

Workpackage 3 title	Collective responses to crises in the public domain
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Objectives

The aim of this workpackage is to study collective responses to the crisis and the position of policy-makers in the public domain. We examine the positions of collective actors with regard to the crisis, how they frame the crisis, its origins (diagnostic), and potential solutions (prognostic). We also evaluate how policy-makers perceive and frame the crises so as to appraise the consistency between actual policies responses and policy rhetoric. This workpackage also enables us to evaluate the position of the EU as a relevant actor in the public domain and, more broadly, Europe as an issue, across the nine countries of the project.

Which collective actors do more often address issues relating to the economic crisis? How do policy responses to such crisis “look like” in the public domain? What issues are most often addressed? What causes are attributed and by whom? What solution are proposed and by whom? How do organized citizens react publicly to periods of crisis? Are protest activities related in some way to such periods?

Description of work

Following the method of political claims analysis, which has already proven fruitful in previous work of some members of consortium, we will study systematically the actors intervening in public debates, the issues they address, their policy positions, the frames they advance, and the way to stand against the specific disadvantaged groups of this project. Our national representative samples enable us to focus not only on atypical events (usually most visible in the media), but include the everyday debate about the economic crises and their consequences. At the same time, our period of study also allows for assessing diachronic changes in terms of public reactions to the economic crisis. The systematic data collection and analysis will be carried out in each country based on common guidelines. The information will be first summarized in national reports and then an integrated report (and dataset) will be elaborated allowing for cross-national comparative analyses.

Task 3.1: Preparation of codebook for the political claim analysis

This tasks consists in preparing the codebook for the political claims analysis. It will be made of two parts. The first part will include instructions concerning the definition, sampling, and coding of claims. The second part will include the variables and categories to be used in the coding. The main variables refer to the actors intervening in public debates, the issues they address, their policy positions, the frames they advance, and the way to stand against the specific disadvantaged groups of this project.

Task 3.2: Sampling and pretest

Sampling will follow a two-step procedure. In the first step, we will select five national newspapers in each country (available online through sources as Lexis-nexis) and sample from them by relevant keyword searches for each country for the period 2005-2013. From the set of articles thus generated, we will draw a representative sample of about 1000 public interventions for each country. The codebook will be pretested on a small sample of claims before starting the coding.

Task 3.3: Coding of political claims

Coding will follow the method of political claims analysis. This method consists in standardizing the information on claims retrieved on media sources (in this case, newspapers) in numerical form by the use of categories at different levels of generality. A claim is a unit of strategic action in the public sphere. It consists of the expression of a political opinion by some form of physical or verbal action, regardless of the form this expression takes and regardless of the nature of the actor.

Task 3.4: Analysis of political claims data

The political claims data will be analyzed through traditional statistical methods (for example, cross-tabulations and regressions). It will be of two kinds. Firstly, descriptive analyses on key variables of interest such as actors, issues, positions, and frames will provide a picture of how economic crises are dealt with in the public domain and how this varies across countries and across time. Secondly, explanatory analyses will study how these variables influence each other.

Task 3.5: Drafting of integrated report on collective responses to crises in the public domain

The report will consist of a comparative assessment of collective responses to crises in the public domain based on national reports provided by the other beneficiaries.

Deliverables

3.1: Codebook for coding of collective responses to crises in the public domain, including instructions concerning the definition, sampling, and coding of claims and the variables and categories to be used in the coding.

3.2: Integrated report on collective responses to crises in the public domain, summarizing the main findings of WP3, consisting of a comparative assessment of collective responses to crises in the public domain based on national reports provided by beneficiaries.