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#### **How Citizens React to Economic Crises and Their Social and Political Consequences**

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# **Public Responses by Organized Collective Actors to the Great Recession in European Countries, 2008-2014**

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# **Public Responses by Organized Collective Actors to the Great Recession in European Countries, 2008-2014**

## **Abstract**

This paper examines the responses by organized collective actors in the public domain in the context of the economic crisis that started in 2008. The goal is to show how European citizens have reacted to the economic crisis – or at least how they have dealt with issues pertaining to it – in the public domain, that is, as conveyed by the media. In brief, we are interested in the public debates around the Great Recession, whereby we adopt a broad definition of public debates which includes both a discursive (speech acts) and a behavioural (collective mobilizations) dimension. We do so through a broad focus that includes not only countries having suffered much from the crisis but also others that have been in part spared by it. The countries included in our study are the following: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK.

**Keywords:** Economic crisis, collective actors, political claims, public domain

# **Public Responses by Organized Collective Actors to the Great Recession in European Countries, 2008-2014**

## **Introduction**

Discontent arising from economic hardship in times of drastic crisis may lead to collective forms of reactions such as protest behavior. Policy responses, for example in terms of cuts to public spending, to the crisis that started in 2008, which has to become known as the “Great Recession” (Bermeo and Bartels 2014) have brought about massive protests in various European countries and beyond (Baumgarten 2012; Fuster Morell 2012; Karamichas 2009; Taylor-Gooby 2013). Comparative studies have demonstrated how the variation of policies adopted by the country’s elites explains the emergence of protest actions in Latin America (Machado et al. 2011), with similar studies being carried out in various European countries (Ancelovici 2011; Beissinger and Sasse 2012; Kousis 2012; Kriesi 2011). It has also been shown that EU policy changes in some fields (e.g. fishing or agriculture) are likely to be followed by active protests in countries such as France and Spain (Uba and Ugglá 2011).

However, the analysis of collective responses to economic crises can more broadly be referred to the study of a larger repertoire of political interventions by organized actors in the public domain, including speech acts that are strategically made with an explicit political purpose. By acknowledging the plurality of modes of political intervention that different types of actors may use (Sanders 1997; Tilly 1978; Young 2000), a systematic analysis of the public domain has thus to include all potential forms of reactions and interventions in the public space, such as purely discursive forms (for example, public statements, press releases, publications, and interviews), conventional forms of political action (for example, litigation or petitioning), as well as protest forms such as demonstrations and political violence. This large variety of forms of interventions valorizes the public domain as a unique common space where a large plurality of actors can exist and interact for substantiating their positions,

mutual conflicts, shared agreements, and so forth. These actors include powerful policy makers and political elites as well as corporate actors, pressure groups, civil society organizations, movements, and hence, different types of “publics” that are the object of policy-making (Cinalli 2004, 2007; Gray and Statham 2005).

In order to comprehend and examine this rich variety of actors and their forms of action, we rely on political claims analysis (Giugni and Passy 2004; Hutter 2014; Koopmans and Statham 1999). This method enables us to cover a broader set of actors and forms of actions issues than only social movement actors and protests. At the same time, it allows for digging deeper into the content of claims, defined as the expression of a political opinion by verbal or physical action in the public space. Most crucially this method relies upon the systematic analysis of media reports, thus offering a concrete application to operationalize our notion of public domain. In a large polity such as the state it is impossible for all actors to interact publicly and directly, together, as in a face-to-face model. Consequently, they must rely to a considerable extent on the media to access and shape the public space, so as to express their positions, debate the pros and cons of different policy choices, or calling upon the support of the general public.

By conducting an extensive assessment of political interventions in media reports at the time of crisis, we can systematically analyze actors and their actions, the issues that actors address, their policy positions, the frames they advance, and the way to stand against specific disadvantaged groups. In particular, we draw upon a representative sample that includes the everyday debate about the crisis. The data were generated the context of the EU-funded LIVEWHAT project, focusing our attention on available data for the 2008-2014 period. Claims have been coded by random sampling of about 1000 claims per country (for a total sample of 9033 claims) selected from five newspapers in each country and covering the period from 2005 to 2014 (in Greece and Poland the number of newspapers have been

reduced for practical reasons). All articles containing any of the three words “crisis,” “recession, or “austerity” have been selected and coded, to the extent that they referred to the current economic crisis. The articles have been sampled from all newspaper sections, excluding editorials, through key words search.

### **Claim-making about the economic crisis in Europe: cross-national analyses**

In this section we provide a cross-national overview of the ways in which organized actors in the public domain have reacted to the Great Recession between 2008 and 2014. We first look at the main features of claims, namely the actor making the claim, the forms of the claim, and the issue addressed by the claim. Then we address some further aspects more specifically focused on the crisis. In the cross-national tables we also show the distributions for three groups of countries: those who have suffered by a deep economic crisis, those who have not, and a third group of countries which can be considered as standing somewhere in between. Based on common knowledge of the situation of our nine countries as well as on contextual data collected in the LIVEWHAT project (most notably, on indicators of economic recession), we include Greece, Italy, and Spain in the first category; Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland in the second; and France and the UK in the third. This is admittedly a bit rough a way to classify our countries, but it will give some hints as to whether the severity of the crisis has an impact on the ways in which organized actors intervene in the public domain and therefore on the structuring of the discursive field around the issue of the economic crisis.

Table 1 shows to the composition of claims making when looking at its main actor-subjects. Figures are shaped so as to distinguish the main actors of decision-making in the policy domain on the one hand (actors who make use of claim-making as a complement of their non-public agency), and civil society actors who primarily intervene in the public

domain on the other (most likely to have an influence on processes decision-making), while at the same time singling out the intermediate position of economic actors in their role of major stakeholders of crisis. This first step of analysis reveals the presence of specific dynamics of claim-making for different countries. Germany stands out for its elites-based and state-centric nature of claim-making. In this country the public domain is especially shaped by policy actors, with only some minor interventions of economic interests and civil society. By contrast, Italy stands out for the stronger bottom-up dynamics taking place in the public domain. Accordingly, we find the presence of a much more vociferous civil society which stands against the more silent state actors and economic interests. Poland also shows an extensive presence of civil society actors in the public domain. Yet the most noticeable figure refers in this case to the outstanding visibility of professional organizations (which is unequalled in any other country). This figure is thus consistent with the high visibility of economic actors in the Polish case. Yet, only the Swedish case is characterized by a strong prevalence of economic interests on the one hand vis-à-vis both policy actors and civil society on the other. The visibility of economic actors is also evident for both Britain and Switzerland, with a stronger role for civil society actors in Britain and a stronger role of state actors in Switzerland. Lastly, France provides an interesting case for seizing the specific role of labor representatives, group-specific organizations, and welfare NGOs of different kind as the highest proportion of claims by civil society actors

**(Table 1 about here)**

At the same time, it is noticeable that specific characteristics of each country do not build up into higher cross-national models according to typical expectations of comparative studies of politics, sociology and economics. Thus, Southern Greece seems to follow the same overall pattern of claims making that can be found in Bismarckian Germany owing to the remarkable presence political elites in the public domain. While the specific political

developments in Greece (with the repeated conduction of general elections throughout the 2008-2014 time period) have certainly contributed to inflate the static-centric nature of claims making, it is surprising to discover that another Mediterranean state, Spain, is also in line with the German pattern. At the same time, the crisis seems to account for other unusual (mis)matches. Thus, together with other unusual patterns of (mis)match. Thus, Italy is more similar to France than Greece and Spain, Britain is more similar to Poland than it is to Switzerland, Sweden is hardly the country where the voice of work, capital, and civil society is mostly heard, etc.

However, an interesting pattern can be discovered when distinguishing countries according to the intensity of the economic crisis (along the *continuum* “weak” to “strong”) so as to appraise the extent to which the intensity of crisis influences the public domain in terms of main actor subjects. Hence, results may suggest that the economic crisis reduces the space that is available for economic actors in the public domain to voice their concerns (cf. significance test). Findings tell us that in contexts of strong crisis the percentage of claims by economic actors is three times lower than it is in contexts of low economic crisis.

**(Table 2 about here)**

If confirmed by other datasets and testing, this result would only be counter-intuitive in appearance. In fact, it would confirm the main fundamentals of theories of contentious politics (Tilly 1978, Tilly et al. 2006): the existence of any grievance, even when consisting of epochal crisis and systemic recession, depends upon the specific interventions that actors of different type make in the public domain. In simpler words, the contentious dynamics that political insiders and outsiders generate over the crisis is what makes the crisis itself politically relevant, while at the same time reducing the available space for the (most grievant) economic actors.



The analysis of forms of action is of valuable help to substantiate previous findings. The distributions in table 3 confirm the existence of national specificities between the two poles of very homogeneous repertoire (Sweden) and very heterogeneous repertoire (Italy). A visible finding is also the fact that alternative forms of resilience are hardly well-suited for entering the public domain.

**(Table 3 about here)**

At the same time, emphasis should be put on other interesting findings. So we find that the state-centric claim-making in Germany translates into the extensive presence of political decisions. Among the other state-centric countries, a similar pattern can be found in Spain but not in Greece. Italy is different from France in terms of its higher recourse to political decisions (in spite of a similar high presence of civil society actors across the two countries). Once again, Britain and Poland are more similar than what much literature of comparative politics may argue. Lastly, data in table 4 do not show evident patterns for distinguishing countries along the *continuum* between weak to strong crisis, though the simple consideration of percentage do show that more crisis-laden contexts go together with a more extensive presence of protest action (compensating for the reduction of verbal statements).

**(Table 4 about here)**

Crucially, the analysis of issues shows some overall cross-national trend. Thus claim-making over macroeconomics, labor and unemployment, social policy, as well as economic activities and domestic commerce, take the lion's share across all countries. Of course, some national specificities are still identifiable. Britain and Spain stand out as the two opposite poles with highest and lowest claim-making over macroeconomic issues. Italy is the country where discussion over labor and unemployment is most intense, while France stands out for its unparalleled claim-making over economic activities and domestic commerce. Lastly, German actors pay no attention whatsoever vis-à-vis issues of social policy.

**(Table 5 about here)**

The fact that in all countries claim-making focuses on just a limited number of issues accounts for the minor variations along the weak to strong crisis *continuum*. Yet findings in table 6 show an interesting *crescendo* over labor and unemployment between countries of weak and strong crisis respectively. It is also noticeable that a comparable pattern can be detected for other less debated issues, and in particular international affairs.

**(Table 6 about here)**

Table 7 shows the composition of claims making when looking at its main actor-objects. When looking at percentages referring to claims that are focused on (the responsibilities of) policy-makers and the state, one finds some crucial cross-national variations that fit established knowledge of comparative politics, sociology, and economics. Accordingly, the two Continental countries, France and Germany, stand side by side together on a pole of extensive claim-making over (the responsibilities of) policy actors and the state. The Southern countries Greece, Italy, and Spain show very similar scores among themselves. Poland confirms its strong liberal-residual developments by standing, side by side with Switzerland, on the opposite pole of little claim-making. Britain is the only country left out from conventional knowledge, since one may expect stronger similarities with the liberal-residual pole than with the Southern countries.

**(Table 7 about here)**

However, figures referring to economic actors and civil society hardly fit the same pattern. Economic actors are extensively taken as the object of claims in Britain, Germany, Italy and Sweden, while civil society actors bring Poland together with Greece and Italy. Another interesting finding is that in some countries claim-making is still focused on the old cleavage between work and capital (Greece and Italy) while in others claim-making is rooted within a post-capitalist context (Britain, and Spain to a minor extent). Lastly, the comparison

of countries according to the intensity of the economic crisis confirms previous results for the actor-subject variable. So growing intensity may contribute to reduce the role of economic actors within the public domain, while at the same time increasing the visibility of civil society actors vis-à-vis policy-makers and the state.

**(Table 8 about here)**

The variable visibility of economic actors within the public domain, both as main actor-subjects or actor-objects, calls for a more detailed analysis of economic frames vis-à-vis other main types of legal and political frames. Tables 9 and 10 refer to the analysis of main frames. Findings show that, in the vast majority of national cases, economic causes are singled out (table 9). The only real exception to this trend is Italy, where legal, administrative, and regulatory causes take the lion's share. Greece also provides a discordant voice within the group owing to the important presence of political causes among the other diagnostic frames. Most crucially, the idea that the intensity of economic crisis waters down the economic substance of claim-making is confirmed. Thus economic frames prevail especially in contexts of weak crisis, with political causes standing out in contexts of strong crisis (table 10).

**(Table 9 about here)**

**(Table 10 about here)**

### **The impact of political opportunities on claim-making about the economic crisis**

While in the descriptive analyses above we included state actors in order to provide a broader overview of who intervenes in the public domain in times of crisis, how, and on which issues, here we restrict our analysis to civil society actors. In this section we therefore take more a social movement perspective. In this perspective, we are interested in assessing the impact of political opportunities on the claims. More specifically, we look at two dependent variables: the likelihood that a claim by civil society actors (including economic actors) takes the form

of a protest action and the likelihood that it focuses on socioeconomic issues. The rationale behind this two-fold focus is that, on the one hand, we may expect the economic crisis to have increased the contentiousness of citizens' interventions in the public domain and, on the other hand, that such interventions are increasingly dealing with socioeconomic issues.

Table 11 shows the results of two regression models: one predicting protest and one predicting a focus on socioeconomic issues. Both dependent variables are binary and therefore we estimate logistic regression models. In addition, given the hierarchical structure of the data, we use multilevel random-intercept regression models. The models are structured according to a variable combining countries and years. Since our claim-making data covers 9 countries over a 7-year period and given the fact that we do not have contextual data for 2014 (except for the measure of discursive opportunities), in the regression analyses we focus on the 2008-2013 period. As a result, the analyses are done on 54 level-2 observations (or groups), each representing a given year in a given country. We thus model both variation across countries and variation and across time, although some of our measures are not time-varying or are so only to a limited extent. The level-1 observations are represented by the claims.

**(Table 11 about here)**

Both models include five measures of political opportunity structures: the World Bank political stability index (ranging from -2.5 to +2.5), the degree of federalism (ranging from 0 to 100; source: Democracy barometer), the presence of constitutional provisions for direct democracy (ranging from 0 to 100; source: Democracy barometer), the Ghallager index of electoral disproportionality (ranging from 0 to 100), and the World Bank government effectiveness index (ranging from -2.5 to +2.5). The latter is based on a list of individual indicators and captures perceptions of the quality of public services, the quality of the civil service and the degree of its independence from political pressures, the quality of policy

formulation and implementation, and the credibility of the government's commitment to such policies. We also include a number of variables meant to capture the extent to which a government has implemented austerity policies. This follows from Bermeo and Bartels' (2014) idea that mass reactions to the economic crisis are not so much dictated by the extent of the crisis in itself, but rather by the austerity policies enacted by national government (often under the pressure of the EU and the so-called Troika). Following a simple – arguably simplistic – definition of austerity policies as policies aiming at reducing state expenditures and increasing taxation, we include two related measures: central government spending and tax wedge (source: OCDE). In addition, unemployment rate (source: OCDE) is meant to measure the extent of the crisis, or rather of its negative consequences. Finally, the model predicting protest also includes a variable referring to the thematic focus of claims, namely a dummy variable whereby 1 means a focus on socioeconomic issues and 0 a focus on any other issues. However, our main interest lies in the impact of political-institutional indicators, and all other variables should be considered merely as controls.

If we look at the model predicting protest as opposed to other forms of intervention in the public domain, the results are quite comforting for political opportunity theorists (see Kriesi 2004 and Meyer 2004 for reviews): four of our five measures of political opportunity structure have a significant effect on the likelihood that claims by civil society actors take the form of a protest action. The latter include conventional protest actions, demonstrative protest actions, confrontational protest actions, and violent protest actions. Specifically, the more stable the political system, the less claims take the form of one of these protest actions. This is in line, for example, with Tarrow's (2011) stress on changing political alignments as a favorable condition for protest. The effect of this variable is particularly strong. Further, both the degree of federalism and the extent to which direct democracy is constitutionally provided have a significant positive effect on protest, although not a very strong one. This conforms,

for example, to Kriesi et al.'s (1995) analysis of the impact of these aspects of the political opportunity structures on the mobilization of social movements. Finally, the index of government effectiveness also plays a role: the higher the (perceived) governmental effectiveness, the less likely are claims to take the form of a protest action. Thus, weak states – in this case, in citizens' perceptions – are more conducive to protest, as hypothesized by political opportunity theorists. The only political variable that shows no significant effect is the electoral disproportionality index.

Among the other covariates, we observe a positive effect of tax wedge and of socioeconomic issues. The former suggests that higher taxation makes protest more likely, while the latter indicates that protest is more likely to address socioeconomic than other issues.

Turning to the model predicting that claims focus on socioeconomic issues rather than on other – often more cultural – issues, we also observe a number of significant effects. Again, political opportunity structures have an important predicting power, as three of our five indicators are statistically significant: the degree of federalism, electoral disproportionality, and the index of government effectiveness. Firstly, a higher degree of federalism tends to decrease the likelihood that claims focus on socioeconomic issues. In contrast, secondly, more electorally disproportional countries have the opposite effect: they increase the chances that claims bear on socioeconomic issues. Thirdly, a higher governmental effectiveness makes a focus on socioeconomic issue more likely. While here it is more difficult to link these findings with assumptions and hypotheses derived from political opportunity theory, they point to the fact that not only the form of claims, but also their content is affected by the political-institutional context. In addition, we also observe a positive effect of tax wedge, meaning that the higher the taxation the more likely are claims to focus on socioeconomic issues.

## Conclusions

This paper has examined the responses by organized collective actors in the public domain in the context of the economic crisis between 2008 and 2014. The goal has been to show how European citizens have reacted to the Great Recession in the public domain, that is, as conveyed by the media. Throughout the analysis, we have kept a broad focus that has included not only countries having suffered much from the crisis but also others that have been in part spared by it. A systematic dimension of analysis has been to distinguish across different contexts along the *continuum* between weak to strong crisis. Summing up the main findings, emphasis can be put on the fact that public debates over the politics of economic crisis are more focused on the typical style of contentious politics dividing policy insiders from public outsiders than on the conditions and position of economic actors themselves.

This distinction has been useful for the analysis since we found economic actors and frames to be especially prevalent in conditions of contexts of weak crisis. At the same time, we have also found that our countries appear to a large extent to be dominated by a discourse focused on macro-economic issues. Overall, political contention over the crisis is generally pacified, with the only exception where the crisis has been brought at the core of liberal readjustments of the labor market dividing workers on the one hand and capital on the other. This process of pacification is not directly linked to the intensity of the crisis, but more possibly to political factors, in particular the weakness of labor movements and other civil society organizations that do not succeed in mobilizing over the crisis. In addition, it is noticeable that policy-makers and the state dominate the debates about the crisis. In some countries this happens in addition to specific professional organizations and experts who, most likely, supply policy-makers and the state with expertise on the crisis.

Few exceptions on few variables apart, the politics of crisis in Europe appears as a form of client politics, dominated by state actors, and state-sponsored interest groups, mainly

acting via verbal speech, with even the labor organizations having little to say over major transformations taking place in the labor market. At the same time, we have found that political debates over the economic crisis appear according to our data to remain for the most part a country affair. We did find some consistent evidences in line with established knowledge in comparative sociology, politics, and economics (for example, the composition of claim-making in terms of actor-objects). Yet the visibility of heterogeneous public domains in Europe makes it of the global economic crisis still a national political affair.



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Table 1: Actors of claims about the economic crisis by country (percentages)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
<b>State and party actors</b>	<b>50.23</b>	<b>63.23</b>	<b>64.81</b>	<b>46.85</b>	<b>31.52</b>	<b>63.11</b>	<b>35.98</b>	<b>49.80</b>	<b>42.94</b>
State actors	34.93	49.54	56.52	38.39	24.14	44.81	29.17	41.70	27.31
Political parties and politicians	15.30	13.70	8.29	8.46	7.37	18.30	6.81	8.09	15.63
<b>Economic actors</b>	<b>15.30</b>	<b>12.98</b>	<b>9.00</b>	<b>10.01</b>	<b>29.39</b>	<b>9.10</b>	<b>47.66</b>	<b>30.84</b>	<b>25.28</b>
<b>Civil society actors</b>	<b>33.41</b>	<b>21.22</b>	<b>25.18</b>	<b>43.14</b>	<b>36.57</b>	<b>27.40</b>	<b>16.16</b>	<b>18.14</b>	<b>30.76</b>
Other professional organizations and groups	14.25	13.59	13.25	22.19	29.39	16.12	8.54	10.76	18.38
Labor organization and groups	13.67	4.12	9.50	14.55	5.15	6.03	5.18	5.53	7.82
Group-specific organizations and groups	2.22	0.62	0.71	1.96	0.81	1.48	1.12	0.61	1.52
Solidarity, human rights, and welfare organizations and groups	2.22	0.82	1.01	0.62	0.20	1.88	0.51	0.00	1.32
Other civil society organizations and groups	1.05	2.06	0.71	3.82	1.01	1.88	0.81	1.23	1.73
<b>Unknown/unspecified actors</b>	<b>1.05</b>	<b>2.57</b>	<b>1.01</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2.53</b>	<b>0.40</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>1.23</b>	<b>1.02</b>
Total N	100% 856	100% 971	100% 898	100% 969	100% 990	100% 1011	100% 984	100% 976	100% 985

Pearson  $\chi^2(64) = 1.5e+03$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1479

**Pearson  $\chi^2(24) = 1.2e+03$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.2105**

Table 2: Actors of claims about the economic crisis by strength of crisis (percentages)

	Strong	Intermediate	Weak
<b>State and party actors</b>	<b>58.37</b>	<b>46.33</b>	<b>45.04</b>
State actors	46.62	30.85	36.06
Political parties and politicians	11.75	15.48	8.98
<b>Economic actors</b>	<b>9.36</b>	<b>20.64</b>	<b>30.27</b>
<b>Civil society actors</b>	<b>31.80</b>	<b>31.99</b>	<b>23.06</b>
Other professional organizations and groups	17.14	16.46	15.61
Labor organization and groups	9.97	10.54	5.00
Group-specific organizations and groups	1.38	1.85	0.79
Solidarity, human rights, and welfare organizations and groups	1.18	1.74	0.38

Other civil society organizations and groups	2.12	1.41	1.28
<b>Unknown/unspecified actors</b>	<b>0.47</b>	<b>1.03</b>	<b>1.63</b>
Total	100%	100%	100%
N	2969	1841	3921

Pearson chi2(16) = 627.7497, Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1896

**Pearson chi2(6) = 496.6295, Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1686**

Table 3: Forms of claims about the economic crisis by country (percentages)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
<b>Binding actions</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>16.81</b>	<b>6.50</b>	<b>12.18</b>	<b>3.94</b>	<b>14.19</b>	<b>0.10</b>	<b>9.85</b>	<b>3.00</b>
Repressive measures	0.12	0.43	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00
Political decisions	1.69	16.38	6.50	11.97	3.94	13.99	0.10	9.85	3.00
<b>Verbal statements</b>	<b>86.71</b>	<b>79.31</b>	<b>86.08</b>	<b>77.40</b>	<b>93.12</b>	<b>81.05</b>	<b>98.98</b>	<b>88.00</b>	<b>94.32</b>
<b>Protest actions</b>	<b>11.35</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>6.30</b>	<b>9.60</b>	<b>2.93</b>	<b>4.27</b>	<b>0.71</b>	<b>2.15</b>	<b>2.58</b>
Conventional protest actions	6.52	1.19	2.34	1.65	2.22	1.39	0.00	0.92	1.55
Demonstrative protest actions	3.86	1.94	1.93	3.92	0.61	1.98	0.51	0.92	0.83
Confrontational protest actions	0.85	0.65	1.73	3.82	0.10	0.79	0.10	0.31	0.21
Violent protest actions	0.12	0.11	0.30	0.21	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00
<b>Alternative forms of resilience</b>	<b>0.12</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>0.83</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.50</b>	<b>0.20</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.10</b>
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	828	928	984	969	989	1008	984	975	968

Pearson  $\chi^2(56) = 759.2297$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1121

**Pearson  $\chi^2(24) = 628.9440$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1558**

Table 4: Forms of claims about the economic crisis by strength of crisis (percentages)

	Strong	Intermediate	Weak
<b>Binding actions</b>	<b>10.98</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>7.53</b>
Repressive measures	0.14	0.06	0.10
Political decisions	10.84	2.39	7.43
<b>Verbal statements</b>	<b>81.53</b>	<b>90.81</b>	<b>90.02</b>
<b>Protest actions</b>	<b>6.69</b>	<b>6.63</b>	<b>2.40</b>
Conventional protest actions	1.79	3.84	1.08
Demonstrative protest actions	2.60	2.23	0.98
Confrontational protest actions	2.09	0.50	0.28
Violent protest actions	0.20	0.06	0.05
<b>Alternative forms of resilience</b>	<b>0.81</b>	<b>0.11</b>	<b>0.05</b>
Total	100% 2961	100% 1796	100% 3876

Pearson  $\chi^2(14) = 299.7602$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1318

**Pearson  $\chi^2(6) = 238.1766$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1175**

Table 5: Issues of claims about the economic crisis by country (percentages)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
<b>Socioeconomic issues</b>	<b>76.99</b>	<b>56.33</b>	<b>58.84</b>	<b>57.93</b>	<b>65.34</b>	<b>47.30</b>	<b>70.35</b>	<b>50.41</b>	<b>72.38</b>
Macroeconomics	44.99	50.00	48.44	40.49	52.15	38.18	61.57	44.21	65.61
Labor and unemployment	14.40	5.70	8.84	15.33	10.63	6.68	6.61	5.06	3.39
Social policy	4.50	0.53	1.25	2.11	2.45	2.23	2.07	0.93	3.39
Economic activities and domestic commerce	13.11	0.11	0.31	0.00	0.10	0.21	0.10	0.21	0.00
<b>Other issues</b>	<b>23.01</b>	<b>43.67</b>	<b>41.16</b>	<b>42.07</b>	<b>34.66</b>	<b>52.70</b>	<b>29.65</b>	<b>49.59</b>	<b>27.62</b>
Rights, civil liberties, and discrimination	1.54	0.84	1.46	0.95	0.41	0.85	0.41	0.41	1.64
Health	0.90	0.11	1.66	0.85	1.64	1.59	0.72	0.41	0.72
Agriculture	2.31	0.53	1.56	1.16	0.20	0.32	0.52	0.10	0.00
Education, culture, and sports	1.54	1.37	2.29	7.82	3.58	4.98	3.62	0.31	0.62
Environment	1.16	0.84	0.94	0.74	0.61	0.95	0.93	0.21	0.41
Energy	0.26	0.42	1.04	1.16	0.41	0.42	1.14	0.41	0.41
Immigration and integration	0.39	0.11	0.31	0.53	0.31	0.42	0.52	1.34	0.72
Transportation	1.67	1.05	0.52	2.01	0.10	1.59	0.52	1.14	1.13
Law and order	0.13	1.90	3.85	3.38	5.01	4.45	1.03	2.79	0.82
Urban and regional policies	4.11	27.43	14.76	15.43	15.24	16.54	16.94	32.44	16.53
Defense	0.26	0.21	0.21	0.11	0.10	0.53	0.62	0.21	0.00
Science	0.39	0.95	2.18	0.63	2.25	0.11	1.65	2.07	0.41
Foreign trade	0.13	4.96	4.26	0.11	0.51	0.95	0.10	4.96	1.13
International affairs	4.50	2.74	5.93	6.98	2.86	16.44	0.62	1.96	1.33
Government and public administration	2.57	0.21	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00
Public lands and water management	0.00	0.00	0.21	0.11	1.43	2.44	0.31	0.83	1.75
Other fields	1.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	778	948	962	946	978	943	968	968	974

Pearson  $\chi^2(160) = 2.8e+03$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.2044

Pearson  $\chi^2(8) = 314.9799$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1929

Table 6: Issues of claims about the economic crisis by strength of crisis (percentages)

	Strong	Intermediate	Weak
<b>Socioeconomic issues</b>	<b>54.72</b>	<b>71.17</b>	<b>59.05</b>
Macroeconomics	42.41	56.45	51.99
Labor and unemployment	10.28	8.28	7.02
Social policy	1.86	3.88	1.50
Economic activities and domestic commerce	0.18	5.82	0.13
<b>Other issues</b>	<b>45.28</b>	<b>28.83</b>	<b>40.95</b>
Rights, civil liberties, and discrimination	1.09	1.60	0.52
Health	1.37	0.80	0.73
Agriculture	1.02	1.03	0.34
Education, culture, and sports	5.02	1.03	2.23
Environment	0.88	0.74	0.65
Energy	0.88	0.34	0.60
Immigration and integration	0.42	0.57	0.57
Transportation	1.37	1.37	0.70
Law and order	3.89	0.51	2.69
Urban and regional policies	15.57	11.02	22.97
Defense	0.28	0.11	0.28
Science	0.98	0.40	1.73
Foreign trade	1.79	0.68	2.62
International affairs	9.75	2.74	2.05
Government and public administration	0.07	1.14	0.05
Public lands and water management	0.91	0.97	0.65
Other fields	0.00	0.51	0.00
Total	100%	100%	100%
N	2851	1752	3862

Pearson chi2(40) = 1.1e+03, Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.2533

Pearson chi2(2) = 170.5644, Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1419



Table 7: Objects of claims about the economic crisis by country (percentages)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
<b>State and party actors</b>	<b>38.47</b>	<b>36.02</b>	<b>10.96</b>	<b>13.00</b>	<b>3.64</b>	<b>11.18</b>	<b>6.20</b>	<b>3.79</b>	<b>11.57</b>
State actors	34.76	34.98	10.46	12.38	3.13	9.00	5.69	3.08	10.05
Political parties and politicians	3.71	1.03	0.51	0.62	0.51	2.18	0.51	0.72	1.52
<b>Economic actors</b>	<b>24.10</b>	<b>40.87</b>	<b>24.57</b>	<b>43.86</b>	<b>26.16</b>	<b>10.09</b>	<b>47.26</b>	<b>35.18</b>	<b>44.77</b>
<b>Civil society actors</b>	<b>24.33</b>	<b>11.25</b>	<b>29.85</b>	<b>30.44</b>	<b>27.98</b>	<b>17.01</b>	<b>11.48</b>	<b>19.59</b>	<b>4.57</b>
Other professional organizations and groups	4.52	0.83	4.26	3.30	7.98	3.96	0.41	1.54	0.10
Labor organization and groups	14.14	8.15	20.41	21.36	13.03	6.73	10.57	16.00	3.96
Group-specific organizations and groups	3.82	1.24	5.08	4.64	6.26	5.44	0.00	1.85	0.41
Solidarity, human rights, and welfare organizations and groups	1.62	0.10	0.00	0.10	0.20	0.40	0.10	0.10	0.00
Other civil society organizations and groups	0.23	0.93	0.10	1.03	0.51	0.49	0.41	0.10	0.10
<b>Unknown/unspecified actors</b>	<b>13.09</b>	<b>11.87</b>	<b>34.62</b>	<b>12.69</b>	<b>42.22</b>	<b>61.72</b>	<b>35.06</b>	<b>41.44</b>	<b>39.09</b>
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	828	928	984	969	989	1008	984	975	968

Pearson  $\chi^2(64) = 2.6e+03$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1926

**Pearson  $\chi^2(24) = 2.3e+03$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.2936**

Table 8: Objects of claims about the economic crisis by strength of crisis (percentages)

	Strong	Intermediate	Weak
<b>State and party actors</b>	<b>11.70</b>	<b>24.13</b>	<b>12.33</b>
State actors	10.59	21.59	11.64
Political parties and politicians	1.11	2.54	0.69
<b>Economic actors</b>	<b>25.94</b>	<b>35.12</b>	<b>37.34</b>
<b>Civil society actors</b>	<b>25.67</b>	<b>13.80</b>	<b>17.61</b>
Other professional organizations and groups	3.84	2.16	2.71
Labor organization and groups	16.05	8.71	11.94
Group-specific organizations and groups	5.06	2.00	2.35
Solidarity, human rights, and welfare organizations and groups	0.17	0.76	0.13
Other civil society organizations and groups	0.54	0.16	0.48
<b>Unknown/unspecified actors</b>	<b>36.69</b>	<b>26.95</b>	<b>32.72</b>
Total	100%	100%	100%
N	2965	1848	3918

Pearson  $\chi^2(16) = 394.7893$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1504

**Pearson  $\chi^2(6) = 344.0756$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1404**

Table 9: Position of claims about the economic crisis towards objects (means)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
State and party actors	.109	.278	-.186	.278	-.071	-.009	.036	.647	-.563
Economic actors	.207	.391	.140	.666	.557	.602	-.139	.437	.056
Civil society actors	.624	.481	-.358	.546	.415	.557	-.454	.286	-.200
Unknown/unspecified actors	.310	.714	-.046	.772	.275	.532	-.108	.767	.154
Total	.285	.399	-.114	.592	.390	.462	-.157	.523	.01
N	861	948	859	969	628	689	852	836	2828

Adjusted R-squared from ANOVA = 0.1033, Prob>F = 0.0000

Table 10: Diagnostic frames of claims about the economic crisis by country (percentages)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
Economic causes	57.22	61.76	51.30	24.64	56.28	35.88	71.77	74.52	58.43
Legal, administrative, and regulatory causes	18.56	12.75	14.32	51.09	14.76	42.94	12.44	10.19	28.20
Political causes	11.68	12.75	27.34	16.67	12.33	9.89	10.05	8.92	3.92
Other diagnostic frames	12.54	12.75	7.03	7.61	16.63	11.30	5.74	6.37	9.45
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	582	102	384	276	908	354	209	157	688

Pearson  $\chi^2(24) = 496.9871$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.2128

Table 11: Diagnostic frames of claims about the economic crisis by strength of crisis (percentages)

	Strong	Intermediate	Weak
Economic causes	38.66	57.87	61.12
Legal, administrative, and regulatory causes	34.32	23.78	13.74
Political causes	18.34	7.48	11.63
Other diagnostic frames	8.68	10.87	13.52
Total	100%	100%	100%
N	1014	1270	1376

Pearson  $\chi^2(6) = 237.3373$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1801

Table 12: Blamed actors in claims about the economic crisis by country (percentages)

	France	Germany	Greece	Italy	Poland	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	UK
State and party actors	55.91	54.55	84.05	65.41	40.45	31.82	66.67	43.62	61.13
Economic actors	32.83	43.18	7.41	25.19	25.91	9.09	30.77	50.00	29.92
Civil society actors	8.63	0.00	6.55	8.65	3.18	3.03	0.00	3.19	1.28
Unknown/unspecified actors	2.63	2.27	1.99	0.75	30.45	56.06	2.56	3.19	7.67
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	533	88	351	266	220	66	39	94	391

Pearson  $\chi^2(24) = 589.9347$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.3099

Table 13: Blamed actors in claims about the economic crisis by strength of crisis (percentages)

	Strong	Intermediate	Weak
State and party actors	71.74	58.12	46.26
Economic actors	14.49	31.60	34.92
Civil society actors	7.03	5.52	2.27
Unknown/unspecified actors	6.73	4.76	16.55
Total	100%	100%	100%
N	683	924	441

Pearson  $\chi^2(6) = 153.4421$ , Pr = 0.000, Cramer's V = 0.1935

Table 14: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting the likelihood that a claim by civil society actors takes the form of a protest action or focuses on socioeconomic issues

	Protest	Socioeconomic issue
Political stability	-1.243** (0.485)	0.213 (0.252)
Federalism	0.008** (0.003)	-0.006*** (0.001)
Direct democracy	0.016*** (0.005)	0.002 (0.003)
Electoral disproportionality	0.026 (0.033)	0.041** (0.017)
Government effectiveness	-0.486* (0.261)	0.283** (0.127)
Central government spending	-0.016 (0.015)	-0.008 (0.008)
Tax wedge	0.071*** (0.016)	0.028*** (0.008)
Unemployment rate	0.015 (0.029)	-0.009 (0.016)
Socioeconomic issue	0.376*** (0.143)	-
Constant	-5.094*** (0.859)	-0.923** (0.441)
Sigma_u	.434 (.102)	.204 (.052)
Rho	.054 (.024)	.012 (.006)
Log likelihood	-878.648	-2549.177
Observations	3864	3955
Number of groups	54	54

Standard errors in parentheses

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1