand, the willing and strength of the EU to find solution out of the Eurozone crisis is an indication of more integration. As Glencross (2013: 60) points out: *“For European integration, this form of top-down economic management constitutes an historic turning point. Never before has the EU been so implicated in deciding national tax and spending policies”*.

In the past years the latest crisis has become a very interesting topic for academics from different disciplines, not only because of the crisis itself, but also about how the public sense of crisis is constructed. Studies in sociology, political sciences and European studies have paid attention to the analysis of narratives and discourses stemming from media reports. But most of these studies are qualitative with no empirical data (Crespy & Schmidt 2014, Wodak & Angouri 2014, Kutter 2014, etc.). Moreover, only few are studies using attribution analysis of crisis reports (Kousis et al. 2015, Sommer et al. 2014, Roose et al. 2014, Scholl et al. 2014). The goal of our paper is to illustrate, via fresh empirical data, the role of EU actors in the Eurozone crisis debate in terms of increasing or decreasing the gap between the European North and the European South. We aim to contribute in the understanding of the impacts of the crisis in the European integration project.

This paper provides a systematic and comparative description of discursive actor attributions related to Eurozone crisis coming from the major EU actors from a period started at September 2009 to September 2013. We see as major EU actors: European Parliament, European Commission, ECB and EU/Eurogroup with its crisis management institutions e.g. EFSF and ESM. In the following section, on methods and data (X.Y), we concentrate on the data collection process and the Discursive Actor Attribution Analysis (DAAD) as our methodology. Afterwards, we present some finding on how EU actors participate in the attributing of responsibility during the Eurozone crisis. The data for this paper is taken from a joint Greek-German project on the Eurozone Crisis called "The Greeks, the Germans, and the Crisis (GGCRISI)". The main research focus lies on the question "Who makes whom responsible for what".

### **The debate on the Eurozone crisis and the Role of EU actors**

The European integration project and the European Union more general have brought as an impact the creation of a, more or less visible, European public sphere (Koopmans and Statham 2010, Koopmans and Erbe 2004, Trenz 2004 etc.). This development changed a bit the rules of the attribution game as the senders and the addressees could come from national, European or transnational level (in sense of member states referring to other member states). Thus, as the crisis is a European and not only a national phenomenon, we expect to find evidence of a high Europeanized debate about the crisis.

In order to identify the core elements of this debate we will use the theory of the Europeanization of the public national spheres. The term Europeanization generally is used in order to describe processes of transformation and integration of institutions, politics, public policy or, even public discourses from the national level to the EU one (Ladrech 1994, Moumoutzis 2011, Radaelli 2012). More specific about Europeanization of public spheres, Koopmans and Statham (2010: 43) argue that *“we can speak of a Europeanized public sphere to the extent that a substantial – and, over time, increasing – part of public contestation goes beyond a particular national political space and does not bypass Europe by referring only to non-European supranational and transnational spaces”*. More than that, Brüggemann et al. (2006) point out that the Europeanization of public spheres is a process in which the public discourse goes further than the territorial state and through this process, European actors become more visible and issues more prominent.

For Koopmans and Statham (2010) a Europeanized public sphere could be *horizontal*, or *vertical*. Horizontal in the sense that nation states refer to each other in their national public spheres. Vertical when more and more links to the European Union appear in the national reporting. This can mean that actors of the European Union are often cited in the national media or that more effort is put in the reporting on issues on the European level. As the crisis is a high debated European issue we assume to find many hints of a high Europeanized debate in the media reporting. The aim of this paper is to have a closer look on European Union actors appearing in the discourse. Therefore, we will use the Koopmans and Statham’s approach of vertical Europeanization, which is divided into a bottom-up pattern *“in which national actors address European actors, make claims on European issues, or both”*; and a top-down pattern *“in which European actors intervene in national public debates in the name of European regulations and common interests”* (Koopmans and Statham 2010: 38).

Similar studies about Europeanization and attributions of responsibility has shown that the Eurozone crisis debate is the perfect ground for studying the linkages between actors from European members states and actors from European Union institutions (Scholl 2014).

Another very crucial dimension of Eurozone crisis is the turnover in the reporting habits regarding the European actors. To be more specific, as the recent economic crisis is not a national crisis but a European crisis, European actors (EU Commission, ECB, Eurogroup) have played a very important role in the efforts of finding a solution. These procedures in which European institutions and policies were formed (EU level) in order to give a solution in member states’ fiscal problems (national level) can be identified as top-down Europeanization (Moumoutzis 2011, Ladrech 1994). Thus, as Europeanization not only in the policy level but also in discourse, the appearance of EU actors in the debate and in European public sphere became more often and intense. Due to this dimension of Eurozone crisis the debate which was

triggered brought new facts in the discourse structure as it has national and European dimensions.

It has become clear that during the Eurozone crisis EU actors played a significant role. Several studies have drawn the importance of these actors (Puetter 2012, Caporaso et al 2015, etc.). More specific Hobolt (2013) claims, that citizens of Europe trust more in EU actors than national governments find a possible solution for Eurozone crisis *“the public response appears to be conditioned by an assessment of whether the EU is relatively more capable at handling the crisis than national government...this may provide an explanation for why support for the euro has remained so stable inside the euro area, despite the many public protests against the consequences of the crisis and the increasing tendency to pin the blame on the EU”*(Hobolt 2013:25). At the same spirit of showing the effects of the crisis in the role of EU actors Glencross says that: *“this is the first time that EU policies complicated EU-policy debates played such a central role in national politics, as shown by government instability in the face of meeting EU-budget rules. Equally, the response to the crisis, notably the evolution of the ECB’s role...shows the EU’s capacity for flexibility”* (Glencross 2013: 66). He ends his analysis pointing out that in this unexpected situation, as the economic integration project was incomplete (e.g. monetary union without banking union), forced the political actors to find a solution in order to avoid the dissolution of the Eurozone.

The importance of EU actors (European Council, Councils, ECOFIN, Eurogroup) and their crucial role in the economic governance during the crisis is also given by Puetter (2012) and also by Quaglia (2013) who summarize that in crisis handling the EU political factors were as much important as economic factors. Especially, for the role of European Commission, Bauer and Becker argue that during the crisis its role has become more operational *“the Commission continues to be a powerful player in EU economic governance... While its agenda-setting power is decreasing, most decisions in economic governance depend on the Commission to make them work”* (Bauer & Becker, 2014: 213).

Attributions of responsibility are gaining ground as methodological tool in analyzing the discourse in the European policy studies. More specific Wilson and Hobolt (2015) examine how voters assign policy responsibility to the EU by comparing attributions made by citizens and experts. Along with their other findings, they point out that issues of European integration may get more attention by citizens than other issues. Using the same method as we (Discursive Actors Attribution Analysis) Sommer and Roose (2015) look at the self-legitimation strategies among the key actors in the Eurozone crisis debate. After their hypothesis testing they conclude that national actors under legitimation pressure are more active in sense of making attributions. Another telling finding of them was that EU actors were not as active in the Eurozone crisis debate (as other actors or as expected?). They also found out differences

between the used media. Especially the news agency Reuters seems more focused on EU actors than the national media in Greece and Germany. Moreover, Sommer and Roose (2015: 20) point out the necessity of further investigation about the addressees of attribution.

Summarizing the above mentioned it seems that the studies about European politics, political science or sociology have given very little attention to the role of the European Actors in Eurozone Crisis debate. Our paper aims to illustrate, via discursive actor attribution analysis, the key aspects this debate focusing at the European actors. Our goal is to give elements and possible explanations about: a) the kind of attributions that are used by the European actors, b) the changes in the attribution behavior among different attribution senders and addressees and c) the changes in the attribution patterns during the crisis from September 2009 to September 2013.

## **Method and Data:**

### **Discursive Actor Attribution Analysis as a tool to analyze Eurozone Crisis debate<sup>3</sup>**

Data for this paper stems from the research project “The Greeks, the Germans and the Crisis (GGCRISI)<sup>4</sup>”, a joint Greek German project, funded<sup>4</sup> by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, Culture and Sports of Greece and the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). The project mainly analyzes the contentious debate in the Eurozone crisis with a special focus in Greece and Germany that one might plausibly expect to represent the two extremes in the debate.

In the project we follow Koopmans and Statham in defining an instance of political claims making as “a unit of strategic action in the public sphere that consists of the purposive and public articulation of political demands, calls to action, proposals, criticism, or physical attack, which actually or potentially affect the interests or integrity of the claimants and/or other collective actors” (also Koopmans & Statham 1999: 206, Koopmans et al. 2005: 24). Thus, besides protest, as covered in protest event research (see e.g. Rucht et al. 1998, Rucht & Roose 2003, Kousis 2013a,b), other forms of claims making are included.

As for the unit of analysis, this is the attribution of responsibility as a specific kind of political claim deserves particular attention. The unit of this sub-analysis is an attribution, in which a sender attributes the responsibility of an evaluated object to an addressee. In order to gain this information we use the method of Discursive Actor Attributions Analysis (DAAA). This method is actually an instrument for the standardized measurement of the backbone of a controversial discourse. It is a combination of frame analysis with protest event analysis. Thus it has many similarities with political claims analysis. However, the unit of analysis is not restricted to claims but is more inclusive.

The discursive actor attribution analysis is primarily designed for coding newspaper reporting, but can also be adapted to coding other material like other media reporting (TV or radio), press releases, programmatic papers, websites etc. The three core elements of the coding process are the attribution itself, reasons given for the actor attribution and the context in which an actor

---

<sup>3</sup>The description of the used method is taken from another paper: Kostas Kanellopoulos, Dimitris Papanikolopoulos, Angelos Loukakis, “Comparing local and transnational dimensions of anti-austerity protests in the Greek debt crisis through Discursive Actor Attribution Analysis” Paper presentation at the “Studying Social Movements against EU Austerity” Workshop organized by Roskilde University, Denmark, May 7-8, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> The project is co-coordinated by Jochen Roose (for Germany) and Maria Kousis (for Greece) and conducted by two groups of researchers one in Germany and one in Greece. We gratefully acknowledge Martin Wettstein’s (University Zürich) very helpful coding tool ‘angrist’ which has facilitated the coding process.

attribution is stated. These three elements are introduced in turn (Roose, Kousis, Sommer 2014).

As mentioned in the previous paragraph the actor attribution is the unit of analysis. In its simplified form, the actors' attribution is the answer to the question: "Who makes whom publicly responsible for what?" It is the combination of an attribution sender (AS) stating the attribution, an attribution addressee (AA) to whom the attribution is directed, and the attribution issue (AI). These three parts are linked in the guiding question: "Who (AS) makes whom (AA) publicly responsible for what (AI)?" This trias forms the core of an actor attribution (figure 1).

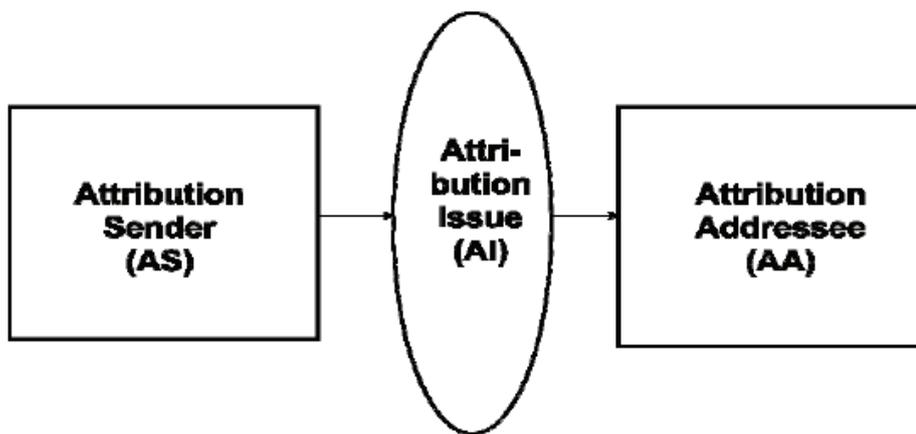


Figure 1: Attribution Trias (adapted from Gerhards, Offerhaus and Roose 2007: 111 in Roose, et al. 2014:11)

Actor attributions can appear in different forms. Blame is the most common form of attribution, which indicated a negative evaluation of a sender to the addressee about an issue. Praise or credit is the same causal link but with a positive evaluation. More than that, blame and praise can not only be diagnostic but also be prognostic, i.e. the addressee is blamed/credited for an expected outcome in the future. Alternatively, the addressee can be called to do or not to do something by the sender. These forms of attributions called request attributions as they not only want something to happen but the request is directed at an actor making specifically this actor responsible for the action to be taken. The final form of attributions is that of competence attribution which indicate the ascription of the sender to addressee for a general competence for action about the specific issue.

Summarizing the above mentioned attribution forms we can classify the actors' attribution in ten types. The relation between attribution addressee and attribution issue can be an Actors-causal relationship (i.e. the addressee causes the issue), a request (i.e. the addressee should act

in regards to a specific issue) or a generally attributed competence (i.e. the addressee should be in charge of handling issues like this in general). The causal relationship can be directed to the presence and past as diagnostic or to the future as prognostic, while the other relationships are necessarily prognostic. All these attributions can be positively or negatively evaluated. For the causal attributions we also identify ambivalent attributions, in which at the same time the sender discuss positive as well as negative aspects of an issue (Roose, et al. 2014:11).

The data for this paper are derived from the systematic coding of 5 quality newspapers and articles from Reuters press agency. More specific the systematic sample includes 2 daily newspapers from Germany, Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ) and Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), and two from Greece, Kathemerini and Eleutherotupia (unfortunately at the end of 2011 Eleutherotupia bankrupted thus it has been replaced by another Greek newspaper called Ta NEA). The total period covered for is from 28-9-2009 to 30-9-2013.

The selection of newspaper issues is based on artificially rotating weeks (for the 1st week we picked Monday, the 2nd Tuesday, the 3rd Wednesday, etc.). This means that the sample covers every 7th weekday issue (Monday to Saturday). If a newspaper issue of the selected day is missing due to holiday, strike etc., we take the next issue that is available. The logic of artificially rotating weeks guarantees that the sample covers all days of the week (except Sundays) to the same degree. This rules out possible biases resulting from newspaper publication days (e.g. certain sections of the newspaper only appearing on Mondays).

Based on the above mentioned criteria we have create a sample of 180 Greek Newspaper issues and accordingly 180 German newspaper issues, which has been complemented with issues from Reuters. We decided to cover Reuters press releases in order to add a source with a transnational orientation which is not selective according to national criteria.

From this sample we choose as suitable for coding those articles and actor attributions which directly or indirectly, centrally or peripherally refer to the Eurozone crisis, its configurations, causes and consequences on social, political and economic level. Corresponding to the above defined object of study, we select only those articles appearing in the newspaper sectors Politics, Economy, Feuilleton as well as editorials, opinions and (guest) commentary, investigative journalism and dossiers assigned to these sectors. As the article selection procedure was almost completed we identify that number of articles in the Greek systematic sample was significantly higher than in the German one. In order to reduce the number of selected articles in the Greek sample we have decided to include the 66% of the total number of articles of the Greek systematic sample. Hence, every third selected article has been excluded from the coding process.

After the coding more than 8.000 attributions of responsibility have been coded (8.145). This paper analysis is based on the data of 1.070 attributions, which are linked with European Actors

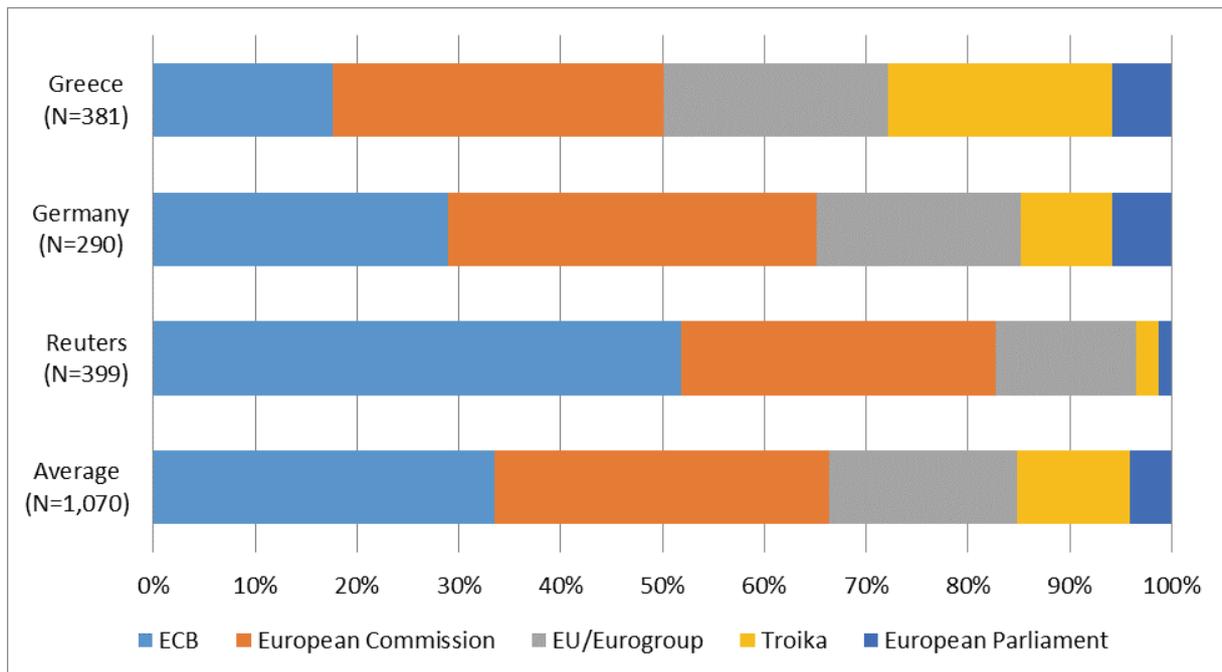
as Attributions Senders. An important clarification that has to be made for the understudying the logic of our paper is the choice of the actors as we are interest to investigate the role of EU actors in the narratives around the crisis we group the attribution senders in five wide categories a) the European Parliament, b) the European Commission, c) the ECB and d) Eurogroup and the other crisis management institutions e.g. EFSF and ESM and our last actor is e) Troika.

## The findings

Our analysis here is based on 1,070 attributions<sup>55</sup> stemming from European Union Actors or the Troika. Hence, EU actors are responsible for more than 12% of the cases in our data set. They play a far more important role in the reporting of Reuters with almost a fifth of all attributions than in the two national public spheres of Greece (9.1%) and Germany (11.8%). For the forthcoming analysis we grouped the EU actors in four groups and leave the Troika as a single actor as the involved IMF is not a European institution. Figure shows how active the different actors were in the crisis discourse. In average the European Central Bank (ECB) is the most active attribution sender, but this role differs a lot among the three media sources. Whereas the ECB is responsible for more than 50% of all attributions in Reuters reporting, the ECB plays a minor role in Greek media with less than 20%. With slightly more than 30% of all attributions the commission is evenly represented in all newspapers. EU, Eurogroup and crisis institutions such as the EFSF claim 20% of all attributions. The picture between the newspapers looks much more different for the Troika and the European parliament. Overall, the latter is the least active sender, but worst represented in Reuters' reporting. The Troika as sender of attributions appears, not surprisingly, most often in Greek newspapers and plays only a minor role for Reuters.

---

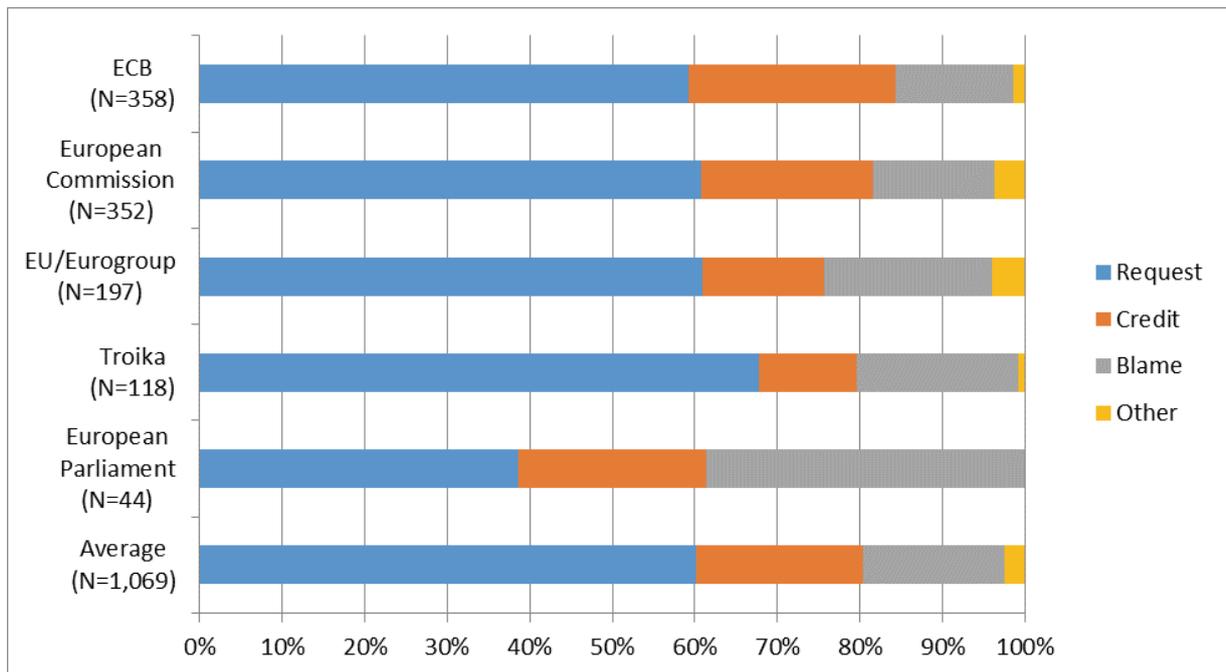
<sup>55</sup> Although the coding of our full systematic sampling is completed, the presented results are still preliminary as the data set is not cleaned and coding procedure not finished.



**Figure 2:** EU actors as senders in different media, in %.

What we can see first from our findings is that the two most active institutions in the Eurozone crisis debate are the ECB (358 attributions) and the European Commission (352 attributions). These two actors are responsible for more than 65% of the attributions we are interested in. A possible explanation of been so active could be that these institution have the main responsibility for finding a solution to the Eurozone crisis. The European Commission (EC) is the actor who takes decisions in the political level and the ECB is the actor who is in charge for the stability of the common currency and more than that ECB was responsible for the financing and re-financing the crisis management mechanisms and bail out packages. Going a step further in the analysis a very interesting finding is the low visibility of European Parliament (EP) as player in the attribution of responsibility game. More specific EP is the sender of less than 5% (44) of the cases.

In the coding process the coders had to choose between ten different types of attributions. In order to keep it simple we only distinguish here between an attribution of credit, blame or requests. We don't differentiate if credit or blame were granted for a past action or were given prognostic for a future result. We excluded ambivalent attributions where senders are not sure about the outcome. Request could mean that an actor is called to take or to not take action on a specific issue. Figure shows the attribution patterns of the five above mentioned actors in this sense.



**Figure3:** Attribution patterns of EU actors as senders

The main type of attributions is request with almost 60% of all cases. For the troika as sender are requests slightly more important than for other actors. The European parliament shows a really different attribution pattern than all other actors. But the comparative low case number (N=44) makes interpretations of this difference difficult. Credit and blame almost balance each other what leads us to the assumption that EU actors are reluctant in judging in terms of attributing success or failure to someone. They are presented in a role as actors who call for action or non-action but are reluctant with strong judging. That finding is coming in contrast with the general attribution patterns that are coming from national media and agrees with the patterns from transnational media. More specifically, the attributions that came from Greek or German newspapers in most of the cases are blame attribution (50.5% and 42% accordingly) and have a strong judging character as in both countries the sum of credits and blames are almost 60%. On the other hand the attributions that have as an origin the Reuters press releases are mostly requests (52%). To bring to light the attribution patterns of the EU actors we now have a look on the addressees to whom they refer.

In average Greek actors make the biggest group of addressees with 33% of all attributions (Figure ), followed by EU actors, and Troika (31.7%). The crisis countries (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, and Spain) receive almost 12%. Together with Greek actors, who are overrepresented because of our sample, they receive almost 45% of all attributions. German actors play only a minor role and transnational or global actors are almost absent. Indeed, the different EU actors show

different attribution patterns. The focus of the Troika lies mainly on Greek actors – only 8.5% of the sent attributions go to other actors. The ECB and the EP address almost half of their attributions to EU/Eurozone actors and the Troika. Another 16% of the EP’s attributions go to German actors; all other senders send less attributions to German actors. In average, a comparison of credit lenders and debtors in the European Union shows, that more attention is paid to the latter. But also self-attributions in terms of EU actors addressing other EU actors or even themselves play a significant role. In the following, we will concentrate more on this sender-addressee relation. Thereto, we compare the evaluation of these addressees in terms of who gets credit, who is blamed and who is called to action.

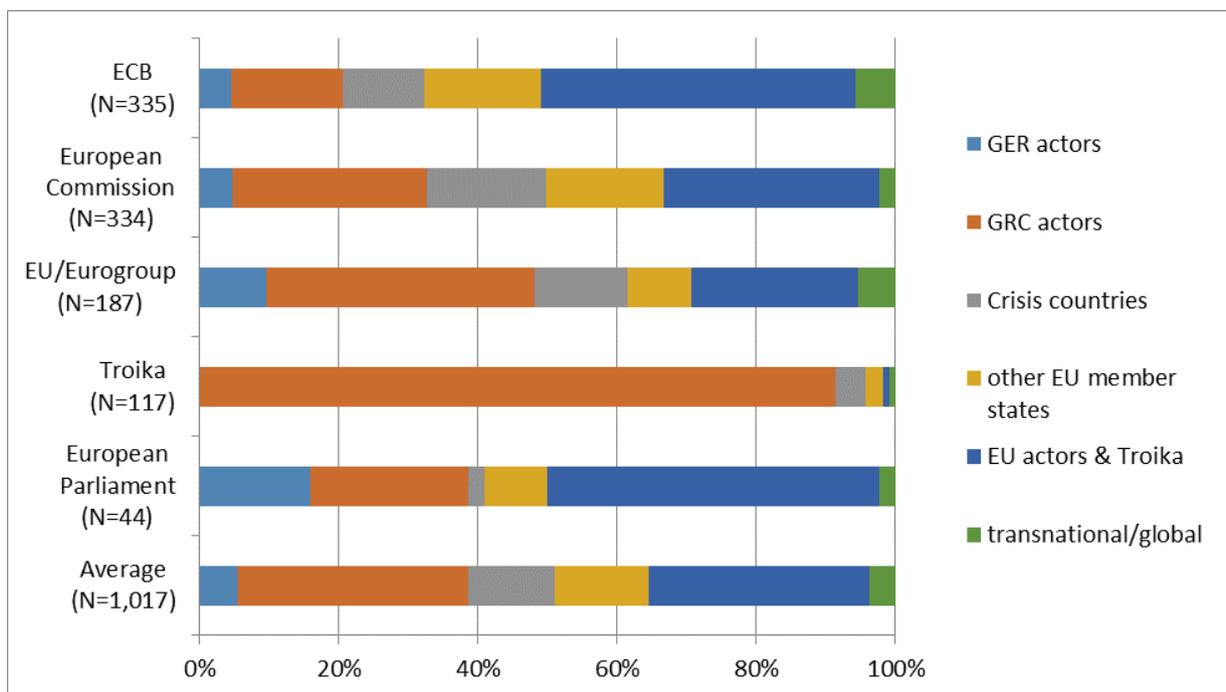


Figure 4: Sender-addressee relation

In Figure we can see that the most often used type of attribution is request; almost 60% of all sent attributions are positive or negative requests. This is pretty much the same picture for all addressees except for German actors. More than half of the attributions German actors receive are blames. Only the Troika is not blaming German actors since almost 92% of the blames made by the Troika go to Greek actors (not in this figure). German actors receive credit attributions from EU/Eurogroup actors and from the ECB. The European Commission calls German actors to act on specific issues. Greek actors are mostly praised by the Commission and the ECB. They get blamed by almost all EU actors except the European Parliament. The latter concentrates its blames on other EU/Eurozone actors with more than 40% of its blames. So, blaming Greek

actors and actors from other crisis countries is not the rule for EU institutions but for EU/Eurogroup, the crisis institutions and the Troika, who send most of their blames to Greek actors. Most of requests are sent to Greek actors and other EU actors. Overall the picture is shaped by requesting, a less confrontational strategy to evaluate someone's behavior. EU actors are reluctant in blaming other actors. When they blame, they blame mostly German and other EU actors and not Greek actors or the other crisis countries. Only actors from the European Parliament seem more judging but the most significant fact for their behavior is that they are hardly visible at all within the crisis discourse.

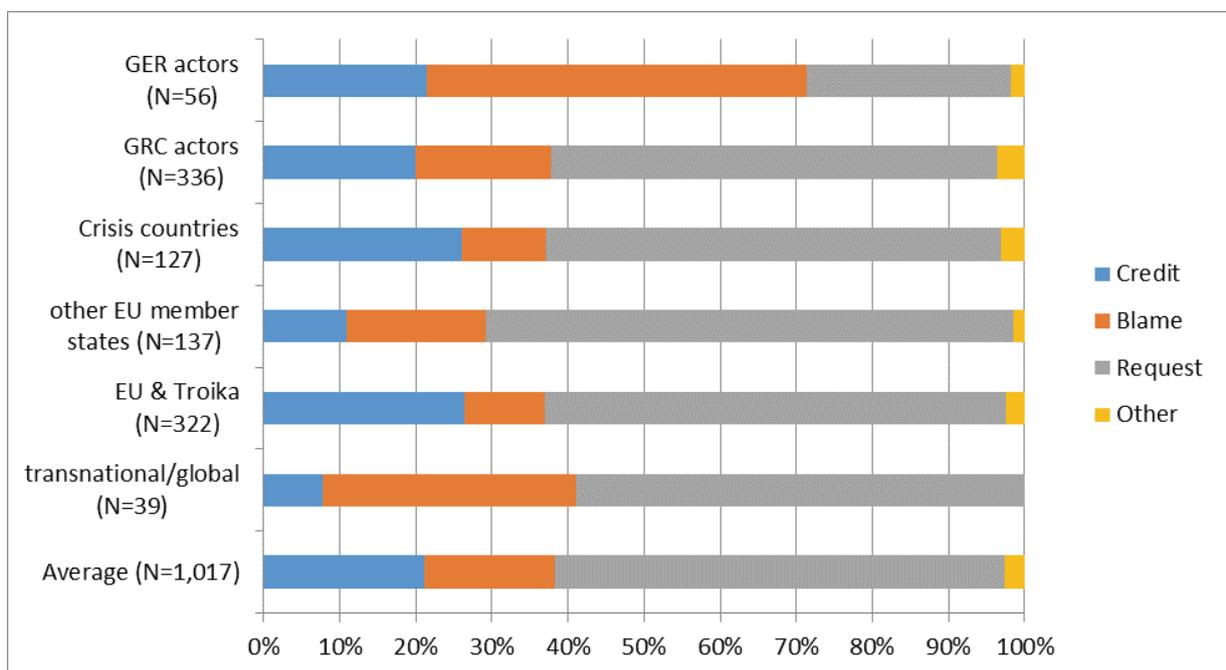


Figure 5: Share of type of attribution per addressee, only EU actors as senders

## Conclusion

Eurozone crisis is an uncomfortable situation, which challenges the architecture of the whole European integrating project. It, thus, requires quick and viable responses from the part of policy makers both at the national and the European level. At the same time the debate about the crisis was a chance for a vertical Europeanization of the public sphere.

In this paper we tried to shed some light in the role of the European actors in the debate about Eurozone crisis. We used the discursive actors' attribution analysis as a method in order to understand the European perspective about who is responsible and in which way. Thus, we focused on the main attribution activity among different European actors, to whom the addressee the responsibility, what attribution they use and to the relations between senders, attribution types and addressees.

Our most important finding is that the Eurozone crisis debate for the European actors it is mostly a call for action between different actors than a judging procedure. The high number of requests attribution indicates that European actors ask from themselves and from other actors to do things and this is an indication about their role in the crisis. We assume that they act in a direction of securing the Eurozone and avoid any actions or discursive patterns which would put the integration project in more danger. For our point of view this is the reason for such a low appearance of blame attributions.

Another very interesting remark is the differentiations among the actors activity. As our analysis showed European Commission and European Central Bank were the two most active actors. That probable happened because they had the main responsibility of finding a solution. Impressive as well was the absence of European Parliament as an actor (very low visibility). We understand that they are not key actors in decisions making but we thought that as the only institution which is directly elected by EU citizens they could be more active in the Eurozone debate.

Greek actors are more addressed by the Europeans, mostly by Troika and European commission. Mainly Greek actors receive requests and blames. European Actors and Troika are second most addressed actors mainly for requests and praises. We believe that these patterns are in accordance with the responsibilities which each actor had during this period. Greeks are requested to do things in order to avoid the bankruptcy and blamed because they didn't do whatever they are requested to do. Similarly Commission played a key role in the crisis management thus receives too many requests on how to deal with crisis and then gain praises (causal or prognostic) for the solutions that they found.

However, our analysis pays no attention the attribution issues, as we describe the attribution patterns and the relationship between sender, type of attribution and addressee but the issues of the debate remain untouched. Further investigation on issues could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Eurozone crisis debate.

## **References**

Bauer W.M., and Becker S. (2014). "The Unexpected Winner of the Crisis: The European Commission's Strengthened Role in Economic Governance", *Journal of European Integration*, 36:3, 213-229

- Brüggemann, M., Sifft S., Kleinen von Königslöw K., Peters B., and Wimmel A., (2006). "Segmented Europeanization. The Transnationalization of Public Spheres in Europe: Trends and Patterns". TranState Working Papers 37. Bremen: Universität Bremen. Available online at <http://econpapers.repec.org/paper/zbwsfb597/37.htm>.
- Caporaso J., Kim M.J., Durrett W. and Wesley R. (2015) "Still a regulatory state? The European Union and the financial crisis", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 22:7, 889-907, DOI: 10.1080/13501763.2014.988638
- Crespy, A., and Schmidt, V. (2014). "The clash of titans: France, Germany and the discursive double game of EMU reform". *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(8), 1085-1101.
- Glencross A. (2014), "The Eurozone Crisis as a Challenge to Democracy and Integration in Europe", *Orbis*, Volume 58, Issue 1, Pages 55–68
- Hobolt S. (2013), "The Public Constraint on EU Governance During and Beyond and Crisis", Paper prepared for presentation at the EUSA 13th Biennial Conference Baltimore, Maryland, USA - May 9-11
- Kanellopoulos K., Papanikolopoulos D, Loukakis A.(2015), "Comparing local and transnational dimensions of anti-austerity protests in the Greek debt crisis through Discursive Actor Attribution Analysis" Paper presentation at the "Studying Social Movements against EU Austerity" Workshop organized by Roskilde University, Denmark, May 7-8,
- Kousis M, Roose J, Scholl F, Papadaki M, Sommer M, Kanellopoulos K,(2015) "Comparing Greek and German Interest Groups in the Eurozone Crisis through Discursive Actor Attribution Analysis". Paper presentation in the section "Conceptualising and Comparing Interest Groups and Interest Group Systems" at the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops 2015, Warsaw, Poland.
- Koopmans R. and Erbe J. (2004), "Towards a European public sphere? In Innovation", *The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 17 (2), pp. 97–118.
- Koopmans R. and Statham, P.(2010), "Theoretical Framework, Research Design, and Methods". In Ruud Koopmans, Paul Statham (Eds.): *The Making of a European Public Sphere. Media Discourse and Political Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 34–62
- Kutter, A. (2014). "A catalytic moment: The Greek crisis in the German financial press". *Discourse & Society*, 25(4), 446-466.
- Ladrech, R. (1994), "Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France". *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32: 69–88.
- Loukas E. (2013), "Europe's North-South Divide", *Diplomaatia*, special edition 118:119 available at: <http://www.diplomaatia.ee/en/article/europes-north-south-divide/>

Moumoutzis, K. (2011) "Still Fashionable Yet Useless? Addressing Problems with Research on the Europeanisation of Foreign Policy", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49(3): 607-629, available at:

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/politics/research/comparativegroup/Fashionable%20Yet%20Useless.pdf>

Puetter U. (2012) "Europe's deliberative intergovernmentalism: the role of the Council and European Council in EU economic governance", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 19:2, 161-178,

Quaglia L. (2013) "Financial regulation and supervision in the European Union after the crisis", *Journal of Economic Policy Reform*, 16:1

Radaelli C. (2012), "Europeanization: The Challenge of Establishing Causality" in Exadaktylos T. and Radaelli C. (ed.) *Research Design in European Studies Establishing Causality in Europeanization*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Roose, J. (2013), "Challenging the public attribution of responsibility in routine EU politics". Paper prepared for the 7th ECPR General Conference in Bourdeaux

Roose, J., M. Kousis, M. Sommer (2014) "Discursive Actor Attribution Analysis: A Tool to Analyze How People Make Sense of the Eurozone Crisis", paper presented at the ECPR General Conference, Glasgow, Sept.

Scholl F., Roose J., Sommer M., Kousis M., Kanellopoulos K., (2014), "Attributing Responsibility in the Debate on the Eurozone Crisis: Comparing the Europeanization of public spheres in Greece and Germany" paper presented at 3rd Midterm Conference of the European Political Sociology Research Network of ESA (European Sociological Association) hosted by University of Copenhagen, November 28-29.

Trenz, H. J. (2004), 'Media Coverage on European Governance: Exploring the European Public Sphere in National Quality Newspapers', *European Journal of Communication* 19 (3), pp. 291–319

Wilson T. & Hobolt S. (2015), "Allocating Responsibility in Multilevel Government Systems: Voter and Expert Attributions in the European Union", *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 77, No. 1 (January 2015), pp. 102-113

Wodak, R., and Angouri, J. (2014). "From Grexit to Grecovery: Euro/crisis discourses". *Discourse & Society*, 25(4), 417-423.