



**National & Kapodistrian University of Athens**

**Department of English Language & Literature**

**MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF SOCIAL ACTORS IN THE 2015 GREEK  
ELECTIONS AMIDST THE ECONOMIC CRISIS: A CORPUS-BASED  
CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

**Efthymia Garidi**

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Supervising Committee**

**Supervisor:** Professor Vassiliki Mitsikopoulou

**Members:** Professor Vassiliki Nikiforidou, Professor Angeliki Tzanne

**Examination Committee**

Professor Emerita Sophia Marmaridou

Professor Anastasia Stamou

Assistant Professor Salomi Boukala

Assistant Professor Mariza Georgalou

To my family:

Francesco, Kostas, and Yorgos

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis examines media representations of the economic crisis in Greece during the crucial 2015 electoral period. Using a methodological framework that combines Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with Corpus Linguistics (CL), this study incorporates Halliday's Transitivity Theory and van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors framework to analyse the representations of key social actors (Greece, EU, Syriza/Tsipras, and Austerity) in mainstream and alternative media, and in particular in American and British newspapers and blogs.

The findings reveal significant differences in the representation of these actors, shaped by the media's ideological positions, particularly their views on austerity policies. Mainstream media often depicted austerity as a necessary economic policy, casting Syriza and Tsipras in a negative light during their anti-austerity phase, and portraying them more favorably as their stance softened. Greece was consistently represented as needing fiscal discipline, with mainstream media narratives shifting from criticism to cautious optimism as the Greek government showed a willingness to implement austerity measures. The EU was depicted in the mainstream media as the enforcer of austerity and a stabilizing force. Its power was emphasized more strongly when austerity measures were contested, while references to its authority diminished as the acceptance of austerity increased.

Conversely, the alternative media offered a contrasting perspective, often celebrating Syriza and Tsipras's anti-austerity stance as a courageous stand against economic oppression. However, as Syriza's stance on austerity softened, alternative media shifted to a more critical view, expressing disappointment and describing the shift as a betrayal of anti-austerity ideals. The portrayal of Greece in the alternative media consistently

emphasised the humanitarian impact of austerity, focusing on the social costs and depicting the Greek people as victims of external economic policies. The EU was criticised for its harsh measures and represented as a coercive force exacerbating Greece's economic problems.

This study contributes to the field of linguistics by demonstrating the critical role of language in the construction of social realities and public perceptions during economic crises, highlighting the interplay between media, ideology and politics. It does not only enhance our understanding of media discourse during the economic crisis in Greece, but also provides a methodological blueprint for future studies examining media representations in similar contexts. The findings underscore the importance of critically engaging with media content to uncover underlying ideological biases and their impact on public perception and policy.

## ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Η παρούσα διατριβή εξετάζει τις αναπαραστάσεις των μέσων ενημέρωσης για την οικονομική κρίση στην Ελλάδα κατά την κρίσιμη προεκλογική περίοδο του 2015. Χρησιμοποιώντας ένα μεθοδολογικό πλαίσιο που συνδυάζει την Κριτική Ανάλυση Λόγου (CDA) με τη Γλωσσολογία Σωμάτων Κειμένων (CL), η μελέτη αυτή ενσωματώνει τη θεωρία της μεταβατικότητας του Halliday και το πλαίσιο της αναπαράστασης των κοινωνικών δρώντων του van Leeuwen για να αναλύσει τις αναπαραστάσεις των βασικών κοινωνικών δρώντων (Ελλάδα, ΕΕ, Σύριζα/Τσίπρας και λιτότητα) στα κυρίαρχα και εναλλακτικά μέσα ενημέρωσης, και ειδικότερα στις αμερικανικές και βρετανικές εφημερίδες και τα ιστολόγια.

Τα ευρήματα αποκαλύπτουν σημαντικές διαφορές στον τρόπο αναπαράστασης αυτών των δρώντων, που επηρεάζονται από την ιδεολογική στάση των μέσων ενημέρωσης σχετικά με τη λιτότητα. Τα κυρίαρχα μέσα ενημέρωσης συχνά παρουσίαζαν τη λιτότητα ως αναγκαία οικονομική πολιτική, αναπαριστώντας αρνητικά τον Σύριζα και τον Τσίπρα κατά τη διάρκεια της θέσης τους ενάντια στη λιτότητα και πιο ευνοϊκά καθώς η στάση τους αμβλύθηκε. Η Ελλάδα παρουσιάστηκε σταθερά ως χώρα που χρειάζεται δημοσιονομική πειθαρχία, με τις αφηγήσεις των κυρίαρχων μέσων ενημέρωσης να μετατοπίζονται από την κριτική σε συγκρατημένη αισιοδοξία καθώς η ελληνική κυβέρνηση έδειχνε προθυμία να εφαρμόσει μέτρα λιτότητας. Η ΕΕ απεικονιζόταν στα κυρίαρχα μέσα ενημέρωσης ως φορέας επιβολής της λιτότητας και ως σταθεροποιητική δύναμη. Η δύναμή της τονιζόταν εντονότερα όταν αμφισβητούνταν τα μέτρα λιτότητας, ενώ οι αναφορές στην αυθεντία της μειώνονταν όσο αυξανόταν η αποδοχή της λιτότητας.

Αντίθετα, τα εναλλακτικά μέσα ενημέρωσης προσέφεραν μια αντίστροφη οπτική, συχνά εξυμνώντας τη στάση του Σύριζα και του Τσίπρα κατά της λιτότητας ως μια θαρραλέα στάση απέναντι στην οικονομική καταπίεση. Ωστόσο, καθώς η στάση του Σύριζα απέναντι στη λιτότητα αμβλύθηκε, τα εναλλακτικά μέσα ενημέρωσης μετατοπίστηκαν σε μια πιο κριτική άποψη, εκφράζοντας απογοήτευση και περιγράφοντας τη μετατόπιση ως προδοσία των ιδεωδών κατά της λιτότητας. Η απεικόνιση της Ελλάδας στα εναλλακτικά μέσα ενημέρωσης έδινε σταθερά έμφαση στις ανθρωπιστικές επιπτώσεις της λιτότητας, εστιάζοντας στο κοινωνικό κόστος και παρουσιάζοντας τον ελληνικό λαό ως θύμα εξωτερικών οικονομικών πολιτικών. Η ΕΕ επικρίθηκε για τα σκληρά της μέτρα και παρουσιάστηκε ως μια εκβιαστική αρχή, η οποία επιδείνωσε τα οικονομικά προβλήματα της Ελλάδας.

Η μελέτη αυτή συνεισφέρει στον τομέα της γλωσσολογίας με το να καταδεικνύει τον κρίσιμο ρόλο της γλώσσας στην κατασκευή της κοινωνικής πραγματικότητας και των κοινών αντιλήψεων κατά τη διάρκεια των οικονομικών κρίσεων, αναδεικνύοντας την αλληλεπίδραση μεταξύ των μέσων ενημέρωσης, της ιδεολογίας και της πολιτικής. Δεν ενισχύει μόνο την κατανόηση του λόγου των μέσων ενημέρωσης κατά τη διάρκεια της ελληνικής οικονομικής κρίσης, αλλά παρέχει επίσης ένα μεθοδολογικό σχέδιο για μελλοντικές μελέτες που εξετάζουν τις αναπαραστάσεις των μέσων ενημέρωσης σε παρόμοια πλαίσια. Τα ευρήματα υπογραμμίζουν τη σημασία της κριτικής ενασχόλησης με το περιεχόμενο των μέσων ενημέρωσης για την αποκάλυψη των υποκείμενων ιδεολογικών προκαταλήψεων και των επιπτώσεών τους στη δημόσια αντίληψη και την πολιτική.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Background and Object of the Study

The economic crisis in Greece, which erupted in the wake of the global financial downturn in 2008, is a pivotal moment in contemporary European history. From 2010, Greece faced severe economic challenges, including soaring debt levels, austerity measures, and a deepening recession. This period of financial turmoil tested the resilience of Greece's economic institutions and sparked intense debates and political upheaval (Karyotis & Gerodimos, 2015).

In 2015, Greece faced a critical juncture with the elections and the referendum that followed, as the Greek people grappled with key decisions that would significantly shape the country's economic and political trajectory.

On January 25, 2015, Greece experienced a significant political shift when the left-wing party Syriza, led by Alexis Tsipras, won the general elections. Syriza's victory was mainly due to a rejection of the austerity policies imposed by previous governments and the Troika, that is the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The new government aimed to renegotiate the terms of Greece's bailout agreements, advocating for debt relief and a more growth-oriented economic approach (Tsakatika, 2018). This was the starting point for a tense period of negotiations between the Greek government and its international creditors (Tsirbas, 2015).

In mid-2015, as negotiations reached a critical point, the Greek government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Tsipras, called for a referendum on 5 July. The referendum asked Greek citizens to vote on whether to accept the bailout conditions proposed by

the creditors. The people, facing economic hardship and uncertainty, voted overwhelmingly against the proposed terms and rejected further austerity measures. The outcome of the referendum increased tensions with the European Union and resulted in more intense negotiations (Silverman, 2016).

After the referendum, Greece was at a political crossroads. The Tsipras government, despite the popular rejection of the bailout conditions, ultimately accepted a new bailout package with slightly modified terms (Tsakatika, 2018). This decision caused internal dissent within Syriza, leading to a split in the party. On September 20, 2015, snap elections were called, and Syriza managed to secure a victory again, albeit with a slightly reduced majority. The period following the referendum saw negotiations and policy implementation continue, reflecting the complex and evolving nature of Greece's relationship with its creditors (Zahariadis, 2016).

These events in 2015, marked by elections and the referendum, were critical moments in Greece's response to the economic crisis (Tsebelis, 2015). but also became focal points for media representation and public discourse, shaping the narratives surrounding the nation's economic and political future.

The representations of the Greek economic crisis in mainstream and alternative media during the crucial moments of the January 2015 elections, the July 2015 referendum, and the subsequent September 2015 elections reveal striking divergences, underscoring the diverse landscape of media discourse. However, research on alternative media remains limited. Mainstream media outlets, often aligned with established political and economic interests (McChesney, 1999; Christiansen & Barnartt, 1995), tended to frame the events within a broader Eurozone context, emphasizing fiscal responsibility and the imperative of adhering to international financial agreements. In contrast, alternative

media sources, which are known for their independent and non-mainstream perspectives (Atton, 2002; Downmunt & Coyer, 2007), offered a dissenting view that questioned the efficacy of austerity measures and challenged the dominance of the Troika in shaping Greece's economic policies. These alternative narratives were often rooted in grassroots movements, featuring voices of dissent, socio-political activism, and calls for a more democratic and equitable economic framework (Atton, 2002; Schuman, 1982). This study examines the different representations of the Greek crisis in the media and their impact on public perceptions of the crisis.

## **1.2 Research Questions**

This thesis is essentially a study of media discourse and more specifically on how the Greek elections of 2015 were covered by British and American newspapers on the one hand, and British and American blogs on the other hand. The aim of this study is to examine the representations of the social actors related to the economic crisis in Greece and the elections, the differences between mainstream and alternative media, and the extent to which shifts in these representations take place in the three election periods of the same year.

In this thesis there are three research hypotheses. The first is that the representations of the social actors will revolve around the concept of austerity and their stance towards it; even though austerity is a policy approach, it is in essence the most important social actor.

Austerity in the 21st century is defined by Evans and McBride (2017, p.8) as comprising fiscal consolidation, structural reforms of the public sector, and flexibilization of labour markets. The implementation of austerity measures in response



to the 2008 global financial crisis is a deliberate decision which is fundamentally rooted in the ideological framework of neoliberalism (Russell, 2019).

Proponents of neoliberal economic policies argue that austerity measures are crucial to restoring economic health by curbing public spending, reducing government deficits and promoting market-driven solutions (Power et al., 2019:1). The core tenet of this ‘Thatcherite’ perspective is that austerity measures create an environment conducive to private sector growth and investment, thereby promoting economic recovery and stability (Streeck & Schäfer, 2013). They also argue that these measures are not only economically sound, but also consistent with the broader neoliberal philosophy of limited government intervention and an emphasis on individual responsibility, which is in essence the ‘diffusion of market logics through the state’ (McBride & Evans, 2017, p.100).

The deliberate choice of austerity as the primary policy response reflects the neoliberal belief in the efficacy of market forces, with fiscal discipline seen as essential to achieving long-term economic prosperity. The Fiscal Compact, or “Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union” which was signed in 2012 by 25 out of 27 EU members, with the exceptions of the UK and the Czech Republic (described in detail in Saravalle, 2021, pp. 49-59) emphasises the need for fiscal discipline and avoidance of sovereign debt at all costs. In fact, the Fiscal Compact ‘establishes a pervasive legal regime to tighten the budgetary policies of the Contracting Parties, with the goal of ensuring fiscal discipline in the member states as a precondition for financial stability in the entire Euro-zone’ (Fabbrini, 2013, p. 8), in which context the supposed lack of fiscal discipline in Greece and other Southern European countries is seen as a disease (Mitsikopoulou & Lykou, 2019).

However, critics counter that measures for fiscal discipline, i.e. austerity measures, disproportionately burden the most vulnerable segments of society, exacerbate social inequalities and undermine the social safety net (Berezin, 2009; Joy & Shields, 2017). The adoption of austerity measures therefore represents a paradigmatic clash between neoliberal economic principles and concerns about social justice and welfare. Giniger and Sotiropoulou (2019) characterise welfare and austerity ‘an antithetical dyad’ (p.82). The crisis of 2008 provided an ‘ideological platform’ on which to ‘renew the assault on the remaining pillars of the welfare state’ (Evans & McBride, 2017).

The second hypothesis is that the media will take a stance on austerity. Drawing on the characteristics of the mainstream and alternative media found in the literature and discussed in detail in the literature review chapter, the mainstream media are likely to be pro-austerity, while the alternative media are expected to be anti-austerity. Most research has focused on the media's stance towards Greece and its people, without emphasizing whether they evaluate the austerity measures positively or negatively.

A great number of studies on the representation of the Greek crisis have found that mainstream media, both Greek and international, place the main responsibility for the crisis on Greek politicians and the Greek people (for example, Bickes et al. 2014; Lykou and Mitsikopoulou, 2017; Tseronis, 2015), whose irresponsible behaviour is due to their culture (Herzfeld 2011, Bickes Otten and Weymann 2014, Kaitatzi 2014, Kutter 2014, Tseronis 2015). The portrayal of Greece is often negative, while the creditors are viewed as the ones saving the Greek banks and imposing necessary austerity measures, which are expected to lead to the consolidation of the Greek economy (Mavroudeas & Paitaridis, 2014; Papatheodorou, 2014). Thus, they seem to represent the Greek crisis as a local, culturally conditioned specificity rather than as part of a systemic, global crisis.

Limited research has been conducted on alternative media, but the available studies suggest that the crisis is seen as systemic, rooted in the malfunctioning of the capitalist system and/or the implementation of neoliberal policies (Lekakis, 2017; Touri & Kostarella, 2016). Studies have mainly focused on Greek social media, while there is no research on how the Greek crisis is represented in the international alternative media, a gap which the present paper seeks to fill.

The third research hypothesis concerns the differences between the three election periods. 2015 was a politically dense period with major events, intense conflicts, and widespread protests. The political events were constant and the conditions varied considerably. Therefore, it is possible that the representations of social actors might differ to a lesser or greater extent in the three election periods.

Based on these observations, the research questions are the following:

1. Who are the most prominent social actors in the corpora and how are they represented in the mainstream and alternative media?
2. How do representations of prominent social actors differ in mainstream and alternative media?
3. How do representations of prominent social actors differ across the three election periods?
4. How does stance towards austerity affect representations of the other social actors in mainstream and alternative media?

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study examines media representations during a critical period in contemporary Greek history, marked by the economic crisis and the ensuing political events of 2015. Extensive research has been conducted on mainstream media, providing insights into

how dominant accounts, often aligned with entrenched interests, have framed the crisis and its resolution, but there is still a significant gap in understanding alternative media, especially international media. Despite the growing influence of alternative media in shaping public discourse, there has been a lack of research exploring their role in the context of the Greek crisis.

This study aims to address this gap, which is accomplished by compiling and analysing a large corpus of articles from blogs, allowing for extensive analysis and well-informed conclusions in an area where no previous research has been conducted. At the same time, it highlights dissenting perspectives, grassroots movements and voices that challenge conventional views. Beyond the specific context of the Greek crisis, this study can also contribute to our understanding of the media's role in shaping public discourse and political decision-making, and provide insights into the media's influence on societal perceptions and political processes.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework: Integrating Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL)**

As indicated in the previous subsections of this introduction, this thesis examines issues relating to power dynamics, the public discourses on key policy decisions, and the crucial role of the media in shaping, influencing and propagating these discourses. Thus, this study aptly employs a CDA theoretical framework to provide a well-rounded understanding of the representations of the Greek crisis in mainstream and alternative media during the crucial period of the 2015 elections and subsequent events. Critical Discourse Analysis is the primary theoretical lens, offering an insightful examination of the ideologies, and social implications embedded in media discourse. It enables the examination of how language constructs and perpetuates socio-political realities,

revealing hidden agendas and underlying ideologies (Fairclough, 1995, 2010; Van Dijk, 2001; Weiss & Wodak, 2007; Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

In addition to CDA, this study employs Corpus Linguistics, a methodology that uses computational tools to systematically analyse large corpora. The use of corpus linguistics has been crucial in conducting a large-scale analysis of a vast corpus and in avoiding the selective bias inherent in article selection, which has often been characterised as ‘cherry picking’ (Koller & Mautner, 2004, p. 225; Orpin, 2005, p. 38; Partington, 2004). Through the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis, we have at our disposal the high degree of detail and breadth of qualitative methods with the statistical reliability and generalisability of results of quantitative methods (McEnery & Wilson, 1996, p.77; Partington, 2006).

### **1.5 Methodology of the thesis**

This study adopts a research approach that synergises quantitative and qualitative methods, drawing on the analytical frameworks of critical discourse analysis and corpus linguistics. By integrating complementary methodologies, this research seeks to provide a detailed and multifaceted analysis of the representations of the Greek crisis in mainstream and alternative media during the critical period of the 2015 elections and subsequent events. Through the lens of CDA, this study examines the underlying power structures, ideologies and socio-political implications embedded in media discourse. At the same time, the use of CL techniques allows for a systematic analysis of linguistic patterns in the data, leading to a better understanding of how language constructs and shapes socio-political realities.

This interdisciplinary approach offers a data-driven exploration of representations of the Greek crisis. The aim is to uncover the underlying agendas of mainstream and

alternative media, as well as the broader socio-political implications embedded in language. Through this theoretical framework, the research aims to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how media representations shape and are shaped by the complex interplay of linguistic choices, power dynamics, and socio-political contexts.

## **1.6 Organization of the thesis**

This thesis is divided into 8 chapters, the first of which, **Chapter 1**, is the Introduction, which provides an overview of the rationale for the thesis, the theoretical framework, the design of the research and the organisation of the thesis.

**Chapter 2** is the Literature Review and is composed of three parts. The main aim of the first part is to describe the unique characteristics of the two types of media as explained in the existing academic literature. This involves a thorough examination of their individual characteristics, followed by an analysis of the areas in which these types of media overlap or differ. This process seeks to identify the underlying reasons for the different interpretations of the crisis and the different representations of social actors within the mainstream and alternative media spheres.

The second part is a review of existing studies that examine the economic crisis in Greece from its onset in 2009 to the 2015 elections. The aim is to establish a comprehensive framework that describes the different approaches used by the media to deal with the crisis. Furthermore, this section aims to highlight the differences between mainstream and alternative media, distinguishing between Greek and international perspectives.

The third part of this study involves a thorough analysis of the strengths and limitations of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL), as established in

the literature. This section explains why the combined approach of CDA and CL was adopted for the current investigation, drawing on relevant studies that have effectively employed this synergy. There is also a section referring to Halliday's transitivity theory and Van Leeuwen's representation of social actors framework, which are used in conjunction for the qualitative analysis of the data.

**Chapter 3**, “Methodology and Research Design” is a description and justification of the methodology, outlining the methods of data collection and the methods of data analysis, both quantitative and qualitative. It also includes a justification of the combined use of quantitative and qualitative methods and the benefits of this combination.

**Chapter 4**, the “Quantitative Analysis Results”, stands as a pivotal component of this thesis, elucidating the intricate relationship between media discourse and socio-political dynamics during three distinct electoral periods in Greece. By employing advanced corpus tools, this analysis extends beyond mere linguistic examination to uncover deeper ideological patterns and shifts within the media landscape. This methodological approach not only enriches our understanding of discourse in media but also demonstrates the transformative potential of corpus tools in handling extensive datasets that traditional analysis could not manage feasibly.

The chapter meticulously charts the evolution of media representations across different periods, identifying key thematic consistencies and divergences in the portrayal of political, economic, and national issues. Such insights are crucial for grasping the broader media influence on public perception and political outcomes during times of crisis. This analysis does not simply recount the frequencies and categories of words but investigates their strategic deployment within the media, offering a window into the

constructed narratives that shape public discourse and, consequently, policy and public opinion.

By contextualizing the quantitative data within broader socio-political frameworks, this chapter contributes significantly to research on media's role in shaping electoral politics and economic policies. It highlights the necessity of integrating robust analytical tools and interdisciplinary approaches to dissect the complex ways through which language and power interact within the media sphere.

**Chapter 5**, “Qualitative Analysis: Representations of Syriza/Tsipras”, presents the findings of the qualitative analysis on the cases of Syriza for the January and September subcorpus, and Tsipras for the July subcorpus, as the social actors selected for further analysis from the party-related category.

The Chapter first presents an overview of the representations of these social actors in all subcorpora, with an emphasis on the activated and subjected cases. Then the representations of the social actors in each period are presented separately. Starting with the January subcorpus, the findings from the activated cases of the newspaper corpus are presented separately for instances of the two main categories of activation, which in this case are activation as an actor in a material process and through possessivation. For each of these categories, we discuss the most frequent topics in the corpus and how Syriza is represented in the newspapers. Examples of cases are given and presented in tables to highlight their similarities. Finally, the findings from the activated cases of the January newspaper corpus are summarised.

The same procedure is followed with the Syriza cases of January blog corpus: they are analysed and presented, first the activated ones and then the subjected ones. The same



is repeated for the Tsipras cases in the July subcorpora and for the Syriza cases in the September subcorpora.

**Chapter 6**, “Qualitative Analysis: Representations of Austerity” presents a qualitative analysis of representations of austerity within the January, July, and September subcorpora. This chapter builds upon the preceding chapter by shifting the focus from political figures to the broader economic discourse. It examines how austerity is conceptualised and contested in both mainstream and alternative media. The analytical framework employed is similar to that used in Chapter 5, but with greater emphasis on the socio-economic dimensions of media representations.

The initial section of the chapter presents a synthesis of the portrayal of austerity across all time frames, with a particular focus on the prevalent themes and linguistic strategies employed to frame austerity measures. The analysis distinguishes between portrayals that either normalise or criticise austerity policies, thereby elucidating the ideological foundations of each perspective.

The analysis methodically presents the data from each subcorpus, beginning with how austerity is represented in the mainstream media during the January elections, moving through to the July referendum and concluding with the September elections. Each section details the instances where austerity is either foregrounded as a proactive economic strategy or critiqued for its social repercussions, providing insights into the editorial tendencies and ideological underpinnings of the media sources. The representations are supported by quantitative data and exemplified through selected text instances, facilitating a nuanced understanding of the discourse dynamics at play.

**Chapter 7**, “Qualitative Analysis: Representations of Greece / EU” is the joint presentation of the cases of Greece and the EU, in a briefer way than was done for the

cases of Syriza/Tsipras and Austerity. First, an overview is given of the representations in the newspaper and blog subcorpora for all periods. The January subcorpora are presented first, in turn the activated cases in the newspaper corpus and the subjected cases in the newspaper corpus, and then similarly for the blog corpus. This is repeated for the EU instances. The July and September cases are then presented in the same way.

**Chapter 8**, the Discussion and Conclusions serves as the culmination of this thesis, discussing and summarising the main findings. It begins by recapitulating the theoretical foundations and methodological approaches that have guided the research, followed by a detailed discussion of the findings in response to the posed research questions. This chapter describes how the stance towards austerity influenced the representations of key social actors across different media landscapes. It also outlines the contributions of the study, providing insights into the integration of Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics to explore ideological biases in media discourse. Furthermore, the Chapter discusses the limitations inherent in the study's scope and methodology, offering directions for future research to expand and build upon the findings presented. Lastly, the Chapter reflects on the broader implications of these findings, emphasizing the role of media in shaping public perception and policy during economic crises.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

The present study, as described in the introduction chapter, is a study of the representations of social actors related to the Greek crisis and the Greek elections of 2015 in mainstream and alternative media, combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics methodology. The literature review chapter consists of three parts: a) literature on mainstream and alternative media, b) literature on the economic crisis in Greece, as presented in the media, and c) literature on the combination of Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics methodology.

The aim of the first part is to outline the characteristics of the two types of media, as derived from the literature, and to discuss their points of convergence and divergence, in an attempt to explain why one would expect different explanations of the crisis and divergent representations of social actors from the mainstream and alternative media.

The second part is concerned with reporting on the studies which have been carried out on the issue of the economic crisis in Greece, since its beginning in 2009 until the time of the 2015 elections addressed in this study. The aim is to investigate the approaches the media had on the issue, and the differences between mainstream and alternative media, Greek and international, as well as to identify areas which have not been sufficiently researched.

The third part will focus on the role of CDA and CL in the study of media and political discourse, with the aim of explaining why this combination was chosen for this study and the ways in which it can be expected to prove beneficial for the purposes of the study.

## **2.2 Mainstream and Alternative Media**

When examining media representations of the Greek crisis, it is important to note the distinction between mainstream and alternative media, in order to investigate the varying perspectives, agendas, and voices that impact public discourse on socio-political issues. Therefore, to gain a broader comprehension of the representations of social actors within the Greek crisis discourse, this study makes a conscious decision to differentiate between mainstream and alternative media, based on the recognition of the distinct roles that these types of media play in shaping public perceptions and opinions. The approach acknowledges the multiplicity of voices within the media landscape and allows for a more refined exploration of the dynamics at play within each sphere.

To this end, the data in this study are articles posted on two types of online media, namely online versions of mainstream newspapers and news blogs, representing the broader categories of mainstream and alternative media.

Most mainstream newspapers have an online version, which is usually a free access one, and which contains either all or most of the articles of the printed version, while they are expected to add articles about breaking news after the printed version has been published. News blogs are usually created by journalists, but it is not uncommon for non-journalists to participate, and rather than being part of large corporations, they are in most cases small-scale ventures with limited profits, if any, at least in the beginning.

The data analysis findings reveal significant discrepancies in the representation of social actors between mainstream and alternative media, specifically newspapers and news blogs. Extensive research has been conducted in this area, covering a wide range of aspects and highlighting the many ways in which information exchange and

communication have evolved (for example, Atton, 1996, 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Downing, 2001; Couldry & Curran, 2003).

Throughout the 20th century, the media industry was dominated by very few corporations, especially in the wealthier regions of the world, such as Europe and the U.S. (Lievrouw, 2011). Until a few decades ago, the mainstream media, newspapers, magazines, television and radio, with their trained professional journalists, were the almost exclusive disseminators of news. In the last decades the concentration of media seems to be more extensive than ever and corporate media power stronger than ever (although they are also less trusted by the audience than in the past), yet it is also the case that new media are emerging constantly and they are increasingly used by networks to challenge the discourse of the mainstream media (Bennett, 2003; Bruns et al., 2012; Waltz, 2005). Although the majority of people still show a preference for mainstream media outlets, there is evidence that there is an audience shift of attention from mainstream media and an increasing reliance on alternative media (Wilson et al., 2011; Salaudeen & Onyechi, 2020).

It is indisputable that the emergence of the alternative media changed the map of the media drastically, and a great number of scholars have been investigating the impact of the new media on news reporting and mass communication, to determine its extent and its characteristics. The mainstream, corporate media and the alternative media differ in many aspects, for example as regards ownership, organizational practices, ideological influences, content, connection with social movements, or the audience they address. In certain of these aspects the differences are more rigid, and on some others the boundaries seem to be more fluid, indicating that probably a media spectrum (Kenix, 2011, p. 19) has emerged and not a divide, at least in some respects.

## 2.2.1 Mainstream Media

### 2.2.1.1 Ownership and content

Mainstream media are large-scale and either state-owned or part of big corporations. Ostertag (2006) describes the process of accumulation of media by fewer and fewer owners in the United States:

In 1983, when Ben Bagdikian published the first edition of *The Media Monopoly*, 50 corporations dominated the U.S. mass media, and the biggest media merger in history was a \$340 million deal. By 1987 those 50 corporations had shrunk to 29. By 1997 the 29 had shrunk to 10, one of which was created in the \$19 billion merger of Disney and ABC. Just three years later, the end of the century saw the 10 shrink to just 5 amid the \$350 billion merger of AOL and Time Warner, a deal more than a thousand times larger than ‘the biggest deal in history’ just seventeen years earlier (p. 16).

Several authors have linked this increasing concentration of media ownership to the consolidation of information control (Alleyne & Wagner, 1993; Bagdikian, 2000), which directly affects the democratic processes, since those who control the dissemination of information also control the predominant ideology of society (Grossberg, Wartella, & Whitney, 1998; Herman & Chomsky, 1988).

The content of media is generally linked to ownership (Bagdikian, 2000). However, it has also been suggested that the nature of the content is not merely a matter of who or how many the owners are, but it is the entire capitalistic framework that interconnects the institution of media into a larger hegemonic system that has the most powerful influence on content (McChesney, 1999), and therefore it is a systematic issue and not simply a media industry weakness. Thus, similar coverage across media outlets is

probably the result of a common acceptance of widespread capitalistic, free-market ideology (Christiansen & Barnartt, 1995).

An example of this is given by Croteau & Hoynes (2003), who point out that the press covers governmental inadequacies, but largely ignores the failures of economy. Criticising the governments creates a common belief that media outlets are objective, not controlled by governments, while they never question the economic forces behind societal structures, economic structures that benefit media conglomerates.

### **2.2.1.2 Organizational practices**

Corporate media have hierarchies and are staffed by professionals, while there is also a hierarchy in the relationship between the media and the audience (Couldry, 2001), in the sense that the mainstream media are strictly the source of information, and the audience are the receivers, their respective roles being exclusive.

Mass media function like businesses, with profits as their main objective, and their way of producing profit and accumulate capital is by selling media content, or by selling audiences to advertisers (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2015, p. 167). This means that they can be paid by the audience who, for example, buy a newspaper, or gain advertising revenue for giving the advertisers access to an audience, for example by printing advertisements or broadcasting commercials.

There is a trend for the global media to adopt corporate practices such as prioritizing profits for their shareholders over any notion of social responsibility (Bagdikian, 2000), and therefore they aim to maximise audiences through journalism that is conventional and formulaic (Armstrong, 1981; Duncombe, 1997; Kenix, 2011). Some researchers have remarked that mainstream media worldwide seem to be neglecting the quality and the range of their content (Bennett, 2003; Solomon, 2004). For the corporate media,

maximising profits is their most imperative goal, and therefore considerations such as wide circulation and geographic distribution are merely tools for maximizing profits, not ends in themselves (Ostertag, 2006, p. 2).

### **2.2.1.3 Ideology**

Mainstream media can construct leading social values, they play an essential role in maintaining the authority of the political system, and they establish what is normal and deviant by the way they portray people and ideas (Reese, 1990, p. 394). They can decide which issues will be foregrounded in the public arena, and they give priority “to the ideas of the main social actors such as the state, politicians, and private sector over the views of disfranchised minorities in society” (Bailey et al., 2007:16), while certain issues and events may be repressed. The ideological content they disseminate is not criticizing capitalist society but, on the contrary, affirming it, while critical voices and activists are marginalised; minorities are not simply neglected, but very frequently prejudice against them is advanced (Fuchs & Sandoval, 2015, p. 167). Even when journalists come into conflict with representatives of government and business, this is merely a reformist antagonism that does not threaten underlying hegemonic principles (Dreier, 1982; Parenti, 1986).

Hacket (1984) observes that the traditional view of news reporting assumes that "news can and ought to be objective, balanced and a reflection of social reality" (p. 251). Ostertag (2006) suggests that “objectivity” is the ideological rationale for corporate media, who claim to be unbiased and objective. In fact, there is a widely held belief that the information provided by the mainstream media are essentially “objective”, as traditional news outlets are “organised platforms where trained journalists provide



verified information whose sources are properly attributed” (Salaudeen & Onyechi, 2020, p. 13).

In reality, however, the notion of the journalist lacking a point of view emerged “as a necessary ideological underpinning of media oligopoly, the selling point for the idea that media control by the few is not inherently detrimental to democratic institutions or culture” (Ostertag, 2006, p. 3). He adds that the corporate media exert a type of censorship that is usually more subtle than the “blatant old-school censorship”, a type of censorship that “frames news, entertainment, and advertising so as to limit the range of options for social change to those that are consistent with corporate interests” (ibid.). For example, the stories which are more frequently censored, distorted, or ignored, are the stories of social movements that challenge corporate power; demonstrations of thousands may be totally ignored, or be presented as a spectacle (only showing violent scenes, for instance) with the substance of the movement’s concern being absent (Ostertag, 2006, p. 17). Human rights protests are frequently presented in terms of violence and not in terms of their cause (Chouliaraki & Vestergaard, p. 9) or they are even criminalised (Jiménez-Martínez, 2020).

Reese (1990) observes that mainstream media designate certain locations, such as the editorial pages, for the journalists to express their opinion, thus creating the illusion that all other news content is delivered in an “objective” manner, free of the journalist’s values, which in reality makes the mainstream reporting more effective ideologically, since it is presented as non-ideological (p. 392). Hackett (1984) maintains that the rules of impartiality in the media are an essential part of their ideological functioning as they disguise their ideological messages (p. 242).

The stance of all mainstream media is not necessarily the same in every topic. In fact, in certain topics there may be considerable differences depending on political leanings and affiliations. An example is provided by Abadi, d'Haenens, and Koeman (2016), who examine the stance of mainstream newspapers concerning the integration debate in Germany, i.e. whether Muslims living in the country should fully embrace the values of German society or maintain their own culture and be accepted as they are. The study's findings indicate that right-leaning newspapers tend to portray Muslims as a homogeneous group rather than as individuals more frequently than left or centre-leaning newspapers, and often associate them with problems. These problems are often attributed to their culture, which is described as radically different from the German culture. In another study of immigration coverage in the German mainstream media, the results indicate that many media articles increase citizens' concerns, but in others there are frames that reduce people's concerns about immigration (Erhard, Heiberger, & Windzio, 2021). This divergence could be explained by the fact that the "integration or multiculturalism" debate is one on which there are different views by right-wing or populist parties on the one hand, and left-wing or centre parties on the other (Chaika, Sharmanova, Maliuga, & Savytska, 2022).

In other, more central issues, issues which are more closely related to the economic foundations of the capitalist system, the stance is far more homogeneous, as is in the case with the issue of the economic crisis in Greece, where the stance does not differ substantially across different mainstream media (Hadjimichalis, 2018; Liakos & Kouki, 2015; Tracy, 2012). Newspapers owned by political parties, such as the Syriza party's *Avgi* and the Greek Communist Party's *Rizospastis*, are exceptions to this observation. Although these two newspapers receive state subsidies and function like mainstream media in many respects, they are not subject to government intervention like other state-

subsidised newspapers (Papathanassopoulos, 2013, p.243) and naturally adopt the party's perspective.

### **2.2.2 Alternative Media**

Alternative media are a “sprawling domain” which is “scrambling the traditional boundaries between journalism and non-journalism” (Dahlgren, 2013, p. 123). The term encompasses a broad variety of new forms of communication and of exchanging information. The emergence of various new types of media is, to a great extent, due to the fact that the tools for creating media are now more accessible and inexpensive than they ever were. Ironically, traditional mass media have become more expensive than ever to maintain, and it has also become more difficult than ever for the average person to make their voice heard through them (Waltz, 2006, p.121), which is another reason for the proliferation of the new forms of media.

These new forms of media have transformed the media landscape, creating substantial opportunities for individuals to actively engage in information dissemination and contribute to the construction of a dynamic and evolving media environment. However, the impact may not be as significant as initially expected. As Papacharissi (2002) predicted, while the internet and related technologies have established a new space for political conversation, their ability to transform this space into a true public sphere is uncertain. She suggests that these technologies are likely to adapt to existing political and cultural norms rather than creating entirely new ones. This thesis demonstrates that alternative media provide a different perspective on events and have potentially influenced them, but not in a radical or transformative way.

There is a broad variety of definitions of alternative media, as many attempts have been made to outline the characteristics that such media should possess. Atton (2002) quotes

the three elements of alternative publications proposed by the Royal Commission of the Press (1977), which are a) dealing with the opinions of small minorities, b) expressing hostile attitudes to “widely-held beliefs”, and c) dealing with subjects not given regular coverage by other publications. He quotes (2002, p.13) the prerequisites set by the editors of *Alternatives in Print* (one of the first bibliographical reference works in the field of alternative media), who maintain that an edition may be thought of as alternative if at least one of the following is true: a) it is non-commercial, b) it focuses on social responsibility, and c) it defines itself as alternative (*Alternatives in Print*, 1980, p.vii). He also claims that alternative media can only be grounded in the cultural form of independent media outlets (2004). In Atkinson’s (2006) definition, alternative media are “any media that are produced by non-commercial sources and attempt to transform existing social roles and routines by critiquing and challenging power structures” (p. 252). In general terms, their contribution is that they can bring about shifts in media power, by providing new ways of consuming, producing and distributing media (Couldry, 2001) and by producing counter-hegemonic representations (Jeppesen, 2016, p. 55).

Undeniably, the characteristics of the alternative media cannot simply be produced and listed by a single, straightforward approach, as they are characterized by diversity and contingency. There are many approaches to define them and many aspects to be considered. The differences in the definitions depend to a certain extent on which aspect is emphasized, i.e. ownership, organizational practices, ideological influences, content, connection with social movements, the audience they address, etc.

#### **2.2.2.1 Audience / Content**

Alternative media have been defined as the media challenging “actual concentrations of media power, whatever form these concentrations may take in different locations” (Couldry & Curran, 2003, p. 7). They accomplish that by “creating a platform for those marginalized by mainstream media, those who are socially, culturally and politically excluded” (Downum & Coyer, 2007, p. 5), by expressing a different point of view than is usually expressed, by catering to communities that are usually neglected, by advocating social change (Waltz, 2005, p.2). Traber (1985, p.2) argues that the news values of the alternative media are quite different from the ones of the mass media, as the former introduce alternative social actors, such as the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized, which are neglected by the latter.

In terms of content, some scholars suggest that alternative media must have leftist social justice goals (Fuchs, 2010; Jeppesen, Kruzynski, Lakoff, & Sarrasin, 2014), while others argue that right-wing media can be alternative too (Pajnik & Downing, 2008; Atton, 2006). In any case, it is evident that very frequently, especially regarding user-generated content (UGC), i.e. digital material developed by lay users and not professional journalists, controversial issues are addressed from diverse perspectives that can differ from those of mainstream news (Benkler, 2006; Kim, 2015). Apart from providing the audience with diverse perspectives, the user-generated news content sometimes provides ‘a voice to a public, which is usually locked out of direct participation in traditional journalism’ (Bruns, 2005, p.76).

#### **2.2.2.2 Organizational practices**

Albert (1997), in an article in *Z* magazine, an alternative publication he founded, stresses that being alternative cannot simply entail a differentiation in content, or addressing a non-mainstream content, but it also depends on the way an institution is

organized and on the way it works. He proposes a set of criteria, regarding salaries and conditions of work which should be adopted by all alternative media: staff not hierarchically organized and equally contributing to decision making, no gender or racial discrimination, respect for the audience, support for other alternative projects.

Regarding the organizational practices, Atton (2002), in his list of attributes that alternative media ought to possess, includes de-professionalized organizational norms and roles, horizontal communication patterns and independent distribution practices. He also comments on the dimensions relevant to economics and organization that alternative media:

“Emphasize structural imperatives within which alternative journalism takes place that are quite at odds with the market-driven institutions of the mass media. They are radical in the sense that they are opposed to hierarchical, elite-centred notions of journalism as a business – this is an ideology that holds that only through more egalitarian, inclusive media organizations is it possible to even think about a socially responsible journalism”. (p.268).

Scholars such as Atton (2002) and Downing (2001) emphasise the importance of horizontal organizational forms of media production, which they consider an indispensable feature of alternative media, equally important as the content. Langlois and Dubois (2005) consider the organizational practices even more important than the content, asserting that “true alternative discourses can only be fostered through a media organization that remains open, transparent, and non-hierarchical. For that reason, autonomous media move beyond the issues of content and into those of organization, participation, and empowerment” (Langlois & Dubois, 2005, p.9). Fuchs (2010) disputes the centrality of organizational practices and argues that a critical anti-capitalist message is far more important.

### **2.2.2.3 Connection with movements**

In addition to the main features identified above, there is an aspect of the alternative media which is linked to activist action, in the sense that they provide information that could lead to the people taking action of some sort (Atton, 2002; Schuman, 1982). The term “citizen media” has been employed to emphasise the link with citizenship practice and empowerment, transforming the audience into active citizens (Rodriguez, 2001). Due to Web 2.0 developments, news can reach the audience almost at the time of happening, and media consumers, equipped with internet-connected devices, can themselves become creators of media content, which is disseminated through the platforms of digital media (Bowman and Willis, 2003; Dare, 2011). In addition, alternative media are often viewed as participatory media, an approach which suggests that “democratic media potentials can be realized by opening up access to media production” (Sandoval & Fuchs, 2009). Participatory media are “an agent for social change, culture development and democratization” (Servaes, 1999, p. 269), and advocate social change through politicized and in-depth social commentary (Armstrong, 1981; Duncombe, 1997; Kenix, 2011),

Downing (2001) adopts the term “radical” media, stressing the role of the new media in social emancipation. O’ Sullivan (1994, p.10) claims that this role is of primary importance for alternative media, claiming that they are radical as they reject established politics and advocate change in society, or at least the critical reassessment of traditional societal organization. For other researchers, this term is considered rather restrictive, as it suggests that the objective of the new media projects is social change, and even more revolutionary change (Atton 2002), which might be the case for some but certainly not all of this category of media.

“Activist media” is another term used in the literature for the media that are attempting to play a role in encouraging the audience to get involved in social change (Waltz, 2005,

p. 3). The term “activist” cannot be used interchangeably with “alternative” as not all alternative media aim to inspire their audience to act. Neither are activist media necessarily alternative. An example of a mainstream activist organization is the website Charity Today, established in the UK in 2009 by Lee Rayment “to give charities, fundraisers and supporters a free national platform in which to promote their charitable activities”.

#### **2.2.2.4 Ideological influences**

Alternative media are often defined as being opposed ideologically to mainstream media, a “range of media projects, interventions and networks that work against, or seek to develop different forms of, the dominant, expected (and broadly accepted) ways of ‘doing’ media” (Atton, 2004a, p. viii) while at the same time aiming at promoting ideas, not profits (Ostertag, 2006, p.3). There are various types of media for which a variety of different terms can be used; as Atton (2007) indicates, these terms could include alternative journalism, citizen journalism, citizen’s media, community media, democratic media, emancipatory media, radical media, social movement media etc. (p.18).

Jeppesen (2016) asserts that, although the types of media which can be labelled with one of these terms are usually assumed to be equivalent variations of the general category “alternative media”, their ideological influences and their aims are different to such an extent that an inventory of different terms is required to categorise them. Jeppesen’s categorization identifies four main types of alternative media: (a) DIY media and culture, b) Community and Citizen Media, c) Critical Media and d) Autonomous and Radical Media. DIY media emphasize empowerment through subcultural identity and belonging, and are concerned with the self-representation of the individuals. An



example of DIY media are “zines”, small-circulation, self-published magazines concerning subcultures, such as the punk lifestyle subculture. Community and Citizen Media, on the other hand, are essentially concerned with the self-representation of marginalized, oppressed communities. Their aim is to create a space for the practice of citizenship, where citizens are encouraged to contribute and actively represent the community’s interests, and are thus mostly locally oriented. Critical media has emerged out of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, and are essentially anti-capitalist and anti-hegemonic. They aim at offering publicity to anti-capitalist and anti-corporate movements, and therefore are preferably professional and large scale, so as to reach larger audiences. Theories of autonomous and radical media emerge out of the social anarchist and anti-authoritarian theoretical fields. They are concerned with the self-representation of movements and anti-oppression politics.

The blogs selected for this corpus were chosen primarily based on their popularity rather than specific characteristics, making it challenging to place them within a particular subcategory of alternative media. Therefore, the findings derived from these blogs offer insights into alternative media in a broader sense, transcending categorisations and encompassing a diverse range of perspectives and discourses within this sphere. This approach ensures that the analysis remains objective, comprehensible, and representative of the multifaceted nature of alternative media, thereby enriching the overall understanding of media representations surrounding the Greek crisis.

### **2.2.3 Points of convergence and Divergence Between Mainstream and Alternative Media**

Today, most of the criteria which must be fulfilled in order for media to be categorized as alternative, are increasingly met, at least partially, by a number of mainstream media.

Thus, we cannot perceive the division of media into mainstream and alternative as an absolute one, but more as a continuum, or, as Kenix describes the process which is unfolding is that “the converging media spectrum is conflating what once was considered to be two separate media spheres” (2011, p.19). This is mostly true for the liberal West, since there have been studies which show that in more authoritarian regimes in the Middle East the distinction remains firm (Wu, 2021).

Regarding the pressures of commercialism on corporate mainstream media, there has been extensive research. Although the issue of these pressures on alternative media has not received much attention (Barnouw and Aufderheide, 1997; McChesney, 1999), the impact of the need to finance the venture and address wider audiences does exist in alternative media as well (Hamilton, 2000). Hamilton suggests that in order for a medium to reach wider audience and increase its influence, capital is required, and the readily available source is advertising. Nevertheless, one cannot attract advertisers without conforming at least partially to the form and professionalization levels of mainstream media. This need affects a medium's openness to contributions from the public, as material produced by non-professional journalists may not be of high quality. Producing high-quality articles requires time, energy, and training that only professional journalists possess. This presents a challenge for alternative media's goal of breaking down the barrier between journalists and the public, as receiving advertising revenue conflicts with publishing user-generated content (Hamilton, 2000, p.361).

A case study (Gibbs, 2003) on an alternative Hawaiian newspaper (the *Honolulu Weekly*) highlights the negative consequences that not making adequate profit has on wages and working conditions of the employees. The researcher interviews the employees and describes a situation where the majority of the employees cannot support themselves and their families financially through their work without additional

income and are frequently forced to seek other employment. The vast majority of the staff are freelancers, who do not receive satisfactory payment for their contributions, which naturally affects the quality of their work, as they cannot present stories that require a lot of research. Additionally, the newspaper offices are cramped, not adequately equipped and are situated in a high-crime area. The employees report that they choose to work there because of the “ideal of alternative papers” (p.592), that is they feel that their work makes a positive contribution to society. Regarding the profit-seeking of the specific alternative newspaper, the researcher comments that the reality of the *Honolulu Weekly* is that the “alternative” label at best only thinly disguises its deep roots in capitalist modes of production. At worst, it is used to justify the hyper-exploitation of its workers in the pursuit of matching upscale readers with niche-market products (p.603).

This conclusion undeniably concerns the specific alternative newspaper, which was also the venture of a businessperson who admits to having no previous experience with or special interest in journalism, and merely detected a niche for doing business in her city, aiming primarily at making profit (Gibbs, 2003, p.588). Although there are most likely more alternative media which have been created on the same basis, there is no evidence that this is standard practice. However, it seems that even for alternative media which are created by people aspiring to promote social justice and progress, the pursuit of profit is an important aspect of their work, should they be concerned with fair wages and high-quality work.

Another distinction which has been claimed to exist between the two types of media is that mainstream media tend to reproduce “pack journalism” content and alternative media may more frequently contain in-depth social analyses. “Pack journalism” refers to the practice of large groups of reporters from different media outlets working

together to cover the same story, using the same sources and gathering in the same place to get a statement from a source (Bovard, 2007; Ross, 1998). However, this is not always the case, this distinction is not absolute, since there are mainstream media which publish in-depth analyses, while there are also alternative media which simply reproduce news reports (Kenix, 2011, p.19).

The mainstream media is often accused of excluding marginalized groups (Dowmunt & Coyer, 2007). However, this trend is changing as mainstream and alternative media are starting to converge in this respect too, and marginalization is no longer an absolute rule. Kenix (2011) observes that mainstream media, in their effort to attract more audiences by addressing all segments of society, and thus gain more advertising revenue, they tend to “allow spaces for marginalized groups to enter into more intimate, communal exchanges that now operate within mainstream media” (2011, p.100).

Even user-generated content, which used to be published only by alternative media, is in actual fact becoming a practice adopted by certain mainstream media as well. Harrison (2010) conducted an observational study on how the BBC approaches the use of UGC and suggested that there are a number of reasons for this choice:

“public service broadcaster obligations toward inclusivity and mass reach; a means to combat viewer disengagement with mainstream news; a response to increasing competition for audiences; anticipation of the constantly changing skill sets of audiences and the increasing and changing capacities and forms of ICT and, the editorial ability of the BBC to make UGC fit its own traditional news values” (p.243).

Therefore, the researcher does not see the adoption of this practice as a fundamental shift in the values of mainstream media, but rather as an attempt to integrate

advancements by making the necessary adjustments. In a similar study on the use of UGC by three major media outlets, namely BBC, CNN, France 24 and Al Jazeera, Cervi (2019) concludes that, with the exception of France 24, the role for the audience is that of the supplier of raw material, without any guarantee and no explanation about its use, and therefore it is not essentially a participatory experience.

#### **2.2.4 Points of Divergence Significant for the Study**

It is evident that the distinction between mainstream and alternative media entails a degree of ambiguity, and that there is no unanimity among scholars as to the criteria that need to be fulfilled for media to be placed in the category of alternative. However, there are certain points of divergence which seem to carry more significance, especially for the purposes of this study.

The first is the observation that the corporate-owned mainstream media seem to share the same viewpoint regarding the fundamental social and economic structures of society and seem to offer unconditional support to the capitalist system (McChesney, 1999; Christiansen and Barnartt, 1995). This leads to the majority of mainstream media having little or no different outlook on issues which are of paramount importance for economic leaders (Croteau and Hoynes, 2003). As shown in the following section of this literature review, articles published in mainstream media on the issue of the economic crisis in Greece expressed surprisingly similar views, even though they are newspapers with varied political affiliations.

The second point is the notion of objectivity. The mainstream media claim to report news objectively, maintaining an impartial outlook, as if the complete lack of bias were possible (Ostertag, 2006; Salaudeen & Onyechi, 2020). While asserting their lack of ideological stance, the mainstream media adopt the leading social and economic values

of the capitalist society, and thus become “one of the elements that disseminates the axiomatic of capitalism” (Bortolini, Grisci, & de Costa, 2020, p. 142). Alternative media, however, often claim to be on the side of the oppressed and to give a voice to marginalised groups, and unlike traditional media, do not claim to be objective (Atton, 2002; Dowmunt & Coyer, 2007). As the economic crisis in Greece was essentially a conflict between the European institutions who wished not to deviate from their firm fiscal policies and the Greek people who were suffering the consequences, the coverage of the crisis by the two types of media is especially interesting to look into.

The tendency of alternative media to be linked with social movements and encourage social action, especially at a local level, is also an aspect which is relevant to this study (Atton 2002, Schuman 1982). During the year that is examined (that is 2015), there was an abundance of movements in Greece, as people were forming collectives or used previously existing ones to protest against the austerity measures, to organize the resistance to them (e.g. I don't Pay movement, where people refused to pay certain taxes), or to counteract the consequences of austerity to the people - such as self-organised soup kitchens or outpatient clinics (Galis and Neumayer, 2016). These protests and movements were covered by alternative media, as demonstrated in the analysis chapters, and much less by mainstream ones, indicating that the alternative media are not solely interested in local social action.

Even though the boundaries between mainstream and alternative may not always seem well defined, in certain ways they remain divergent, especially in the way they cover issues of paramount importance for the economic elites, as was the implementation of austerity policies in Greece, which will be addressed in the following section of this literature review.

## **2.3 Coverage of the Economic Crisis in Greece and Europe in the Media**

The economic crisis in Greece has been extensively covered by mainstream and alternative, Greek and international media. It seems that it was an issue of great importance, not only for Europe but outside of it as well. There is a wealth of research on mainstream media coverage, but to a much lesser extent on coverage by alternative media, especially international ones.

### **2.3.1 Coverage of the Economic Crisis in Greece and Europe in the Mainstream Media**

#### **2.3.1.1 International mainstream media**

In the mainstream international media, from the onset of the crisis in 2009 until 2015 - the year of the elections we are focusing on in this study - there were certain tendencies which were prevalent. Such tendencies were the depiction of Greece - and to a lesser extent that of other weak economies, such as Italy and Spain (see for example Bickes, Otten & Weymann, 2014; Gomez-O'Cadiz, 2014 ) - in a negative light and as responsible for the state of their economy; the depiction of other European peoples as the victims of Greece's (and sometimes Italy's and Spain's) irresponsible spending; the references to the risk of the whole Europe being "contaminated" by the weak economies; the assumption that the Greek debt is unsustainable and Greece should probably be "expelled" from the Eurozone.

There is an abundance of studies on the coverage of the crisis by the international mainstream media, and many on the coverage of the "Greek case" more specifically; the findings are in broad terms converging. The findings of the studies concerning the Greek mainstream media are comparable to those of the studies concerning the international mainstream media, although different aspects are stressed. There are

respectively fewer studies in the alternative media. Nevertheless, the studies which have been conducted show that the types of representations which are prominent in the mainstream media are not prevalent in the alternative media.

A very frequent assumption that various studies have detected in the mainstream media is that the crisis is not systemic, the causes do not lie with the economic system or even the structure or malfunction of the EU or the Eurozone, but are mainly due to cultural characteristics of the peoples of certain countries, most of all Greece. Therefore, there are recurrent references to a “Greek culture”, or in certain cases a “Southern European culture” that is responsible for the poor performance in the field of economy (Herzfeld, 2011; Bickeset al., 2014; Kaitatzi, 2014; Kutter, 2014; Tseronis, 2015).

A very characteristic example of this tendency in the mainstream media coverage of the crisis in Greece is shown in Tseronis (2015); it is a study of certain front covers of two German news magazines, namely *Focus* and *Der Spiegel*, from the period 2010-2011, which referred to the “Greek crisis”. Both magazines are skeptical, to say the least, about whether Greece should continue being a member of the Eurozone. *Focus*, directly blames the Greek people – visualized as a photoshopped Venus of Milo – for the crisis, while *Der Spiegel* presents Greece as the location of the crisis without necessarily blaming its people, simply stating that Greece is a weak economy with an accumulated debt that cannot be reversed, so it should not be participating in a strong currency. Nevertheless, regardless of whether the Greek people are directly blamed or not, their common deduction is that Greece poses a threat for the future of the Eurozone and should be expelled.

The stance of the two German magazines is not a rare occurrence. In fact, the construction of a negative image of Greece was systematic in the international, and



especially the European, media. It seems that the media panic about the “Greek case” enhanced the frustration and resentment of the public in other European countries at the dire financial situation of Greece and the “help” required by other countries (Kutter, 2014; Herzfeld, 2011; Tzogopoulos, 2013). Kaitatzi (2014) argues that “representations of the Greek crisis constitute particular cases of an institutional ‘intra-European racism’” (p.35). She adds that the German tabloid media, during the economic crisis in Greece, had actually launched a campaign against the Greek people, where “hard facts were missing but negative adjectives prevailed: ‘lazy,’ ‘corrupt,’ ‘profligate,’ ‘untrustworthy.’” (p.33). The emphasis on the role of Greek culture as the main factor which triggered the Greek crisis, is also shown in Bickes et al. (2014), who examine an article of Focus magazine. The researchers point out that through metaphors of blooming and withering, the author claims that the Greek culture has constantly been declining since the ancient era, and the present state of the Greek culture is what caused the economic crisis (p.425). Thus, the author of the article not only blamed the Greek culture for the bad economic state, but also attempted to give a historical explanation for the alleged cultural decline.

Similarly, Antoniadis (2012) analysed the articles on Greece from the years 2009-2011 in broadsheets from 11 countries, inside and outside Europe, and detected a negative stance towards Greece in the majority of them. Kutter (2014) investigated editorials from German financial newspapers, subjecting them to a critical discourse analysis that combined the analysis of content, argumentation and discourse strategies. The findings suggest that the German financial press contributed substantially to negative stereotyping and a sentiment of resentment. She claims that “the scandalization of the Greek crisis and the notion of crisis it ‘catalysed’ helped to forge a specific approach to crisis management and the reform of the European Economic

and Monetary Union” (p.447) – an approach which essentially entailed fiscal consolidation to be achieved through strict austerity policies and neoliberal restructuring, supervised by the EU and enforced with credit conditionality.

The notion that there is a connection between the financial crisis and cultural characteristics of certain people was of course not an invention of the media, but it was widely asserted by politicians and financial analysts. Yet, there is a widely accepted argument among researchers that the mainstream media played a major role in the dissemination of stereotypes which attributed the root of the crisis to cultural characteristics of the Greeks (Liakos & Kouki, 2015; Katsinas, 2019), with the aim of legitimizing the economic policies imposed on Greece, and avoiding the construal of the crisis as systemic (Hadjimichalis, 2018).

In fact, many scholars claim that the mainstream media are directly expressing the views of the economic elites. Mylonas (2012), for instance, argues that the mass media, along with the political and economic elites, constructed the hegemonic naturalization of the crisis, and, as far as Greece is concerned, they positioned the country as “a scapegoat and as a laboratory where political strategies of capitalist restructuring of the EU are performed” (p.646). Mylonas (2012) investigated the headlines concerning the crisis in the German popular daily newspaper Bild-Zeitung and identified five broad categories that organize the meaning making of the euro crisis and Greece’s position in it. These categories were: 1) the economic one (the imperative of austerity policies); 2) the eschatological-drama frame (catastrophic crisis scenarios); 3) the “narcissist” frame (stressing the function of loans as “help” and presenting Germans as “victims”); 4) the culturalist frame (Greece as a “natural wonder”, blaming Greeks for the crisis); and 5) the spiteful frame (Bild speaks as a representative of German tax payers, expressing fury and anger) (p.657).

Bickes et al. (2014) discuss the crucial role the media played in the period 2010-2012 in shaping the public's negative opinion of the countries of south Europe, and especially Greece (p.424). In their study they analyse the metaphorical language in the news coverage of the European financial crisis in three comparable international news magazines, that is *Spiegel* (Germany), *The Economist* (UK) and *Time* (USA). Their research concluded that in all three magazines metaphors of destruction and disease were particularly frequent. In addition, the indebted countries are presented as weak, or sometimes as pupils in a teaching scenario (the European policy), while the strong economies of the Eurozone are presented as rescuers, or teachers in the teaching scenario, and the crisis itself was presented as natural disaster. In all three magazines, Spain is depicted as being in a better state than Italy, and Greece as the worst of all. However, there is a difference among them as to how harsh they are towards the weak economies. *Spiegel* is, as the majority of the German media, creating fear to the readers about the threat the "lazy" Greeks present for the stability of eurozone. The metaphorical language in the *Economist*, on the other hand, shows a "persistent sceptical attitude towards the single currency" and questions the principles of the European Union in general, rather than those of a single country – which cannot be completely unrelated to the fact that the UK was already considering the possibility of Brexit. The *Time* uses mostly metaphors of game and war, indicating that the authors see the financial crisis in Europe from a distance, describing the events but not considering them to be an immediate threat for the US.

The use of metaphors as Bickes et al. (2014) describe it, provides hints as to the measures which are required to solve the problem, since the European countries are divided into weak pupils and strong teachers and rescuers, and the situation is characterized as grave as disease and destruction. Similar conclusions are found in

Arrese (2015), who conducted a study about the use of conceptual metaphors (based on Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) in four major Spanish newspapers, on the topic of the Eurozone crisis. The findings can be summarized as following: a) expressions of nature and disease are dominant, and b) the same conceptual metaphors are used in all four newspapers, despite their diverse ideological nature. Arrese (2015, p.31) points out that “the fact that the prevailing metaphorical frames, disease and nature, assume an understanding of the crisis as something quite uncontrollable, not easily managed by human intervention alone” and adds that the choice of these conceptual metaphors suggests that the solutions require technical answers (like medical problems) or urgent measures (like natural disasters).

In reference to Greece, the fear of “contagion” from the Greek “terminal” financial situation is reflected through the use of conceptual frames by the Spanish newspapers under study. Regarding the uniformity in the use of metaphors, Arrese and Vara (2015) draw the conclusion that there is a common view of the euro crisis, despite their ideological divergence, and that this is a contribution to the “debate about the extent to which the media coverage of economic issues tends to produce uniform thinking, interpretations dominated by technical arguments, and institutional and elitist explanations of current events”.

Similar were the findings of Joris, d’Haenens and Van Goro (2014), who conducted a study on the coverage of the euro crisis in Flemish and Dutch mainstream newspapers, from the point of view of framing. The researchers adopt the definition of framing by Entman (1993), according to whom to frame means to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating context, in such a way to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (p.52). The most frequent frame in the study was

war (the euro crisis as a battle between actors), followed by disease (the crisis is caused by an illness), natural disaster (the crisis causes by an unexpected and unpredictable event), construction (the design and the foundations of the euro were the cause) and game (a fairly friendly contest between players) (Joris et al., p. 610). The results were similar in all three types of mainstream newspapers analysed, i.e. quality, popular and financial (ibid., p. 611)

An important conclusion drawn from these studies is that their findings suggest that the media, in the discussion of the crisis, do not take a distance from the analyses of experts and economic agents, and do not attempt to have their own interpretations, thus making elite political and financial institutions dominant in the discussion at the expense of the views of common people (Arrese and Vara, 2015).

This hypothesis is also confirmed in Mercille (2014), who conducted research on the mainstream media's coverage of the "housing bubble" in Ireland (a precursor of the 2008 economic crisis) which burst in 2007 and led the country to a grave economic crisis. Mercille argues that the mainstream news organisations "largely sustained the bubble until the property market collapsed" (p.282). He attributes this stance to a series of reasons, i.e. "(1) news organisations have multiple links with the political and corporate establishment, of which they are part, thus sharing similar interests and viewpoints; (2) just like elite circles, they hold a neoliberal ideology, dominant during the boom years; (3) they feel pressures from advertisers, in particular, real estate companies; and (4) they rely heavily on 'experts' from elite institutions in reporting events" (ibid.). These reasons account for the willingness of the mainstream media to adopt views consistent with the ones of the European elites.

Therefore, in the case of Greece, the construction of the narrative of a “Greek case”, a description of the particularities of the country, which make the country’s situation exceptional, and required immediate action, was likely to be aiming at justifying the course of action taken, i.e. the intervention of the troika and the imposition of harsh austerity measures through the implementation of the memoranda.

This reasoning is illustrated in Mavroudeas and Paitaridis (2014), who claim that the need to justify this course of action was the cause for the rush to provide explanations (along with the need to account for the previous’ years reports which presented Greece as a fast-growing economy in the EU) (p.9). They argue that the mainstream explanations of the crisis in Greece fall in three categories. The first is the “Greek disease” explanation, according to which the crisis was due to the fact that Greece is a special type of economy, with persistent fiscal deficits accumulated by low productivity, high wages and a big public sector (accounted for with the “lazy South” narrative). The authors also stress the role of the media (both Greek and international) in making this view widely acknowledged (p.12). The second explanation, which the authors characterize as broadly Anglo-Saxon, recognizes that there is truth in the fiscal profligacy argument, but at the same time sees fundamental flaws in the structure of the EMU, which are mainly to blame. The third explanation is the ‘middle-of-the-road’ one, according to which the “Greek disease” arguments are accurate, but the situation is exacerbated by the EMU’s structural flaws.

Along the same lines, Papatheodorou (2014) suggests that it was due to the need to strengthen neoliberal perspectives that the crisis was not presented as a global problem, but as the problem of one country whose people were held accountable. “Under the mainstream hypothesis of moral hazard, Greeks had to be penalised. With the large support of the media and despite the lack of any empirical plausibility, these views were

widely reproduced and dominated public debate and official rhetoric in Greece and abroad, contributing in legitimising austerity and stabilisation measures that were implemented as the remedy to reduce the huge public debt, and to cure economic crisis”. (p.180).

This practice was to an extent adopted in relation to other Southern European countries as well. Hatzimihalis (2018) claims that the political leaders, both domestic and European, attempt to create a narrative where the economic situation in Southern European countries is due to their own inefficiencies and the people’s “tricks to fool the State”. He argues that the mainstream media popularized these views and spread them far and wide and thus “the revival of old prejudices paved the way for persuading political audiences in Europe that austerity policies were what Southern people deserved and what should be used by central-northern countries to discipline them” (p.4). Hatzimihalis also points out that there was an actual mainstream media campaign against Southern Europe, launched in 2010 to prepare the ground for EU/ECB /IMF intervention; the campaign was based on traditional stereotypes, with a massive number of articles published every week, presenting Southern Europeans as lazy and irresponsible in their spending, as opposed to the hard working and sensible Northerners.

The “campaign” preparing the imposition of austerity seems to have been spreading outside the borders of the EU. Tracy (2012) examined the representation of the economic crisis in Greece by US mainstream media (i.e. two national newsweeklies, and three broadcast television networks), during the first period of this crisis, from December 2009 to July 2010, and pointed out that they attributed the blame to alleged personality flaws and lack of ability on the part of the Greek nation and its people, while simultaneously designating austerity as the only plausible solution. Tracy points out

that “the Greek crisis was presented through specific episodic frames that sequentially present a problem – “Greek Contagion,” a cause – “Incorrigible Greeks,” and a solution – “Austerity” (p.517). Tracy claims that the media play a role in the continuation and severity of crises, as they mislead the public to focus their attention on surface phenomena (such as cultural caricatures) and not on the structural causes, and they reproduce “expert” rationales that only aim to legitimize and perpetuate neoliberal formulas of financial sabotage (p.526).

During the years of the crisis there were multiple national elections in Greece, and the coverage of the elections was essentially intertwined with questions of management of the crisis and EU membership, while not only Greek politicians, but also EU officials were central in the discussion. Lampropoulou (2014) examines the representation of the dual national elections in Greece, which took place in May and June 2012, in a prominent British broadsheet, i.e. *The Guardian / The Observer*. She focuses on speech representation (traditionally termed as reported speech), and finds that the majority of voices represented are those of the EU elites (almost half of the cases), while the Greek politicians are represented at around 25% of the times, and the Greek people are definitely neglected, being represented as little as 6.5% of the times. What is more, in more than half of their speech representation instances, the EU elites “warn or urge Greece to stick to its deals” (p.475). Lampropoulou concludes that the analysis of the speech representation instances leads to an interpretation of the elections through a polarised image of the crisis (p.480).

Many researchers have found comparable results regardless of the political leanings of the media under investigation. An exception to this is Mitsikopoulou and Lykou (2015) whose data are articles from two British political magazines, i.e. *The Spectator* and *The New Statesman*. They conducted a study drawing upon systemic functional linguistics,



and arrived at the conclusion that the two magazines have divergent views on the European crisis. More specifically, *the Spectator* adopts a “local” view of the crisis, focusing on how the UK is affected by it, neglecting to make any reference to causes and its systemic effects; moreover, they consider the crisis to be exclusively economic, failing to notice its political and social ramifications. By contrast, the *New Statesman*, places the crisis in its global socioeconomic context, and addresses both the economic and the political aspects of it. The results are not at all surprising, given the fact that the *New Statesman* is not an average centre-left magazine; its socialist history, the influential personalities who have been involved in it, as well as its almost exclusively leftist readership, are characteristics that greatly differentiate it from common centre-left mainstream media, although we could not claim that it can be classified in the alternative media.

It is obvious that researchers agree that there has been a systematic attempt on the part of the international mainstream media to interpret the Greek crisis as a local anomaly, largely due to the weaknesses of the Greek economy and the cultural characteristics of the Greek people, and to avoid discussing both the shortcomings of the capitalist system and the inherent problems of EU policies. Therefore, the strict fiscal reforms and austerity policies imposed by the EU are portrayed as the only solution to the “Greek problem”, while the consequences of these policies on the people of Greece are ignored as irrelevant. The situation was not very different in the Greek mainstream media, which are discussed in the following section.

### **2.3.1.2 Greek mainstream media**

One would probably assume that in the Greek media, the discourse of blame and the search of causality in the cultural characteristics would not be so predominant, since

their readership are in essence the same people who are presented as the culprit. Nevertheless, this is not true; in fact, it seems that the differences between the coverage of international and Greek mainstream media are not great. This observation becomes less surprising when this tendency in the Greek mainstream media is compared to the discourse of prominent Greek politicians, who adopted the discourse of blame and collective guilt to persuade the people for the need of reforms and harsh measures. A widely known example is the greatly symbolic phrase of Theodoros Pangalos, the then Deputy Prime Minister, who, on a speech in the Greek parliament in September 2009, stated: “We all ate it together”, thus articulating the view that the Greek people, and not just their politicians were corrupted and lived beyond their means with revenue immorally acquired.

Many researchers stress this correlation; for instance, Liakos and Kouki (2015) maintain that, in the case of Greece, the narrative of lazy and irresponsible Greeks was systematically disseminated by economic and political elites (national and international) as well as mainstream media from 2010 to 2014, and explain this by pointing out that the Greek mainstream media are owned by big conglomerates, who represent powerful interests which influence their editorial stances (p.51), and thus it is natural to notice similarities in the discourse of mainstream media with that of the elites. In fact, most Greek mainstream newspapers embraced the neoliberal explanation of the crisis, i.e. the pathologies of the Greek society (Mylonas 2012, Pleios 2013).

This is also evident in Lykou and Mitsikopoulou (2017), in an article published in the book *Greece in Crisis: Combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics Perspectives*, edited by Hatzidaki and Goutsos (2017), which contains a number of interesting articles on the representations of the Greek crisis. The researchers conducted an analysis of the coverage in two Greek broadsheets, *Kathimerini* and *Ta Nea*, at three

different stages of the crisis (January-June 2010, May-July 2012 and November 2014 – January 2015). The findings indicate that in the first period both newspapers concentrated on the discourse of blame, with *Kathimerini* attributing the blame mainly to the Greek people, and *Ta Nea* also identifying inherent weaknesses in the Eurozone and ineffective management by the EU. During the second period *Kathimerini* focuses primarily on the discourses of catastrophe (as a result of a potential Grexit) and suffering (as a result of the austerity measures). The primary focus of *Ta Nea*, on the other hand, is a disciplinary discourse, the necessity of the Greek people complying with EU demands. In the third period, the blame discourse still prevails in *Kathimerini* (attributed to Greek governmental parties, the Greek people but also the EU), along with a fear for the future discourse. In *Ta Nea* Grexit is central, presented as a great threat for Greece.

By referring to Grexit as something both possible and catastrophic, the Greek newspapers warn their readership that they must comply to the rules imposed by the creditors, even though they are hard and produce suffering.

In a study of *Kathimerini* articles during the first stages of the crisis, Mylonas (2012) detects a divide concerning the roots of the crisis and its solution: on the one hand, the crisis originated on the corrupt essence of contemporary Greece, on the “anomy”, “delinquency” and “irrationality” which was prevalent on the Greek society. On the other hand, the proposed neoliberal reforms are “rational” and “a-political”, they are the only way for Greece to overcome the crisis.

Mylonas describes a “common Greek identity”, as it is constructed in the articles, namely that “all Greeks were corrupted by consumerism and political clientelism” and also “not democratic enough”. Moreover “Greece had an abysmal, excessive and

dysfunctional public sector and Greece deceived the EU". The solution to this corruption and irrationality are the reforms, and especially austerity: "Prolonged austerity appears as essential for a 'new Greece' to emerge, that is (economically) dynamic, entrepreneurial and more European" (p.313), while the IMF is presented as "a neutral, technocratic and credible institution" (p.315). Mylonas characterizes the neoliberal construction of the crisis as "eschatological", with the crisis being at the same time an imminent threat and an opportunity to resolve inherent problems and reform "our" identity.

In studies exploring the coverage of the crisis in Greek mainstream media in the years of austerity, the researchers agree that they tend to reproduce hegemonic explanations of the crisis (Leandros, Papadopoulou, & Psylla, 2011; Lekakis, 2017; Nikolaidis, 2015; Pleios, 2013; Poulakidakos & Veneti, 2014). This is a point of convergence with the studies of the international mainstream media.

For example, Lekakis (2017) argues that during the years of the economic crisis and the negotiations with the troika, mainstream media "have danced to the tune of the state" (p.30). An explanation of such an extensive degree of compliance to the mainstream politicians on the part of the Greek media could be an observation made by many researchers, concerning the media of Southern European countries, namely that the Greek media, as well as the Italian, Spanish and Portuguese ones, have developed within a system of clientelism and there are distinct patterns of media-politics interactions. In this system of interaction, the representation of political and business interests and the political affiliations become of paramount importance (Hallin & Mancini, 2004; Papathanassopoulos, 2013; Touri & Kostarella, 2016).

Concluding, we can safely assume that the Greek mainstream media adopt to a large extent similar explanations for the crisis as the international ones, in accordance with Greek politicians and economic elites, and support austerity policies as the solution. Although there are not nearly as many studies on the coverage of the crisis by alternative media, especially the international ones, there is enough evidence to suggest that the approach is entirely different, as will be shown in 2.2.2 below.

### **2.3.2 Coverage of the Economic Crisis in Greece and Europe in the Alternative Media**

The research which has been conducted in the coverage of the crisis by alternative media, though limited, suggests that there are considerable differences compared with mainstream media, in many respects. Titley (2012) investigates an effort of a network of political and community activists, journalists and academics to react to the mainstream media uniform framework concerning the ‘bailout’ of Ireland in the post-2008 banking crisis by the troika (the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank), which represented the view that the bailout and austerity were the only choice concerning the crisis, and there was no alternative. As Titley observed, an alternative media network challenged this uniform acceptance of the adopted solution and attempted to give a voice to other views.

The Greek mainstream media, as already mentioned, shared views of the crisis with the economic and political elites and reproduced their arguments as to what caused the crisis and how it could be resolved. This stance on their part, is undoubtedly one of the reasons that the Greek media lost part of their credibility during the same period. In the Press Freedom Index, for example, a prestigious annual ranking compiled by the Reporters Without Borders, Greece ranked 89<sup>th</sup> in 2016, which is a striking decline

compared to the 35<sup>th</sup> position of 2009. This is not unrelated to the fact that a considerable number of alternative media, mainly digital, emerged during the years of the crisis in the Greek media landscape. In fact, this emergence has been attributed to the attitude of the mainstream media to support the elite's views, thus placing pressures to the journalistic industry (Boucas & Iosifidis, 2015; Kountouri & Nikolaidou, 2019; Nikolaidis, 2015; Pleios, 2013; Touri, Theodosiadou, & Kostarella, 2016).

One of the forms of media which were activated to provide an alternative view on the crisis and to voice the people are the political documentaries. Lekakis (2017) examined the documentaries which are included in #greekdocs, a project created to archive independent documentaries about the crisis in Greece, with the aim of determining the contribution to media activism and highlight the intersection between journalism and activism, claiming that alternative media in times of crisis and austerity operate both as journalistic and activist practice. The archive contains works of both citizens and professional journalists (working independently), and at the time the Lekakis' study was conducted, they were 50 in total, all produced between 2011 and 2016. The key themes which were found to emerge in the documentaries of the archive were the political crisis, the media crisis, the social crisis, and the refugee crisis (and interestingly not the economic crisis). The political crisis is understood as the implementation of neoliberal policies at the level of the state as well as transnational governance, the media crisis refers to the corruption of media institutions and their complicity to austerity, the social crisis is associated with the consequences of austerity and resilience practices, and the refugee crisis underscores the vulnerability of immigrants and refugees at a time of crisis, and the structural violence of EU laws against migration.

Another form of alternative media that emerged in large numbers especially during the years of the economic crisis are news blogs, which attempted to challenge the

dominance of mainstream media, with the use of continuous news updates and investigative journalism (Nevradakis, 2011). Touri and Kostarella (2016) attribute this emergence partly to the implications of the financial crisis, one of which was that professional journalists found themselves unemployed or underemployed, and formed journalist collectives and online communities.

In a study comparing Greek mainstream newspapers and Greek blogs during the economic crisis, Touri and Kostarella (2017), employing Wordsmith tools to create keyword lists, find that the two respective lists are not so different (as happened at the present study in the case of British and American newspapers and blogs). However, when the researchers selected and concordanced 15 statistically significant keywords, and analysed them using framing and reasoning devices (Van Gorp, 2010), they found that the interpretations of the blogs were different than those of the newspapers, and arrived at the conclusion that the contribution of the blogs to public debates is mainly that they provide audiences with additional explanations that question the interpretations of political elites and mainstream media (Touri and Kostarella, 2017, p.1220).

Social media have been used as an alternative source of information, and at the same time as tools for activism. Galis and Neumayer (2016) point out that “radical left groups and collectives have organized and covered major propaganda campaigns, mobilizations, and anti-austerity protests between 2008 and the present through corporate social media such as Facebook and Twitter as well as alternative social media such as Athens Indymedia” (p.4). They claim that corporate social media can act as “communicating vessels” with alternative ones, as is the case when counter-information broadcasted through alternative media were widely disseminated through twitter hashtags (p.10).

Social media can also allow common people to communicate their own representations of events, such as the economic crisis. Georgakopoulou (2014) conducted a “small stories” study, analysing the comments on selected videos on YouTube, concerning an incident which had taken place during a live TV show, in April 2012, when a then MP of Golden Dawn and now convicted neo-Nazi became violent towards two women MPs of the Communist Party and Syriza respectively. Georgakopoulou suggests that “the choice of circulating the incident as a story had implications for how it was connected with the Greek crisis” (p.526). Moreover, while the majority of the comments which were analysed were “event-focused”, i.e. commenting on what took place, there was also a considerable number of comments which “provide general socio-political commentary on the Eurozone and the Greek crisis” (p.526).

It is probably due to their relation with activism, that the alternative media are more widely researched in relation to local events. For instance, regarding the economic crisis in Greece, there has been mainly research on Greek and not international alternative media, although the study of alternative media in Greece has not been exhaustive and deserves further exploration (Lekakis, 2017, p.31). Furthermore, it would be interesting to investigate how the economic crisis in Greece was represented in international alternative media, as it is expected that they are not exclusively concerned with local socio-political events, but have a more global view of politics. This is one of the contributions of this study, to explore the representations of the social actors related to the Greek crisis not only in the international mainstream media, but also in international alternative media, which yields very interesting findings that have not been given adequate attention in the literature.



## **2.4 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL)**

As explained in the introduction of this chapter, the methods adopted in this study are a combination of Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics. In section 2.3, the reasons for this choice are addressed by referring to the relevant literature.

### **2.4.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)**

Critical Discourse Analysis is an area of research that examines the role of language in society, one which sees language as embedded in its sociolinguistic context and examines the ways it is used to express social processes (Fairclough, 2010), and in which discourse is treated as “a form of social practice” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p.258).

CDA asserts that language is not only a tool for communication but also a means through which social relations of power and dominance are constructed and contested. It is often understood as “an academic movement, a way of doing discourse analysis from a critical perspective, which often focuses on theoretical concepts such as power, ideology and domination” (Baker et al., 2008, p.273). It focuses on how discourse shapes and is shaped by power dynamics, ideologies, and social inequalities, with the aim to reveal the concealed motives, presumptions, and power dynamics present in various forms of communication, including written, spoken, and visual. According to Fairclough (1995), the aim of CDA is to “systematically explore the opaque relationship of causality and determination between a) discursive practices, events, and texts, and b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes” (1995, p.132).

Through the examination of linguistic features such as word choice, grammar, narrative structure and framing techniques, CDA provides insights into the ways in which discourse influences public perceptions, identity formation and social practices. CDA

does not seem to be a closed paradigm, based on a specific theory; it is more accurate to say that it is a school or to which many researchers can relate (Wodak 2002, p.7), characterized by the interest in de-mystifying ideologies and power (Wodak and Meyer, 2009). It is “a shared perspective on doing linguistic, semiotic, or discourse analysis” (van Dijk 1993, p.131). Baker points out that the lack of set ways of doing analysis is one of its main advantages, as the researcher is given the opportunity to combine approaches and techniques without limitations (p.255).

CDA is an interdisciplinary field that draws on theories from linguistics, sociology, and psychology, since its aim is not only to describe the linguistic features of texts but also to understand their socio-political contexts and implications. Critical discourse analysts take explicit stance, as they are interested in the way “social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context” (Van Dijk 2001:352). Taking a stance should not be considered problematic; as Baker (2008) explains, “bias is unavoidable when conducting social research, and the aim for neutral objectivity is in itself a stance” (p.255). By taking a critical approach, CDA contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex interactions between language, power, and society.

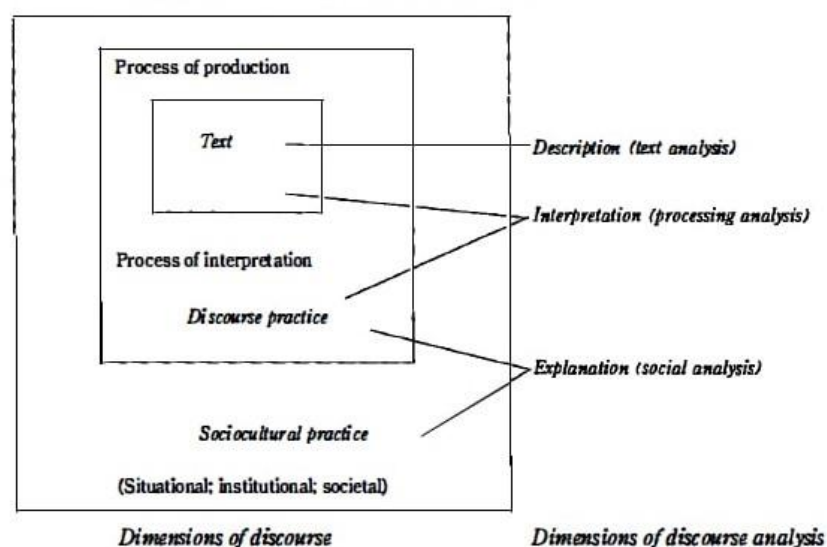
CDA studies are derived by quite different theoretical backgrounds and make use of different methodologies, but are fundamentally interested in analyzing opaque or structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control, as manifested in language (Weiss and Wodak, 2007). In relation to media discourse, CDA has been used to “unmask the ideologies which discriminate the oppressed group while presenting a positive image for the group with the highest authority” (Ramanathan & Hoon, 2015, p.57).

For this thesis on the representations of social actors in the media coverage of the Greek crisis, CDA was chosen because of its robust framework for uncovering the underlying ideologies and power structures in media texts. CDA's emphasis on the relationship between language, power, and society offers a precise tool for dissecting how media discourse constructs, represents, and sometimes manipulates public perceptions of social actors involved in the crisis. Given the profound socio-political implications of the Greek crisis, it is crucial to understand not only the overt content of media representations but also the subtle ways in which language represents social actors, assigns blame or sympathy, and influences the audience's understanding and attitudes. CDA enables an in-depth examination of these discursive practices, making it possible to trace how the media's representation of the crisis reflects broader societal ideologies and power dynamics.

Due to the central importance of sociocultural context for this research, the strand of CDA that is followed is the approach of Normal Fairclough. Fairclough (1995) adopts “a three-dimensional conception of discourse, and correspondingly a three-dimensional method of discourse analysis” (p.97). In Fairclough’s model, discourse is seen as a) text, b) discourse practice and c) sociocultural practice. With this view of discourse, Fairclough proposes a method of discourse analysis that includes “linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes” (1995, p.97).

The three-dimensional model of discourse analysis is depicted in Picture 2.1 below (reproduced from Fairclough 1995, p.98.).

Picture 2.1 Fairclough's three-dimensional model of discourse analysis



Incorporating Norman Fairclough's framework into the critical discourse analysis of media representations of social actors within the context of the Greek crisis, specifically during the elections of January and September 2015, and the July referendum, offers a methodologically rigorous and theoretically enriched approach. Fairclough's multidimensional view of discourse as a form of social practice that is both constitutive of and constituted by social structures provides a critical lens through which the intricate relationship between media discourse and the socio-political landscape during the Greek crisis can be examined. Given the significant connection of this study to the sociopolitical context surrounding the events reported in the media, Fairclough's three-dimensional framework for CDA proves exceptionally suitable for this research.

Naturally, there are many studies on media discourse that have relied on Fairclough's critical discourse analysis.

In her research on media-induced polarization concerning the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Pavlichenko (2022) employs Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis, augmented by van Dijk's ideological square model. The latter describes the

dichotomy of positive in-group representation versus negative out-group representation (van Dijk, 1998). The study examines British and American news coverage of the conflict. Pavlichenko looks at discursive strategies and their linguistic manifestations, including the use of stylistic devices such as conceptual metaphors, similes, idioms and metonymy, to reveal a pattern of discursive polarisation strategies within the media. These strategies include labelling (attributing positive or negative connotations to people, groups, or countries), victimization (exaggerating the adverse actions of the out-group while casting the in-group as victims), and personalization (ascribing human characteristics to non-human entities) (2022, p.216). Pavlichenko's research highlights the media's responsibility in using language that promotes division and provides insight into the linguistic and discursive methods used.

Rafiq, Bari and Hussain (2021) draw on Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional model to explore the ideological underpinnings of the opinion columns of Orya Maqbool Jan, a prominent Pakistani columnist known for his analysis of religious, political and international relations issues among Islamic nations. The research examines five of his columns published over six months to reveal the ideological orientation and narrative framing used by Jan to propagate his views. The findings suggest that Jan strongly endorses Islamic principles and his narrative is characterized by pro-Islamic, anti-secularist, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and pro-Taliban ideologies.

Zhang (2014) adopts the same approach to critical discourse analysis, alongside the analytical tools of Halliday's systemic functional grammar, to examine the New York Times' news coverage of the Iraq war. The study shows that journalists' use of various linguistic strategies creates different images of the American and Iraqi sides. According to the analysis of the news reports, this differentiation in portrayal is used to criticize Saddam Hussein, mobilize support, and contribute to the justification of the war

(p.2275). The findings demonstrate the significant role of language in media representations of international conflicts, highlighting how linguistic choices in news reporting can shape perceptions and narratives around such events.

Another study that combines Fairclough's framework and Halliday's systemic functional grammar, focusing on the transitivity system, is that of Behnam and Mahmoudy (2013). The researchers analyse the representation of Iran's nuclear programme in both Iranian (Iran Daily, Kayhan) and British (The Guardian, The Telegraph) newspapers in 2004 and find that the British media often portray Iran as socially deviant, highlighting a polarisation in the representation of Iran's nuclear activities.

Fauzan, Subroto, and Poedjosoedarmo (2014) use Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the ideology behind MetroTV's coverage of the Sidoarjo mudflow in Indonesia, revealing a portrayal of the disaster as a result of human error and highlighting the responsibility of the Lapindo Corporation. Through qualitative analysis, it identifies MetroTV's ideological stance in emphasising the negative impacts and responsibilities associated with the mudflow.

Bolte and Keong (2014) rely on Fairclough's framework to examine how refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants are represented in news reports from three English-language online newspapers in Malaysia - The Star, The New Straits Times and Malaysiakini - focusing on the 2011 refugee swap deal between Australia and Malaysia. The analysis reveals ideological differences in the portrayal of refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants, with government-affiliated media taking a more supportive stance, while the right wing Malaysiakini offers a balanced perspective, thus reflecting the different political stances and ideologies of the newspapers.

These studies affirm Fairclough's (1995b) assertion that media do not simply mirror realities, but rather construct their own versions of reality, tailored to the perspectives and interests of their producers (pp. 103-104). Representation in Fairclough's view, which is adopted in this thesis, is linked to ideology, it is essentially "the representation of 'the world' from the perspective of a particular interest, so that the relationship between proposition and fact is not transparent, but mediated by representational activity" (Fairclough, 1995a, p.44). Hence, it is beneficial to analyse the representational processes within a text by scrutinizing the choices made, identifying what is omitted or included, determining what is stated explicitly or implied subtly, recognizing what is emphasized or minimized, and examining the process types or categories which are used to describe events (Fairclough, 1995b, p.104).

Building on Fairclough's foundational insights, my analysis of media representations in the context of the Greek crisis further employs Halliday's concept of transitivity and van Leeuwen's framework for the representation of social actors to analyse and understand the linguistic and discursive choices made in media texts. Halliday's system of transitivity, an integral part of systemic functional linguistics, allows for an examination of how actions, processes and events are represented in texts, revealing the underlying viewpoints and attitudes towards the participants involved. This approach is instrumental in uncovering the roles assigned to social actors within the media narrative, shedding light on the active or passive constructions that influence readers' perceptions of agency and responsibility.

Complementing this, van Leeuwen's model offers a more detailed analysis of how social actors are represented, focusing on the different roles attributed to them. Social actors as defined by van Leeuwen's are "the participants of social practices" (van Leeuwen, 2008, p.23), who could be both animate as well as inanimate objects. This

combination of methodologies allows for a thorough analysis of the textual strategies used to construct realities, in line with the study's aim to explore how media discourse shapes and is shaped by the socio-political dynamics of the Greek crisis. Together, these theoretical tools provide a powerful lens through which to unpack the complex processes of meaning-making in media texts, offering insights into the interplay between language, ideology and power in shaping public discourse.

#### **2.4.1.1 Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar – Transitivity Theory**

In the Hallidayan approach to language, a property of language is that it “enables human beings to build a mental picture of reality, to make sense of their experience of what goes on around them and inside them” (Halliday, 1985, p.106). Halliday & Matthiessen (2004) identify two forms of representation of experience: the "outer" experience, i.e., actions or events, what we experience in the world around us, and the "inner" experience, the world of consciousness, that is our reactions and reflection on the outer experience.

Halliday (1985) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) argue that in the study of language one has to take into consideration three metafunctions, namely the ideational (one's inner and outer experiences), interpersonal (one's interactive exchanges) and textual metafunctions (the internal organisation of the message). For Halliday a clause is “the simultaneous realization of ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings” (Halliday 1985, p. 42) and also “the product of three simultaneous semantic processes. It is at one and the same time a representation of experience (ideational), an interactive exchange (interpersonal), and a message (textual)” (p.53).

In the transitivity system, Halliday sees the ideational function of the clause as meaning "representation" (1985, p.101), transitivity being a module of the ideational function of



the clause that attempts to represent processes or experiences, while focusing on how language users construe versions of reality in discourse. The clause is broken down into three general components: the process, the participant and the circumstance (Bloor & Bloor, 1995; Halliday 1985; Martin 2001; Thompson, 1996), which explain generally how phenomena of the real world are represented as linguistic structures. In fact, the transitivity model “construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types” (Halliday & Matthiessen 2004, p.170).

In Halliday’s theory of Transitivity (1985) there are three principal process types, namely: a) *material clauses*, which are clauses of doing and happening, when change is caused in the flow of events, b) *mental clauses*, which concern our consciousness and what we experience through it, and c) *relational clauses*, which serve to characterize and identify. Material process clauses construe the outer experience, mental process clauses construe the inner experience, while relational processes are processes of identifying and classifying. There are also three subsidiary process types, which are d) *behavioural clauses*, which concern typical physiological and psychological behavior, e) *verbal clauses*, which are essentially clauses of saying, and f) *existential clauses*, which represent that something exists or happens.

In the following table, the process types as well as participants that may be involved in each of them, are outlined (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, p.311)

Table 2.1 Process types and participants.

PROCESS TYPE	Category meaning	Participants, directly involved	Participants, obliquely involved
material: action event	'doing' 'doing' 'happening'	Actor, Goal	Recipient, Client; Scope; Initiator; Attribute
behavioural	'behaving'	Behaver	Behaviour
mental: perception cognition desideration emotion	'sensing' 'seeing' 'thinking' 'wanting' 'feeling'	Senser, Phenomenon	Inducer
verbal	'saying'	Sayer, Target	Receiver; Verbiage
relational: attribution identification	'being' 'attributing' 'identifying'	Carrier, Attribute Identified, Identifier; Token, Value	Attributor; Beneficiary Assigner
existential	'existing'	Existent	

#### 2.4.1.2 Van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors framework

In his seminal article on the representation of social actors, van Leeuwen (1996) introduces “a *sociosemantic* inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented” (1996, p.32), a model which allows the analyst to “bring to light ... systematic omissions and distortions in representations” (p.194).

Van Leeuwen clarifies that his framework prioritizes socio-semantic aspects over linguistic realization and argues that there are two reasons that justify this prioritization. The first reason is that a sociological concept is not always realized linguistically in the same way. For instance, the grammatical agent is not the exclusive way to realize the sociological agency, as the latter can be realized by a possessive pronoun or by a prepositional phrase. The second reason is related to the nature of meanings, which, as van Leeuwen puts it “belong to culture rather than to language and cannot be tied to any specific semiotic” (p.24).

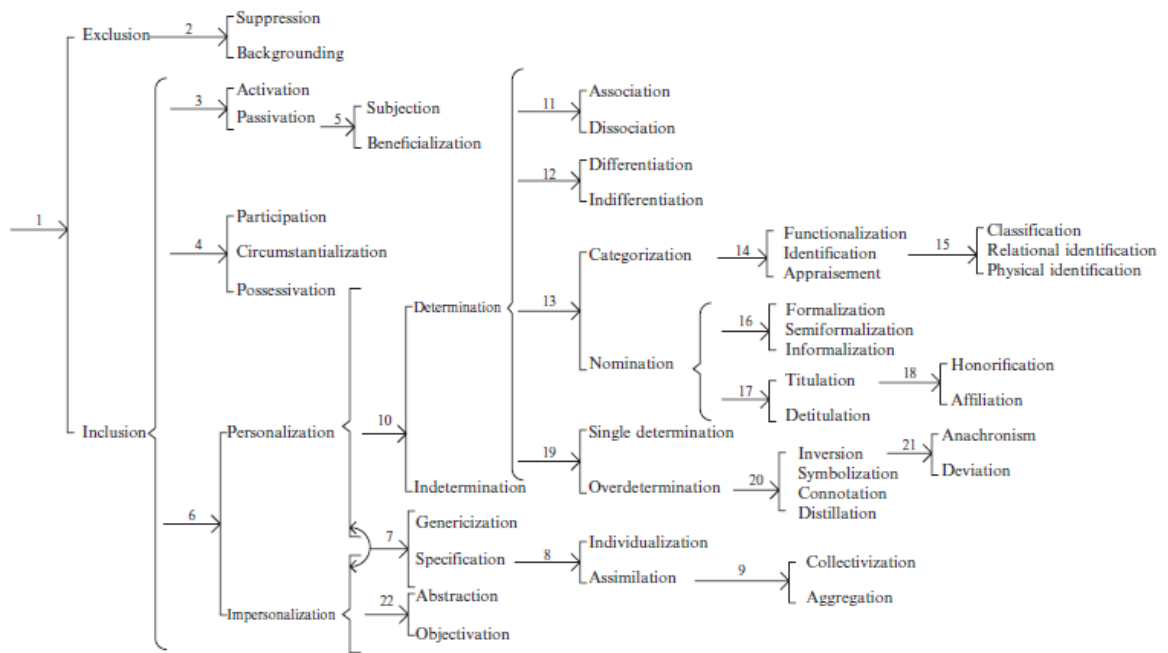
Van Leeuwen (1996) maintains that the meanings exist in the society and language functions as a tool in carrying the meanings while redefining them, and therefore the

analysis should start from social encapsulations, as for example foregrounding/backgrounding, and then be linked to linguistic micro-mechanisms employed to realize such meanings. He argues that such an approach ‘brings together what linguists tend to keep separate; it involves a number of distinct lexico-grammatical and discourse-level linguistic systems, transitivity, reference, and nominal groups, rhetorical figures, and so on, because all these systems are involved in realization of representations of social actors’ (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 67).

Regarding the representation of social actors, the first distinction in van Leeuwen’s inventory is that of inclusion/exclusion. When a social actor is excluded, it may be “innocent”, that is, assumed known or irrelevant, or it may be due to propaganda strategies. A further distinction in the representation of social actors in van Leeuwen’s framework is the one between genericization and specification, that is whether social actors are represented as classes or individuals. In terms of the identity of the social actor, van Leeuwen makes a distinction between indetermination, “when social actors are represented as unspecified, ‘anonymous’ groups” and determination “when their identity is, one way or another, specified (p.39). Furthermore, social actors can either be represented with a unique identity – nominalization – or in terms of shared functions and identities – categorization. In addition, van Leeuwen points out that social actors can be personalized or impersonalized. When they are impersonalized, they are represented “by abstract nouns or by concrete nouns whose meanings do not include the semantic feature ‘human’” (p.46).

The following table depicts the social actor network according to van Leeuwen (2008:52).

Table 2.2 Van Leeuwen’s social actor network.



A very important aspect of the representation of social actors, on which this part of the analysis is based, is that of the role allocation, i.e. the roles that social actors are given in representations. Thus, a social actor can be activated, when they are given the active role in an activity, or passivized, when they are undergoing the activity. Passivated social actors can be either subjected – treated as objects – or beneficialized, that is being at the receiving end of an activity and benefit from it either positively or negatively.

Van Leeuwen points out that “there need not be congruence between the roles that social actors actually play in social practices and the grammatical roles they are given in texts” (1996, p.32). Therefore, there are various ways activation and passivation may be realized.

As regards activation, it can be realized by grammatical participant roles, that is by transitivity structures. Following the transitivity analysis (Halliday, 1985), van Leeuwen adds that an activated participant can be an actor in a material process, a behaver in a behavioral process, a senser in a mental process, a sayer in a verbal process or an assigner in a relational process.

Activation can also be realized through possessivation, and more specifically by prepositional circumstantials with *by* and *from*. Another way of realizing activation is premodification or post modification of nominalizations, a frequent form of which is possessivation, i.e. the use of a possessive pronoun to activate or passivate a social actor.

Subjection can be realized by participation, with the social actor being goal in a material process, phenomenon in a mental process or carrier in an effective attributive process (Halliday 1985, p.43). It can also be realized through possessivation as well as adjectival premodification.

Finally, beneficialization can be realized by participation, where the participant is a client or recipient to a material process, or receiver to a verbal process (pp. 132-33).

There are numerous CDA studies relying on transitivity theory and/or representation of social actors, a number of which are discussed in the following subsection.

#### **2.4.1.3 CDA studies applying transitivity theory and/or representation of social actors framework**

Van Leeuwen's framework has often been used to analyse the media representation of social actors regarding elections (as does the present study). Oyeleye and Osisanwo (2013) use transitivity theory and Van Dijk's framework for the representation of social actors, as well as measuring the passivation and activation percentages to show that media representation of the elections in Nigeria in two Nigerian magazines was not ideologically neutral. Osisanwo (2016) conducted another study on the ideologies in the representations of the Nigerian elections, applying certain aspects of van Leeuwen's social actor framework, including role allocation, and Halliday's transitivity. The

findings of the study point to the fact that activation is used to reveal agency, while passivation is used to obscure it.

Ahlstrand (2021) conducted a study on representation in an Indonesian news website of the prominent female Indonesian politician, Megawati Soekarnoputri, an icon of ideological contestation during the 2014 presidential election. Ahlstrand applied Van Leeuwen's model of social actor analysis and van Dijk's concept of the ideological square, i.e. discourse seen as adhering to an ideological square, which emphasises the 'good things' of the in-group, and the 'bad things' of the out-group, and deemphasises the 'bad things' of the in-group, and the 'good things' of the out-group (Van Dijk, 1998, p.267). Matu and Lubbe (2007) also rely on the model of social actors and the concept of the ideological square to illustrate how the portrayal of various social groups varies in different newspapers in Kenya, in a period until the elections of 1997.

Halliday's theory of transitivity and van Leeuwen's model of social actors are deployed in a study on the representation of 2018 elections in Malaysia in two Malaysian newspapers (Asad, Noor & Jaes, 2019). The same authors conducted a study on the representation of certain social actors in the Malaysian and Pakistani elections of 2018, having as data articles published in online alternative and mainstream newspapers of the two countries respectively, concluding that in alternative online newspapers of both countries there was a fair representation of social actors, while the mainstream ones were more inclined towards their political private interests (Asad, Jaes & Noor, 2020). Asad, Noor and Bin (2021) examined the representation of the Malaysian political party Pakatan Harapan over the 100 days leading to the general elections of 2018 (where it defeated a party that had governed the country since 1953), in an alternative and a mainstream newspaper. The analysis, based on transitivity and representation of social actors, showed that while the alternative newspaper remained neutral towards the party

throughout the 100 days, the mainstream newspaper shifted its stance in favor of Pakatan Harapan, as it was coming close to winning the elections.

Stamou (2001) examines how the media represents non-protesters—such as drivers, pedestrians, and parents of protesters—during a student and teacher protest in Greece, highlighting how these portrayals can influence public perception of the protest and lead readers to view the protest unfavorably, aligning with dominant discourses on protests.

There have been a number of CDA studies which examine the female and male social actors in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) textbooks, all of which were carried out in Iran, and which have relied on Halliday's Transitivity and van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors. Sahragard and Davatgarzadeh (2010) focus on hidden ideologies that promote gender inequality through textbooks. Similarly, Karimaghaei and Kasmani (2013) find that female social actors are represented in a way which implies their subordinate roles.

Yaghoubi-Notash and Nouri (2016), applied inclusion / exclusion and role allocation in a study of an EFL textbook, and found that regarding inclusion / exclusion there was equal treatment of men and women in the textbook they investigated. Nevertheless, application of role allocation revealed significant divergence, as men were allocated a far more active role than women. Comparable had been the results of a study by Roohani and Heidari (2012), who found that in the EFL textbook they examined, the men were primarily represented as active, energetic and independent, and were placed in high-status positions much more frequently than women, as well as Amal Saleh et al. (2006) who had found that women were mostly associated with the traditional roles

of housekeeping and care giving, and Esmaeili and Arabmofrad (2015), who identified a sexist attitude in favor of male social actors.

In Qasim (2014), transitivity theory is employed to explore doctor-patient interactions and the enactment of power, by investigating the roles of the doctors and patients in clauses and the kind of processes they are involved in. For example, doctors' utterances are found to include mainly material processes, which points to the fact that they are mostly interested in facts and information. In the second part of the analysis the author follows van Leeuwen's framework, and more specifically role allocation and exclusion, and, among the concluding remarks, it is pointed out that doctors seem to use their position of power to the benefit of the patients.

In another study concerning health issues, and more specifically interactions in Online Support Groups (OSGs), a bipolar disorder OSG is examined and the veteran members of the group are found to be more active social actors, providing advice to the new members (McDonald & Woodward-Kron, 2016).

The representations of the government, the president and the people in the statements of the Indonesian president on the issue of Covid-19 pandemic, were investigated by Megah (2020), in a study based on the model of transitivity and van Leeuwen's framework.

In a number of studies, the issue of the representation of homosexuality is addressed. Bartley and Hidalgo-Tenorio (2015) applied transitivity to examine a corpus of Irish newspaper articles discussing the controversy over same-sex marriage in Ireland, to investigate the discourse construction of homosexuality and detect instances of homophobia. A combination of lexical choices, metaphors and transitivity were examined in the writings of a Canadian neo-conservative author, that is William D.



Gairdner, focusing on his discourse about homosexuals and homosexuality (Lillian, 2005). The analysis illustrates the ways that Gairdner's homophobic agenda, in which homosexuals are depicted as violent and unhealthy (p. 128), forms part of a broader neo-conservative agenda of discrimination based on gender, race or sexual orientation. Gouveia (2005) examines the transitivity patterns employed by Portuguese newspapers to investigate their representation of gays and lesbians.

Szuchewycz (2000) employs transitivity theory to analyze the reports in two newspapers of a study whose findings challenged the commonly held belief that Canada is a racism-free country, and finds that in both newspapers there is an overall denial of evidence of racism in Canada, and a reinterpretation of the findings. Transitivity analyses has also been employed on Salih (2021), who examined the representation of immigrants and immigration in the US public sphere,

Rashidi and Rasti (2012) have used five of the sets of categories described in van Leeuwen's system networks of representation of social actors, namely inclusion / exclusion, activation / passivation, association / dissociation, individualization / assimilation and personalization / impersonalization in articles by western mainstream newspapers about nuclear activity of Iran to show that there is bias in the representation of the Iranian side. The representation of the events of the Battle for Tripoli during the Libyan civil war of 2011 in a British and a Chinese newspaper are examined in a study employing Hallidayan transitivity analysis, and significant divergence is detected (Seo, 2013).

The reviewed studies have shown that the application of transitivity theory and the representation of social actors framework can be particularly effective. However, to

conduct a large-scale analysis of a sizable corpus, it is crucial to integrate these approaches with corpus linguistic techniques.

#### **2.4.2 Corpus Linguistics (CL)**

Corpus linguistics, a discipline that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century, revolves around the analysis of language as expressed in corpora - large collections of 'authentic text' that serve as a mirror of the linguistic patterns of a particular language or its subsets (Bowker & Pearson, 2002, p.9). Geoffrey Leech, one of the pioneers, emphasised that a corpus should be "representative of some language or text type" in order to provide a solid basis for linguistic analysis (Leech, 1992, p.116). This fundamental principle guides the construction of corpora, ensuring that they provide a representative sample of the language or linguistic variety in question (Bowker & Pearson, 2002, p.10).

Working with a corpus allows researchers to delve into large datasets of naturally occurring language, using computational tools designed to measure linguistic phenomena such as frequency, collocation and clustering. These analyses often produce quantitative results, highlighting the discipline's ability to reveal "probabilities, trends, patterns, co-occurrences of elements, features or groupings of features" (Teubert & Krishnamurthy, 2007, p.6). The basic research methods of corpus linguistics, such as the study of word lists, keywords, collocates and concordances, emphasise the discipline's systematic approach to the study of language (Sinclair, 1991, p.32).

While corpus analysis primarily generates numerical data such as frequencies and percentages, which are then subjected to statistical processing, deeper exploration is also possible through concordance analysis. This highlights that, despite the objectivity offered by corpus linguistic methods, significant human insight is required at every

stage of the analysis. This symbiosis of computational analysis and human interpretation is essential for deriving meaningful insights from corpus data and illustrates the delicate balance between quantitative findings and qualitative interpretation in the field of language research (Baker et al., 2008, p.277).

### **2.4.3 Combining CDA and CL Methodology**

In addition to using Fairclough's model to analyse media representations of the Greek crisis, I also incorporated corpus linguistics methods. That is because the methods commonly used in CDA are largely qualitative. Most studies involve close examination of limited amounts of texts, relevant to the matter under investigation (Marchi and Taylor 2009:3). The limited amounts of data, the random selection and the exclusively qualitative investigation have in the past raised questions of objectivity of CDA methods and have given rise to constructive criticism.

Widdowson (1995) implies that the data are conveniently chosen and analysed, so that the researcher's preconceptions are proven and the interpretation will accordingly be adjusted to their "agenda" (Widdowson 1998:148). Along the same lines, Fowler (1996) claims that the qualitative methodological approach of CDA is inherently weak. Stubbs (1997) points out that few CDA studies actually compare their findings against the norms of language, and that data sampled in CDA texts is hardly representative, since little data are analysed and selection is normally random. Indeed, the criticism of 'cherry-picking' data to prove a preconceived point has been a concern of many researchers (Koller and Mautner 2004:225, Orpin 2005:38; Partington 2004).

In response to the criticism of biased selection in CDA studies, several scholars (e.g. Stubbs & Gerbig 1993, Hardt-Mautner 1995, Stubbs 1996, Baker 2006) suggested that

a combined application of CDA and CL methods could help in the direction of eliminating methodological weaknesses.

Through combining qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis we have the greater precision and richness of qualitative methods with the statistical reliability and generalizability of results of quantitative methods (McEnery and Wilson 1996:77, Partington 2006). By comparing our data with a reference corpus, we can in effect contrast our findings to what is ‘normal’ in language (Stubbs 1997, Hardt-Mautner 1995, 2001, Orpin 2005). In addition, corpus data can “reveal the presence of counter-examples” (i.e., resistant and changing discourses) which “are much less likely to be uncovered via smaller-scale studies” (Baker 2006:10)

In a seminal study, Hardt-Mautner (1995) describes how the qualitative methods of CDA proved unsuitable for dealing with a sizeable corpus she had to work with, during a project about the EC/EU discourse of the British Press. Consequently, she had to combine the use of concordance programs with CDA’s traditional qualitative analysis. She asserts, however, that what is required is to combine qualitative and quantitative methods, not replace the former with the latter. Qualitative, holistic methods can yield in depth analyses but they may lack in breadth. Therefore, a combination of two different approaches could produce better results. What is more, Hardt-Mautner (ibid:24) suggests that researchers “move constantly between these different views of the data, rather than working in a ‘quantitative’ and a ‘qualitative’ compartment respectively”.

A keystone study for the combination of CDA and CL methodology is Baker et al. (2008), which, as Nartey and Nuokyya-Ire Mwinlaaru argue, was the study “that popularized the methodology which has now become commonplace” (2019:8). Baker

et al. (2008) applied this approach to the study of media representation of refugees in the UK. They characterize this association as ‘a useful methodological synergy’ and comment that neither CDA nor corpus linguistics “need be subservient to the other” (2008:274). They claim that it is important that CL and CDA methods be balanced, and neither should be diminished; that CDA can benefit from incorporating more objective, quantitative CL approaches; and that CL needs to be supplemented by the close analysis of selected texts using CDA theory and methodology.

In a similar study of the representation of refugees in the UK press, Gabrielatos and Baker (2008) examine a large corpus with Wordsmith Tools to investigate consistent collocations, by performing concordance analysis of certain keywords. Not only do they find that their representations are mainly negative, but they also identify certain strategies, such as the development of nonsensical terms as “illegal refugee” or “genuine immigrant” (2008:30). They claim that ‘the corpus-based approach enables the researcher to arrive at a more complete understanding of the meanings and functions of certain word choices in texts about refugees and asylum seekers (2005:223).

Another significant study which had been conducted three years earlier had been Orpin (2005), who used a combination of CDA and corpus linguistics methods in her study on lexical choices of British newspapers. She drew her data from the Bank of English corpus, and examined 4 sub-corpora, with texts from 4 British newspapers. She analysed the synonyms or near-synonyms of the word “corruption”, by a) using a program that generates lists of the most frequent collocates, and b) manually scanning the concordances. She found that words with a more negative connotation were generally used about events that take place outside of Britain, while for comparable events occurring in Britain, less negative words were used. Orpin concludes that corpus methodology can complement and not substitute qualitative analysis (2005:59).

Marchi and Taylor (2009) conducted a ‘quasi-experiment’ (ibid.:1) to explore the reliability of combined CDA and CL methodology. They both worked on a corpus of the whole output of four British newspapers for a period of two years, having the same research question (that is, how journalists speak about themselves and their profession). The difference was that one of the researchers explored lexical items derived from wordlists, keywords and key-clusters as well as intuition, while the other selected lexical items via introspection and from additional background reading. Some of their findings, they report, were dissonant, some converging and some complementary, and they conclude that no way can researchers claim that their study has ‘scientific neutrality’ due to the triangulation of data – nor should it have in the social sciences, they add. They claim that a corpus approach is not a neutral one, as since the early stages selection of the researcher plays a role, as for example in selecting the lexical items which will be investigated (ibid.:4).

Baker and Levon (2015) examined the combination of CL and CDA methods, analyzing articles on masculinity. One analyst used a 41.5-million-word corpus of articles, while the other focused on a down-sampled set of 51 articles from the same corpus. The qualitative analysis yielded a number of representations which were not identified by the corpus analysis, and the reverse was also true. Unlike Marchi and Taylor (2009), they were not contradictory, only converging or complementary. The researchers claim that reading every line and/or using multiple methods is essential.

Partington (2004), in a study which looks into the then infrequent cooperation of CL and discourse studies, coined the term “Corpus-assisted discourse studies” (CADS), defined as “that set of studies into the form and/or function of language as communicative discourse which incorporate the use of computerized corpora in their analyses” (Partington 2013:10). Baker et al. (2008) comment that the word “assisted”

in CADS implies that CL is subservient to discourse studies, which should not be the case, as they contribute equally.

Numerous researchers have noted benefits of synergizing the two approaches. Van de Mierop reports that, while examining the construction of identity in case studies of speeches, he realized that larger corpora would yield generalizable conclusions (2005:109). Thus, in a study on identity construction he quantitatively examined a large corpus and qualitatively scrutinized a sub-corpus, and asserts that an added benefit of examining a corpus is that cluster analysis provided him with good starting points for his qualitative analysis (2005:128). This had also been noted by Hardt-Mautner, who observed that a computerized corpus may bring certain items to the analyst's attention, so that they can study them qualitatively (1995:24), and that computers have potential "to unravel how particular discourses, rooted in particular socio-cultural contexts, construct reality, social identities and social relationships" (1995:1). Baker and McEnery (2005:223) claim that it is particularly productive for researchers to use the connotative use of language in CDA, and by determining how frequent a collocation is in our corpus in comparison with a general corpus, we are given the possibility to detect attempted associations.

Hardt-Mautner (2001:138) states that corpus linguistics too can benefit from this association with CDA, since it can be enriched by being applied to research questions which are inspired by social concerns. In fact, CL has also been criticized that its data are 'semiotically impoverished and decontextualised' (Marchi and Taylor 2009:3) and that there is a possibility to restrict findings to 'counting only what is easy to count' (Stubbs and Gebirg 1993:78).

However, it is a particularly fruitful approach, and since 2008 there has been an abundance of corpus-based CDA studies, the majority of which concern three domains, namely media (39.7%), politics (31.4%) and social media (11.6%) (Nartey and Mwinlaaru 2019).

CL methodology has been applied in a substantial number of studies investigating the representation of Muslims. Baker (2012) examined a corpus of British newspapers as to the representation of Islam and Muslims, and he concludes that they are frequently associated with extremism. However, he too argues that the interpretation of quantitative patterns can be subject to human bias (*ibid.*: 255). In an extensive study on the same topic, Baker et al. (2012) examined a 143-million-word corpus of British newspaper articles (1998-2009), and concluded that the Muslims were collectivized, with an emphasis on a hypothetical sameness to each other and their differences with Western people; Muslims are also represented as easily offended and in conflict with non-Muslims.

Regarding the representation of Wahhabi-Saudi Islam/Wahhabism, Salama (2011) compared two books written on the subject by authors with opposing views and examined the collocations of key words, to investigate how the key words contributed towards different ideologies. He asserts that CDA alone is not sufficient to study collocations, corpus analysis tools as well as a reference corpus (in this case the Corpus of Contemporary American English) were required. He concludes that “collocation can be a micro textual resource for a macro ideology-making process across opposing discourses, either within or across textual practices” (*ibid.*:337). Iqbar (2014) examined the attributive words used with the word ‘Muslim’ in a corpus of Time magazine articles and detected a tendency for attributive words to be used so as to propagate a negative concept of the Muslim community, and their association with danger and criminality.



In a study on the representation of Islam and Muslims in the US mainstream media, Samaie and Malmir (2017) compiled a 670,000-word corpus, including articles from 2001 to 2015. The study employed the Discourse-Historical Approach to CDA (Wodak and Meyer 2009) and made use of collocation and concordance analysis of the most frequent topics or categories regarding the representation of Muslims, and found that “Islam and Muslims are associated with violence, religious radicalism, and Islamic extremist militants” (2017:1351). Other studies on the representation of Muslims are Al-Hejin (2015), on the representation of Muslim women on BBC, as well as Tornberg and Tornberg (2016), on the representation of Muslims in the social media.

Of course, unfavorable representation of immigrants is not limited to Muslim immigrants. In general, immigrants tend to be underrepresented and associated with delinquency or crime, especially in the Western media (Eberl, Meltzer, Heidenreich, Herrero, Theorin, Lind, Berganza, Boomgaarden, Schemer and Strömbäck 2018), and many CL/CDA studies are centered around this issue.

O’Halloran (2009) examines (employing Wordsmith Tools and the BNC as a reference corpus) the articles in the British tabloid *The Sun* on the 2004 enlargement of the EU, and more specifically those associating the entrance of eight Eastern Europe countries with a danger of high levels of immigration from these countries to the UK. In this study two notions of keyness are combined, i.e. one of cultural keywords, that is concepts that are salient across a culture (Williams 1983), as well as the statistical keywords which are detected when comparing the frequency lists of the corpus under investigation with a general corpus. Their combined examination yielded five strategies employed by the *Sun* to associate the enlargement with immigration and immigration with illegal status and criminality.

Racism and prejudice against Asian immigrants was widely expressed with relation to the coronavirus pandemic. In a study investigating the sentiments of Taiwanese students in Australia toward 'Asianphobia', which was prevalent on the news and in society immediately after the emergence of coronavirus cases in the West, Yeh (2022) compiled a 119,375-word corpus with articles on the topic, which the students had collected, as well as their own feedback (for instance, reported interactions with people who assaulted them) and analyzed it to find linguistic evidence of exclusion, discrimination, and racist discourse against the Asians and Chinese.

Other studies on migrants and racism are: KhosraviNik (2010), on the representation of immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers in British newspapers in the period 1996-2006; Taylor (2009), on the representation of immigrants in the Italian press; Alcaraz-Mármol and Almela (2016), on the semantic prosody of the words immigration and immigrants (*inmigración* and *inmigrante*) in two Spanish newspapers.

The combination of CDA and CL has been used in studies investigating gender, sexual orientation and identity issues. Kijratanakoson (2022) examines the representation of male sex workers in Thai newspapers, and compiles a corpus of over 45,000 words with articles from the online versions of 11 Thai newspapers. He concludes that the media implement such discursive strategies as to render their representation non-threatening. Motschenbacher (2019) uses the framework of CDA and combines quantitative and qualitative forms of corpus-based linguistic analysis to uncover ideologies connected to sexual identity formation. She examines the media coverage of a celebrity before and after his public coming out, combining a keyword analysis with an in-depth qualitative analysis. He identifies a foregrounding of the celebrity's ethnic (i.e. latino) background before his coming out, which becomes backgrounded after it, as his sexuality becomes the dominant identity feature.

Cabas-Mijares (2021) examined the news coverage of the Undocuqueer movement – that is, a movement by activists in the US who are both LGBTQ and undocumented immigrants and therefore have to confront discrimination relating to both these identities. The data of the study was a corpus with articles written about undocumented LGBTQ immigrants, from newspapers in the states with the most immigrants. The analysis showed that, even though some journalists acknowledged the struggle of these people, they still criminalized illegal immigration and belittled the Undocuqueer movement.

Other studies on gender, sexual orientation and identity issues are: Edwards and Milani (2014) who examine “herbalist pamphlets” in South Africa (that is, advertisements of traditional healers) as to the representation of women, and illustrate how these pamphlets reproduce a patriarchal order that privileges men over women; Aull and Braun (2013), who investigate gender representations in sports coverage; Baker and Levon (2016), who look into representations of masculinity in the British press, and the extent to which they vary depending on race and class; Hardaker and Glashan (2016) on the issue of rape threats via social media; Jaworska and Krishnamurthy (2012), on the representation of feminism in the British and German press; Mongie (2015) on the discourses and framing of the gay liberation movement in two South African newspapers over a period of 24 years (1982-2006); Bachman (2011) on the discourses of same-sex marriages and civil unions in the UK parliament.

The combined methodology of CDA and CL has also been used to detect the representation of ethnic identity. Kim (2014), using Wordsmith Tools, examined articles about North Korea published in US mainstream media in order to identify specific discursive practices relating to North Korea. Chend and Lam (2012) examined the Western perceptions of Hong Kong in the decade that followed the reversion of the

sovereignty from Britain to China in 1997. Previous research had shown that prior to the handover the Western media anticipated an inauspicious future for the country. The researchers examined Western and Chinese sources from the periods 1996-1998 and 2006-2008. Don, Knowles and Fatt (2010) examine the speeches of Malaysian prime minister Tun Dr. Mahathir, to illustrate the ways in which the Malaysian identity and nationhood is constructed in those speeches.

There have been a number of studies which show that representations in the media may be affected by the interaction of media outlets with governments and political forces. In order to investigate the discursive practices regarding the construction of the former Libyan president, Muammar Qaddafi, a 19-million-word corpus of articles from two Arabic newspapers was compiled by Haimed (2016), divided in three subcorpora, from the periods before (2009-2010) during (2011) and after (2012-2013) the uprising and the civil war. With the aid of Wordsmith Tools, Haimed found the statistically strongest collocates of Qaddafi for each period and showed that his representation before the uprising was relatively positive, while after the uprising, when the West became openly hostile to his regime, it was gradually more negative, and he was associated with terrorism. Chen (2014) examined the representation of the Libyan civil war (2011) in a Chinese (China Daily) and a US (New York Times) newspaper, using frequency lists and collocation analysis, and found that in China Daily there were some neutral or even positive descriptions of Qaddafi, while in New York Times they were mainly negative.

Hou (2016) explored the ideology of the “Chinese Dream”, an idea that President Xi Jinping had put forward in November 2012, analysing a corpus of articles from China’s state-run English-language newspapers with the help of software Concgram (Greaves, 2009) and argues that the numerous references to the Chinese Dream, in which it is

associated with success, inspiration, peace, development, and promising future, are evidence of the Chinese government media control.

In a study on the coverage of the Israeli – Palestinian conflict by US newspapers, Almeida (2014) compiled a corpus of articles from the years 2002-2006 and examined the quotes by Israeli and Palestinian authorities and civilians. While Palestinian civilians were more represented in the corpus than the Israelis, the Israeli authorities were considerably more represented than the Palestinian authorities, indicating the heavy reliance of the US media on the Israeli authorities for information about events and persons.

Another issue that has been addressed in corpus-based CDA studies is the issue of governmental policies. Mulderrig (2011) conducted a corpus-based historical analysis of change in the discursive construction of social identity in UK education policy discourse from 1972–2005, with the aim to show how the New Labour displays a rhetorical novelty in its governance of education, while at the same time retaining strong ideological continuities with the preceding conservative governments. In another study she examined how the pronoun “we” was utilized as a rhetorical tool by New Labour so as to legitimate its contestable neoliberal policy decisions by articulating a “politics of inclusion” (Mulderrig 2012). Cheng and Ho looked into the controversy and the mass protests that had arisen in Hong Kong in 2014, regarding a proposed educational reform aiming at creating a pro-Beijing national identity. They compare the use of collocations, semantic preferences, semantic prosodies and metaphors in news reports (which were generally favorable to the protests) and Hong Kong government press releases, and found significant differences between them (Cheng and Ho 2014).

In conclusion, there is a wealth of studies demonstrating the usefulness of combining CDA and CL. In the present study the combination is overly appropriate, since it demands the critical stance of critical discourse analysis to seek the ideological motivations underlying the stance of the media, but also the quantitative analytical tools of CL in order to achieve the processing of a large corpus.

In conclusion, this literature review has examined the roles of mainstream and alternative media in shaping public perceptions of the Greek crisis, as well as the value of combining Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) methodologies. The review highlighted how these media types offer distinct perspectives, with mainstream media often supporting established structures and alternative media challenging them.

As we transition to the methodology chapter, the focus will shift to detailing how a CDA approach, combined with CL techniques, will guide this study. This will include outlining the research design and methods used to analyze media representations of social actors during the Greek crisis.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

#### 3.1 Introduction

The methodology chapter of this thesis outlines the analytical strategies and procedural steps used to investigate media representations of social actors within the context of the Greek crisis. It builds upon the theoretical foundation established in the literature review and explores the practical application of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), incorporating Halliday's transitivity system and van Leeuwen's framework for the representation of social actors, as well as corpus linguistic techniques.

This chapter aims to provide a transparent and detailed account of the research design, data collection methods, and analytical procedures that underpin this study. It also aims to ensure the reliability, validity, and reproducibility of the research findings by explaining the methodological choices and the rationale behind them. It facilitates a rich understanding of how media discourse shapes and reflects the socio-political representations of the Greek crisis.

This thesis engages in a thorough examination of the varied ways in which media discourse portrays social actors in the midst of the Greek crisis, focusing on two different types of media: mainstream newspapers and alternative blogs, and is based on corpora compiled specifically for the purpose of the study. It aims to uncover the underlying ideologies and power relations within these representations, offering a broad analysis of the media landscape during that period, and more specifically during the three election periods of 2015, that is the January 25 elections, the July 5 referendum, and the September 20 elections. The research questions, introduced in Chapter 1, are as follows:

1. Who are the most prominent social actors in the corpora and how are they represented in the mainstream and alternative media?
2. How do representations of prominent social actors differ in mainstream and alternative media?
3. How do representations of prominent social actors differ across the three election periods?
4. How does stance towards austerity affect representations of the other social actors in mainstream and alternative media?

It would not be possible to attempt to answer these research questions without the compilation of corpora, as only by examining a large collection of articles would we be able to reach reliable evaluations of the stance of the journalists towards the social actors.

In addition to being a corpus analysis, this is essentially a CDA study, since we are interested in the power relations during the various phases of the economic crisis in Greece, and in investigating whether and to what extent the free vote of the people in the 2015 elections was attempted to be influenced by the media. In essence, we are examining how the different narratives of the Greek crisis were relevant to the Greek elections, and which narrative was reflected predominantly in articles by the mainstream and alternative media.

### **3.2 Methods of Data Collection**

A corpus-based approach was considered essential to provide a structured and extensive dataset that could be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. In order to take into account the potential for variance in media representations across different media and different political milestones, six separate subcorpora were meticulously compiled.



Two sets were created for each of the three electoral periods analysed: the January elections, the July referendum, and the September elections. For each period, one subcorpus consisted of newspaper articles (henceforward called the newspaper corpus, or NC), while the other included blog posts (henceforward called the blog corpus, or BC).

The separate subcorpora aimed firstly to facilitate a comparison between mainstream newspapers and alternative blogs. The hypothesis was that each medium might offer divergent portrayals of social actors.

Secondly, segregating the data by electoral period was also essential. This anticipated that the representations of social actors could shift significantly in response to the evolving political landscape. This methodological choice allows for a detailed, period-specific analysis that can reveal subtle dynamics and potential discrepancies in media discourse across different platforms and key moments of the Greek crisis.

The three electoral periods under scrutiny were not merely pivotal political events; they were intrinsically tied to broader issues of significant consequence, such as the economic crisis in Greece and the nation's membership in the Eurozone—or potentially its status within the European Union (EU) itself. These matters were not isolated to Greece alone but were seen as having substantial repercussions for the economy of the entire Eurozone, and by extension, the global economy. This interconnection underscores the profound impact of these elections, highlighting their importance not only within the context of Greek politics and society but also in terms of their broader economic implications on a regional and global scale.

### 3.2.1 Newspaper Subcorpora

The first consideration in the compilation of the newspaper subcorpora was the question of the newspapers from which the articles were to be included. Therefore, the selection of the newspapers was based on a number of criteria in order to ensure that the corpus would be most appropriate for the purposes of the thesis.

The first decision that had to be made was to determine which countries' media would be included in the corpus, and the decision was US and UK media. The primary criterion guiding the selection of US and UK media for this study stems from a pragmatic acknowledgment of linguistic limitations; the research is bound by the linguistic competencies of the researcher, which confines the analytical scope to English-language media. In addition, including newspapers from more countries would undoubtedly enrich the analysis but also significantly expand the scope of the study beyond feasible limits.

The USA and the UK were selected over other Anglophone countries because a) newspapers from these two countries have a significant global influence and extensive international reach, b) as leading economies and central players in international finance and politics, they were more directly engaged with and affected by the events surrounding the Greek crisis, and c) there was a higher level of interest and coverage in U.S. and British newspapers regarding the Greek crisis.

Furthermore, it seemed intuitively necessary to include data from a European Union member that was on its way to exit, which could possibly reflect ambivalent attitudes towards the Greek crisis. On the other hand, the USA being a country of international interest and consequence, the American press is expected to address itself to a much larger audience than, possibly, the press of other countries, and therefore to formulate

opinions and policies towards the Greek crisis and politics. It follows that both British and American press seemed reliable sources for investigating legitimising, or not legitimising, practices concerning the economic crisis in Greece.

Once the focus on U.S. and British media was established, the subsequent step involved determining the specific newspapers to be included in the study. This selection was guided by a set of criteria, outlined as follows:

- i. **High circulation:** Newspapers were selected based on their ranking in terms of average circulation, as compiled by the Alliance for Audited Media. This ensures that the chosen newspapers have a wide reach and impact, making them representative of mainstream media discourse. Thus, the newspapers that were chosen were those of highest circulation, excluding the ones that did not meet the criteria 2 and 3 below.
- ii. **Accessibility and frequency:** A prerequisite for selection was that the newspaper must have an online version freely available to the public and operate as a daily newspaper with paid circulation. This criterion ensures that the newspapers are readily accessible for analysis and regularly contribute to public discourse, offering valid insights into the representation of global events.
- iii. **Exclusion of specific types:** Tabloids (like *The Sun*) and newspapers with a narrow focus (such as those specializing in business and economics like the *Wall Street Journal*) or those with limited world news sections (like the *Denver Post*) were excluded. This decision was made to ensure the study concentrates on broadsheets that provide comprehensive coverage of a wide range of topics, including significant international events, thus aligning with the study's thematic focus.

- iv. **Exclusion of free newspapers:** Only newspapers with paid circulation were included in the study. This was because free newspapers typically do not provide in-depth reporting or international coverage, and their financial model differs from that of more traditional mainstream media.

After applying these criteria, the most suitable US newspapers to be included in the corpus were *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *New York Post*, *The Washington Times* and *Chicago Tribune*. The UK newspapers which were chosen, following the same considerations, were *The Guardian*, *the Independent* and *the Telegraph*.

### 3.2.1 Blog Subcorpora

Having established a geographical focus on US and UK sources for the newspapers, it was logical to apply the same regional criteria to the blog selection. To ensure that the blogs were effectively included in the blog corpus, additional specific criteria were needed. These were as follows:

- i. **Popularity:** Blogs were initially selected based on their popularity, as indicated by Alexa ratings, a global measure system owned by Amazon that ranked millions of websites in order of popularity based on their traffic and visitor engagement over the past three months. At the time of the corpus compilation, website popularity was measured primarily through Amazon's now-defunct system. As of May 2022, this system is no longer active. The criterion of popularity ensures that the chosen blogs have a significant readership and influence, making their representation of events and social actors more impactful in shaping public discourse. Therefore, popularity is used as an indicator of a blog's relevance and reach in the public domain.

- ii. **Focus on News Content:** Only blogs primarily dedicated to news reporting were considered, excluding personal diaries or those focusing on unrelated topics. This selection criterion guarantees the content is relevant to the study's focus on media representations of the Greek crisis, ensuring the blogs provide journalistic rather than personal interpretations of events.
- iii. **Independence from Major Newspapers and Corporations:** Blogs affiliated with major newspapers or owned by large corporations were excluded to focus on independent news sources. This distinction aims to explore perspectives that might differ from mainstream media narratives, providing insights into alternative discourses and viewpoints on the Greek crisis. Blogs that belong to big corporations might share some characteristics with independent blogs, but they do not fulfil all the criteria of alternative media, as were outlined the literature review of this thesis.
- iv. **Multi-contributor Format:** To ensure a broader journalistic effort is reflected, the study excluded blogs maintained by a single individual and focused on those with multiple contributors. This aligns with the aim of analysing journalistic representations of social actors and events, rather than personal viewpoints.
- v. **Exclusion of Politically Affiliated Websites:** Blogs directly linked to political parties or organizations were not selected to avoid overtly partisan perspectives. This criterion is crucial for maintaining a focus on news sources that aim to present information in a more balanced and journalistic manner, rather than propagating specific political agendas or ideologies.

The blog corpus was compiled by selecting blogs in descending order of popularity based on their Alexa ratings (at the time of the compilation, in 2017). Any blog that did not meet the established selection criteria was systematically excluded. The blogs

which were finally chosen were *Think Progress*, *Daily Cos*, *Zero Hedge*, *Crooks and Liars*, *Crooked Timber*, *Outside the Beltway*, *Naked Capitalism*, *Truthdig*, *Counterpunch*, *Z Net Top*, *Alter Net*, *Left Foot Forward*, *The Commentator*, *Hope Not Hate*, *The Slog*, *Sluggo O'Toole*, *Social Europe Journal*, *Libcom*, and *Open Democracy*.

The number of blogs selected is greater than that of newspapers because blogs typically do not cover international events, or any events, as extensively as newspapers. The decision as to how many blogs would be selected was made on the grounds that the articles comprising the corpora would produce six subcorpora with the NC and the BC of each election period having approximately the same number of words.

The subcorpora contain all the articles which were written up to five days before and five days after the elections or referendum in the selected newspapers and blogs and which concerned the events in focus. Both news and opinion articles were included, with the former predominant, as there were naturally fewer opinion articles published.

Although I initially had reservations about including opinion articles, I decided to include them. The rationale behind this decision was that, even though they are inherently subjective, opinion pieces are a vital component of media discourse, reflecting the editorial stance of a publication and contributing to a deeper understanding of the media landscape. Including these articles enables a more in-depth analysis of the range of perspectives presented and ensures that the study captures the complexity and diversity of media representations, including those that explicitly aim to persuade or influence public opinion.

The number of articles and words contained in each subcorpus is presented in Tables 3.1-3.3

Table 3.1. Number of articles and words in January NC and BC

	<b>Newspaper Corpus</b>	<b>Blog Corpus</b>
Number of Articles	40	36
Number of words	41.318	44.679

Table 3.2. Number of articles and words in July NC and BC

	<b>Newspaper Corpus</b>	<b>Blog Corpus</b>
Number of Articles	47	41
Number of Words	43.538	55.113

Table 3.3. Number of articles and words in September NC and BC

	<b>Newspaper Corpus</b>	<b>Blog Corpus</b>
Number of Articles	29	11
Number of Words	24.433	15.747

The NC and the BC for each period are balanced in terms of word count. However, there are variations between the periods due to the fluctuating international interest in the elections. This is reflected in the different volumes of articles produced for each period. In particular, the NC and, to a greater extent, the BC for September are significantly smaller, indicating declining interest in the Greek crisis. In addition, it seems that the period that attracted more international interest was the July referendum.

The corpus consists of 204 articles, totaling 224,828 words. To analyse this substantial volume, quantitative methods and computational tools were necessary. The next subsection describes the complexities of dealing with such a large corpus and the methods used to overcome this challenge.

### **3.3 Methods of Data Analysis**

#### **3.3.1 Quantitative Analysis**

It was clear from the outset that in order to effectively address all the research questions with such a large amount of data, the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods would be essential. The initial stage of the research involved answering the first research question, which was to identify the most prominent social actors in the corpus and examine their representations across mainstream and alternative media. To identify the main social actors, it would be necessary to determine the most frequently mentioned and discussed social actors in the 224,828-word corpus. This level of detailed analysis would only be possible through the use of corpus analysis software, which allows for the creation of frequency lists.

The initial quantitative phase was necessary to identify the key social actors, which formed the basis for a systematic comparison of their representations across various media types. This quantitative foundation would enable a more sophisticated qualitative examination of how these actors are represented, ensuring a methodological synergy that effectively bridges the gap between numerical data and interpretive analysis.

To obtain quantitative results in a corpus-based study, researchers must select suitable software from the abundance available in the market. Corpus analysis tools normally have two features: a feature for generating word lists and one for generating concordances (Bowker & Pearson, 2002, p.13).

Word lists can provide information on the total number of words, the number of occurrences of each lexical item (token), as well as frequency lists, i.e. a list of words that occur in a corpus in order from most to least frequent. Word lists can also provide evidence of collocations, that is 'the above-chance frequent co-occurrence of two words



within a pre-determined span, usually five words on either side of the word under investigation' (Baker et al. 2008:278).

However, frequency lists are not enough for the researcher to draw conclusions: concordance-based analyses can suggest explanations as to why certain words are more frequent than others (Baker, Hardie & McEnery, 2006). Concordancing software produces concordance lines, i.e. a list of the occurrences of the word we are examining (the node) along with several words before and after it. It is also possible to see the whole text in which each instance appeared, by clicking on the node. Thus, the researchers are given the opportunity to examine the words in context.

In the present study the corpora will be analyzed using Wordsmith tools, a set of programs for corpus analysis available for purchase online<sup>1</sup>. Wordsmith tools is comprised of three programs, namely Concord, WordList and KeyWord. With Concord, the analyst can have a concordance display of any word they specify, thus being able to see all instances of words of interest in context. The program also provides the analyst with the opportunity to refer to the source text by double-clicking on a concordance line. WordList is a program that generates word lists of any corpus or corpora specified, which can be viewed either in alphabetical or frequency order. The program also produces lists of collocates and clusters for each word in the list. Finally, with KeyWord we can compare two corpora, the one under investigation and a larger, general corpus.

To identify the key social actors, the first part of this analysis focuses on lexical choices. Frequency lists were generated for each subcorpus using the WordList feature, resulting in six distinct frequency lists: January Newspaper Corpus (NC) and Blog Corpus (BC), July NC and BC, and September NC and BC. To refine these lists for analytical

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lexically.net/wordsmith/>

purposes, grammatical function words (such as articles, for example) were excluded. The study's primary interest was in the social actors engaged in the events and their representations across different media outlets. To ensure a targeted examination of the language used to describe and characterize these actors, the focus was narrowed to the 30 most frequent adjectives and nouns across all six lists, as nouns identify the actors and their roles, while adjectives provide insight into the qualities attributed to these actors.

After comparing the lists, it was revealed that the vast majority of the lexical items included in the lists fell into four categories: those related to the country and its people (country-related), those related to the EU and its institutions (EU-related), those related to the economy (economy-related) and those related to the political parties participating in the elections (party-related). A statistical analysis was carried out, based on the Bayesian approach which confirmed the statistical significance of these findings; this approach to statistical analysis has been more and more widely used since the 1980's (Howson & Urbach, 1989), and during the last decade it has started being employed in linguistic studies as well (Titov & Klementiev, 2012; Sorensen & Vasishth, 2015)

For each of the categories (country-related, EU-related, economy-related and party-related), the most frequent word was chosen for further analysis. These words were: Greece, EU, Austerity, and Syriza/Tsipras (Syriza for the January and September subcorpora, Tsipras for the July subcorpus).

Using Concord of Wordsmith tools, concordances were created for each of these lexical items (Picture 3.1). The concordance lines were then scanned manually, so as to create files containing the whole sentences in which the words under investigation were

included (Picture 3.2). This was necessary for the qualitative analysis, as the lexical items would be examined in context.

Picture 3.1. Screenshot from the concordance lines of the word Tsipras in the July BC.

N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word #	Sent #	Para #	Pos
1	that their bad situation is just going to get worse. 10. Tsipras' Bailout Referendum Sham At 1:00 AM in			16,256	609	2	01..5
2	had breached Eurozone rules in a serious way. 11. Tsipras Accepts Most Creditor Terms as Merkel			19,547	735	2	01..6
3	more generally. If there's anything reckless about Tsipras' approach, it's that he even let the creditors			37,360	1..3	7	01..9
4	For instance, per the New York Times account, Tsipras May Accept Creditors' Terms: Prime			20,052	756	10	01..1
5	members of SYRIZA's Left Platform voted against Tsipras's proposal. Many even voted for it because			49,046	1..8	21	01..5
6	on Saturday morning, Greek prime minister Alex Tsipras announced that Greece would hold a			16,272	609	18	01..1
7	handing a sweeping victory to Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, a leftist who came to power in January			25,103	966	20	01..2
8	handing a sweeping victory to Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, a leftist who came to power in January			15,024	563	20	01..3
9	midnight on June 27, Greek prime minister Alexis Tsipras announced to the nation that a referendum			1,897	76	33	01..6
10	it's a vote of confidence or otherwise in Alexis Tsipras. Brussels Parliament Chief Dummkopf			42,596	1..4	16	01..5
11	What happened on the 26th of June was that Alexis [Tsipras] came to realize, at long last, that no matter			38,467	1..3	14	01..6
12	Kathimerini puts it: "Prime minister Alexis Tsipras decided to shy away from his historical			40,303	1..6	12	01..2
13	— had endorsed what Syriza's leader Alexis Tsipras has been saying all along: Greece needs a			29,269	1..4	36	01..8
14	. The subhead says it all: Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras never expected to win Sunday's			22,480	857	10	01..9
15	of the Telegraph story: Greek premier Alexis Tsipras never expected to win Sunday's			22,653	863	11	01..2
16	May Accept Creditors' Terms: Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said Greece was "prepared to accept" a			20,060	756	18	01..9
17	. a concession caucus in the circle around Alexis Tsipras. That is a problem because that is			39,165	1..7	15	01..4
18	and presumably was intended to be, an offer Alexis Tsipras, the Greek prime minister, can't accept.			24,515	943	13	01..4
19	results. For his part, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras took to Twitter to register his reactions to			24,910	960	9	01..9
20	to negotiators last week, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras was pushing for a "No" vote with the			15,869	595	42	01..8
21	the part of the government. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who came to power in large part on a			787	36	5	0786
22	to campaign in Greece! I suspect that Alexis Tsipras would gladly pay his airfare. Not in the least			53,645	1..5	6	01..4
23	had dined on cod and chocolate mousse and Tsipras had made his own presentation, German			12,977	469	15	01..6
24	by the "institutions"—just days after he and Tsipras strongly indicated that they would resign in			2,237	86	29	01..6
25	and its own nationally-circulating newspaper, Avgji. Tsipras is given unlimited airtime on ERT and is			4,747	154	2	01..6
26	. Yes, as I have argued many times before, Tsipras' and Varoufakis' belief that they could			37,021	1..3	10	01..0
27	climax The announcement struck like a bombshell. Tsipras' spectacular decision late on Friday to fly			38,894	1..9	2	01..3

Picture 3.2. Screenshot from the file of sentences created from the concordance lines of the word Tsipras in the July BC.

### Tsipras – July 5 – BC

1. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who came to power in large part on a promise to reject more austerity measures, had called the referendum to get more bargaining power in the dealmaking process.
2. Tsipras is given unlimited airtime on ERT and is faced only with softball questions by its reporters, while ERT's social media accounts reflect a clear pro-government slant.
3. Varoufakis added that if "yes" ultimately prevails on July 5th, that the government will sign off on the proposals presented by the "institutions"—just days after he and Tsipras strongly indicated that they would resign in the event of a "yes" vote.
4. Conventional wisdom has it as follows: Tsipras is a hardline communist, who overplayed his hand with the troika (or "the three institutions", as he calls them).
5. It was then reported by the media that Tsipras submitted a new proposal to the "institutions," a proposal which aimed to settle Greece's funding from the supra-national European Stability Mechanism in order for Greece's debt to become "sustainable" while giving emphasis to the "growth perspective."

Thus, 24 concordance lines and 24 files with sentences were created, as illustrated in Table 3.4. These files were subsequently qualitatively researched, in the way which will be described in section 3.3.2 below.

Table 3.4. List of concordance lines created in the quantitative analysis.

<b>January NC:</b>	Syriza, Austerity, Greece, EU
<b>January BC:</b>	Syriza, Austerity, Greece, EU
<b>July NC:</b>	Tsipras, Austerity, Greece, EU
<b>July BC:</b>	Tsipras, Austerity, Greece, EU
<b>September NC:</b>	Syriza, Austerity, Greece, EU
<b>September BC:</b>	Syriza, Austerity, Greece, EU

### 3.3.2 Qualitative analysis

The sentences produced with the procedure outlined in 3.3.1, were then analysed qualitatively, relying on Van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors (1996), and more specifically Role Allocation, and Halliday's Transitivity Theory (1985).

The decision to use Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, in particular Transitivity Theory (Halliday, 1985), for the qualitative analysis stems from its profound ability to reveal how language constructs reality through verbal processes and their participants. This framework allows for a more sophisticated exploration of the roles and actions attributed to social actors within media texts, highlighting the dynamic relationships between them and their activities or states. By analysing these grammatical choices, the study gains deeper insights into the underlying ideologies and perspectives that the media convey about the social actors involved in the Greek crisis.

The choice to use Van Leeuwen's concept of Role Allocation in the analysis is based on the method's sophisticated ability to meticulously analyse the multiple roles assigned

to social actors in media texts. This analytical approach can reveal both the obvious and subtle ways in which social actors are portrayed by the discourse. It examines how these actors are represented either as active agents who initiate action and influence outcomes, or as passive subjects who receive action and are acted upon, thereby highlighting the distribution of agency and power within the discourse. Additionally, the method explores how social actors are sometimes circumstantialised and positioned in the background. This analysis goes beyond simple categorisation and explores the narrative techniques and linguistic choices used to construct these roles. It reveals the underlying assumptions, values, and ideologies that guide their representation.

As described in the previous subsection, the quantitative analysis has identified four categories of words that constitute the larger proportion of the corpus (country-related, EU-related, economy-related and party-related words). The most frequent lexical item of each category (Greece, EU, Austerity, and Syriza/Tsipras) was then processed with the Concord from the Wordsmith tool, and files containing the whole sentences of the nodes were created. These sentences were the object of the qualitative analysis, which was carried out by employing transitivity theory and the representation of social actors framework. The analysis was conducted in 4 steps.

**Step 1:** The files created during the quantitative analysis stage were manually scanned and all clauses were characterised as activated, subjected, beneficialised or circumstantialised, and then they were annotated as to the ways in which they are activated, subjected, beneficialised or circumstantialised, according to Van Leeuwen's Role Allocation framework.

Van Leeuwen, based on Halliday's Transitivity Theory has defined the roles social actors are given in representations (2008, p.32-35). He claims that who is represented

as an ‘agent’ and who is represented as a ‘patient’ is not to be confused with the grammatical roles, as representations can reallocate the roles a social actor is given in a social practice.

Van Leeuwen explains that “activation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity” (2008, p.33). Thus, a social actor can be activated as:

- i. **An Actor in a Material Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p.179) as “the Actor is the one that does the deed — that is, the one that brings about the change”

**Example:** “Greece is running both a primary budget surplus and a trade surplus.”  
(Greece, January BC).

- ii. **A Behaver in a Behavioral Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p.250) as “The participant who is ‘behaving’” .

**Example:** “I thought I was dreaming.”

In this instance, the Behaver is ‘I’. The example is taken from Halliday, as there were no instances of a social actor being the behavior in a behavioral process in the corpus (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.250).

- iii. **A Senser in a Mental Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p. 201) as “the one that ‘senses’ - feels, thinks, wants or perceives”.

**Example:** “The EU blinks in fear of a disintegration of the euro” (EU, July NC).

- iv. **A Sayer in a Verbal Process** described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p. 254) as “anything that puts out a signal”.

**Example:** “In landslide 61% to 39% vote, Greece says 'no' to bailout deal” (Greece, July NC).

- v. An **Assigner in a Relational Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2004, p.237) as “the entity assigning the relationship of identity of attribution”.

**Example:** “We might call it the authorial voice”.

The example is taken from Halliday, as there were no instances of a social actor being the Assigner in a relational process in the corpus (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.237).

In these cases, the activation is realized through participation, and the active role is foregrounded (Van Leeuwen, 2004, p. 33). There are also cases where the activation is realised in other ways. For example, it can be realised through:

- vi. Through **Adjectival Premodification or Postmodification**, described by van Leeuwen (2004, p.33) as “nominalizations or process nouns” that “can also realize activation”.

**Example:** “They are against neoliberalism and the current austerity program” (Austerity, January BC).

- vii. Through **Possessivation**, i.e. the use of a possessive pronoun or any possessive construction to activate (e.g. our intake) (ibid, p.33).

**Example:** “Syriza’s victory is a milestone for Europe” (Syriza, January NC)

Possessivation is a very frequent category, and a possessive pronoun can also be used to passivate, as can Adjectival Pre/Postmodification (ibid, p.33). Examples will be provided below.

As Van Leeuwen puts it, passivation occurs when the social actors “are represented as “undergoing” the activity, or as being “at the receiving end of it.” A further distinction is required, as a passivated social actor can be either subjected (treated as an object), or beneficialized (benefiting from the action, either positively or negatively) (ibid, p.33).

Subjection can be realized with the social actor being:

- i. **A Goal in a Material Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2008, p.181) as the “one that ‘suffers’ or ‘undergoes’ the process”.

**Example:** “Greek voters are more likely to support the European Union, the European Central Bank and the IMF — Greece’s lenders — and send Tsipras and his government packing.” (Tsipras, July NC)

- ii. **A Phenomenon in a Mental Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2008, p.203) as “that which is felt, thought, wanted or perceived”.

**Example:** “Mr. Tsipras, however, has continued to focus on the notion that Greece needs to move beyond the parties that caused the financial crisis.” (Greece, September NC).

- iii. **A Carrier in a Relational Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2008, p.245) as “the entity to which the attribute is ascribed, or the possessor”.

**Example:** “Greece elections: In times like these, the EU has far more dangerous adversaries than Syriza” (EU, January NC).

- iv. **A Verbiage In A Verbal Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2008, p.255) as “the function that corresponds to what is said”.



**Example:** “A Greek government official said Tsipras had spoken earlier in the day with Juncker, European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi and European Parliament president Martin Schulz.” (Tsipras, July NC).

Like activation, Subjection can also be realized in a backgrounded way:

- v. Through **Possessivation** (e.g. intake of immigrants) (Van Leeuwen, 2008, p.33)

**Example:** “We believe that Greece’s position within the Eurozone could come into question again within the next few months”. (Greece, September BC)

- vi. Through **Adjectival pre/postmodification** (e.g. racial intolerance) (ibid. p.33)

**Example:** “The IMF, in all its austerity wisdom, once predicted that Greece's unemployment rate would peak at 12%.” (Austerity, January BC).

The difference with activation through Possessivation or Adjectival Pre/postmodification is that the social actor is not seen as being active but rather as being at the receiving end of an action. For instance, in the example “Syriza’s victory is a milestone for Europe,” the social actor (Syriza) is represented as being inherently linked to the action of winning the elections. Conversely, when subjection is expressed through possessivation, as in “We believe that Greece’s position within the Eurozone could come into question again within the next few months,” the social actor is framed in a passive light, positioned as the subject influenced by external actions or decisions – in this case Syriza is placed in a certain position.

Beneficialisation can be realized with the beneficialised participant being:

- i. A **Recipient or Client** in relation to a **Material Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2008, p.191) as “a participant that is benefiting from the performance of the process”.

Example: “The people of Greece have presented the European Union with the greatest political crisis in its history” (EU, July NC).

- ii. A **Receiver in a Verbal Process**, described by Halliday & Matthiessen (2008, p.255) as “the one to whom the saying is directed”.

Example: “Describe to the court the scene of the accident”

In this instance, the receiver is ‘the court’. The example is taken from Halliday, as there were no instances of a social actor being the receiver in a verbal process in the corpus (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.255).

Lastly, there are cases where the social actors are neither activated nor passivated, but are circumstantialized. In this case, the social actors could be a circumstantial of extent, location, manner, cause, contingency, accompaniment, role, matter, or angle (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2008, p.264). However, circumstantialization is not important for this study, as the percentages of circumstantialization of all four social actors examined, in all subcorpora, are very low and therefore not significant enough to be analysed.

The 24 files containing sentences from the quantitative analysis were thoroughly examined using Van Leeuwen's analytical framework. Each sentence was categorized as Activated (A), Subjected (S), Beneficialized (B), or Circumstantialized (C). Further explanation was provided on how each state, such as activation or subjection, was linguistically expressed. To demonstrate the practical application of this analysis, Picture 3.3 displays a section from the file linked to the July Blog Corpus (BC). The section specifically focuses on sentences that contain the lexical item 'Tsipras'.

Picture 3.3. Screenshot from file of sentences created from the concordance lines of the word Tsipras in the July BC, after manually scanned and characterized as to their role allocation.

**Tsipras – July 5 – BC**

1. Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who came to power in large part on a promise to reject more austerity measures, had called the referendum to get more bargaining power in the dealmaking process. **A – actor in a material process**
2. Tsipras is given unlimited airtime on ERT and is faced only with softball questions by its reporters, while ERT's social media accounts reflect a clear pro-government slant. **B – recipient in a material process**
3. Varoufakis added that if "yes" ultimately prevails on July 5th, that the government will sign off on the proposals presented by the "institutions"—just days after he and Tsipras strongly indicated that they would resign in the event of a "yes" vote. **A – saver in a material process**
4. Conventional wisdom has it as follows: Tsipras is a hardline communist, who overplayed his hand with the troika (or "the three institutions", as he calls them). **S – carrier in a relational process**
5. It was then reported by the media that Tsipras submitted a new proposal to the "institutions," a proposal which aimed to settle Greece's funding from the supra-national European Stability Mechanism in order for Greece's debt to become "sustainable" while giving emphasis to the "growth perspective." **A – actor in a material process**

**Step 2:** After all sentences derived from the concordances had been scanned and analysed, as described in Step 1, the total percentage of activation, subjection, beneficialization and circumstantialization was calculated.

The analysis focuses on the percentages of activation and subjection, which appear to be prevalent for all social actors, in comparison with the often marginal percentages of beneficialisation and circumstantialisation.

The percentages of activation and subjection seem to lead to interesting observations. More detailed analysis will attempt to interpret these observations. While there are no significant discrepancies between the NC and BC of each subcorpus, this does not necessarily imply that the stance of the two types of media towards the social actors in question is identical.

**Step 3:** For each social actor, in each subcorpus, we calculated the percentages of the ways activation and subjection were realized in the respective cases.

The findings of this analysis can lead to conclusions concerning which social actors were considered the ones making the decisions and taking initiatives. For example, when a social actor is in the majority of instances activated as an actor in a material process, this is most probably an indication that it is considered to be a powerful social actor. In addition, the differences among the three periods in investigation may point to shifts owing to political developments – e.g. a social actor that is less frequently activated as an actor in a material process in September than in January, might be seen as less powerful than in the past. However, the percentages alone do not contribute much to our understanding of the stance of the two types of media, so as to arrive at conclusions regarding the potential differences in the stance of mainstream and alternative media.

The necessity of combining quantitative and qualitative methods, in order to achieve the best possible results and deeper understanding, has been widely discussed in the literature (e.g. Hardt-Mautner 1995, Orpin 2005, Baker et al. 2008, Marchi and Taylor 2009) and has also been extensively addressed in the chapter of the literature analysis of this thesis. Hardt-Mautner (1995:24) suggests, as previously mentioned, that the researcher needs to constantly move between these two different types of data. Thus, it was considered necessary to shift again to qualitative analysis, and examine the sentences manually, in the way which will be described in Step 4.

**Step 4:** The four social actors this study focuses on, can be perceived in a sense as opposing pairs. The first pair would be Greece and EU; as discussed in the literature review, the economic crisis in Greece was widely presented by the mainstream media as an outcome of the recklessness of the Greeks and the inherent weaknesses of the Greek economy, even as owing to cultural characteristics (Herzfeld 2011, Bickes et al., 2014, Kaitatzi 2014, Kutter 2014, Tseronis 2015), while the EU was seen as the rescuer,

the social actor providing solutions and dictating necessary measures (Kutter 2014, Herzfeld 2011, Tzogopoulos 2013). In the alternative media, although the research is much less extensive, it seems that Greece is represented as a victim of a systemic crisis and the EU as imposing policies that exacerbate the situation (Touri and Kostarella 2016).

Regarding the pair Syriza and austerity, Syriza was opposed to austerity and their campaign had been one based on promises of abolishing it (Smyrnaioi and Karatzogianni 2020). There were two opposing views on the matter, the Greek governments before January 2015 elections and the mainstream media, on the one hand, claiming that austerity was the most suitable solution to the “Greek crisis” (Tracy 2011, Hatzimihalis 2018), while on the other hand there were widespread and hyperactive anti-austerity movements, expressed and organized through the social media and alternative media (Galis and Neumayer 2016). It was those movements that Syriza attempted to represent in the central political scene (Kouki and González 2018).

Extensive research has been conducted on the representation of Greece and the EU, particularly in the mainstream media. Chapter 7 will discuss the results of the analysis. The conclusions drawn from the data based on transitivity and role allocation are largely consistent with those of other studies on the topic, as discussed in the literature review. The investigation of alternative media representations is an interesting area of research, as it has been underexplored.

The representations of Syriza and austerity have not been given the same amount of attention, and their coverage in the mainstream media is not as thoroughly analysed as that of Greece and the EU, neither are, of course, their representations in alternative

media. Hence, it was considered essential to look into the coverage of Syriza and austerity in more detail.

Therefore, from the activation and subjection instances, which were more frequent in the corpora than the beneficialization and circumstantialization instances, the prevalent ways of activation / subjection realizations were chosen. For instance, for Syriza in the January subcorpus the activation as an Actor in a Material Process and through Possessivation, as well as the subjection as a Carrier in a Relational Process and through Possessivation were chosen. These instances were manually investigated as to their content, while presenting characteristic examples of use, to arrive at conclusions regarding the stance of the mainstream newspapers and the alternative news blogs.

In order to achieve this, the content of the selected instances was meticulously analyzed. The lexical choices within these instances were scrutinised to identify whether the representation of the social actors was positive or negative. For example, when Syriza was activated as an Actor in a Material Process, the verbs and surrounding context were examined to determine if they suggested positive agency, such as "initiates reforms," or negative actions, such as "causes turmoil." Similarly, subjected instances were assessed to see if Syriza was depicted passively in a negative light, such as being the Carrier in a Relational Process with attributes like "ineffective" or "struggling." By analysing these lexical choices, it was possible to discern whether the mainstream newspapers portrayed Syriza and other actors in a more favorable or unfavorable manner compared to the alternative news blogs.

Additionally, this analysis could only be possible by relating it to the sociopolitical environment in which the events were unfolding. The context of the 2015 Greek economic crisis, marked by austerity measures, political upheaval, and public

sentiment, was crucial in interpreting the lexical choices and representations. Understanding the broader sociopolitical climate allowed for a deeper insight into why certain lexical choices were made and how they reflected the prevailing attitudes and ideologies of the time. For instance, during periods of intense negotiation with international creditors, mainstream media might emphasise the need for fiscal responsibility, while alternative blogs could highlight grassroots resistance and socio-economic struggles. This contextual awareness provided a richer, more nuanced interpretation of the data.

The results of this analysis are presented in Chapter 5 for Syriza / Tsipras, 6 for Austerity and 7 for Greece and EU. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the findings of the quantitative analysis.

### **3.4 Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies: A Synergistic Approach**

Throughout this study, a dual-method approach has been employed, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. This approach, grounded in the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics, leverages the strengths of each method to provide a holistic understanding of media representations of social actors within the context of the Greek crisis.

Quantitative methods, such as corpus analysis tools, have enabled the systematic identification and enumeration of key lexical items and patterns within a vast dataset. This phase of the research was crucial for establishing a foundation from which more detailed analysis could be undertaken, addressing questions related to the frequency and prominence of social actors across different media and time periods.

Following this, a qualitative analysis was conducted using Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar and Van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors framework, which allowed for a deeper exploration of how these actors are represented through grammatical choices. This phase was essential for interpreting the ideological principles and the strategies of discourse that shape media representations, providing insights into the ways in which language constructs social realities.

The synergy between quantitative and qualitative methods enriches the research, allowing for a comprehensive analysis that is both broad in scope and detailed in its examination of discursive practices. The quantitative phase offers a view of linguistic patterns, setting the stage for the qualitative analysis to delve into the micro-level intricacies of language use and its social implications. This methodological approach ensures a robust and nuanced exploration of the research questions.

The integration of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL) in this study creates a synergistic methodological framework that effectively addresses the limitations inherent to each approach when used in isolation. CDA, with its focus on the nuanced interpretation of texts to uncover underlying ideologies and power structures, can sometimes be criticized for its subjective nature and the potential for researcher bias in selecting and interpreting data. Conversely, CL, with its reliance on computational tools to analyze large volumes of text quantitatively, might overlook the deeper, qualitative aspects of language that reveal subtle discursive practices and meanings. By combining CDA's interpretative depth with CL's empirical rigor and ability to manage extensive datasets, the study mitigates these concerns, ensuring a balanced analysis that is both methodically robust and rich in interpretive insight. This dual approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of media discourse that is



grounded in empirical evidence while also being attuned to the complexities of language as a social practice.

The benefit derived from this combined quantitative and qualitative methodology extends beyond merely offsetting the disadvantages of each approach. Quantitatively, CL's ability to systematically process and analyze large text corpora provides a macro-level understanding of language patterns, offering a broad overview of how social actors are represented across different media and time periods. This empirical foundation enables the identification of significant trends and patterns that might not be immediately apparent through manual analysis alone. Qualitatively, CDA's interpretive analysis then delves into these identified patterns, examining the specific linguistic and discursive choices that construct these representations. This allows for a nuanced understanding of the ideologies and narratives at play, linking quantitative findings to broader social and cultural contexts. The synergy between quantitative breadth and qualitative depth enriches the study's findings, offering a holistic view that captures both the scale of discourse practices and the subtleties of meaning-making in media representations of the Greek crisis. This methodological integration thus leverages the advantages of both CDA and CL to provide a more comprehensive and nuanced analysis than either could achieve on its own.

In this thesis, the application of Fairclough's three-dimensional model enables a comprehensive analysis that integrates text, discursive practice, and sociocultural practice to investigate media representations of the 2015 Greek elections. At the textual level, van Leeuwen's sociosemantic inventory is utilized to dissect how social actors are represented in media texts. This involves examining activation and passivation within sentences, framed through Halliday's transitivity theory, to identify the roles assigned to the most prominent social actors. Moving to the level of discursive practice,

the analysis interprets these textual features to understand how different media—mainstream versus alternative—construct social realities, shedding light on the ideological underpinnings in their choice of transitivity, which reflects broader ideological narratives. Finally, at the sociocultural practice level, the thesis connects these linguistic choices to wider social and ideological contexts, exploring how they reflect and influence public opinions, social structures, and responses to the economic crisis. This methodological application not only highlights the dynamic interplay between language and social contexts but also illustrates how media discourse can shape and reinforce public perceptions during critical political events.

## CHAPTER 4

### QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS RESULTS

#### 4.1 Introduction

As was described in the Methodology chapter, the subcorpora were first examined using the Wordsmith Tools in order to detect patterns in the lexical items which were more prominent. Using the Wordlist program of Wordsmith tools, a frequency list was created for each subcorpus. The general findings were that in the frequency lists of all three periods there were not great differences between the frequency list of the NC and that of the BC (quantitatively that is), and that in all six frequency lists the vast majority of the lexical items seem to fall into four categories: lexical items denoting Greece and the Greek people, those referring to the EU and its institutions, those concerning the economy and those concerning political parties.

The statistical significance of the percentages of the lexical items of each category was tested, following the Bayesian method of statistical analysis. The Bayesian method had been far less popular than the classical statistical method for the most part of the twentieth century, but has gained great momentum since the 1980s (Howson & Urbach, 1989). It is an approach based on Bayes' theorem (1763), and, according to this approach, probability measures a "degree of belief." Bayes' theorem links the degree of belief in a proposition before (prior) and after (posterior) accounting for evidence. In this study it is used to verify that the findings on the prevalence of the four themes are statistically important, calculating the range of possible percentages the lexical items of each category could have in all the articles written on the subject, not only the ones in the corpora.

In this chapter the analysis of the frequency lists, as well as the statistical analysis, are presented separately for each election period.

## **4.2 January Elections**

### **4.2.1 Frequency lists**

The two corpora containing articles about the January elections were proven to have similar frequency lists, with 23 out of 30 lexical items common in the two lists, some of which in respectively close positions. Table 1 shows the 30 highest-ranked adjectives and nouns of the January NC and BC. The first column shows the rank of each lexical item in the frequency list of adjectives and nouns, the second and the sixth column is the rank in the general frequency list (corpus rank or CR), the third and the seventh columns are the lexical items, the fifth and the eighth represent the numbers of instances of each lexical item in the respective corpus, and the last column concerning each corpus shows the percentage of these instances in the corpus.

Table 4.1. January elections: Frequency list (first thirty nouns and adjectives) in January NC and BC

Rank	Newspaper corpus (NC)				Blog Corpus (BC)			
	CR	Lexical Item	No	%	CR	Lexical Item	No	%
1	11	Greece	401	0.95	10	Syriza	445	0.97
2	12	Syriza	393	0.93	16	Greece	316	0.69
3	17	party	300	0.71	20	Greek	271	0.59
4	23	Tsipras	233	0.55	27	Left	229	0.50
5	24	Greek	227	0.54	30	party	216	0.47
6	28	austerity	206	0.47	31	austerity	201	0.44
7	33	European	172	0.41	33	debt	180	0.39
8	36	government	163	0.38	37	European	150	0.33
9	41	new	136	0.32	42	government	138	0.30
10	42	country	134	0.32	43	Europe	130	0.28
11	43	Left	130	0.31	50	people	108	0.24
12	44	Europe	129	0.30	53	new	100	0.22
13	45	debt	128	0.30	54	election	99	0.22
14	47	election	120	0.28	55	euro	99	0.22
15	52	Athens	114	0.27	56	political	99	0.22
16	54	Greeks	103	0.24	59	Eurozone	96	0.21
17	55	people	97	0.23	64	economic	87	0.19
18	57	bailout	93	0.22	67	parties	82	0.18
19	61	euro	86	0.20	68	Tsipras	82	0.18
20	63	years	86	0.20	70	crisis	81	0.18
21	64	victory	85	0.20	71	EU	80	0.17
22	65	EU	84	0.20	72	social	79	0.17
23	67	political	83	0.20	78	right	74	0.16
24	68	Eurozone	80	0.19	83	Troika	68	0.15
25	70	minister	80	0.19	86	Greeks	66	0.14
26	73	elections	77	0.18	87	elections	63	0.14
27	74	right	77	0.18	88	radical	62	0.14
28	79	coalition	66	0.16	92	years	60	0.13
29	80	leader	66	0.16	93	country	59	0.13
30	81	Alexis	65	0.15	97	Spain	58	0.13

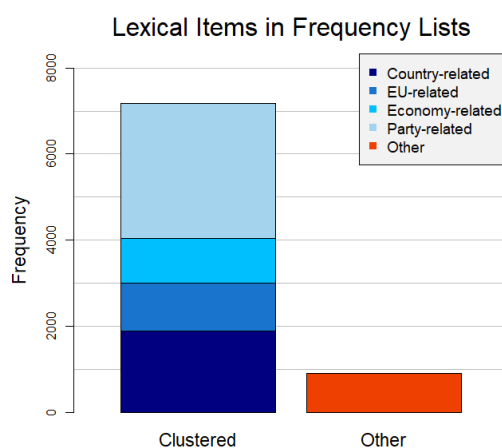
As explained in the introduction of this chapter, there seem to be four broad categories in which the vast majority of the lexical items in the frequency lists fall into, namely: lexical items related to Greece and the Greek people, lexical items related to the EU and its institutions, lexical items referring to the economy and the financial crisis and lexical items referring to the parties participating in the elections, mainly the two major political parties which were likely to win them. The categories are illustrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. The four categories of the most frequent lexical items in January NC and BC

<i>Country-related</i>		<i>EU-related</i>		<i>Economy-related</i>		<i>Party-related</i>	
<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>
Greece	Greece	European	European	austerity	austerity	Syriza	Syriza
Greek	Greek	Europe	Europe	debt	debt	party	left
country	people	euro	euro	bailout	economic	Tsipras	party
Athens	Greeks	EU	Eurozone		crisis	govern- ment	govern- ment
Greeks	country	Eurozone	EU		Troika	left	parties
people						minister right coalition leader Alexis	Tsipras   right radical

In the following chart, the percentages of the lexical items of the four categories (clustered), as well as the percentage of the lexical items not falling in one of these categories (other) are presented.

Chart 4.1. Clustered and non-clustered lexical items in January subcorpus.



In Tables 4.3-4.6, the lexical items of each category are presented separately, with rank and frequency information. As far as matters of the EU and Eurozone are concerned,

Table 4.3 illustrates how closely were the elections associated with the European institutions. There are 5 EU-related lexical items in the frequency lists of both the newspaper corpus and the blog corpus. Their rank in the frequency lists of the NC and the BC is presented in columns 2 and 4 respectively, and the number of occurrences in columns 3 and 6.

Table 4.3. EU-related words in January NC and BC

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
European	7	172	European	8	150
Europe	12	129	Europe	10	130
Euro	19	86	Euro	14	99
EU	22	84	Eurozone	16	96
Eurozone	24	80	EU	21	80
<b>Total</b>		<b>551</b>			<b>555</b>

As shown in Table 4.3, there is a total of 551 EU-related lexical items in the 41,318-word newspaper corpus (1.33%) and a total of 555 such items in the 44,679-word blog corpus (1,24%). This means that out of every 100 words, more than one is EU-related, which is indicative of how central the role of the EU in Greek politics was and how closely it was linked with the national elections. Qualitative data obtained from the manual scanning of the concordances of the lexical items in question can test this assumption and explore the nature of the association of the elections with EU matters.

Another issue that is closely associated with the elections, which is also relevant to the EU, is the economy and the Greek crisis. The lexical items austerity and debt are particularly frequent in both corpora. What could point to a different attitude of mainstream and alternative media is the fact that the word bailout is included in the NC

frequency list, while the word Troika is only frequent in the blog corpus, with 40 occurrences in the newspaper corpus.

A ‘bailout’ or ‘bank rescue’ is defined as ‘government-sponsored delay in the exit of insolvent banks that is explicitly or implicitly funded by public resources’ (Rosas, 2005). Therefore, it seems to carry positive connotations of the creditors saving the Greek banks, keeping them solvent and thus saving Greece from bankruptcy, and its extensive use by the newspapers may be an indication that the newspapers are supporting the EU policies and are well-disposed toward the EU institutions.

The word Troika, on the other hand, carries especially negative connotations, as it is a loan from the Russian, originally denoting a three-horse carriage, but which in the Stalinist era, in the 1930’s, was adopted to refer to the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs) Troikas, which were essentially a body of three members (Kareniuskaitė 2016), the most notorious of the extra-judicial tribunals that were used for political enemies. They were established in every region and acted as judges, juries and executioners. The accused typically did not appear in person and had no right to representation or appeal (Belova & Gregory 2009). The term was later used for any group of three with the power to make decisions, and thus was used to refer to the decision group created by the European Commission (EC), the European Central Bank (ECB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which was formed during the European debt crisis to manage the bailouts of Greece, Cyprus, Ireland and Portugal (Tuori & Tuori, 2014).

We can assume with relative confidence that the more extensive use of the word ‘troika’ by the blogs is indicative of their stance on the Greek crisis. The qualitative analysis of



the concordances will be more illuminating as to the difference in the stance between the two types of media.

Table 4.4. Economy-related words in January NC and BC

<b>NC</b>			<b>BC</b>		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Austerity	6	206	Austerity	6	201
Debt	13	128	Debt	7	180
Bailout	18	86	Economic	17	87
			Crisis	20	81
			Troika	24	68
<b>Total</b>		<b>420</b>			<b>617</b>

Table 4.4 shows that the percentage of the economy-related words in the newspaper corpus is 1.02% (420 out of 41,318) and in the blog corpus it is 1.38 (617 out of 44,679). As in the case of the EU-related lexical items, the high percentage shows that the economy was central in the discussion of elections in the media.

On Tables 4.5 and 4.6, the country-related and the party-related lexical items of the frequency lists are presented. It is not unanticipated that articles on elections should contain lexical items denoting the country in which the elections are taking place, as well as the political parties participating. What is surprising, however, is the fact that the lexical item Syriza is second in the newspaper corpus (after the lexical item Greece) and first in the blog corpus, and words denoting the party or its leader are very high in rank. The numbers show that there was considerably more reference to the party of Syriza than the party of New Democracy, although the latter was the governmental party before the elections and the polls did not indicate a landslide of Syriza. The references to Greece and the Greek people are expected in the context of Greek

elections. What needs to be further investigated is the attitude of international media towards the country and its people.

Table 4.5. Country-related words in January NC and BC

<b>NC</b>			<b>BC</b>		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Greece	1	401	Greece	2	316
Greek	5	227	Greek	3	271
Country	10	134	People	11	130
Athens	15	114	Greeks	25	66
Greeks	16	103	Country	29	59
People	17	97			
<b>Total</b>		<b>1076</b>			<b>842</b>

Table 4.6. Party-related words in January NC and BC

<b>NC</b>			<b>BC</b>		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Syriza	2	393	Syriza	1	445
Party	3	300	Left	4	229
Tsipras	4	233	Party	5	216
Government	8	163	Government	9	138
Left	11	130	Parties	18	82
Minister	25	80	Tsipras	19	82
Right	27	77	Right	23	74
Coalition	28	66	Radical	27	62
Leader	29	66			
Alexis	30	65			
<b>Total</b>		<b>1709</b>			<b>1428</b>

The percentage of the party-related words in the newspaper corpus is 4.13% (1709 out of 41,318) and in the blog corpus 3.20% (1428 out of 44,679). Accordingly, the

percentage of the country-related words in the newspaper corpus is 2.60% (1,076 out of 41,318) and in the blog corpus 1.88% (842 out of 44,679).

#### 4.2.2 Statistical Verification

In order to provide a reliable estimate of the percentages of the parameters of interest (namely the four categories in comparison with the total of the words), a statistical analysis was conducted based on the Bayesian approach, as it is more easily interpreted and more dependable for the large amount of data it would be applied on. More specifically, it provides a 99% credible interval with the most probable value for each unknown parameter. The results are shown in the following charts.

Chart 4.2. Bayesian analysis of the data from January NC

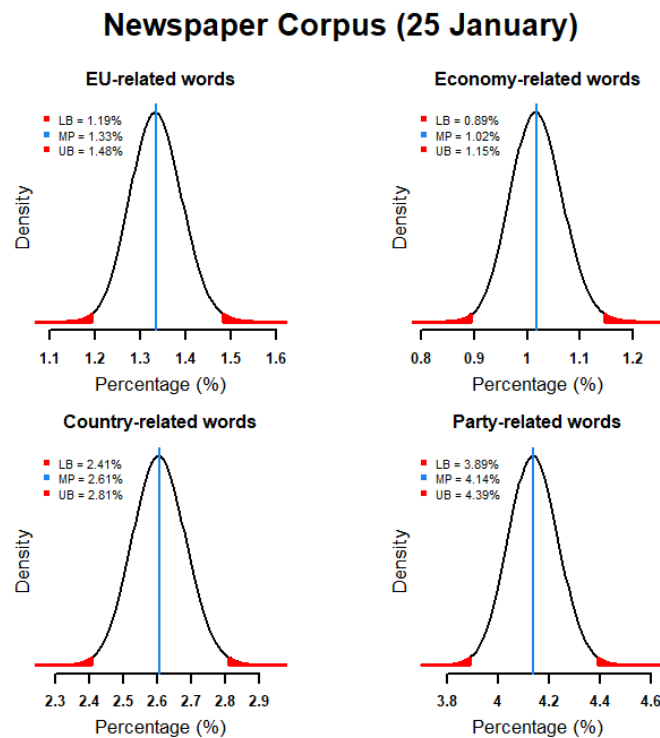
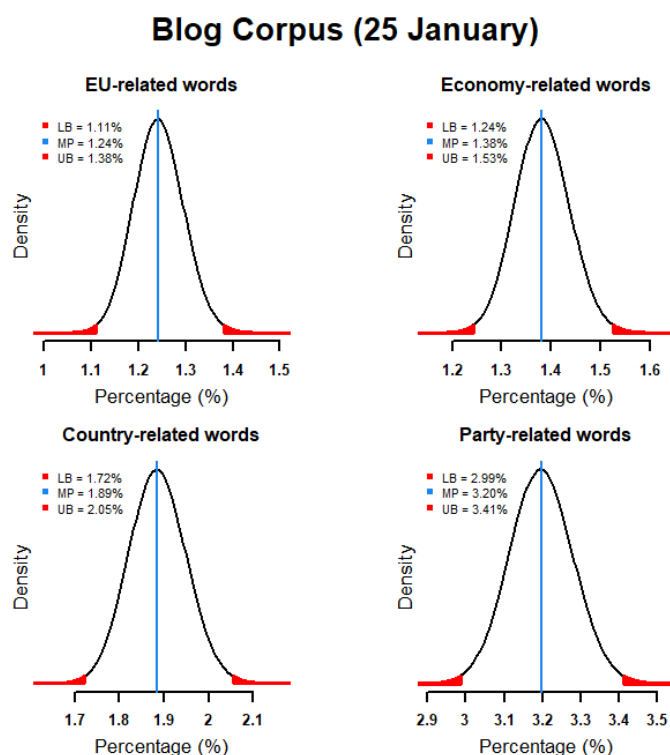


Chart 4.3. Bayesian analysis of the data from January BC



LB and UB represent the lower and upper bound respectively, that is the lowest and highest percentages that each category could reach in the total of the articles written on the issue, estimated by the percentages of the articles of the corpora. MP is the mean percentage, i.e. a point estimate for the unknown percentages.

In the NC, the MP for EU-related lexical items is 1.33%, for economy-related it is 1.02%, for country related 2.61% and for party-related 4.14%. In all four cases, the MP is almost identical to the percentages calculated in the corpus, which are 1.33%, 1.02%, 2.60%, and 4.13% respectively.

In the BC the percentages are similar. The MP is 1.24% for EU-related lexical items, 1.38% for economy-related, 1.89% for country related and 3.20% for party-related. The percentages calculated in the BC are 1.24%, 1.38%, 1.88% and 3.20% respectively, and thus almost identical to the MP, as were the percentages in the NC.

Table 7 illustrates this proximity in the percentages estimated in the texts with the ones found by the statistical analysis to apply in all the articles written on the topic of January elections in British and American broadsheets (NC) and blogs (BC).

Table 4.7. Percentages of the lexical items of the four categories, compared to the MP of the statistical analysis in the January NC and BC

	NC	MP	BC	MP
<i>EU-related</i>	1.33%	1.33%	1.24%	1.24%
<i>Economy-related</i>	1.02%	1.02%	1.38%	1.38%
<i>Country-related</i>	2.60%	2.61%	1.88%	1.89%
<i>Party-related</i>	4.13%	4.14%	3.20%	3.20%

The analysis shows that the percentages calculated from the actual occurrences of words falling in the four designated categories in the two corpora are reliable.

#### 4.2.3 Concluding Remarks

There are certain deductions to be made based on the mere quantitative data which the frequency lists provide, namely:

- a) In both the newspaper and the blog corpora, there is extensive reference to the EU and its institutions, even though the topic of the articles is the national elections of a member country, namely Greece, and not European elections. This is illustrative of the fact that at the time of the elections, the EU played a major role in Greek politics.
- b) Lexical choices concerning the economy, the financial crisis and the ways of overcoming it are particularly high in frequency rank, which reflects the fact that concerns about the debt crisis and the bailout conditions were central. There are certain indications that the newspapers support the EU policies more than the blogs do.
- c) Reference to political parties was not equally divided between the two major parties. Lexical items referring to the then main opposition party (Syriza) are

much higher in number and rank than lexical items referring to the governmental party (New Democracy) – even though the polls were not indicating a clear majority of the opposition. This in a way is linked to economy matters and EU membership, as Syriza was presented by mainstream media, other political parties and EU officials as the party which, once in power, would follow a completely different policy regarding the debt crisis and would cause the expulsion of Greece from the EU or Grexit (Markou 2017).

- d) The frequent reference to the country and its people is not surprising in the context of election reporting but there seems to be some analogy between reference to EU-related terms and Greece-related terms, as two distinct interested parties.
- e) In the blog corpus, apart for the lexical items that fall in one of the four categories, there is an unexpected lexical item particularly high in frequency, i.e. Spain. There are 58 occurrences of the word in articles on the Greek elections. This frequent reference, as the manual investigation of the concordances shows, is due to the comparison recurrently made in the Greek and international media between Syriza and Podemos, as the parties which supposedly aimed at putting an end to their countries' compliance with the financial policies dictated by the EU (Porta et al. 2017).

### **4.3 July Referendum**

The procedure followed was exactly the same as in the case of the January subcorpus, and the findings based on the frequency lists were also very similar to the January ones.

#### **4.3.1 Frequency lists**

In the case of the July subcorpora, the frequency lists of the NC and the BC were comparable, although not without certain significant differences. Table 4.8 shows the 30 higher-ranked adjectives and nouns of the July NC and BC.

Table 4.8. Referendum: Frequency list (first thirty nouns and adjectives) in July NC and BC

Rank	Newspaper corpus (NC)				Blog Corpus (BC)			
	CR	Lexical Item	No	%	CR	Lexical Item	No	%
1	8	Greece	499	1.13	11	Greece	501	0.89
2	15	vote	332	0.75	14	Greek	392	0.70
3	19	Greek	288	0.65	34	referendum	203	0.36
4	26	European	237	0.54	35	government	202	0.36
5	27	referendum	233	0.53	38	Syriza	190	0.34
6	29	Tsipras	217	0.49	46	austerity	168	0.30
7	39	country	171	0.39	47	European	154	0.27
8	40	Greeks	171	0.39	48	vote	154	0.27
9	41	government	168	0.38	53	banks	130	0.23
10	44	euro	156	0.35	54	people	129	0.23
11	45	Europe	156	0.35	65	Eurozone	106	0.19
12	46	creditors	149	0.34	66	bank	105	0.19
13	48	minister	134	0.30	68	economic	99	0.18
14	54	deal	127	0.29	69	EU	99	0.18
15	55	Eurozone	127	0.29	70	Greeks	99	0.18
16	57	bailout	117	0.26	71	Tsipras	99	0.18
17	60	banks	112	0.25	74	troika	95	0.17
18	67	Athens	103	0.23	76	country	93	0.17
19	68	austerity	102	0.23	77	ECB	93	0.17
20	69	people	102	0.23	80	euro	90	0.16
21	70	new	98	0.22	83	economy	88	0.16
22	74	bank	90	0.20	86	creditors	85	0.15
23	75	Sunday	90	0.20	87	Europe	85	0.15
24	76	last	85	0.19	88	public	84	0.15
25	83	debt	83	0.19	95	bailout	77	0.14
26	84	prime	74	0.17	96	political	77	0.14
27	85	week	74	0.17	97	financial	76	0.14
28	86	voters	73	0.16	103	money	72	0.13
29	88	leaders	69	0.16	108	years	67	0.12
30	91	cash	66	0.15	110	Germany	65	0.12

In accordance to the respective frequency lists of the January elections, the lexical items seem to mainly fall into the same four categories (i.e. country-related, EU-related,

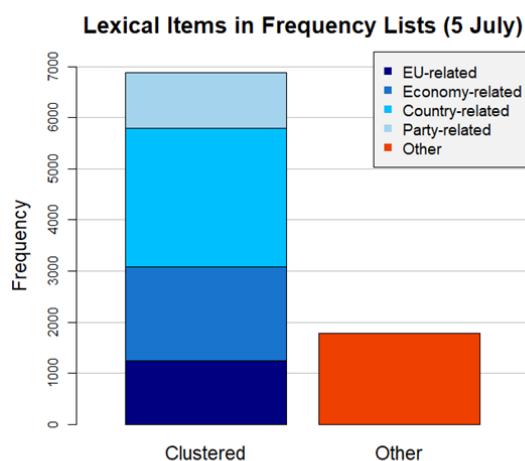
economy –related and party-related), both in the NC and the BC. The lexical items of each category are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: The four categories of the most frequent lexical items in July NC and BC

<i>Country-related</i>		<i>EU-related</i>		<i>Economy-related</i>		<i>Party-related</i>	
<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>
Greece	Greece	European	European	creditors	austerity	Tsipras	government
Greek	Greek	euro	Eurozone	deal	banks	government	Syriza
country	people	Europe	EU	bailout	bank	minister	Tsipras
Athens	Greeks	leaders	ECB	banks	economic	new	
people	country		euro	austerity	Troika	prime	
voters	public		Europe	bank	economy		
				debt	creditors		
				cash	bailout		
					financial		
					money		

In the following chart, the percentages of the lexical items of the four categories, as well as the percentage of the lexical items not falling in one of these categories are presented.

Chart 4.4. Clustered and non-clustered lexical items in July subcorpus.





In Table 4.10 the EU – related lexical items are presented. Regarding the lexical items ‘Eurozone’ and ‘Euro’, it seems that in the BC they are more frequent than in January, while in the NC less frequent compared to the January NC – ‘Eurozone’ is not even included in the 30 most frequent lexical items of the July NC. At the time preceding the referendum, not only the government did not express any intention of leaving the Eurozone, but they also explicitly stated that the solution they wished to achieve was within the Eurozone (Tsatsanis & Teperoglou, 2016). However, during the days preceding the referendum, many Greek politicians and the Greek mainstream media were warning that the expulsion from the Eurozone was inescapable, should the no vote prevail (Constantinou, 2018; Serafis & Herman, 2018). Judging by the findings of the quantitative analysis, the international newspapers do not seem to be as concerned with the issue, at least not as much as the blogs.

In total there are 618 EU-related words in the newspaper corpus (out of 43,538 words) and 627 in the blog corpus (out of 55,113 words). The percentages are 1.42% and 1.14% respectively.

Table 4.10. EU-related words in the July NC and BC

<b>NC</b>			<b>BC</b>		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
European	4	237	European	7	154
Euro	10	156	Eurozone	11	106
Europe	11	156	EU	14	99
leaders	29	69	ECB	19	93
			Euro	20	90
			Europe	23	85
<b>Total</b>		<b>618</b>			<b>627</b>

Regarding the economy-related lexical items, presented in Table 4.11, an interesting point is the strong presence of the word Troika (whose negative connotations were discussed in 4.2) in the blog corpus (99 instances), in contrast to its almost total absence

from the newspaper corpus, where there are as few as 4 instances and of course it is not included in the frequency list. The newspapers preferred the more neutral term creditors (149 instances compared to the 85 in the BC), which reinforces the hypothesis that the two types of media have different attitudes towards the creditors/Troika; this will be further explored in the qualitative analysis.

The same applies to the positive term bailout, which connotes (as discussed in section 4.2) that the creditors are ‘saving’ the Greek banks, which is more frequent in the NC, as a matter of fact it is the first in rank economy-related word; this could be an indication that the newspapers are more positively disposed towards the creditors.

The lexical item austerity (which is associated with the negative consequences of the bailout agreement), is more common in the blog corpus, where it is the most frequently used economy-related lexical item. In fact, research has shown that the pro-austerity and anti-austerity debate was at the time prevailing in the alternative media and the grassroots movements (Markou, 2017). In Chapter 6 the stance of each type of media towards austerity is explored in detail.

In total there are 846 economy-related words in the 43,538-word newspaper corpus and 995 in the 55,113-word corpus, the percentages being 1.94% and 1.80% respectively.

Table 4.11. Economy-related words in the July NC and BC

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Creditors	12	149	Austerity	6	168
Deal	14	127	Banks	9	130
Bailout	16	117	Bank	12	105
Banks	17	112	Economic	13	99
Austerity	19	102	Troika	17	95
Bank	22	90	Economy	21	88
Debt	25	83	Creditors	22	85
Cash	30	66	Bailout	25	77
			Financial	27	76
			Money	28	72
<b>Total</b>		<b>846</b>			<b>995</b>

In table 4.12 the country-related words in the frequency lists are shown. The similarities between the NC and the BC are great. The only difference that could signify a divergence in the stance of the two types of media is the fact that in the NC the lexical item country is higher in the rank than Greeks and people, while in the BC the country is lower than the other two. This could be an indication that the blogs are more interested in the fate of the people in Greece, while the newspapers are more interested in Greece as a country.

The percentage of the country-related words is 3.23% (1407 out of 43,538) in the NC, while in the BC it is 2.35% (1296 out of 55,113).

Table 4.12. Country-related words in the July NC and BC

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Greece	1	499	Greece	1	501
Greek	3	288	Greek	2	392
Country	7	171	People	10	129
Greeks	8	171	Greeks	15	99
Athens	18	103	Country	18	93
People	20	102	Public	24	82
Voters	28	73			
<b>Total</b>		<b>1407</b>			<b>1296</b>

Regarding the party-related words, presented in Table 4.13, there is a noteworthy difference between the newspaper and the blog corpus, namely that in the newspaper corpus there is a much higher reference personally to the Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras (which was not the case in the January NC). In the newspaper blog the lexical item Tsipras has 217 instances and is 6th in the frequency list, while the items prime and minister, which are also included in the frequency list, are used conjointly in the majority of the instances to refer to the Prime Minister. The item Syriza, on the other hand, appears as few as 44 times. The item government is frequent, namely it has 168 instances, but still fewer than the Prime Minister. In the blog corpus the opposite is true.

Government and Syriza are in rank 4 and 5 respectively (202 and 190 instances), while Tsipras is in rank 16 with only 99 instances. This divergence could signify a difference in the perceived agent of the referendum between the newspapers and blogs, which is presented in Chapter 5.

The percentage of party-related words in the NC is 1.59% (691 out of 43,538) and in the BC it is 0.90% (491 out of 55,113). It should be noted that these percentages are significantly lower than the respective percentages in the January subcorpus, both the NC and the BC, where party-related lexical items accounted for the 4.13% of the NC and 3.20% of the BC. This also highlights the reduced emphasis given on the party of Syriza, which was central in the January subcorpus.

Table 4.13. Party-related words in the July NC and BC

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Tsipras	6	217	Government	4	202
Government	9	168	Syriza	5	190
Minister	13	134	Tsipras	16	99
New	21	98			
Prime	26	74			
<b>Total</b>		<b>691</b>			<b>491</b>

### 4.3.2. Statistical Verification

A statistical analysis based on the Bayesian approach was conducted for the findings of the referendum pair of corpora, in the same way as in the case of the January subcorpus.

The results are shown in charts 4.5 and 4.6.

Chart 4.5. Bayesian analysis of the data from July NC

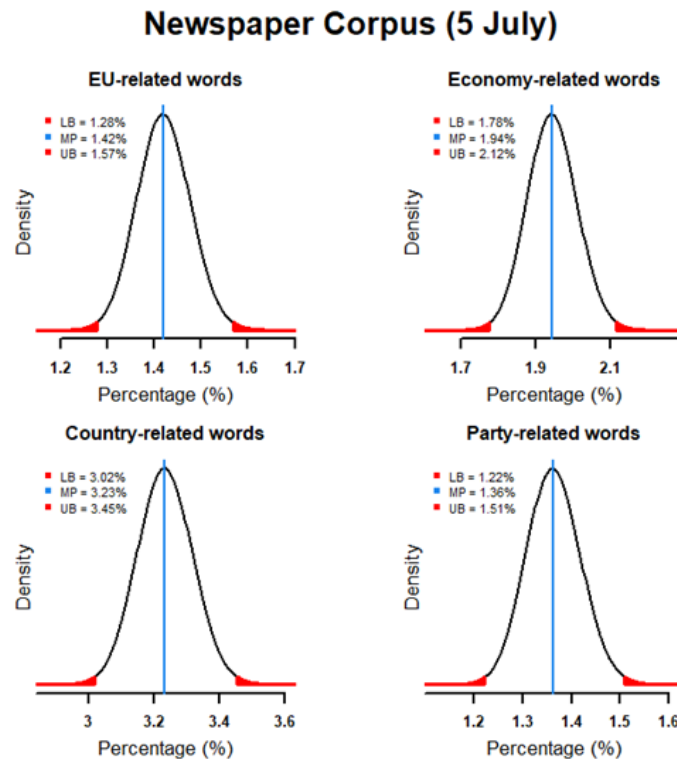
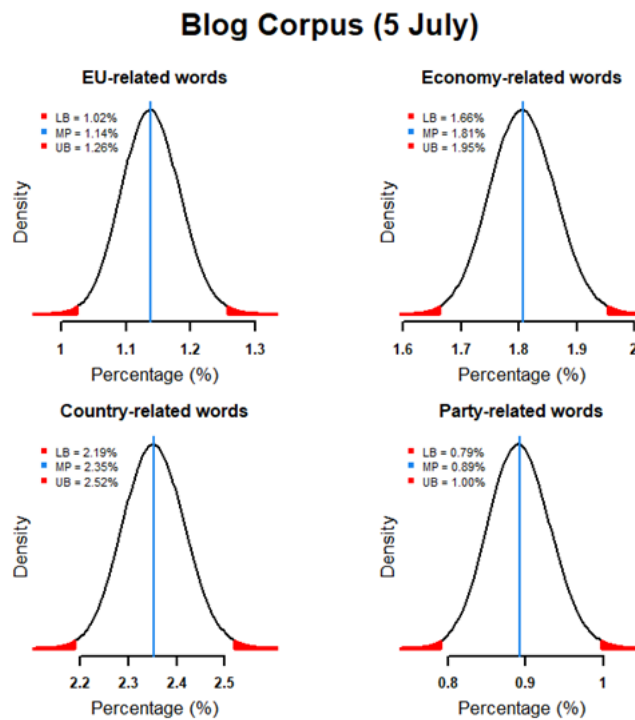


Chart 6. Bayesian analysis of the data from July BC



In the NC, the MP (mean percentage) that is estimated through the statistical analysis is 1.42% for the EU-related words, 1.94% for the economy-related ones, 3.23% for the country-related and 1.36% for the party-related. The respective percentages in the July NC are 1.42% (EU-related), 1.94% (economy-related), 3.23% (country-related) and 1.59% (party-related), the first three being identical to the MP and the fourth close enough so as to be perfectly reliable.

In the BC, the MP was found to be 1.14% for the EU-related lexical items, 1.81% for the economy-related ones, 2.35% for the country-related and 0.89% for the party-related words. The respective percentages in the July BC are 1.14%, 1.80%, 2.35% and 0.90%, all four identical or very close to the estimated MP.

The statistical significance of the findings is illustrated in Table 14, presenting the percentages estimated in the July subcorpus compared to the respective mean percentages.

Table 4.14. Percentages of the lexical items of the four categories, compared to the MP of the statistical analysis in the July NC and BC

	NC	MP	BC	MP
<i>EU-related</i>	1.42%	1.33%	1.14%	1.14%
<i>Economy-related</i>	1.94%	1.02%	1.80%	1.81%
<i>Country-related</i>	3.23%	2.61%	2.35%	2.35%
<i>Party-related</i>	1.59%	4.14%	0.90%	0.89%

### 4.3.3 Concluding Remarks

There are certain conclusions to be drawn from the frequency lists, which can be summarized as follows:

- a) In both corpora there is a high frequency of EU-related words, which is less surprising than in the case of the National elections, as the referendum was closely linked to EU institutions. More specifically, the decision which had to

be made was whether Greece would accept the bailout terms proposed by the European Commission (EC), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the European Central Bank (ECB).

- b) The abundance of economy-related lexical items is not astonishing either, due to the direct link of the referendum to the debt crisis and the bailout agreement. However, the qualitative analysis will be more illuminating as to the way this association is realised by the mainstream and alternative media, and the differences in the frequency of certain items indicate a difference in the stance.
- c) Party-related frequent words almost exclusively refer to the government or the governmental party, as the referendum was a decision of the government and not the opposition. The newspapers, however, are more interested in the Prime Minister while the blogs are interested in the party as a whole.
- d) As in the January subcorpus, there are many lexical items in the frequency lists that denote Greece and the Greek people. This is not unexpected, as the articles are reporting on a referendum in Greece. The manual investigation of the concordances will reveal more about the stance of the journalists and the representations of the country and its people as social actors.
- e) The lexical item Germany is the 30th most frequent item in the noun/adjective frequency list in the blog corpus with 65 instances, while it is present in the newspaper corpus with 32 instances. This could be due to the fact that Germany is a powerful country in the EU, frequently blamed by the Greeks for being the country mainly responsible for the harsh austerity they are undergoing (Kalantzis, 2016).

## **4.4 September Elections**

The procedure followed was exactly the same as in the case of the pairs of corpora discussed in the two previous chapters. The findings based on the frequency lists are presented in this section.

### **4.4.1 Frequency lists**

As was the case with the two previous pairs of corpora, the frequency lists of the September NC and BC were similar, with a few notable differences. What is also noteworthy is that this subcorpus is significantly smaller than the previous ones, since there were not as many articles about the September elections in the international press as there have been for the January elections and the referendum. It seems that these elections were not considered to be as a major political event as the January elections and the referendum. In table 15, the 30 most frequent adjectives and nouns of the third subcorpus are presented.



Table 4.15: September elections: Frequency list (first thirty nouns and adjectives) in September NC and BC

Rank	Newspaper corpus (NC)				Blog Corpus (BC)			
	CR	Lexical Item	No	%	CR	Lexical Item	No	%
1	10	Tsipras	274	1.09	12	Greece	130	0.81
2	14	party	212	0.85	14	Greek	118	0.74
3	15	Syriza	207	0.83	15	Syriza	114	0.71
4	17	Greece	191	0.76	23	political	79	0.49
5	32	Greek	112	0.45	27	government	69	0.43
6	33	bailout	108	0.43	28	Left	69	0.43
7	36	election	93	0.37	29	Tsipras	69	0.43
8	45	country	81	0.32	31	party	66	0.41
9	46	minister	76	0.30	33	new	64	0.40
10	47	government	75	0.30	40	austerity	52	0.32
11	49	vote	75	0.30	41	European	51	0.32
12	50	austerity	71	0.28	48	parties	41	0.26
13	51	Greeks	69	0.28	58	election	33	0.21
14	53	European	67	0.27	59	elections	33	0.21
15	54	voters	66	0.26	60	people	33	0.21
16	55	creditors	63	0.25	63	coalition	31	0.19
17	56	democracy	63	0.25	64	democracy	31	0.19
18	58	political	62	0.25	69	parliament	29	0.18
19	60	parties	61	0.24	70	Right	29	0.18
20	61	elections	60	0.24	71	time	29	0.18
21	62	Left	60	0.24	77	social	26	0.16
22	64	Alexis	55	0.22	78	economic	25	0.16
23	65	parliament	53	0.21	79	vote	25	0.16
24	67	power	51	0.20	81	bailout	24	0.15
25	68	prime	50	0.20	82	debt	24	0.15
26	70	coalition	49	0.20	86	country	23	0.14
27	72	years	48	0.19	87	Eurozone	23	0.14
28	78	deal	45	0.18	92	union	22	0.14
29	79	months	45	0.18	94	electoral	20	0.12
30	81	victory	45	0.18	95	January	20	0.12

As is evident, the pattern of the lexical items falling into the four categories (i.e. country-related, EU-related, economy –related and party-related) is repeated in the case of the third subcorpus as well. The lexical items of each category are shown in Table 4.16.

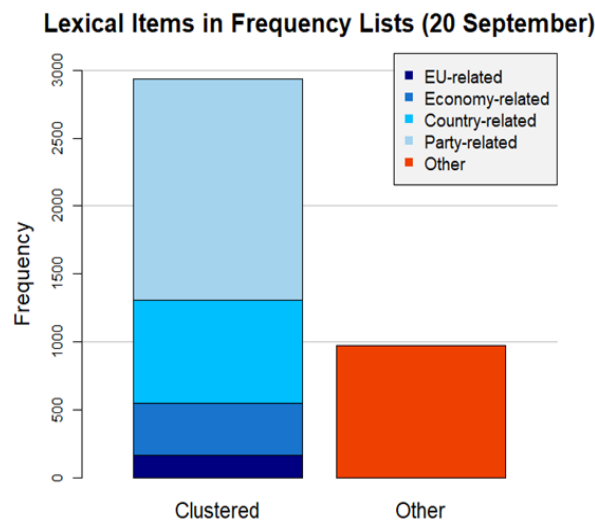
Table 4.16: The four categories of the most frequent lexical items in September NC and BC

<i>Country-related</i>		<i>EU-related</i>		<i>Economy-related</i>		<i>Party-related</i>	
<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>
Greece	Greece	European	European	bailout	austerity	Tsipras	Syriza
Greek	Greek		Eurozone	austerity	bailout	party	governm ent
country	country		union	creditors deal	debt	Syriza minister government democracy parties Left Alexis	Left Tsipras Party New Parties coalition democra cy
Greeks						prime coalition	Right
people							

It is clear that the same four categories dominate the frequency lists. Nevertheless, it seems that economy-related and even more so EU-related words are considerably less frequent than in the other two subcorpora. The majority of the lexical items contained in the frequency lists are party-related.

The following chart shows the percentages of the lexical items of the four categories, as well as the percentage of the lexical items not falling in one of these categories.

Chart 4.7. Clustered and non-clustered lexical items in September subcorpus



As illustrated in Table 4.17, the presence of EU-related words in the corpora is strikingly lower in the September subcorpus. As regards the NC, only the word European is included in the frequency list, with 67 instances in the 24,433-word corpus (0.27%). Three EU-related words are included in the blog corpus frequency list, with a total of 96 instances in the 15,747-word corpus (0.61%). This could in all probability be due to the fact that the government had already signed a bailout agreement with the creditors, and therefore the discussion about whether Greece would be expelled from the Eurozone and possibly the EU was no longer relevant.

Table 4.17. EU-related words in September NC and BC

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
European	14	67	European	11	151
			Eurozone	27	23
			Union	28	22
<b>Total</b>		<b>67</b>			<b>96</b>

Likewise, as shown in Table 4.18, economy-related words are present but notably lower than in the July subcorpus, while the percentage in the blog corpus is even lower than the equivalent in the January elections pair of corpora. More specifically, there are 287 instances of economy-related words in the 24,433-word newspaper corpus (1.17%) and 100 instances in the 15,747-word blog corpus (0.63%). It seems that the discussion about the economy in September elections is still relevant, but not as central as in the previous election periods. The concordance scanning will probably contribute to the clarification of this shift.

The word *austerity* is still the first in rank economy-related word in the September BC, as it was in the January BC and the July BC – it seems that the blogs are still interested in the policies that are implemented in Greece. The lexical item *debt* is present in the

BC frequency list but not in the frequency list of the NC, which could be an indication that there is a discussion on the debt of Greece – and possibly debt relief – in the blogs, an issue that will be addressed in Chapter 6, the chapter on the representation of austerity as a social actor.

Table 4.18. Economy-related words in September NC and BC

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Bailout	6	108	Austerity	10	52
Austerity	12	71	Bailout	24	24
Creditors	16	63	Debt	25	24
Deal	30	45			
<b>Total</b>		<b>287</b>			<b>100</b>

The percentage of the country-related words in the newspaper corpus is 1.99% (486 out of 24,433) and in the blog corpus 1.72% (271 out of 15,747). The percentages are lower than those in the January and July subcorpora, but still considerably high. This could be interpreted as a reduced focus of the journalists on Greece as a social actor.

Table 4.19. Country-related words in September NC and BC.

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Greece	4	191	Greece	1	130
Greek	5	112	Greek	2	118
Country	8	81	Country	26	23
Greeks	13	69			
People	15	33			
<b>Total</b>		<b>486</b>			<b>271</b>

The percentage of the party-related words in the newspaper corpus is 4.83% (1181 out of 24,433) and in the blog corpus 3,26 % (514 out of 15,747). This last category is by far the more frequent one in this subcorpus, both in the NC and the BC, while in the January and July subcorpora it was the least frequent one. This change may be an indication that the other election-related issues (the bailout deal, the position of Greece

in the EU and the Eurozone, the implementation of austerity measures) have become less important, and therefore the central issue is the parties involved in the elections.

Table 4.20. Party-related words in September NC and BC

NC			BC		
<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Lexical Item</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Tsipras	1	274	Syriza	3	114
Party	2	212	Left	6	69
Syriza	3	207	Tsipras	7	69
Minister	9	76	Party	8	66
Government	10	75	New	9	64
Democracy	17	63	Parties	12	41
Parties	20	60	Coalition	16	31
Left	21	60	Democracy	17	31
Alexis	22	55	Right	19	29
Prime	25	50			
Coalition	26	49			
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,181</b>			<b>514</b>

#### 4.4.2 Statistical Verification

The same statistical analysis based on the Bayesian approach which was conducted for the January and July subcorpora, was also conducted for the September subcorpus. The results are shown on charts 4.8 and 4.9.

Chart 4.8. Bayesian analysis of the data from September NC

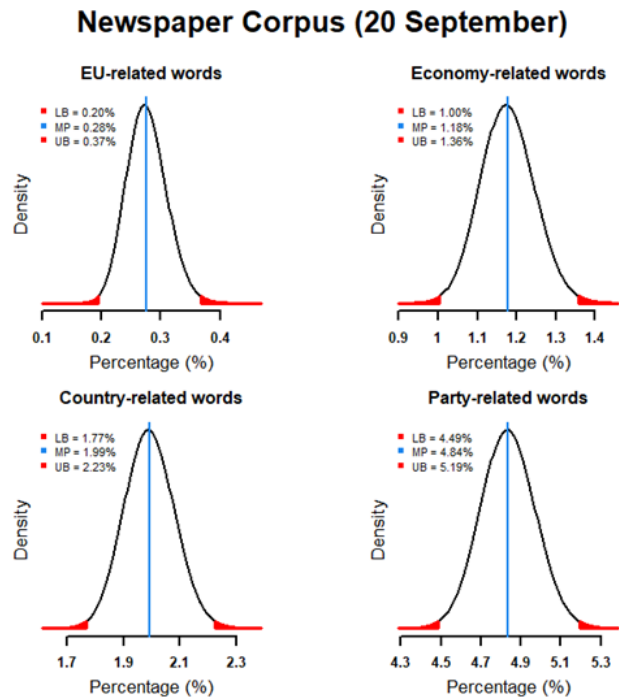
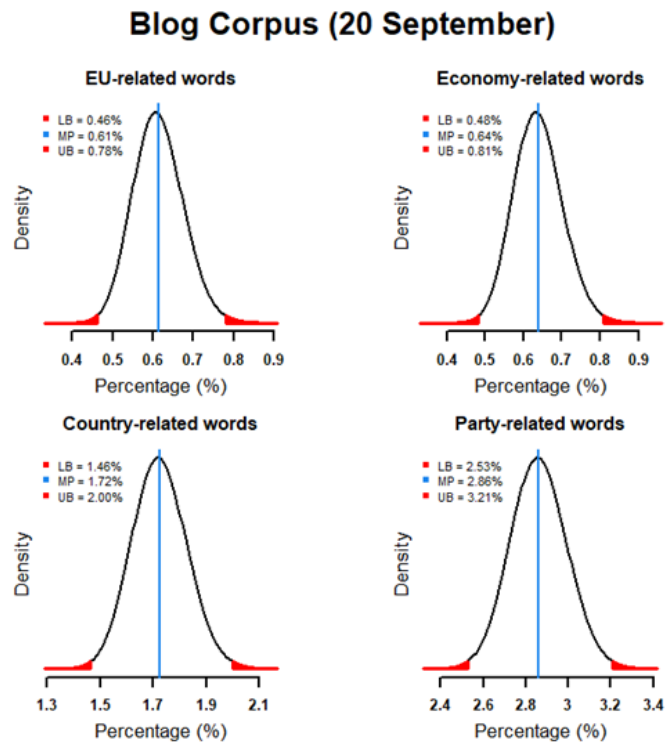


Chart 4.9. Bayesian analysis of the data from September BC



In the NC, the MP (mean percentage), estimated through the statistical analysis is 0.28% for the EU-related words, 1.18% for the economy-related words, 1.99% for the country-related and 4.84% for the party-related. The respective percentages in the September NC are 0.27% (EU-related), 1.17% (economy-related), 1.99% (country-related) and 4.83% (party-related), which are all very close to the MP and therefore reliable.

In the BC, the MP was found to be 0.61% for the EU-related lexical items, 0.64% for the economy-related ones, 1.72% for the country-related and 2.86% for the party-related words. The respective percentages in the September BC are 0.61%, 0.63%, 1.72% and 3.26%, the first three being very close or identical to the MP and the fourth close enough to be regarded as reliable.

Table 4.21 illustrates the statistical significance of the findings, as it shows the percentages estimated in the July subcorpus compared to the respective mean percentages.

Table 4.21. Percentages of the lexical items of the four categories, compared to the MP of the statistical analysis in the September NC and BC

	NC	MP	BC	MP
<i>EU-related</i>	0.27%	0.28%	0.61%	0.61%
<i>Economy-related</i>	1.17%	1.18%	0.63%	0.64%
<i>Country-related</i>	1.99%	1.99%	1.72%	1.72%
<i>Party-related</i>	4.83%	4.84%	3.26%	2.86%

#### 4.4.3 Concluding Remarks

Certain conclusions we can draw based on the frequency lists are the following:

- a) Europe-related words are far more infrequent than in the previous subcorpora, which shows that the question of the position of Greece within the EU is not at all central. The same is true for economy-related words, which are more infrequent than in the previous subcorpora, especially regarding the BC. Now

that the government has passed the bailout deal, the discussion on economic policies is not a hotly debated issue. Likewise, there are fewer and less frequently used terms related to Greece and the Greeks, which were very high in the previous subcorpora.

- b) The party-related words are more frequent in this corpus, which could mean that in this election, the journalists report mostly on the parties participating on the elections, with less emphasis on other issues which were the focal points in the preceding periods.

#### **4.5 Conclusions from the quantitative analysis**

The quantitative analysis shows beyond any doubt that there are four categories of topics that dominate the discussion in the corpus, i.e. Greece and the Greek people, Europe and its institutions, the political parties, and the economy. This is true for both the NC and the BC, which means that since quantitatively they have similar frequency lists, they seem to be concerned with the same topics.

There are, of course, some differences, discussed in earlier sections of this chapter, which suggest certain divergences in the NC and BC of each period and on the basis of which certain hypotheses can be formulated. However, it is more than apparent that qualitative analysis is necessary in order to test these hypotheses and enrich our understanding of mainstream and alternative media attitudes towards the various social actors. Thus, the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods appears to be essential in this study.

For the reasons outlined in Chapter 3 (the methodology chapter), the social actors whose representations are analysed in more depth in the following chapters are Syriza and Tsipras (Chapter 5), Austerity (Chapter 6), Greece and EU (Chapter 7).



## CHAPTER 5

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: REPRESENTATIONS OF SYRIZA/TSIPRAS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Building on the methodological framework established in Chapter 3, this study examines the representations of key social actors identified through our analysis: Syriza and Tsipras are examined in Chapter 5, austerity in Chapter 6, and Greece-EU in Chapter 7. This selection is based on the quantitative findings, which highlight these social actors as central to understanding the discursive landscape of the Greek crisis, and guide our deeper qualitative examination of their varied representations in the media.

Chapter 5 transitions from the foundational quantitative analysis of the previous chapter to a qualitative exploration of key social actors within the context of the Greek crisis: Syriza and Alexis Tsipras. Our approach is informed by the theoretical frameworks of Systemic Functional Linguistics, specifically Halliday's Transitivity Theory and van Leeuwen's Social Actors Representations, in particular role allocation. These frameworks guide our interpretation of how language constructs social realities and identities, allowing for a more sophisticated understanding of the roles and representations of Syriza and Tsipras in different media.

The selection of social actors for detailed analysis is based on a methodological rationale that prioritises frequency as an indicator of salience in public discourse. This choice is supported by academic traditions that acknowledge the relevance of quantitative prominence as a precursor to qualitative significance (Baker, 2006; Stubbs, 1996). In this respect, this study aligns with scholarly work that uses frequency analysis

to identify focal points for in-depth discourse analysis, thereby facilitating a grounded exploration of representational patterns.

Central to this examination is the concept of representations, a term that denotes the ways in which language shapes perceptions of social actors, through “the representational choices” that “will be tied to specific linguistic or rhetorical realisations” (Van Leeuwen, 1996, p.34). Drawing on van Leeuwen's model, we examine the representations of Syriza and Tsipras, focusing on Role Allocation, i.e. the roles given to social actors in representations, such as 'Actor' or 'Goal', which are not necessarily congruent with the grammatical roles given to them in texts, as representations can reallocate roles (Van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 43).

Syriza as a social actor is analysed in this chapter as it was the most frequent lexical item of the party-related category in the January and the September subcorpora and Tsipras is analysed as the most frequent lexical item of the party-related category in the July subcorpora. This divergence is natural, as the party participated in the January and September elections, while the referendum was announced by the Prime Minister on national television on 27 June, thereby placing Alexis Tsipras as a more significant actor than the party.

The frequent appearance of the lexical items 'Syriza' and 'Tsipras' in the corpus is not surprising, given the pivotal role of the party and its leader during the economic crisis, the elections and the referendum in Greece. Their frequent occurrence underscores their centrality and influence in discussions about the Greek political and economic landscape during this critical period.

After their impressive rise in the 2014 European elections, until they took office in January 2015, and for most of that year, Syriza was widely discussed in the media, both

mainstream and alternative, as it was a newly emerging political force that seemed to bring something new to Greek politics and its rise was seen as a major political event. This is hardly surprising, as Syriza was a political party that challenged the dominant EU policies (Smyrnaioi & Karatzogianni, 2020), was associated with and expressed the demands of movements such as the Indignados in Spain or the Arab spring (Karatzogianni, 2015), as well as the domestic movement of the squares (Diani & Kousis, 2014; Markou, 2017). In fact, party members were actively involved in most protests and activist events, and they had been active in movements even before the crisis broke out (Kouki & González, 2018, p.130).

Perhaps more importantly, Syriza reflected the polarization of pro-austerity and anti-austerity (Markou, 2017), or pro-memorandum and anti-memorandum (Kountouri & Nikolaidou, 2019), a discourse which was dominant in online alternative media, social media and grassroots movements, bringing to the central political scene a narrative of the crisis which attributed the crisis not to the laziness of the Greek people and the corruption of the Greek political system (as discussed in Chapter 2) but rather to the EU policies and the compliance of Greek politicians with them (Cinalli & Guigni, 2018), and therefore “shifted the blame for the crisis towards pro-austerity establishment” (Venizelos, 2020, p.60). In this way, the party represented in the parliament the people who were protesting, and, more importantly, “by linking protest with assuming power, the party brought people’s agency to the forefront and offered an alternative to hopelessness” (Kouki & Gonzalez, 2018).

By adopting an alternative narrative, by taking the responsibility from the people and blaming it on the elites, Syriza managed to express the voices of ordinary people who were experiencing a humanitarian crisis as a result of policies dictated by the European institutions and implemented by the traditional parties of the political system. Thus,

Syriza gained the trust of those whose political cynicism was turned into aggression towards the political elites, while at the same time the national and European institutions were becoming more and more delegitimized for them (Rüdig & Karyotis, 2013, 2014; Teperoglou & Tsatsanis, 2014). This is reflected on the main slogan of the January 2015 elections, that is “Hope is Coming, Greece is Moving Forward, Europe is Changing” (see, for example, *To Vima*, 11/1/2015).

The mainstream media, both in Greece and internationally, were aligned with the governments in supporting the elite’s views on the crisis, i.e. that the Greek debt crisis is a direct outcome of the corruption of the State and the laziness of the people, (Kouki & Gonzalez, 2018; Kountouri & Nikolaidou, 2019). On the other hand, the alternative media held the same views as Syriza, namely that there is a global crisis and that Greece should not be forced to pay the enormous debt, while putting unbearable strain on the working class of the country (Kouki & Gonzalez, 2018).

Consequently, before the election of Syriza, and during the first months of the Syriza government, domestic and international media strongly criticised Syriza and presented the party’s intention to defy the creditors’ demands as a dangerous and potentially catastrophic practice (Smyrnaioi & Karatzogianni, 2020; Markou, 2017). Aslanidis and Kaltwasser (2016) claim that after the January elections, there were attempts on the part of the Syriza government to form an alliance with certain mainstream TV stations and newspapers, and that there were indeed some influential journalists who seemed to consider changing the alliance and supported Syriza and personally Prime Minister Tsipras throughout the negotiation period. The referendum, however, given that it was associated with the risk of Grexit, “did rally the sum of the media establishment behind an openly pro-YES, pro-European campaign” (Aslanidis & Kaltwasser, 2016, p.1084), at least as far as the domestic media are concerned.

Initially, domestic and international support for Syriza was channeled through grassroots movements, social media, and alternative media activists; in fact, Syriza's campaign, at least at the beginning of its rise, until the January 2015 campaign, relied heavily on alternative media and social media (Smyrneos & Karatzogianni, 2020). This was natural, for a party that “supported and benefited from grassroots mobilisations” (Venizelos, 2020, p.59) and that in fact owes its electoral success largely to its connection with protests and movements (Kouki & González, 2018; Kousis, Giugni & Lahusen, 2018).

However, as Karaliotas (2021, p.7) points out, the Syriza government “began with efforts to renegotiate the country’s bailout agreement but was marked by the signing of a third memorandum”. After the signing of the new bailout agreement in July 2015, the key proposal of Syriza was “the implementation of austerity with a social face while also expanding social and civil rights and fighting against corruption” (Katsourides, 2016). Karaliotas (2021) argues that when all efforts to alleviate austerity were met with hostility from the creditors’ side, Syriza “shifted the discursive terrain into a moralizing field that further foreclosed the possibilities for politicizing the crisis” (p.16).

## **5.2 Overview of representations in the NC and BC**

While Syriza is analysed in the January and September subcorpora, in the July subcorpus it is replaced by their leader Alexis Tsipras. The reason for this choice was the fact that there was a significant differentiation in the July frequency lists, especially that of the NC, compared to the frequency lists of the January and September subcorpora.

More specifically, in the January subcorpus, Syriza was selected as the social actor to be analysed from the party-related category, as it was the second most frequent word in

the NC, after Greece, and the first in the BC, while the lexical item ‘Tsipras’ followed in 4th and 19th place respectively. In the July subcorpus, however, in the NC the lexical item ‘Tsipras’ has moved up to 4th place in the frequency list, while the lexical item ‘Syriza’ is not found among the 30 most frequent words listed. In the BC, the lexical item ‘Syriza’ (4th position) is still higher than the lexical item ‘Tsipras’ (16th position), although the former has dropped and the latter has risen in the list, showing that the blogs retain their interest for the party even though it was their leader that announced the referendum. Since the lexical item ‘Syriza’ is absent from the NC frequency list, it was decided that Syriza be replaced by Tsipras as the party-related social actor analysed in the July subcorpus. In the September subcorpus Syriza is chosen to be analysed, as in the NC it is still less frequent than Tsipras, but much higher than the July NC (in the third positions while Tsipras is in the first), and in the BC is more frequent than Tsipras (3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> position respectively).

Within the framework of analysing social actors through Systemic Functional Linguistics, this Chapter focuses on activation and subjection cases. The decision to narrow the focus is based on the observation that instances of circumstantialisation and beneficialisation within the corpus are less frequent, making a qualitative analysis of these aspects less fruitful for our purposes. Activation and subjection are critical to understanding the portrayal of power and agency in discourse. This methodical approach aims to elucidate the ideological stances embedded in the representations of key social actors by focusing on where the data is most revealing, in this case, activation and subjection.

In general, regarding the activation and subjection rates, the analysis of the NC and the BC yield similar results. In the January sub-corpora, Syriza is activated in approximately half of the cases, while the subjection rate is consistently lower. The

same pattern is detected in the July sub-corpus, in which Tsipras is activated at an even higher rate and subjected at an even lower one. Most strikingly, in September this is reversed, with Subjection in about half of the cases, and considerable drop in the activation rate in both corpora. The activation / subjection rates are shown in the Table 5.1.

Table 5.1. Activation and Subjection rates of Syriza and Tsipras in all six subcorpora.

<b>Social Actor / Subcorpus</b>	<b>Activated</b>		<b>Subjected</b>	
	NC	BC	NC	BC
<b>Syriza / January</b>	48.26%	49.77%	35.38%	32.51%
<b>Tsipras / July</b>	67.74	60.61%	22.21%	23.23%
<b>Syriza / September</b>	25.84%	27.83%	49.77%	49.56%

Although the percentages of the NC and the BC of each period are comparable, the qualitative analysis indicates that there is a wide differentiation between the NC and the BC. The representation of Syriza and Tsipras exhibits great variation, both between the NC and the BC (which is, admittedly, true for all the social actors examined) and, more interestingly, between the periods examined. In fact, the NC and the BC follow reverse trajectories in terms of positive or negative attitudes of the media towards Syriza and Tsipras.

Overall, a pattern seems to emerge in the newspaper subcorpora moving from a particularly negative view in January towards a more positive one in the September subcorpora. To describe the shift in the newspapers' stance, it can be stated that in January, they had a highly negative evaluation of the possibility of Syriza coming to power. They associated Syriza with a disaster discourse and expressed concern about general economic turmoil. They expressed a certainty that what would follow a Syriza government was Grexit and Greece's economic ruin. The July NC is less critical of the

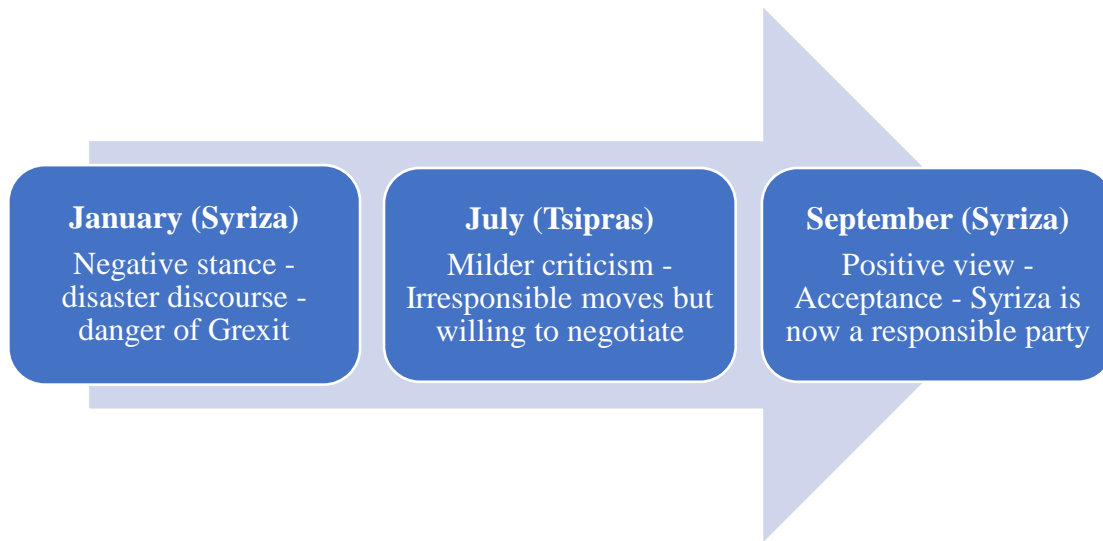
Prime Minister, describing his moves as unfortunate and ill-considered, both in terms of the referendum announcement and his decisions since taking office. But according to the newspapers, Tsipras is interested in negotiations, does not want a clash with the EU or to leave the eurozone, and will end up meeting the EU's conditions. Finally, September NC has a much more positive view of Syriza, welcoming its transformation into a responsible party that can govern effectively.

A different kind of pattern seems to emerge in the blog subcorpora with an enthusiasm in the January subcorpus for Syriza's impending takeover, while there are frequent references to the hope for change across Europe, leading to a shift from neoliberal policies to a more pro-popular approach. In July BC, there is already a disillusionment with Syriza, a prevailing feeling that they are not bringing anything new to Europe after all, and frequent criticism of the Prime Minister for the concessions he has made to the elites and the EU. In the September BC, there is no longer an interest in Syriza as a radical party that will bring change, but criticism of its transformation into yet another party which is managing bourgeois interests.

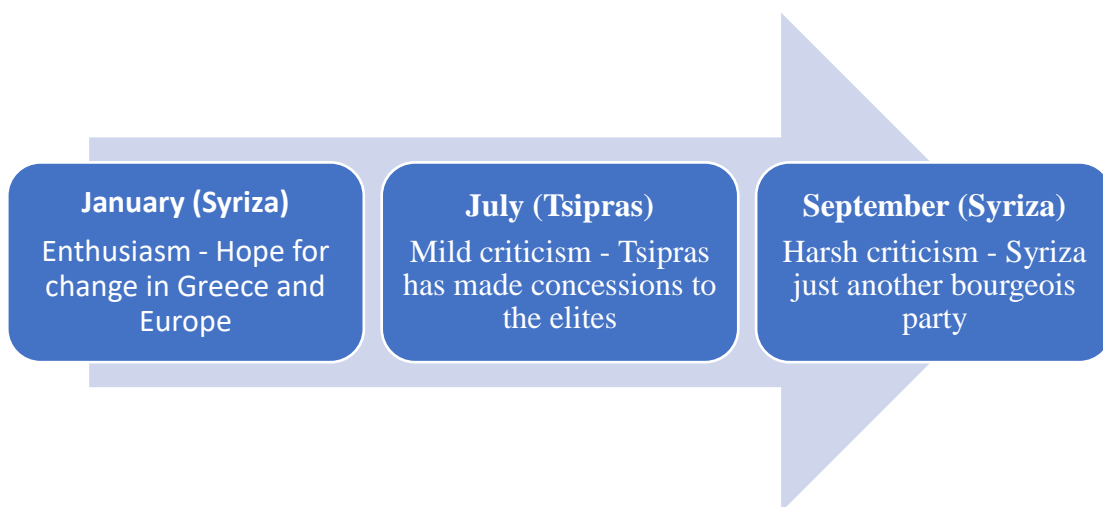
These representations are depicted schematically in Graphs 5.1 and 5.2 below. In the following sections the qualitative analysis will be described in detail.



Graph 5.1 Representations of Syriza / Tsipras in the NC



Graph 5.2 Representations of Syriza / Tsipras in the blogs



### 5.3 Representations of Syriza in the January Subcorpora

The analysis of the representation of Syriza in the January subcorpora has yielded interesting results. In the January NC and BC Syriza is mainly activated, namely in approximately half of the instances. Therefore, it seems that Syriza is represented as a social actor that generates change, either positive or negative. The assessment of the

change Syriza is supposed to be bringing, however, is greatly different in the NC and the BC. As already mentioned, in the January NC the prospect of Syriza in government is viewed negatively and as having serious negative consequences for Greece and Europe. At the other extreme, in the BC, enthusiasm and anticipation is expressed for the positive change that Syriza is expected to bring to Greece and Europe.

Table 5.2 presents the percentages of Activation, Subjection, Beneficialization and Circumstantialization of Syriza in the January NC and BC following van Leeuwen's (1996) model of Representation of Social Actors, particularly Role Allocation. The instances where Syriza is either activated or subjected will be analysed following Halliday's system of Transitivity Theory in the next subsections of the present Chapter. The instances of Beneficialization and Circumstantialization of Syriza are too infrequent for their analysis to provide interesting results, so there is little point in discussing them.

Table 5.2. January, Syriza, NC and BC, Activation, Subjection, Beneficialization and Circumstantialization rates

SYRIZA	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialized	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
Total:								
NC=370	48.26%	49.77%	35.38%	32.51%	5.36%	4.93%	10.19%	12.78%
BC=446	N=180	N=222	N=132	N=145	N=20	N=22	N=38	N=57

The transitivity analysis of activated and subjected instances provides valuable insights into the representations of Syriza, as shown in Tables 5.3 and 5.4.

Table 5.3. January, Syriza, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Activated instances

**Activated** ( NC 48.26%, 180 instances / BC 49.77%, 222 instances)

	NC		BC	
	%	N	%	N
Actor in a material process	22.52	84	20.40	91
Senser in a mental process	2.14	8	5.60	25
Through possessivation	20.64	77	20.40	91
Sayer in a verbal process	1.88	7	3.36	15

Table 5.3 provides a detailed transitivity analysis of the cases in which Syriza is activated within the January subcorpora, revealing how the party is represented as taking action or initiating processes. Notably, activation accounts for almost half of the cases examined, suggesting a dominant representation of Syriza as a key agent of change or influence within political discourse. The primary category of activation, Actor in a Material Process, indicates the portrayal of Syriza as directly involved in actions that have a tangible impact on the socio-political landscape. This reflects media representations of Syriza as an active participant in unfolding events, able to influence outcomes through its policies and political activities.

Table 5.4 switches the focus of analysis to instances where Syriza is subjected, providing insight into how the party is represented as being influenced by or responding to external forces.

Table 5.4. January, Syriza, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Subjected instances

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 35.38%, 132 / BC 32.51%, 145)				
	NC (Total 373)		BC (Total 446)	
Goal in a material process	4.02%	N=15	1.57%	N=7
Phenomenon in a mental process	2.68%	N=10	3.14%	N=14
Carrier in a relational process	15.01%	N=56	13.68%	N=61
Through possessivation	15.28%	N=57	13.90%	N=62

The rate of subjection is lower than that of activation, suggesting a differentiated balance in media representations between Syriza's roles as influencer and influenced. The dominant categories here, subjection as Carrier in a Relational Process and through Possessivation, indicate representations of Syriza as being in a state or condition attributed to it by others, or as possessing certain qualities or attributes. These representations suggest a complex dynamic in the representations in which Syriza is

not only an agent of change, but also subject to the actions and decisions of others, reflecting a multifaceted view of its political position and influence during this period.

### **5.3.1 Representations of Syriza in the January NC**

#### **5.3.1.1 Activation in the January NC**

In conducting the analysis of Syriza's activation in the discourse, we apply the frameworks of both Halliday's Transitivity Theory and van Leeuwen's model of Representation of Social Actors. This subsection focuses on instances of Syriza's activation, with particular emphasis on cases in which Syriza is activated as an Actor in a Material Process or through Possessivation.

The transitivity system construes the world of experience as a set of process types, each of which offers its own model or schema for construing a particular area of experience (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.170), and material processes are processes of doing. Actors in material processes typically denote the agents that bring about the unfolding of the process through time (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.282). The instances where Syriza is an Actor in a Material Process suggest Syriza's active engagement in bringing about change or affecting the political landscape.

Conversely, subjection through Possessivation, where Syriza is linked to certain qualities, attributes, or possessions through grammatical constructions, was expected to further illuminate how the party's identity and actions are represented within the discourse. The cases in which Syriza is activated (as opposed to subjected) through Possessivation, are the cases which refer to an action that Syriza performed, for example 'Syriza's win'.

Cases where Syriza is a Sayer or a Senser are marginal and therefore not important to discuss.

**a) Syriza activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the January NC**

In the NC there are 84 instances where Syriza is an Actor in a Material Process. In almost all of them, Syriza is represented in a negative way. Half of these instances refer to the election victory. The rise of Syriza to power is discussed in most cases along with the consequences this development is due to have, which are related to the further destabilization of the economy and the conflict with the EU.

In Example 5.1, we can see a pattern that is very frequent in the NC. Syriza is the Actor, responsible for winning the election. This places Syriza at the center of potential political change, highlighting its active role in the political process. Winning the election is depicted as a critical event that sets the stage for subsequent actions and outcomes. In the same Example, another Material Process in which Syriza is the Actor is in the process of running out of time and not keeping the creditors happy. This frames Syriza's actions and decisions within a constrained timeline, suggesting potential for significant political and economic repercussions.

This Example constructs a scenario where Syriza's potential electoral success is immediately seen within a context of crisis and urgency. The depiction of Syriza as both a hopeful victor and a party potentially overwhelmed by the immediacies of governance and creditor expectations underscores the precariousness of its position. The reference to a "U-turn" necessary to satisfy creditors paints Syriza's platform as possibly being at odds with the pragmatic demands of economic management, suggesting a tension between ideological commitments and the compromises required in political

leadership, compromises that in the NC are represented as absolutely unavoidable and beneficial for Greece.

In Example 5.2, there is another common pattern of the NC. Syriza not being a homogeneous party but a coalition of different political parties and organisations is a frequently discussed concern, and it is described as likely to have a negative impact on the government's work. The newspapers attribute to Syriza qualities such as amateurism and lack of gravitas, reflecting the widespread belief that one of Syriza's deficiencies was the weak organizational structure, "lacking both a defined hierarchy and financial resources compared to other mainstream parties" (Vittori 2018, p. 83). Therefore, Syriza's coming to power is associated with instability and lack of determination, as in Example 5.2, where Syriza as an Actor will "stand in the way of a deal", it is the "disparate factions" of Syriza which will constitute an obstacle to reaching an agreement with the creditors.

Example 5.1

If Syriza, the radical-left party, wins the coming election, then runs out of time before it can perform the U-turn necessary to keep its creditors happy, depositors might panic.

Example 5.2

It's also possible that Syriza will stand in the way of a deal, with its disparate factions unable to agree on any package of concessions that falls short of the lofty promises made on the campaign trail.

<i>Syriza</i>	<i>wins</i>	<i>the coming election</i>
<i>Syriza</i>	<i>will stand</i>	<i>(in the way of a) deal</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

There are many instances where Syriza's election pledges are characterized as unrealistic and perilous, claiming that any attempt to implement them will lead to a conflict with the EU and its institutions, and consequently to economic chaos and possible bankruptcy. The January NC in this thesis is in accordance with the observation

that mainstream media associate Syriza coming to power with total economic, political and social catastrophe (Stavrakakis & Katsambekis, 2014; Markou, 2017).

In Example 5.3, a Syriza government could lead to economic and social chaos, should they decide to take Greece out of the Eurozone. In fact, a central theme in the mainstream media is the correlation between Syriza and the risk of Grexit. The dilemma is supposed to be that either Greece implements the measures imposed by the EU and its creditors, or it will be expelled from the Eurozone and the consequences will be severe. Undeniably, Syriza had a clear pro-EU and pro-Eurozone position (Bozkurt-Güngen, 2014; Salvati, 2021), and did not consider Grexit as a viable solution (Gezgin, 2018). Only a faction of Syriza considered Grexit and return to the drachma as a solution to the Greek crisis, but they were not in power so as to implement their plan (Koşar, 2016). In spite of this, there are many cases in the January subcorpus that adopt the hypothesis that Syriza coming to power may lead to Grexit, as in Example 5.6, where there are “fears” for a “devastating Grexit”.

Example 5.4 is one of the many examples that stress the unavoidable conflict with the EU that the Syriza election will deliver. Syriza is the Actor in the Material Process of topping the polls. Identifying 'polls' as the Goal shifts some focus towards the democratic process, emphasizing Syriza's agency within this framework. However, the subsequent phrase "raising fears that a win will lead to 'devastating' European exit" introduces a speculative, negative outcome tied to this success, blending acknowledgment of Syriza's electoral effectiveness with apprehension about its potential governance consequences.

### Example 5.3

There is a possibility that if Syriza takes Greece out of the eurozone its banking system would implode, the economy would sink back into recession, unemployment would shoot still higher and there would be severe civil unrest.

#### Example 5.4

Greece elections: Syriza party tops polls raising fears that a win will lead to 'devastating' European exit

<i>Syriza</i>	<i>takes</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>out of the Eurozone</i>
<i>Syriza</i>	<i>tops</i>	<i>polls (raising fears)</i>	
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

The victory of Syriza is sometimes attempted to be explained, mainly by implying that citizens had become wary of austerity and could easily be tempted to vote for a party that promised to put an end on these policies.

In Example 5.5, Syriza is the Actor in the Material Processes of prevailing and gaining votes, signifying Syriza's emergence as the dominant force in the political scene and underscoring the party's active role in attracting and securing electoral support. However, the explanation that voters supported Syriza because they "believed they had nothing to lose" is more a depiction of desperation rather than one of a hopeful or informed choice. The phrasing suggests that the vote for Syriza was not based on a positive belief in the party's policies, but rather on a lack of alternatives. This portrays the decision as a last resort for those who doubt the austerity choice. Generally, Syriza is elected as an anti-austerity, anti-bailout party, and in the majority of the instances where Syriza is the actor of winning the elections, this trait is mentioned.

Regarding the January elections, the victory of Syriza seemed certain, based on all the polls which were conducted. What Syriza was actually aiming for in the election campaign was to gain a majority (Rori, 2016). Securing a majority seems to be considered an impossible yet highly important task - in a significant number of cases, the newspapers refer to this almost certain failure of Syriza that could be an obstacle to



the formation of a government. Example 5.6 demonstrates how mainstream media emphasised the predicted inability of Syriza to form a government, thereby reducing Syriza's electoral success.

Articles published after the governmental coalition with the Independent Greeks often highlight the fact that the latter is a right-wing party, implying that the alliance may be unnatural and incompatible. This is demonstrated in Example 5.7. In this Example, Syriza is the Actor in the Material Process of forming a government. The explicit identification of Syriza's ideological stance as 'radical leftist' sets the stage for potential negative interpretations, when considering the party's decision to ally with a party from the opposite end of the political spectrum. The 'new government' which is the Goal of this Material Process, represents the tangible outcome of the alliance. Describing this government as a product of an 'unlikely alliance' might cast doubt on its stability and the consistency of its policy directions, potentially undermining public confidence in its effectiveness and longevity.

#### Example 5.5

SYRIZA prevailed as the main choice within the anti-austerity bloc and gained the votes of people that wanted governmental change and those who believed they had nothing to lose.

#### Example 5.6

If Syriza falls shy of the 151 seats necessary to form a government on its own, it will have to seek support from other parties — either in a minority government or as a coalition.

#### Example 5.7

Greece had a new government on Monday after Syriza, Greece's radical leftist party, formed an unlikely alliance with a right-wing party.

<i>Syriza</i>	<i>prevailed</i>		<i>as the main choice within the anti-austerity bloc</i>
<i>(If) Syriza</i>	<i>falls shy of</i>	<i>the 151 seats</i>	
<i>Syriza</i>	<i>formed</i>	<i>an unlikely alliance</i>	<i>with a right-wing party</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

In general, the cases in the NC where Syriza is an Actor in a Material Process highlight the potential negative impact that the party's election could have on the economy and society. These instances represent the election of Syriza as a result of desperation rather than as a viable alternative for Greek politics.

### **b) Syriza activated through Possessivation in the January NC**

The previous cases, those of Syriza being the Actor in a Material Process, were cases where Activation is realised by ‘participation’, or grammatical participant roles, where “the active role of the social actor in question is most clearly foregrounded” (van Leeuwen, 1996, p.33). Another way nouns and nominalisations can realise activation is ‘Possessivation’, that is the use of a possessive construction to activate a social actor (e.g. Syriza’s historic win). In this examples Syriza is activated, as they are shown to win the elections, but “by comparison to participation this backgrounds agency, changing it into the ‘possession’ of a process which has itself been transformed into a ‘thing’” (van Leeuwen, 1996, p.33).

When Syriza is activated through Possessivation, in more than half of the times (40 out of 77 instances) it concerns the electoral success and rise of Syriza to power. In nearly all cases, the forthcoming or achieved victory is reported along with reference to the results of Syriza taking office – in almost all cases in a negative way. According to van Leeuwen (1996), this indirect way of activation tends to background the agency of the social actor, transforming the dynamic action of winning the election into a static

attribute of the victory. Thus, although Syriza is still acknowledged as the winner, the focus on its direct agency in the electoral process is reduced. The victory is presented as a characteristic of Syriza, rather than an action actively performed by the party. This shift in representation can affect how audiences perceive the legitimacy and dynamics of Syriza's electoral success, subtly influencing the perceived passivity or inevitability of the victory rather than highlighting the active strategies and efforts that led to such results. This representation might suggest that the party's victory is just one of its many attributes, rather than the result of deliberate and active engagement in political practices.

Some of these instances which present the grave consequences a Syriza government is bound to have on Greece and / or Europe are shown below. Syriza's victory will inevitably bring Greece into conflict with Europe (Example 5.15), aggravate the crisis and undermine the euro (Example 5.16), or even lead bankruptcy and Grexit (Example 5.17).

Example 5.8

Syriza's historic win puts Greece on collision course with Europe

Example 5.9

But Syriza's victory has renewed doubts over Greece's ability to emerge from the crisis, and generated fears that the country's finances could once again send shockwaves through global markets and undermine the euro, the currency shared by 19 European countries.

Example 5.10

However, a Syriza victory could also push Greece close to bankruptcy or signal a complete exit from the 19-nation eurozone, dubbed as a "Grexit".

<b>Syriza activated through possessivation</b>	<i>Syriza's historic win</i>	<i>puts</i>	<i>Greece (on collision course)</i>
	<i>Syriza's victory</i>	<i>has renewed</i>	<i>doubts</i>
	<i>A Syriza victory</i>	<i>could push</i>	<i>Greece (close to bankruptcy)</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

As discussed earlier in this section, in the majority of the cases where Syriza is activated through Possessivation in the January NC, the rise of Syriza is represented negatively. There is a limited number of sentences referring to the victory (5 out of 77) without directly suggesting what this victory might provoke, as in Example 5.18. There is an even more limited number of cases, namely 2 out of 77 (one of the two is Example 5.19) where victory is seen in a positive way, and is associated with hope and positive advances. It is therefore evident that in the vast majority of cases Syriza's win is represented negatively.

Example 5.11

Syriza's success is an astonishing electoral triumph.

Example 5.12

Syriza's victory is a rejection of the toughest austerity regime in the eurozone and should be respected.

<b>Syriza subjected through possessivation</b>	<i>Syriza's success</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>an astonishing electoral triumph</i>
	<i>Syriza's victory</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>a rejection of austerity</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

**c) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January NC**

Judging from the instances where Syriza is activated in the NC, either as an Actor in a Material Process or through Possessivation, we can first of all safely deduce that the attitude of the mainstream media towards the sudden rise of Syriza and its victory in the elections is negative. Furthermore, specific observations that can be made regarding the representation of Syriza in the newspapers are the following:

- i. The election victory of Syriza is consistently associated with the possibility of financial ruin for Greece, panic of the markets, danger of social chaos. It is an anti-austerity party in a time that austerity has been chosen as an answer to the crisis and the political leaders assert that there is no alternative. Syriza coming to power is strongly correlated with the risk of Greece exiting the Eurozone or even the EU, and may also lead to problems for the Eurozone itself and to a devaluation of the euro. Thus, a collision with the creditors and the EU is inevitable.
- ii. It is frequently mentioned that Syriza was not able to obtain a majority, they were obliged to form a coalition with a fringe right-wing party, which will of course lead to complications owing to their incompatibility.
- iii. Syriza is not a homogeneous party, it has different factions that cannot agree among themselves, and they have not learned to function as a ‘serious’ party that takes over the government.
- iv. Syriza was chosen by the voters not on the basis of logic, not because of the value of the party and the merits of its programmatic positions, but as a protest vote. Therefore, it was chosen on the basis of emotion, anger at the political system and the political and economic elite for the loss of their income, and because they felt they had nothing to lose.

#### **5.3.1.2 Subjection in the January NC**

The instances where Syriza is subjected are approximately one out of three in the NC, and the same applies to the BC, which will be discussed in the next section. This indicates that the media may view Syriza as a significant and active player in the political sphere, capable of initiating actions rather than merely reacting to the actions

of others, since the frequency of activation is considerably higher compared to that of subjection.

In the NC, the main ways of subjection are through Possessivation and as a Carrier in a Relational Process, while the cases where Syriza is subjected as a Goal in a Material Process and as a Phenomenon in a Mental Process are considerably less common and therefore will not be discussed.

There are various ways in which subjection can be realized. Like activation, it can be realized by participation, where the passivated social actor would be a Goal in a Material Process, a Phenomenon in a Mental Process, or a Carrier in a Relational Process (Halliday, 1985, p. 43; van Leeuwen, 1996, p.34):

As in the case of activation, subjection can also be realised through Possessivation, where the social actor which is passivated is backgrounded, as in the examples quoted below that refer to the ‘Syriza leader’ (representing Syriza as having a leader, and therefore passivated) or to ‘Syriza’s grass-roots activists’ (where Syriza is shown to have grassroots activists as followers or members). These linguistic constructions serve to depict Syriza not as an autonomous social actor, but rather as an entity defined by its members, leader, etc.

#### **a) Syriza subjected through Possessivation in the January NC**

Approximately half of the 57 instances of Syriza being subjected through Possessivation refer to Syriza officials, such as the leader of the party, MPs, ministers, etc. Notably, approximately one third of them (18 out of 57) refer to the leader of Syriza. In contrast, there are only 6 instances which refer to the supporters and members of the party. The newspapers seem to have a top-down approach, and give much more weight to the party leadership than to members and supporters, even in the case of a left party

that was claiming at the time to be “a party of its members”, as explicitly stated in the party statute, available at the party’s website, and which had also been a party that emerged through the support of the movements and activists, as was discussed earlier in this chapter.

In the instances where Syriza is subjected through Possessivation in relation to their leader, it seems that the newspapers attribute to the leader the political decisions and initiatives of the party. It is generally argued that party leaders are important factors influencing the choice of the voters in the elections (e.g., Bittner, 2011; Garzia, Ferreira da Silva, & De Angelis, 2021). And since most people do not meet the party leaders in person, the media play an important role in the formation of their judgement on the leader, as it is through the media representations that they form these judgements (Aaldering, van der Meer & Van der Brug, 2018; Strömbäck & Esser, 2014). In the NC, Syriza is associated with its leader through Possessivation, and both the party’s and his representations are quite negative in most of the cases. A common pattern in the instances of subjection of Syriza through Possessivation, concerning their leader, is reference to the negotiations that he intends to have with the European officials, and the promises to the Greek people, usually mentioning the dangers stemming from Syriza’s leader attitude.

In Example 5.13, the "leader of the leftist Syriza party" is identified as the Actor, emphasizing the personal role and authority in the actions described. Syriza is subjected through Possessivation, describing the party through its association with its leader rather than directly through its actions. This manner of representation can subtly reduce the perceived agency of Syriza as a collective entity by emphasizing its dependency or close association with its leader's actions and characteristics. Describing the promise of the Syriza leader as having 'appealed to many crisis-crippled Greeks' implies that the

electorate's support for Syriza's stance is based on a vulnerable state of despair, leading them to grasp at any alternative regardless of its practicality or long-term viability. This would imply that support for Syriza is based on a disillusioned hope, portraying the party's rise not as a political triumph but as a symptom of widespread socio-economic distress and a potentially misguided public response. The characterisation of the agreement as 'loathed' reinforces this perception, as it is not evaluated in terms of its effectiveness, but solely in terms of public opinion.

Example 5.14 also backgrounds the party's agency and emphasizes that of the party leader; moreover, it is one of the numerous examples where the victory of Syriza is represented as 'narrow' and insufficient to fulfil the party's promises.

Example 5.13

More recently as leader of the leftist Syriza party, he promised to tear up the country's loathed loan agreement, a vow that appealed to many crisis-crippled Greeks.

Example 5.14

The assumption in German Chancellor Angela Merkel's entourage before Sunday's Greek election was that Tsipras, the charismatic leader of the far-left Syriza party, would eke out a narrow victory, struggle to form a coalition and, if he managed to do so, shift quickly from confrontation to compromise mode.

<b>Syriza subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>Leader of (the leftist) Syriza party</i>	<i>promised to tear up</i>	<i>the country's loan agreement</i>
	<i>Leader (of the far-left) Syriza party</i>	<i>would eke out</i>	<i>a narrow victory</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material /Verbal Process</b>	<b>Goal / Verbiage</b>

The sentences referring to Syriza supporters are far fewer than those referring to the leader, and in these cases they are very often called 'activists' or 'radicals'. In Example 5.15, Syriza's supporters, who wish to see austerity policies overturned, are called



“grass-roots activists”. In example 5.16, the supporters are ‘young radicals’ who ‘plot a political earthquake for Europe’. It can be argued that rejecting austerity is shown to carry negative connotations, labelling individuals who reject it as radicals who have no interest in social peace.

Example 5.15

But for Syriza’s grass-roots activists, who have powered the party’s rise to the top of the polls, continuation of the current austerity policies isn’t an option, either.

Example 5.16

Syriza’s young radicals plot a political earthquake for Europe

<b>Syriza subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>For Syriza’s grass-roots activists (continuation of austerity policies)</i>	<i>isn’t</i>	<i>an option</i>
	<i>Syriza’s young radicals</i>	<i>plot</i>	<i>a political earthquake</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Goal / Attribute</b>

**b) Syriza subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process in the January NC**

One of the ways that, according to van Leeuwen, subjection can be realised through participation, is as a Carrier in a Relational Process. In Halliday’s transitivity, relational clauses serve to characterize and to identify (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.210). Relational clauses would be, therefore, suitable for providing descriptive information about the qualities of the social actors. However, in this case, in most instances Syriza is the Carrier in a Possession or Circumstantial Relational Process, and much less frequently in an Attributive Relational Process. The relational clauses which actually characterise either negatively or positively are very rare.

The analysis has revealed that in a substantially high number of cases the focal point is the election results or anticipated election results, the seats Syriza has or is expected to

have, and whether or not they have a majority. Examples 5.17 and 5.18 both represent Syriza in terms of its electoral success at the time specified, through a Relational Process of Possession, where Syriza is the Carrier/Possessor.

Example 5.17

With 92 percent of polling stations counted, Syriza had 36.3 percent versus 27.8 percent for Prime Minister Antonis Samaras' conservatives.

Example 5.18

With nearly all votes tallied, Syriza have 149 seats in the 300-seat parliament, and the new government will have a majority of 162 seats with the support of the Independent Greeks.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>36.3 percent</i>
		<i>have</i>	<i>149 seats</i>
	<b>Carrier (Possessor)</b>	<b>Process Possession</b>	<b>Attribute Possessed</b> /

The fact that Syriza is positioned as the possessor of electoral results places the party within specific electoral contexts, discussing potential outcomes or implications of the vote counts as they unfold. This choice portrays Syriza as directly associated with specific electoral outcomes, suggesting that Syriza's identity and capabilities are defined by its electoral performance. While the strong association with electoral results empowers Syriza, it also potentially makes the party's public perception vulnerable to those very outcomes.

On the other hand, there are only a few instances in which journalists attribute characteristics and qualities to Syriza in relational clauses, that is using verbs such as 'is' or 'becomes', as in Examples 5.19 and 5.20, and even in these cases Syriza is seen in relation to the election results. In these cases, Syriza is subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process, as certain characteristics are attributed to the party.

### Example 5.19

Syriza becomes the biggest party in the Greek parliament and will form a governing coalition with the right-wing Independent Greeks party

### Example 5.20

While Syriza is ahead in the polls, with New Democracy trailing by between three and five per cent, it is unclear whether the left-wing party will garner enough of the votes to secure an outright win.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>becomes</i>	<i>the biggest party in the Greek parliament</i>
		<i>is</i>	<i>ahead in the polls</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process Intensive</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

Therefore, in the NC relational clauses are not employed to directly attribute positive or negative characteristics to Syriza, but mainly in relation to the election results.

### c) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January NC

The instances where Syriza is subjected in the January NC do not allow us to detect the newspapers' negative stance towards Syriza as clearly as in the activation instances.

More specifically:

- i. In the subjection through Possessivation cases, the leader of Syriza is the one with whom the majority of the cases are concerned. He is frequently associated with danger and unforeseeable developments, owing to his irresponsible attitude. Representing the party leader in a negative light, can influence the voters' choice, as discussed earlier.
- ii. Supporters and rank-and-file members of Syriza are rarely mentioned in the newspapers, a stark contrast to the more extensive coverage seen in the January BC. In contrast, Syriza cadres are subjected through Possessivation in a considerable number of instances, though less frequently than the leader, Alexis

Tsipras, highlighting a greater focus on the party's leadership over its broader membership base.

- iii. In the cases where Syriza is subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process, it is surprising how few the cases of negative representation are. As discussed earlier, in the cases of Syriza being an Actor in a material process in the January NC, Syriza is almost exclusively the actor of negative deeds, and is associated with danger and economic and social chaos. Therefore, in the newspapers in relational clauses there seems to be a tendency towards negative representations of Syriza through their actions, and not through characteristics directly attributed to them by the journalist. The mainstream media's claim to objectivity (Ostertag, 2006; Salaudeen & Onyechi, 2020) may be linked to this tendency, as the newspapers avoid to directly attribute negative characteristics to the party of Syriza and prefer to achieve this through associating them with negative actions.

### **5.3.2 Representations of Syriza in the January BC**

#### **5.3.2.1 Activation in the January BC**

In the BC, the activated instances were the first to be analysed. In terms of percentages, activation in the BC is largely similar to activation in the NC and, therefore, in this respect, what has been described for activation in the NC applies *mutatis mutandis* to the BC: Syriza is activated in about half of the instances, mostly as an actor in a material process or through possessivation, while the cases in which it is activated as a sayer or a senser are rare, and thus it would not be meaningful to analyse them. However, qualitatively the differences are substantial; the negative representations of Syriza that are consistently made in the NC, are almost nonexistent in the BC, where the representations are generally positive.

### **a) Syriza activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the January BC**

The first of the two frequent categories of activation are the Actor in a Material Process cases. The analysis of the instances where Syriza is activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the January BC showed that most instances (namely 51 out of 91) refer to the victory of Syriza, as is the case with the NC; however, the content is significantly different.

In the BC, Syriza's actions are not generally marked in a negative way, nor is Syriza as an actor associated with danger and chaos. On the contrary, the party is a social actor which brings hope and positive developments. Syriza is the opponent of austerity, the latter being presented as having inflicted harm on Greek society, as in Examples 5.21 and 5.22. In Example 5.21, 'Syriza' is the actor in the material process of making its name "as the key opponent of austerity", linking Syriza's actions to the resulting status or recognition they gain. Syriza is the principal or most significant challenger to austerity measures, emphasizing its leading role in this political arena. The phrase "the painful cuts to the minimum wage, pensions, and public spending" elaborates on what 'austerity' entails, detailing the specific policies opposed by Syriza and representing them in a negative light – thus reinforcing the positive role of the party.

Similar conclusions can be drawn by examining Example 5.22, where Syriza is the actor in the material process of fighting austerity, which is called 'biting'. These Examples, like numerous others, effectively represent Syriza as a central figure in the resistance against austerity measures, and frequently emphasise the social and economic impact of these policies, painting Syriza as a defender of public welfare and economic stability.

### Example 5.21

Syriza has made its name as the key opponent of austerity, the painful cuts to the minimum wage, pensions, and public spending that the European Union has required in exchange for bailing out Greece's government debt.

### Example 5.22

The biting austerity his Syriza party had fought so long to annul now belonged to the past, and this was the beginning not of a new chapter but a book for the country long on the frontline of the euro crisis.

<b>Syriza activated as an actor in a material process</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>has made</i>	<i>its name</i>	<i>as the key opponent of austerity</i>
	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>had fought to annul</i>	<i>the biting austerity</i>	
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

Example 5.23 is another instance where Syriza is the social actor who will put an end to policies that have created high unemployment and led the economy into a new recession, instead of improving it. This example is one of the instances in which the EU is presented as the actor imposing these policies, thus positioning Syriza not only against austerity, but also against the EU. Moreover, the policies which Syriza has declared that they intend to follow, are very frequently seen as realistic and promising, and will prove beneficial not only to the people of Greece but also to those who oppose them, like the German people (Example 5.24).

### Example 5.23

Syriza also calls for reversing Greece's devastating austerity policies, imposed by the European authorities, which have brought the country six years of depression and more than 25 percent unemployment.

### Example 5.24

The economic policies Syriza supports are economically sensible – they will speed the eurozone's recovery and eventually be highly beneficial to the German people.

<b>Syriza activated as an actor in a material process</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>calls for reversing</i>	<i>Greece's devastating austerity policies</i>
	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>supports</i>	<i>(economically sensible) economic policies</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Syriza, as seen in the introduction of this chapter, is a political party closely linked to the movements and the working-class people, who contributed to the rise of the party (Diani & Kousis, 2014, Markou 2017, Kouki & González 2018). In the BC, the reference to the movements and the poor is common. In contrast to the limited focus on economic issues in newspapers, blogs offer a more comprehensive perspective, examining not just the macroeconomic aspects but also the impact of economic policies on the everyday lives of individuals and communities. This is exemplified by the reference to the movements and the poor, as illustrated in Example 5.25. In this example, ‘Syriza’ is the Actor in the Material Process of seeking to realise the movements’ causes. The verb ‘will seek’ describes a future intention or action that Syriza plans to undertake. This process is not merely about implementing policy but actively striving to achieve specific goals, indicating a commitment rather than a passive approach and positioning Syriza not only as a governmental party but also as an agent of social change and protector of disadvantaged groups.

#### Example 5.25

As Greece's expected next government, Syriza will seek to realise these movements' causes and offer protection to vulnerable social groups.

<i>Syriza</i>	<i>will seek (to realise)</i>	<i>these movements' causes</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

## **b) Syriza activated through Possessivation in the January BC**

The second extensive category of Syriza activation is through Possessivation. Nearly half of the instances where Syriza is activated through Possessivation refer to Syriza's victory, rise or triumph. In marked contrast to the NC, the majority of these instances express hope for the future and argue that the victory will trigger positive social and political changes.

However, similar to the NC, the majority of cases where Syriza is activated through Possessivation relate to electoral achievements. This choice links Syriza's identity closely with its electoral results and its stance against austerity, but it also subtly reduces the agency of the party. By frequently associating Syriza with outcomes or attributes such as victories and opposition roles, the media emphasise these aspects as defining characteristics of the party, rather than actions or policies directly initiated by Syriza itself. This could imply that Syriza's role is significant not for its independent merits but because of the situations it finds itself in, such as the electoral context or its response to externally imposed austerity measures.

Examples 5.27, 5.28, and 5.29 illustrate instances where Syriza is activated through Possessivation, indirectly assuming the role of the actor in winning the elections. This outcome is perceived in the alternative media as a promising and positive development.

The journalists in the BC generally express high hopes for the Syriza government, and very rarely do they question the new government's ability to implement their promises to stop austerity and reverse its destructive effects. The transformation of Syriza into a mainstream party who accepted the bailout conditions and implemented a memorandum, which will be widely addressed in the September BC, had not been



predicted by most news blogs in the BC in January; they generally express the certainty that Syriza will achieve its goals.

Example 5.27

A Syriza victory would make Greece the first European country to reject the policies that have brought lasting sky-high unemployment, a declining economy, and a public health crisis.

Example 5.28

The Greek election Sunday night produced a historic moment, one that millions of people have long awaited: Syriza’s triumph was the first time that a radical-left party has won an election in Europe since the Cold War began (and arguably, ever).

Example 5.29

The joy on people’s faces when they saw the victory of Syriza was understandable.

<b>Syriza activated through Possessivation</b>	<i>A Syriza victory</i>	<i>would make</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>the first European country to reject (austerity)</i>
	<i>Syriza’s triumph</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>the first time</i>	<i>that a radical-left party has won an election</i>
	<i>The (joy for the) victory of Syriza</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>understandable</i>	
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Goal / Attribute</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

In a significant number of instances, it is maintained that the change in Greece will trigger positive change in other parts of Europe. Apart from the common people of Greece, this victory has drawn the attention of the people of other countries who are also suffering from the imposition of austerity measures, and might lead them to trust left parties that oppose the central economic policies of the EU. The dissemination of the idea of anti-austerity parties, the rise of such parties elsewhere as well, is a great opportunity for Europe (Example 5.30), and is a danger not for the people of Europe but for the ‘hyperventilating’ elites (Example 5.31).

Example 5.30

And the real danger in Europe, at least to the hyperventilating members of the elites, is that the Syriza success has increased the popularity of anti-austerity parties in the rest of Europe.

Example 5.31

Syriza’s victory in Greece, the spectacular rise of Podemos in Spain and even the surge of the Greens in England show that this is not a pipe dream—millions upon millions of Americans agree with a progressive-left program for the simple reason that it’s a sane, common-sense vision for dramatically improving our society, which means dramatically improving the lives of the majority of people.

<b>Syriza Activated through Possessivation</b>	<i>Syriza success</i>	<i>has increased</i>	<i>the popularity of anti-austerity parties in the rest of Europe</i>
	<i>Syriza’s victory</i>	<i>show(s)</i>	<i>that this is not a pipe dream (dramatically improving the lives of the majority of people)</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material or Relational process</b>	<b>Goal or Attribute</b>

It appears that the BC is pervaded by an *Us* versus *Them* dichotomy, adopting a notion of collective identity (see for example Yuval-Davis 2010), which is entirely schematic and absolute. On the one side there is Syriza, the Greek people, and the peoples of Europe (especially the European South), who fight against austerity, as seen in the previous Examples. On the other side there are those who are in favour of neoliberal policies and do not wish their disruption. The latter side are presented as being concerned about the possibility of Syriza coming to power, and in some cases even as trying to prevent it. So, among the social actors who are confronting Syriza are the mainstream media (Example 5.32) the financial markets (Example 5.33) and European leaders such as the German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Example 5.34). In all three examples Syriza is represented as the actor of winning the elections, although the agency is backgrounded through Possessivation.

Example 5.32

By the way, it also probably caused the mainstream media some distress as they had to re-write the "ultra-left seize Greece meme" that was inevitably going to follow a SYRIZA victory.

Example 5.33

Yet, international financial markets are reacting rather negatively to the strong possibility of a SYRIZA victory.

Example 5.34

Combined with ECB president Mario Draghi's intervention last week, does Syriza's triumph further isolate the hawkish Merkel?

<b>Syriza Activated through Possessivation</b>	The "ultra-left seize Greece meme"	<i>was going to follow</i>	<i>a Syriza victory</i>		
	<i>Financial markets</i>	<i>are reacting (rather negatively)</i>	<i>(to the strong possibility of a) Syriza victory</i>		
			<i>Syriza's triumph</i>	<i>further isolates</i>	<i>(the hawkish) Merkel</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Relational process</b>	<b>Goal / Attribute</b>

**c) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January BC**

In the activated instances, it becomes apparent that there are major differences between the representations of Syriza in the NC and the BC.

- i. Although the percentages of activation are very close in the NC and the BC, and even the percentages of the ways activation is realized are similar, the similarities are limited to the quantitative level, while the qualitative differentiations are striking.
- ii. It is apparent that when Syriza is activated in the BC, it is represented as a social actor who carries hope for the people of Greece for the end of their suffering,

- one who will put an end to policies which are destructive for the Greek society.  
and not as one which brings destabilization and economic ruin, as in the NC.
- iii. Syriza is also going to bring positive change to Europe, as their success could result in similar parties rising in other European countries, thus contributing to reverse neoliberal EU policies as a whole.
  - iv. Syriza is activated as the opponent of austerity, the social actor who will fight against it. Contrary to the newspapers, which present it as an inescapable reality, in the BC austerity is seen almost invariably as a negative policy which needs to be replaced. Since Syriza is against austerity, it means it is a positive social actor.
  - v. The European officials and the Greek politicians, with the aid of mainstream media, are attempting to prove to the people of Greece that voting for Syriza will have devastating results. On the other hand, the working-class people, the activists, the social movements, have worked for the Syriza success and will benefit from it.

### **5.3.2.2 Subjection in the January BC**

Quantitatively speaking, what we have noted with respect to subjection in the NC also applies to the BC. The instances where Syriza is subjected are approximately one out of three, considerably lower than the activation percentage which is almost 50%. In the BC, as was the case in the NC, the main ways of subjection are through Possessivation and as a Carrier in a Relational process, which will be the two categories that will be analysed, as the cases where Syriza is subjected as a Goal in a Material Process and as a Phenomenon in a Mental Process are substantially less frequent, and certainly too few to yield interesting results.

#### **a) Syriza subjected through Possessivation in the January BC**

In the BC, the sentences where Syriza is subjected through Possessivation are far more diverse than those in the NC. In contrast to the NC, where the majority of instances refer to the leader of Syriza, while the members and supporters are overlooked, in the BC there are only nine instances (out of 62) referring to the leader, which concern economic matters such as the end of austerity measures that Syriza has promised (Example 5.35) and the reversal of their negative consequences (Example 5.36). In these instances Syriza is passively represented as having a leader, while the actions are attributed to the leader rather than the party itself. This representation suggests that the initiative is primarily linked to Tsipras' personal commitment rather than an independent or collective party action. Nevertheless, these instances are relatively few, which indicates that in the BC, the leader is not more important than the party.

Example 5.35

It's no surprise then that Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras' promise to "cancel austerity" has been popular with voters.

Example 5.36

That means Syriza's dynamic marxist leader, the 40-year-old former student radical Alexis Tsipras, will shortly become Greece's prime minister, pledged to undo years of crippling austerity and to turn Greece back into a real democracy, instead of a scene of corporate pillage.

<b>Syriza subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>Syriza leader</i>	<i>promised to cancel</i>	<i>austerity</i>
	<i>Syriza's (dynamic Marxist) leader</i>	<i>will shortly become</i>	<i>Greece's prime minister</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Goal / Attribute</b>

The instances referring to the members and supporters of Syriza are more than those discussing the leader, in contrast to the NC where the portrayal of Syriza as a grassroots party which had gained momentum through participation in the movements is not particularly prominent. This is yet another distinction between the newspapers; whereas

the connection of Syriza with the movements is highlighted in the BC, in the NC it is practically neglected. In the BC, the members or supporters are presented as ‘Marxists’ (Example 5.37) and their connection to the movements is stressed, as in Example 5.38.

Example 5.37

Indeed, while Syriza’s core members have Marxist backgrounds, their immediate economic program is little more than progressive Keynesian social democratic proposals adjusted for a crisis situation.

Example 5.38

Syriza candidates and politicians have emerged from these movements.

<b>Syriza subjected through possessivation</b>	<i>Syriza leader</i>	<i>promised to cancel</i>	<i>austerity</i>
	<i>Syriza’s (dynamic Marxist) leader</i>	<i>will shortly become</i>	<i>Greece’s prime minister</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Goal / Attribute</b>

The idea of *Us* versus *Them* is also present in this category of instances. Syriza is an opponent of neoliberalism (Example 5.39); in some cases, the mainstream media are indicated as being among the opponents of Syriza, and their role in supporting neoliberalism and presenting Syriza as evil is stressed, as in Example 5.40, while social movements and unions are on the side of Syriza, as shown in Example 5.41. In these examples Syriza is subjected through Possessivation, in the processes of being elected (5.39), being demonised by mainstream media (5.40) and being formed by movements, parties and unions (5.41).

Example 5.39

The election of SYRIZA is a shot directly across the bow of neoliberalism and its flagship of ideas, aka as the austerity project.

Example 5.40

Media Demonization of Syriza: Pretending that Neoliberalism is Popular and Mainstream

Example 5.41

Of course, it's not just social centres, but other social movements, parties and unions that have linked up in the formation of the Syriza coalition.

<b>Syriza subjected through possessiv action</b>			<i>The election of Syriza</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>a shot directly across the bow of neoliberalism</i>
	<i>Media</i>		<i>demonization of Syriza</i>		
	<i>Social movements, parties and unions</i>	<i>have linked up (in the formation)</i>	<i>of the Syriza coalition</i>		
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Goal / Attribute</b>

**b) Syriza subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process in the January BC**

The second category of Syriza subjection in the January BC which was analysed is subjection as a Carrier in a Relational Process. Syriza is subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process in almost the same number of instances as the subjection through Possessivation cases discussed above.

There are a significant number of cases, about 1 out of 4, which discuss what kind of party Syriza is, which is in striking contrast to the NC, where there is no direct discussion about the nature of Syriza. In these cases, the Marxist origins and anticapitalist views of Syriza are stressed (as in Examples 5.42 and 5.43) and yet this is not presented as a negative trait, as in the NC.

In Example 5.42, Syriza is the Carrier, the social actor described or characterized by the attributes provided. By describing Syriza as a coalition that includes a variety of left-wing ideologies—from mainstream left democratic socialists to more radical groups like Maoists and Trotskyists—the sentence emphasizes the diverse and

inclusive nature of the party. This suggests a party structure that is not monolithic but rather a dynamic amalgamation of various factions.

In 5.43, Syriza is again the Carrier, attributed the quality of being "an anticapitalist coalition that addresses the question of power by emphasizing the dialectic of electoral alliances and success at the ballot box with struggle and mobilizations from below", thus defining the party as not only anticapitalist but also strategic in its engagement with both formal electoral processes and grassroots movements. This dual focus emphasizes Syriza's unique position in the political spectrum, in the blogs' point of view.

Example 5.42

Syriza isn't a political party, it's a coalition of democratic socialists, left-wing populist and green left groups, as well as Maoist, Trotskyist, eurocommunist but also eurosceptic components.

Example 5.43

So Syriza is an anticapitalist coalition that addresses the question of power by emphasizing the dialectic of electoral alliances and success at the ballot box with struggle and mobilizations from below.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>isn't</i>	<i>a political party</i>
		<i>is</i>	<i>an anticapitalist coalition</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process Intensive</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

There are also instances where it is openly claimed that Syriza is the solution to Greece's and Europe's problems, as in Examples 5.44 and 5.45.

Example 5.44

Scaremongering campaigns on the part of German and European officials make no sense, as Syriza is not a threat to Europe but a breakthrough.

Example 5.45

In my view Syriza presents the best alternative to the problems young people in Greece are faced with.



<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>not a threat</i>
		<i>presents</i>	<i>the best alternative</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process Intensive</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

### c) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January BC

As was the case with the activated instances, the subjected instances in the BC also reflect the disparity between the representations of Syriza in the two subcorpora. More specifically:

- i. In the Possessivation cases, there is no emphasis on the leader, but instead the members and supporters are equally prominent and are represented as playing a major role in the rise and composition of Syriza.
- ii. As has also been made evident from the activated instances in the BC, there is an *Us vs Them* dichotomy, that represents Syriza as the enemy of economic elites and neoliberalism in the EU, and the mainstream media as being aligned with Syriza's opponents and trying to instill fear in people about the possibility of Syriza coming to power. The opponents of Syriza are consistently represented in a negative way.
- iii. In the BC there are numerous cases where Syriza is evaluated, and favourably so, in attributive relational processes. While in the NC the journalists avoid making direct characterisations of Syriza, in the BC the nature of the party is widely, and directly discussed.

### 5.4 Representations of Tsipras in the July subcorpora

The critical Referendum of July 5 in Greece, marked a pivotal moment in the nation's political landscape. This significant event not only shaped the course of the Greek financial crisis but also spotlighted the role of leadership in times of national decision-

making. Consequently, the focus of the analysis in the July subcorpus shifts to Alexis Tsipras, the Prime Minister, rather than the Syriza party as a whole. This shift underscores the importance of Tsipras's position and decisions during the referendum, reflecting the public and media's concentration on individual leadership as the embodiment of policy and national direction. Additionally, the analytical shift to Tsipras is supported by the frequency of the instances of the lexical item 'Tsipras' in the July subcorpora, which is higher than that of the party itself, a reversal from the patterns observed in the January and September subcorpora. Thus, this section aims to explore how Tsipras, as a social actor, was represented during this defining period, emphasizing his influence and actions in the context of the referendum.

The analysis showed that Tsipras is activated in a wide majority of the instances, in both corpora, which indicates that the Prime Minister is mostly seen as the social actor who brings about changes – particularly since the other three social actors in the July subcorpora, i.e. Greece, the EU and Austerity have very low activation rates, and especially the EU's activation rate has fallen substantially. As far as subjection is concerned, Tsipras is subjected in as low as one out of five instances, both in the NC and the BC, while the percentages of beneficialisation and circumstantialisation are very low.

The percentage of activation is considerably higher than that of Syriza in the January 5 subcorpora, which indicates that the Prime Minister is seen as the social actor responsible for calling the referendum, and the one whose initiatives play the most significant role in the political developments in Greece. It should be noted that the occurrences of the name of the Prime Minister in the NC have surpassed those of the name of the party, which is an indication that the newspapers assign him personally the central role which was previously assigned to the whole party, or even considering the

referendum a personal choice of the Prime Minister. This is not the case in the BC, where, although Syriza occurrences have fallen and Tsipras occurrences have increased, Tsipras is still considerably less frequent than Syriza in the BC, indicating that the alternative media still see Syriza as a party which makes decisions collectively, while the newspapers see the Prime Minister as the important social actor.

Table 5.5 presents the percentages of activation, subjection, beneficialisation and circumstantialisation of Tsipras in the July NC and BC subcorpora. The instances where Tsipras is either activated or subjected will be discussed in this chapter. As was the case with Syriza in the January subcorpora, the cases where Tsipras is beneficialised and circumstantialised are too rare to be interesting for analysis, so only activation and subjection instances will be discussed. Tables 5.6 and 5.7 present the transitivity analysis of activated and subjected instances, which is also to be discussed in the following subsection.

Table 5.5. July, Tsipras, NC and BC, Activation, Subjection, Beneficialisation and Circumstantialisation rates

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
<b>TSIPRAS</b>	67.74	60.61	22.12	23.23	6.45	10.10	3.69	6.06%
<b>Total:</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	N=6
<b>NC=217</b>	N=147	N=60	N=48	N=23	N=14	N=10	N=8	
<b>BC=99</b>								

Table 5.6 presents the transitivity analysis of the instances where Syriza is activated in the July subcorpora. The substantial increase in activation percentages compared to the January subcorpora both in the NC and the BC underscores Syriza's evolving role as a more assertive and influential social actor during this period.

In the July subcorpora, the most prominent category of activation remains Actor in a Material Process, but with a notable increase, especially in the NC. This suggests a heightened portrayal of Tsipras actively shaping political events, possibly in response to the critical events surrounding the referendum. Such a depiction reinforces the perception of the Prime Minister as a decisive force capable of direct impacts on Greece's political scene.

Additionally, the Sayer in a Verbal Process category sees a significant rise in the NC, indicating a more vocal presence of Tsipras in public discourse. This could reflect Tsipras's strategic communication efforts to sway public opinion or articulate his stance on pressing issues, highlighting his engagement in verbal and rhetorical activities that aim to influence the socio-political narrative.

Interestingly, the category of Senser in a Mental Process shows a substantial increase in the BC, pointing to a portrayal of Tsipras as more reflective or responsive to the socio-political environment. This could mean that the blogs represent Tsipras as being attuned to the public's sentiments and concerns.

The reduced frequency of activation through Possessivation in the representation of Tsipras in the July subcorpora, compared to that of Syriza in the January subcorpora, might indicate a media focus on his direct actions and decisions rather than attributing the outcomes or achievements to his possessions or relationship to them, emphasising his personal agency and possibly consolidating his image as a strong leader capable of guiding the country through difficult times.

Table 5.6. July, Tsipras, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Activated instances

<b>Activated</b> (NC 67.74%, 147 / BC 60.61 %, 60)				
	NC (Total 217)		BC (Total 99)	
Actor in a material process	30.41%	N=66	23.23%	N=23
Senser in a mental process	3.22%	N=7	15.15%	N=15
Sayer in a verbal process	28.11%	N=61	14.14%	N=14
Through possessivation	5.99%	N=13	8.08%	N=8

Table 5.7 illustrates the transitivity analysis of instances where Tsipras is subjected in the July subcorpora. The overall percentages of subjected instances in both the NC and the BC are relatively close, with 22.12% in the NC and 23.23% in the BC.

The higher occurrence of instances of activation through Possessivation in the NC suggests that mainstream media more frequently depict Tsipras as being defined by what he possesses or is associated with. This may be an attempt to preserve a sense of objectivity by avoiding direct characterisations.

The number of instances of subjection as a Carrier in a Relational Process is notably higher in the BC, indicating a stronger tendency in blogs to discuss Tsipras in terms of attributes, identities, or descriptions that are ascribed to him. This may be attributed to the fact that alternative media outlets do not claim to adhere to the principles of objectivity, instead admitting to adopting a particular stance (Atton, 2002; Dowmunt & Coyer, 2007).

Subjection as a Phenomenon in a Mental Process is more frequent than in the January subcorpora, especially in the BC. It can be observed that Tsipras is the subject of thoughts, feelings, or perceptions. This could reflect commentary or public opinion about Tsipras' actions or decisions, suggesting a media focus on how he is perceived or judged by others.

The cases where Tsipras is represented as the Goal in a Material Process are notably infrequent, accounting for just around 2% in both the NC and BC. This rarity suggests that Tsipras is generally seen, both in mainstream and alternative media, as an independent social actor, typically not merely at the receiving end of actions but instead actively shaping events.

Table 5.7 July, Tsipras, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Subjected instances

<b>Subjected (NC 22.12%, 47 / BC 23.23%, 24 )</b>				
	NC (Total 217)		BC (Total 99)	
Goal in a material process	2.30%	N=5	2.02%	N=2
Phenomenon in a mental process	4.61%	N=10	6.06%	N=6
Carrier in a relational process	5.52%	N=12	12.12%	N=13
Through possessivation	8.75%	N=19	3.03%	N=3
Verbiage in a verbal process	1.39%	N=3	-	

#### 5.4.1 Representations of Tsipras in the July NC

##### 5.4.1.1 Activation in the July NC

The discrepancy in the rank of the lexical item Tsipras in the NC and BC frequency lists is not the only difference between the July NC and BC; the transitivity analysis revealed variance in other respects. As already mentioned, Tsipras is activated in most of the instances in both corpora, with the NC having a higher percentage of activation in comparison with the BC. In the NC, in most cases he is either the Actor in a Material Process or the Sayer in a Verbal Process, therefore equal attention is given to his actions and his words. In the BC, the percentage where Tsipras is a Sayer in a Mental Process is also significant, so attention is also given to the Prime Minister's thoughts and feelings. Cases where Tsipras is activated through Possessivation are infrequent in both subcorpora and thus are not going to be discussed for either corpus. As in the January

subcorpus Syriza representations, the representations of Tsipras in the July subcorpus are mainly negative in the NC and mainly positive in the BC.

**a) Tsipras activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the July NC**

There are 66 instances, out of the 217 cases of activation, in which Tsipras is an Actor in a Material Process, that is the participant who performs the action in a clause. Tsipras as an Actor is to a great extent represented negatively, and particularly his decision to announce a referendum is heavily criticized, as is his previous stance of obstructing negotiations with the creditors.

In the vast majority of the instances the announcement of the referendum is reported or discussed, usually stressing the unexpectedness of Tsipras' move, and in most the wisdom or the legitimacy of this move is questioned. There is a tendency in the newspapers to represent the referendum as a catastrophic move that made relations with the creditors even more difficult and as a definite aggravation of the situation for Greece.

In Example 5.46, Tsipras is the Actor in the Material Processes of shredding the creditors' goodwill, of calling a referendum and of campaigning for a 'no' vote. Thus, he is represented as being actively engaged in the decision-making, initiating a critical political action but also actively participating in the subsequent campaign. On the other hand, the creditors are backgrounded as a Circumstance, as the referendum is called "on the terms creditors had offered". The choice of the lexical item 'shredded' to describe Tsipras's actions carries a distinctly negative connotation, suggesting a reckless or harmful disregard for previously established goodwill in the ongoing negotiations. This choice of word reflects a critical perspective often found in mainstream media portrayals, where Tsipras's decisions are seen as detrimental to

diplomatic relations and financial stability. The decision to call a referendum is represented not merely as a bold move but as a "shock move," highlighting an element of surprise and imprudence. His active campaign for a 'no' vote is further depicted as a divisive tactic, polarizing public opinion and exacerbating tensions both domestically and internationally.

Similarly, in Example 5.47, Tsipras is the Actor in the Material Processes of exacerbating negative opinions and monopolising optimism. This sentence represents Tsipras as a polarising figure, in terms of his inability to mitigate negativity and his contribution to an increasingly negative image of his government and the country. At the same time, he appears to believe that he is the sole source of optimism, which further divides public opinion and potentially fosters resentment or disillusionment among the populace.

Example 5.46

After months of on-off talks, Tsipras shredded much of the remaining goodwill with his shock move last week to call a referendum on the terms creditors had offered and his decision to campaign for a "no" vote.

Example 5.47

The problem, though, is that Mr Tsipras turns negative opinions into even more negative opinions and regards optimism as an exclusive tool of his own Syriza government.

<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>shredded</i>	<i>much of the remaining goodwill</i>
	<i>turns</i>	<i>negative opinions into even more negative opinions</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Throughout the July NC it is stressed that Tsipras' move and his general attitude of not complying to the creditors' demands are bound to have grave consequences. In a considerable number of instances these consequences are specified, and it is pointed out that they are already visible. Firstly, the Prime Minister was forced to impose capital controls (Example 5.48); in addition, his decision to break off negotiations resulted in



the European officials putting a halt to the bailout programme, causing the ECB to withdraw the support to the Greek banks (Example 5.49).

Example 5.48

Fearing a bank collapse, Mr. Tsipras returned to television on Sunday night, announcing capital controls and the closing of the banking system.

Example 5.49

Since Mr. Tsipras broke off talks, European officials have refused to negotiate further and to extend a deadline for the last bailout program, setting up a decision by the European Central Bank to cap its emergency support to Greek banks.

	<i>announced</i>	<i>capital controls and the closing of the banking system</i>
<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>broke off</i>	<i>talks</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

However, although the newspapers consider Tsipras’ decision to call a referendum to be perilous, they do not suggest that it may lead to Grexit. In fact, they reproduce Tsipras’ intent to use the no vote in the referendum as leverage for the negotiations for the bailout deal, as for instance in Example 5.50.

In many instances there is also approval for Tsipras’ course of action after the referendum, and explicit optimism that Greece will get back on track, implementing austerity measures and reforms. An instance of this is Example 5.51, where it is reported that Tsipras ‘is softening his position’, which is seen as a positive development that ‘boosted markets’ globally.

Example 5.50

Tsipras campaigned for a no vote, arguing that this was the best way to secure a better deal, keeping Greece in the euro while obtaining debt relief from its creditors.

Example 5.51

Hopes that Tsipras was softening his position — after refusing for five months to accept the proposed spending cuts — boosted markets across Europe, the United States and Asia.

<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>campaigned</i>	<i>for a no vote</i>
	<i>was softening</i>	<i>his position</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

The newspapers seem to have a view that is closer to what appears to be the opinion of no-voters, that their vote will lead to new negotiations. This is shown both in the Actor in a Material Process cases, and even more in the cases where Tsipras is a Sayer in a Verbal Process, which will be presented in the next subsection. It is true that in the NC the referendum is seen as a reckless move that will definitely have a cost for Greece, but they do not doubt that the intention of the Greek Prime Minister is not to leave the Eurozone, nor do they claim that Grexit is a likely outcome of this situation. Therefore, they do not agree with the yes-voters view, the majority of whom believed that a no vote at the referendum would lead to Grexit. The views of no-voters and yes-voters have been analysed in a survey conducted by Walter, Dinas, Jurado and Konstantinidis (2018), which showed that the vast majority, close to 90%, of those who voted ‘no’ believed that their vote would lead to a better negotiating position, while the majority of the yes-voters believed that the consequence of a ‘no’ vote would be Grexit.

**b) Tsipras activated as a Sayer in a Verbal Process in the July NC**

This was the second more frequent category of activation in the July subcorpora. In the wide majority of the cases in which Tsipras is a Sayer in a Verbal Process, he urges the Greek people to cast a ‘no’ vote. In surprisingly few instances, however, reference is made to the policies and the demands that the Greek people are asked to reject, even though this is the purpose of the referendum.

In 10% of the cases of Tsipras being activated as a Sayer, the Prime Minister is shown to be presenting his decision to resort to a referendum as an utterly essential course of action in order to deal with what he calls ‘blackmail’ from the creditors (as in Example

5.52), and at the same time he appears to present the ‘no’ vote more as an issue of democracy than of economy. Therefore, the debate, as represented in the NC, is not at all about what will change in the economic policy of the Greek government if the ‘no’ vote prevails, but is limited to a symbolic move to redefine national sovereignty – a ‘victory for democracy’ as in Example 5.53.

Example 5.52

On Friday, Mr. Tsipras renewed his call for Greeks to reject the terms of the bailout offer from the country’s European creditors, warning voters against caving in to “blackmail.”

Example 5.53

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras hailed the result as a "victory for democracy" and urged the country to come together.

	<i>renewed</i>	<i>his call for Greeks to reject the terms of the bailout offer</i>
<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>hailed</i>	<i>the result as a "victory for democracy"</i>
<b>Sayer</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>

This appears to be a partial interpretation of the Prime Minister’s emphases. It is true that during the referendum campaign and right after the announcement of the results, Tsipras appealed on emotion by putting an emphasis on democracy, and claiming that this was the main political principle of his party (Boukala & Dimitrakopoulou, 2017; Finlayson, 2012). However, this was not the only aspect of the referendum stressed by the Prime Minister. In his speeches and his appearances on TV, he also stressed the dichotomy between a Europe against austerity and a neoliberal Europe, claiming that the true European heritage was the opposition to neoliberalism (Boukala & Dimitrakopoulou, 2017). This aspect seems to be largely ignored in the NC, while in the BC it is prominent, as will be shown in the July BC analysis.

As mentioned in the previous subsection, with the announcement of the referendum, the Prime Minister stressed that if the result is a ‘no’ vote, i.e. the rejection of the agreement, this will be a negotiating point that will give him greater leverage in

negotiations with the creditors (Tsatsanis & Teperoglou, 2016). Tsipras reassured the Greek people that there would be no chance of exiting the Eurozone, and stated repeatedly that his government was a pro-Europe government. The Greek mainstream media ignored this reassurance and strongly suggested that the danger of Grexit was imminent in the case of a no-vote (e.g., Constantinou, 2018; Serafis & Herman, 2018). In the US and British newspapers that are examined through the NC, on the other hand, there are no claims that the referendum may lead to Greece exiting the Eurozone.

This divergence could be attributed to the fact that the Greek newspapers primarily cater to a domestic audience, directly impacted by the ongoing financial crisis and the referendum's outcome, and who would be the voters in the referendum. The focus on an imminent threat of Grexit likely aimed to underscore the severity and immediate implications of the referendum, influencing voters by emphasizing the potential for significant national upheaval in the case that a 'no' vote would prevail, as Greek mainstream media are generally thought to have been mostly interested in campaigning a yes vote (Kountouri & Kollias, 2020; Triga & Manavopoulos, 2017). On the other hand, the international media perspective was most likely based on the desire to minimise financial panic. These media outlets likely aimed to mitigate fear and uncertainty in the global financial markets, which could be adversely affected by speculations of an EU member state's exit from the Eurozone.

In over one third of the instances in which Tsipras is a Sayer, he is presented to be asserting that a no vote will facilitate the negotiations, as in Example 5.54, which is one of the numerous instances that reflect the tendency detected in the NC to emphasise the fact that Tsipras associated the referendum with the negotiations, reinforcing the view that international mainstream media were mainly interested in containing the panic in

the markets. In Example 5.54, Tsipras is the Sayer, emphasizing his role in delivering a direct message or promise to the public.

In many cases there is direct reassurance by Tsipras that there is no possibility of a Grexit (Example 5.55), but that Greece's membership of the eurozone and the EU will continue unhindered.

Example 5.54

Before the vote, Tsipras promised he could strike an agreement with Europe “within 48 hours” if voters backed him — as they did.

Example 5.55

But Tsipras insisted that the vote “did not answer the question ‘in or out of the euro.’”

<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>promised</i>	<i>he could strike an agreement with Europe</i>
	<i>insisted</i>	<i>that the vote “did not answer the question ‘in or out of the euro’”</i>
<b>Sayer</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>

The consequences of the referendum announcement were the closing of the banks and capital controls which brought panic to businesses and people. However, in many instances Tsipras is reassuring that these outcomes would only be temporary, as in Example 5.56.

Example 5.56

Mr Tsipras claims the banks will open on Monday if the people vote no but it is virtually certain their savings would remain locked up for some considerable time.

<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>claims</i>	<i>the banks will open on Monday</i>
<b>Sayer</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>

In this Example Tsipras is the subject who performs the action of claiming, highlighting his role as a communicator of a significant assertion about the political-economic situation. The use of "claims" suggests a degree of skepticism or the need for scrutiny regarding Tsipras's statements, reflecting an ideological stance that may

question the reliability or feasibility of his political promises. In addition, the latter part of the sentence introduces a contradicting perspective that challenges Tsipras's claim, adding a layer of skepticism to the assertion.

### **c) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the July NC**

The following conclusions highlight how Tsipras's actions during the critical period before and after the Greek referendum have been interpreted and represented in the two types of media. The insights provided illuminate the responses to his political decisions and the perceived broader implications for Greece and its relationship with the European Union.

- i. As an Actor, Tsipras is accused of recklessness and risky behaviour. The referendum announcement is represented as unexpected, uncalled for, even illegitimate – a move that could lead Greece into uncharted waters. Tsipras' actions came as a shock and are expected to cause a greater deterioration in the relations of the Greek government with the European officials and a worsening of the situation in Greece.
- ii. The grave consequences are already visible: capital controls, closing of the bank sector. However, Tsipras as a Sayer is presented to assure the Greek people that those measures are only temporary.
- iii. Although on the one hand Tsipras is represented as reckless for calling a referendum, on the other hand he is shown as not having the intention to come into conflict with the EU. The newspapers emphatically present him as claiming that the only reason for announcing a referendum was to use it in the negotiations. Therefore, we do not detect in the NC the tendency of the Greek

mainstream media to overemphasise the risk of clash with the creditors and Grexit in case of no vote prevailing.

- iv. In the NC there is a focus on democracy as the motive of the referendum, while the aspect of rejecting austerity and neoliberal policies is clearly undermined, if not completely absent, which is in complete contrast with the BC, as will be shown in the next section.

#### **5.4.1.2 Subjection in the July NC**

Subjection occurs when an actor is represented as being affected by actions, decisions, or events, rather than being the one who initiates or controls them, implying a lack of agency or power in the scenario being described, highlighting their dependency in relation to other actors. The subjection rate of Tsipras in the July NC, however, is low, considerably lower than that of activation, as was also the case with the Syriza activation and subjection rates in the January subcorpora. In fact, it is slightly over 20%, showing that Tsipras is infrequently represented as an actor who is dependent on other actors. However, qualitatively, there are notable discrepancies between the NC and BC in the way the Prime Minister is depicted in instances of subjection.

As shown earlier in Table 5. 5, the cases of subjection through Possessivation are the most frequent subjection cases, in the NC (while in the BC they are minimal). The other two categories which are rather frequent are subjection as a Carrier in a Relational Process and as a Phenomenon in a Mental Process, although the numbers are not particularly high as the subjection percentage is low.

##### **a) Tsipras subjected through Possessivation in the July NC**

In the July NC, cases of subjection through Possessivation are relatively limited, comprising only 19 out of a total of 48 subjection instances, reflecting the overall

infrequency of subjection in this analysis. The majority of these instances refer to Tsipras’ government, and not in a favourable way.

Tsipras’s government is represented as irresponsible and incompetent, as in Example 5.57, where they accused of putting the country's economy at great risk by not complying with the bailout agreements, thus ‘having returned the country to recession’ The Greek government is now in a very difficult position, having caused serious complications, and as a result of the Tsipras’ government actions, the future of Greece is uncertain and ‘default looms’ should the creditors decide to withdraw their financial support (Example 5.58).

Example 5.57

Many blamed Mr. Tsipras’s government for having returned the country to recession when it had shown hints of recovery just before the January elections.

Example 5.58

If it decides not to supply more liquidity to the Greek banking system on the grounds it may be throwing good money after bad as a default looms, the Greek banks will not be able to stay afloat for long, despite claims from the Tsipras government that they will be open this week.

<b>Syriza subjected through possessiv ation</b>	<i>Many</i>	<i>blamed</i>	<i>Mr. Tsipras’s government</i>		
			<i>Tsipra’s government</i>	<i>claims</i>	<i>the Greek banks will be open</i>
	<b>Sayer / Carrier</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>

Newspapers often choose to employ subjection through Possessivation when aiming to critique Tsipras more harshly, as it allows them to express disapproval through a more detached, indirect approach. Conversely, when newspapers represent Tsipras more favourably, they tend to activate him as an Actor or Sayer, highlighting his direct involvement and leadership qualities. This tactic suggests that when the critique is



particularly severe, the media may prefer not to portray him as the protagonist of the action.

### **b) Tsipras subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process in the July NC**

In the NC, there are 12 instances in which Tsipras is subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process. In almost all of them, the Greek Prime Minister is represented negatively and as having no allies (Example 5.59). In three of the cases the words of third parties are quoted. In two of them, the ones in which Tsipras is represented negatively, there are the words of experts, with prestige and authority (Examples 5.60 and 5.61). The third, which is positive towards Tsipras, concerns the words of an ordinary resident of Athens (Example 5.62). It could be the case that the newspapers make a choice when they present the opinion of third parties on Tsipras, to be people of authority and knowledge who express a negative opinion, which of course carries a different weight from the positive opinion of ordinary citizens who are not considered to be in a position to judge the situation accurately and in depth.

#### Example 5.59

Greece's Tsipras short on allies as he tries to avoid ruin.

#### Example 5.60

"Tsipras is the direct result of austerity; he is a creature of the creditors' own making," said Paul De Grauwe, a professor of political economy at the London School of Economics.

#### Example 5.61

"This victory for the 'no' camp will unfortunately embolden the government, but is likely to do little to convince the creditors that Tsipras is a trustworthy negotiating partner who has any ability to implement a deal," said Megan Greene, chief economist of Manulife Asset Management.

#### Example 5.62

It's a vote to change course and stay in the euro, and Tsipras is our best hope," she said. (Athens resident Maria Antoniou )

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>(is)</i>	<i>short on allies</i>
		<i>is</i>	<i>the direct result of austerity</i>
		<i>is (not)</i>	<i>a trustworthy negotiating partner</i>
		<i>is</i>	<i>our best hope</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process Intensive</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

Tsipras as a Carrier is represented negatively in most of the instances, not only by experts but by the writers of the articles too. For instance, in Example 5.63 Tsipras is presented as being in a dead-end situation (for which he is of course responsible); in Example 5.64 Tsipras could find himself in a situation where he would have to face an angry and frightened Greek population. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the instances in the July NC which present Grexit as a possible outcome are rare, and they have in common the degree of disaster which they present such an outcome to entail.

#### Example 5.63

Tsipras faces intense pressure from creditors abroad and banks at home who all demand what Greece lacks: money.

#### Example 5.64

Under these circumstances Mr Tsipras would need to explain to an angry and frightened Greek population why he got it wrong when he said no would lead to more talks and was compatible with Greece remaining as a full member of the euro.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>faces</i>	<i>intense pressure from creditors abroad and banks at home</i>
		<i>would need</i>	<i>to explain [...]why he got it wrong</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process Circumstantial</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

#### c) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC

The subjected cases are not as many as the activated ones, and are therefore not so useful for drawing conclusions. Nevertheless, we can identify the following tendencies:

- i. Referring to the Syriza government as ‘Tsipras government’ is quite common and in most of these cases the government and the Prime Minister are represented negatively, with their decisions and actions criticized as perilous for Greece and the Greek citizens.
- ii. Tsipras is isolated, not trusted by other European leaders and the creditors, and has brought himself and his country in an impossible situation.

## **5.4.2 Representations of Tsipras in the July BC**

### **5.4.2.1 Activation in the July BC**

As mentioned earlier, Tsipras as a social actor is not as frequent in the BC as it is in the July NC, where the lexical item ‘Tsipras’ is far more frequent than the lexical item ‘Syriza’, which was not even frequent enough to be included in the frequency list of the 30 most frequent nouns and adjectives of the subcorpus. The number of activated instances is considerably lower than in the NC, and yet their analysis seems to deliver certain insights in the representation of Tsipras in the blogs. Of the 60 activated instances, over one third concern activation as an actor in a material process, while there are 15 cases of activation as a senser in a mental process and 14 as a sayer in a verbal process, so there is no particular emphasis on the Prime Minister’s actions, feelings or words, but more or less equal attention is paid to all three.

#### **a) Tsipras activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the July BC**

In the July BC, there is considerable evidence of dissatisfaction with the current political situation in Greece. Initially, the blogs were very enthusiastic about the election of Syriza and its potential to abolish austerity. However, this enthusiasm has now been overtaken by a growing sense of disillusionment among supporters who had high expectations for swift and decisive action. This shift in opinion is a

reflection of the government's reluctance to confront the creditors. Consequently, they do not seem to treat Tsipras' actions in the same enthusiastic way they had treated Syriza's victory in the elections, but instead in a notable number of cases (as Examples 5.65 and 5.66) they express dissatisfaction with the fact that the Prime Minister has already made many concessions and it does not seem likely that the referendum will lead to the abolishment of austerity policies.

Example 5.65

It was then reported by the media that Tsipras submitted a new proposal to the "institutions," a proposal which aimed to settle Greece's funding from the supra-national European Stability Mechanism in order for Greece's debt to become "sustainable" while giving emphasis to the "growth perspective."

Example 5.66

But hasn't Tsipras conceded on most of these demands already, by sending the letter to the troika which was immediately leaked to the FT?

<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>submitted</i>	<i>a new proposal</i>	<i>to the "institutions"</i>
	<i>has conceded</i>	<i>on most of these demands</i>	
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

As in the NC, there are no references to the possibility of Grexit, but rather there are instances referring to the negotiation leverage that a no-vote will give the Prime Minister, as in Examples 5.67 and 5.68.

Example 5.67

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who came to power in large part on a promise to reject more austerity measures, had called the referendum to get more bargaining power in the dealmaking process.

Example 5.68

Tsipras and Syriza have won big in the referendum, strengthening their hand for whatever comes next.

<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>had called</i>	<i>the referendum</i>	<i>to get more bargaining power</i>
<i>Tsipras (and Syriza)</i>	<i>have won big</i>		<i>in the referendum</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

#### **b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the July BC**

Judging by the activated instances in the July BC, we can draw the following conclusions:

- i. The blogs do not consider that the referendum announced by Tsipras may result in a Grexit, a scenario viewed in the January BC as a possible and positive outcome of Tsipras' party coming to power.
- ii. The blogs adopt the view that Tsipras has resorted to the referendum solution as a means of strengthening his position in the negotiations and that there is no possibility to cancel the austerity policies, as he had promised to do.

#### **5.4.2.2 Subjection in the July BC**

As the total number of the instances of the lexical item Tsipras in the BC are not particularly high, and the subjection rate is very low, the total number of the subjected cases of Tsipras in the BC are as low as 23, with over half of them subjected as carrier in a relational process. The fact that Tsipras is more frequently represented as a Carrier and not as a goal could mean that he is associated with certain conditions or circumstances without being portrayed as overtly passive or powerless. This might subtly underscore the complexities of his position—highlighting how external conditions or expectations are linked to him without depicting him as merely reacting to or being shaped by these forces.

#### **a) Tsipras subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process**

It seems that Tsipras is not represented in a very positive way in the July BC, as Syriza had been in the January BC. In many instances there is disappointment as to the choices of the Prime Minister up to that point. The journalists express their disapproval of the decision for a referendum, judging it as inefficacious, since the Syriza government has

already made concessions and did not confront the creditors from the beginning, as expected.

In Example 5.69, Tsipras is the Carrier of a relational process which is describing his political standing and the public's approval of his actions – "a fresh election and strong popular approval" are the attributes linked to Tsipras, detailing what he possesses or has achieved. The representation of Tsipras as a Carrier who ‘had’ these positive outcomes but faced unyielding creditors suggests that there has been an obstruction from more powerful social actors, which could be interpreted as diminishing his effectiveness or the significance of public support in the face of rigid external pressures. Similarly, in 5.70 Tsipras is the Carrier and ‘trapped by his success’ is the Attribute linked to him. It describes the state or situation in which he finds himself as a consequence of his previous achievements. In 5.71, Tsipras as the Carrier is attributed a depressed emotional state, representing Tsipras as deeply affected by the perceived failures and challenges faced during his administration.

#### Example 5.69

But Tsipras already had a fresh election and strong popular approval and yet the creditors were not moved.

#### Example 5.70

Mr Tsipras is now trapped by his success.

#### Example 5.71

Mr Tsipras was depressed, dissecting all the errors that Syriza has made since taking power in January, talking into the early hours...

<b>Attributive / Possessive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Mr Tsipras</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>a fresh election</i>
		<i>is</i>	<i>trapped</i>
		<i>was</i>	<i>depressed</i>
	<b>Carrier / Possessor</b>	<b>Process Intensive / Possession</b>	<b>Attribute / Possessed</b>

In each of these examples of representation of Tsipras as a Carrier in a Relational Process, the choices not only emphasise his internal states and personal struggles, but also subtly critique his inability to fulfil key promises, such as confronting creditors and abolishing austerity measures.

**c) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July BC**

The examination of the subjected instances in the July BC where Tsipras is a Carrier in a Relational Process lead to similar conclusions as the activated instances, concerning the decreased enthusiasm of blogs towards the Prime Minister and his party.

- i. In general, it is obvious that in the articles in the BC do not express the enthusiasm for Tsipras' administration that was expressed in January. It seems that the belief in a change coming to Europe has diminished considerably and has been replaced by disappointment.
- ii. This disillusionment of the international alternative media with the Syriza administration is in complete contrast to the Greek alternative media. In Greece, the mainstream media were accused of fearmongering and bias in favour of the yes vote, while the alternative media actively campaigned in favor of the no vote (Miloni et al., 2018; Nikolaidis, 2019). As the international mainstream media presented differences in their representations of Tsipras with the Greek mainstream media, so do the international alternative media with the Greek ones.

## **5.5 Representations of Syriza in the September subcorpora**

What is a very striking difference between the September corpus and the two previous ones, is that the percentages of activation and subjection have been completely reversed, which is very intriguing and offers an appropriate basis to deduce conclusions. Unlike Syriza in the January corpora and Tsipras in the July corpora, which were activated in the majority of the cases, Syriza in the September NC and BC is subjected in half of the instances and activated in only one out of four. This is a first sign that Syriza is no longer considered as a social actor influencing the course of events and determining the political developments.

This is hardly surprising. By the time of the September elections, Syriza had already signed an agreement with the creditors, on 13 July, complying to the austerity measures and the reforms dictated by them. The party had also lost governmental majority, as 25 members of parliament became independent, and was only able to ratify the agreement in parliament with the votes of the opposition. As a result, the party had lost the international interest it once attracted and was no longer seen as a threat to the European economy or as a hope for those suffering under austerity and opposed to neoliberal policies. Besides, they had completely abandoned their rhetoric about confronting the troika and abolishing the memoranda, and have had to join forces with the parties of the opposition – which Syriza previously called ‘parties of the memoranda’.

Not only can these developments account for the notably lower percentage of activation, but they also explain why there are considerably fewer articles on the September elections than were on the January elections and the July referendum – the September subcorpora are half the length of the January and July ones. The Greek elections are no longer expected to generate any change in Europe, for better or for worse – depending on the point of view of those writing.



Table 5.8. September, Syriza, NC and BC, Activation, Subjection, Beneficialization and Circumstantialization rates

Syriza	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
Total: NC=209 BC=115	25.36 % N=53	24.35 % N=28	50.24 % N=105	53.04 % N=61	5.74 % N=12	4.35 % N=5	18.66 % N=39	18.26% N=21

Table 5.8 highlights a significant reduction in the instances where Syriza is activated, particularly when compared to the January subcorpora and Tsipras' activation in the July subcorpora. While the activation rate of just over 25% does not suggest that Syriza is viewed as entirely powerless or without influence over events, it clearly indicates a diminished level of international attention and perceived impact. Previously seen as a key player capable of significantly influencing developments, Syriza's current representation reflects a reduced expectation of its ability to shape outcomes dramatically.

Table 5.9 presents the transitivity analysis of the activated cases.

Table 5.9. September, Syriza, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Activated instances

<b>Activated</b> (NC 25.36%, 53 / BC 24.35%, 28)				
	NC (Total 209)		BC (Total 115)	
Actor in a material process	18.66%	N=39	13.04%	N=15
Senser in a mental process	1.43%	N=3	-	
Sayer in a verbal process	0.96%	N=2	1.74%	N=2
Through possessivation	4.31%	N=9	9.57%	N=11

In the January subcorpora, Syriza was subjected in slightly over one-third of cases. In the September NC and BC, it was subjected in almost half of the cases. The capitulation of Syriza to the creditors' pressures and the acceptance of another austerity agreement

have naturally put an end to the belief that Syriza would reject austerity policies and would become an agent of political developments and social change in Europe.

The diminished perception of Syriza as a social actor who brings about changes is reflected in the subjection rate. Now that Syriza is just another party that complies with EU dictates, it is mostly subjected. In most of the cases in both corpora, it is subjected through Possessivation, while the second most frequent category is as a Carrier in a Relational Process. By frequently representing Syriza through Possessivation, the media are representing Syriza's identity and actions through external factors or other social actors. As a Carrier in a Relational Process, Syriza is often associated with certain states or conditions attributed to it. The transitivity analysis of the subjected cases is presented in Table 5.10.

Table 5.10. September, Syriza, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Subjected instances

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 50.24%, 105 / BC 53.04% , 61)				
	NC (Total 209)		BC (Total 115)	
Goal in a material process	4.31%	N=9	7.83%	N=9
Phenomenon in a mental process	0.96%	N=2	6.09%	N=7
Carrier in a relational process	10.05%	N=21	10.43%	N=12
Verbiage in a verbal process	0.96%	N=2	-	
Trough adjectival premodification	1.91%	N=4	1.74%	N=2
Through possessivation	32.06%	N=67	26.96%	N=31

As was the case with the two previous subcorpora, i.e. the January and July ones, quantitatively there are great similarities between the September NC and the September BC. However, again like the previous subcorpora, the representations of Syriza are completely different in the September NC and BC.

## **5.5.1 Representations of Syriza in the September NC**

### **5.5.1.1 Activation in the September NC**

The analysis of the activated cases in the September subcorpus generated certain interesting findings. Since the September subcorpus is not as extensive as the January and July ones, and the activation percentage is low, the number of the activated cases is also low, namely 54 cases, in 40 of which Syriza is an Actor in a Material Process. Syriza is not represented as negatively as in the January subcorpus, or even as negatively as Tsipras in the July subcorpus, nor is there any suggestion that they pose a threat to the Greek economy or the stability of Europe, as was the case in the previous subcorpora.

#### **a) Syriza activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the September NC**

In the majority of the instances where Syriza is activated as an Actor in a Material Process, reference is made to the outcome of the elections, though in a different way than in the subcorpora of the previous election periods, where elections were discussed intertwined with issues of economy, politics and imminent threats to stability and where destruction discourse was adopted. In the September NC the elections are considerably less linked to other issues, and in many cases the fact that Syriza won the elections is presented in a neutral or positive way, as in Example 5.72.

Unlike the January NC, where the inability of Syriza to gain a parliamentary majority was explicitly stressed, in the September NC it is not treated as such a serious issue; there are few cases where the number of seats Syriza will secure is mentioned, and even in those few cases, there are no suggestions that the lack of majority could be problematic. For instance, in Example 5.73, the number of seats gained by Syriza is reported, without explaining that there is a lack of governmental majority. This shift

could be interpreted as a sign of the more positive attitude of the newspapers towards Syriza, but perhaps it is to some extent due to the fact that Syriza had already managed to form a coalition government once.

Example 5.72

Syriza win resounding and unlikely victory as charismatic ex-PM Alexis Tsipras is re-elected

Example 5.73

Following a campaign that for weeks looked too close to call, Syriza won 35.5% of the vote – a fraction less than its previous total – against 28.1% for the centre-right opposition, New Democracy, giving the leftist party 145 seats in the 300-seat parliament.

	<i>win</i>	<i>resounding and unlikely victory</i>
<i>Syriza</i>	<i>won</i>	<i>35.5% of the vote</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

While in January the coalition with the Independent Greeks is generally criticized in the NC as an unlikely alliance between a leftist party and a far-right party, in the September NC there are no such reservations expressed; the coalition is accepted as natural, as a “workable coalition” (Example 5.74).

The newspapers stress that through government experience, Syriza has become a pragmatic party that does not express unrealistic positions, as shown in Example 5.75. Completely absent from the September NC are comments that Syriza cannot win the trust of other European leaders despite concessions, comments that were very common in the January NC.

Example 5.74

Syriza has done well enough to form a workable coalition, thereby avoiding the need for another election and removing one of the hurdles before Greece has the first review of its bailout some time before the end of the year.

Example 5.75

On the other hand, as Syriza illustrates, the experience of office can fundamentally change the way leaders make arguments.

Syriza	<i>has done (well enough)</i>		<i>to form a workable coalition</i>
	<i>illustrates</i>	<i>(that) the experience of office can fundamentally change the way leaders make arguments</i>	
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

In general, newspapers now portray Syriza in a notably more favorable light than before, commending its evolution into a party that adheres to the expected standards of governance.

#### **d) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the September NC**

The analysis of activated instances in the September NC reveals significant transformations in the media's portrayal of the party.

- i. The negative representations of Syriza in the January NC and of Tsipras in the July NC, are not present in the September NC. The victory of Syriza in the September elections is presented by the newspapers in a neutral way, even with moderate contentment in some cases. It seems that the newspapers are no longer opposed to Syriza coming to power, they do not perceive it as a threat to the European stability and the implementation of neoliberal policies in Greece.
- ii. The lack of majority is not handled as a major setback, as was the case in the January elections. The coalition with the Independent Greeks is not seen as a problem.
- iii. The reason for the radically different treatment from the newspapers that Syriza is receiving in the articles on the September elections, can probably be attributed to the transformation of Syriza, which is also a subject of discussion in the

September NC. Syriza is seen as having undergone substantial changes since taking office, and as the newspapers see it, they now have a more realistic stance towards governing.

#### **5.5.1.2 Subjection in the September NC**

The main findings produced by the subjection instances are similar to those produced by the activation instances. In most of the cases in the NC (and as will be shown in the BC as well), Syriza is subjected through Possessivation, while the second most frequent category is as a Carrier in a Relational Process. Although the percentages are very close to those of the BC, the representations differ significantly, as the analysis reveals.

##### **a) Syriza subjected through Possessivation in the September NC**

The Syriza victory in the elections is generally seen as a positive development in the NC – which is in stark contrast to the January NC, where the Syriza victory was presented as catastrophic and perilous for both Greece and the EU. In many cases it is stressed that Syriza won despite abandoning their anti-austerity rhetoric, as in Example 5.76.

The new ‘identity’ of Syriza, that of the realistic party which has the ability to govern – in contrast to the amateurism that Syriza was accused of in the January NC – is stressed in a considerable number of cases. For instance, the party division is given attention, and the party ‘rebels’ are usually presented in a negative light, their failure to be elected in the parliament is stressed, and the fact that they left the party is generally considered a positive step towards Syriza’s transformation into a pragmatic, able to govern party (Example 5.77).

##### **Example 5.76**

Even so, Syriza voters did not stray, in spite of the party’s about-face.

Example 5.77

Tsipras managed to sideline Syriza’s far-left rebels, who ran against him in Sunday’s elections but failed to enter Parliament, giving him greater control over his party.

<b>Syriza subjected through possessivation</b>	<i>Tsipras</i>		<i>Syriza voters</i>	<i>did not stray</i>
		<i>managed to sideline</i>	<i>Syriza’s far-left rebels</i>	
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>

Syriza is now committed to carrying out the implementation of the bailout deal (Example 5.78) The difficult political situation which Syriza has to face is the object of a high number of cases where Syriza is subjected. The new orientation of Syriza is also given attention: Syriza is not going to abolish austerity, but they will try to protect the vulnerable while adopting austerity policies (Example 5.79).

Example 5.78

Syriza officials said that although the party had not gained an outright majority, they would immediately set about forming a stable government, with a view to keeping the crisis-plagued country, bailed out for a third time this summer, on track with its European lenders.

Example 5.79

Syriza officials put a different spin on the issue: even if they can’t stop austerity, they can make it less onerous by implementing it in a way that protects the vulnerable.

<b>Syriza subjected through possessivation</b>	<i>Syriza officials</i>	<i>put</i>	<i>a different spin on the issue</i>
	<i>Syriza officials</i>	<i>said</i>	<i>they would set about forming a stable government</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material / Verbal Process</b>	<b>Goal / Verbiage</b>

It is clear from the instances where Syriza is subjected through possessivation that the newspapers are not so critical of the party, in fact they are moderately supportive of its re-election.

#### **b) Syriza subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process in the September NC**

The cases of this category present major differences with the corresponding cases in the January NC. As discussed earlier in this Chapter, the instances where the journalists make use of attributive relational clauses to characterize Syriza are rare. In contrast, in the September NC, the majority of these cases are attributive and address characteristics of the party, as Examples 5.80 and 5.81 do.

In Example 5.80 Syriza is the Carrier in this attributive relational process. The verb ‘is becoming’ indicates a state of transformation or change in Syriza’s characteristics, while the attribute ‘an office-seeking party rather than a programmatically pure one’ describes the evolving nature of Syriza, shifting from a party primarily focused on ideological purity to one actively seeking to gain and maintain political power through office.

Syriza is the Carrier in 5.81 along with New Democracy. Both parties are associated with a specific stance or commitment, highlighting their shared political position, which is ‘keeping Greece in the eurozone’. Thus, the newspapers highlight a political consensus regarding the implementation of austerity measures and the sustained participation in the eurozone, and at the same time the pragmatic transformation of Syriza who now recognises the necessity of complying to the creditors’ demands.

#### Example 5.80

Syriza is becoming an office-seeking party rather than a programmatically pure one.

#### Example 5.81



Both Syriza and New Democracy are committed to keeping Greece in the eurozone under the new terms of an €86bn three-year rescue package.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>is becoming</i>	<i>an office-seeking party</i>
	<i>Syriza (and New Democracy)</i>	<i>are committed</i>	<i>to keeping Greece in the eurozone</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Process Intensive / Circumstantial</b>	<b>Attribute / Circumstance</b>

Of course, the radical past of Syriza cannot be forgotten, and hence there are a few cases in which it is implied that, even though the majority of the party are now aligned with the EU policies, there are still certain factions left that may cause problems in the future, as shown in Example 5.82. In some cases there is an attempt on the part of the journalist to speculate on future developments, whether it is about the efficacy of Syriza implementing the bailout deal now that it is ‘shorn of its radical elements’ (Example 5.83), or that it will be governing Greece for a long time – possibly since it complied with the demands of the creditors (Example 5.84).

Example 5.82

At the same time, Syriza also has internal divisions over policy that could lead to more factional infighting mainly over its agreeing to the new bailout terms in August.

Example 5.83

Shorn of its radical elements, the new Syriza is likely to raise fewer objections to carrying out Greece’s third bailout.

Example 5.84

Syriza is likely to govern Greece for the foreseeable future.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>internal divisions</i>
		<i>is likely</i>	<i>to raise fewer objections to carrying out Greece’s third bailout</i>
		<i>is likely</i>	<i>to govern Greece for the foreseeable future</i>

	Carrier	Process Circumstantial	Circumstance
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**c) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the September NC**

The following are the conclusions drawn from the instances where Syriza was subjected in the September NC, which reinforce and expand upon the findings from the activated cases concerning the representations of Syriza and its electoral success.

- i. The subjected cases confirm the conclusions drawn from the activated ones on the representations of Syriza and its electoral victory in the September NC. More specifically, it is made clear by the subjected cases as well that Syriza is represented in a neutral, at times even moderately positive way. The same is true for the victory in the September elections – it is not seen as a threat as was the victory in the January elections, there is no disaster discourse, it is neutrally reported as a victory which will not have negative consequences, on the contrary, it is expected that proper governance will ensue.
- ii. Syriza is explicitly described as a party in transition, which has got rid of the radical elements that have kept it behind and is transforming into a mainstream, pragmatic party that can govern effectively. This transition is celebrated in the newspapers.

**5.5.2 Representations of Syriza in the September BC**

**5.5.2.1 Activation in the September BC**

The number of the activated instances in the September BC is as low as 32, in the majority of which Syriza is activated as an Actor in a Material Process. The percentages are very similar to the September NC, but the representations are quite different.

**a) Syriza activated as an Actor in a Material Process**

The blogs reflect a prevailing sense of disillusionment, a stark contrast to the high hopes once held for Syriza's ascent to power in January, when expectations were set for transformative economic changes in Greece and across Europe. Thus, in the September NC, in the cases where Syriza is activated as an Actor in a Material Process, there is some reminiscence over the past actions of Syriza, when the party was connected with social movements and brought hope for the end of austerity as in Example 5.85.

Many cases involve the loss of hope for Greece and Europe, and the transformation of Syriza into a compromised political party. The enthusiasm of January has turned into bitter resentment for what the once favored party has become (Example 5.86). In this Example, Syriza is the Actor in the Material Process of not keeping a promise. By being represented as an Actor in this sentence, Syriza is directly accused of having compromised its core values for political expediency, aligning itself with the very practices it once criticized.

**Example 5.85**

In 2012, a relatively new political party, SYRIZA, the Coalition of the Radical Left, campaigned on raising employment by increasing necessary government spending, ending privatization and government layoffs, and cancelling much of the debt owed by the Greek government to foreign lenders and also cancelling the debt of low income people.

**Example 5.86**

SYRIZA has not kept its word and its promises to oppose austerity; it has become another electoral, compromised political party.

<i>Syriza</i>	<i>campaigned</i>		<i>on raising employment</i>
	<i>has not kept</i>		<i>its word</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

The mistakes that led to Syriza failing to abolish austerity as they have promised are also addressed in many instances, as in Example 5.87, where one of the mistakes of Syriza is supposed to be that they do not explain to the Greek people that leaving the Eurozone was essential.

The enthusiastic references to Syriza's victory that were prevalent in the January BC have notably diminished; in this subcorpus, there is only a single instance, specifically Example 5.88, where Syriza's victory is positively highlighted as a significant achievement.

Example 5.87

In addition and probably most important, neither SYRIZA nor other groups did the necessary educational work with the Greek population to explain what these alternatives such as leaving the Eurozone would mean and why they are necessary.

Example 5.88

First of all, beyond anybody's (especially the pollsters') expectations, Syriza won big.

<i>Syriza</i>	<i>did not do</i>	<i>the necessary educational work with the Greek population</i>
	<i>won</i>	
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January BC**

The analysis of the activated instances of the September BC shows how the blogs have adjusted their views on Syriza's effectiveness and significance for the political scene in Greece and Europe.

- i. The enthusiasm of the blogs for the party of Syriza taking office has turned into disappointment. In general, the responsibility of the failure is attributed to Syriza – it was their mistakes and shortcomings that led to this unpleasant situation, it was not unavoidable.

- ii. The references to Syriza's past show that the blogs were particularly engaged with the possibility of anti-austerity parties becoming powerful and changing Europe, so they contrast the hopes of January with the disillusionment of September.

### 5.5.2.1 Subjection in the September BC

#### a) Syriza subjected through Possessivation

As in the NC, the transformation of Syriza is discussed, although on a completely different note. Here it is seen not as a positive transformation into a realistic party that is able to govern, as in the NC, but rather as a disastrous development with grave consequences (Example 5.89), while the anger and frustration of former supporters is emphasized (Example 5.90). In the first case, Syriza is subjected through Possessivation in relation to its collapse; in the second in relation to its betrayed supporters, as a party that has lost its momentum and faces an uncertain future.

#### Example 5.89

The result of all this is already in front of our eyes: collapse of the Syriza in the polls and real resurrection of the traditional right wing of New Democracy which is already working to bring down this prematurely aged discredited Syriza.

#### Example 5.90

First-time voters, Syriza's traditional core supporters and young Greeks hit by unemployment of more than 50% – all of whom had rushed to vote “no” in the referendum, only to see their vote turned into a “yes” – feel particularly betrayed.

<b>Syriza subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>The result</i>	<i>(is)</i>	<i>collapse of Syriza</i>
	<i>Unemployment</i>	<i>hit</i>	<i>Syriza's traditional core supporters</i>
	<b>Carrier / Actor</b>	<b>Relational / Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>

The blogs demonstrate a particular interest in the political movements of Syriza MPs who have become independent (as evidenced by Examples 5.91 and 5.92), a topic that the newspapers appear to overlook. This suggests that some hopes for policy change in Europe may now be shifting towards these former Syriza members. However, the level of enthusiasm and coverage is notably less intense compared to the fervour that accompanied Syriza in January. Furthermore, the blogs occasionally reflect on the initial hopes that were sparked by Syriza, contrasting them with the current, more disheartening reality (Example 5.93).

Example 5.91

50. Over 30 SYRIZA members of parliament voted no and formed a new party, Popular Unity, who called for not paying most of the government debt, stimulating the economy, ending the use of the Euro and creating a new Greek currency, the drachma, which was name of the previous currency.

Example 5.92

73. The leader of the part of SYRIZA that disagreed with Tsipras and left SYRIZA is Panagiotis Lafazanis, a 64-year-old mathematician, with Eurocommunist roots.

Example 5.93

84. The January 25 elections that brought the Syriza-Independent Greeks coalition government to power seem like a distant memory.

<b>Syriza subjected through Possessiv ation</b>			<i>Over 30 Syriza members</i>	<i>voted</i>	<i>no</i>
			<i>The part of SYRIZA that</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>Syriza</i>
	<i>The January 25 elections</i>	<i>brought</i>	<i>the Syriza- Independent Greeks coalition</i>		<i>to power</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the September BC**

The analysis of the subjected instances in the September BC can lead to the following conclusions:

- i. The subjected instances reveal the same tendencies observed in the activated ones, i.e., the disappointment of the blogs about the transformation of SYRIZA into another mainstream party that will follow the dictates of the EU, and the insistence on recalling the past of Syriza and the hopes it had created.
- ii. Another tendency identified is the references to that part of Syriza, which has now resigned from the party, placing some hopes on them resisting austerity, although there is no comparison with the hopes that had been enthusiastically expressed for Syriza in the January BC.

## **5.6 Conclusions**

The findings from the qualitative analysis converge in many respects with the characteristics of the mainstream and alternative media as outlined by previous research, while also indicating aspects that should be further explored.

Concerning the newspapers, the analysis of the Syriza instances confirms what has already been suggested for mainstream media in general, that the newspapers adopt the view of the elites (Mercille, 2008), and this was also true with regard to the economic crisis in Greece. The Greek crisis is, according to the newspapers, a problem stemming from the malfunctions of the Greek economy, and mainly due to, as explained at the beginning of the present chapter, the corruption of politicians and the State and the laziness of the Greek people (Kouki and Gonzalez 2018, Kountouri and Nikolaidou 2019). Therefore, it seems natural to also adopt the view that the crisis should be ‘treated’ with austerity measures and reforms which will put an end to these malfunctions.

The fact that the newspapers have such a harsh stance towards Syriza in January, when Syriza challenges these policies, and adopt a more neutral or even positive

stance when Syriza starts to compromise with the policies dictated by the creditors, indicates that mainstream media indeed give priority to the ideas of the powerful social actors (Bailey et al. 2007:16), as in this case are the European leaders, the EU institutions, the IMF, that wish the uninterrupted implementation of these policies.

The social actors that are clearly not prioritized by the newspapers, are the people of Greece, who have suffered the grave consequences of the implemented policies. There is no discussion as to whether they were justified to vote for a political party that promised them political change – in the NC this is not a plausible solution.

Another trait of the mainstream media, discussed in Chapter 2, is the fact that they claim to be objective, and deny that they report the news from a certain point of view (Ostertag 2006, Salaudeen and Onyechi 2020). While adopting the leading social and economic values of the capitalist society (Bortolini et al. 2020), the mainstream media claim to have no ideological stance at all. This is a possible explanation for the lack of direct characterization of Syriza with attributive relational clauses, especially in January when the stance of the newspapers is utterly negative. While the actions of Syriza (in clauses where the party is an actor in a material clause) are represented (supposedly) objectively as dangerous, devastating, threatening, etc., there are no cases where Syriza is directly characterized as a dangerous party, or anything similar. This helps the newspapers maintain a semblance of objectivity, while indisputably taking a stance.

A third characteristic of the mainstream media with which the findings are consistent is the fact that, as discussed in Chapter 2, while the stance of all mainstream media is not necessarily the same on all topics, but dependent on political affiliations and ideological differences (as for example on an issue like immigration), as far as issues central for



the foundations of the capitalist system are concerned, their stance is considerably more homogeneous (Tracy 2011; Erhard et al. 2021); one of these issues is the economic crisis in Greece and the policies which need to be followed in order to be remedied (Tracy 2011, Liakos and Kouki 2015, Hatzimihalis 2018). The analysis of the newspaper subcorpus, in all three election periods, demonstrates that there are no significant variations among the newspapers, as the cases that differ greatly from the norm are very rare.

Regarding the alternative media, one of their main aims (as discussed in Chapter 2) is argued to be to challenge concentrations of media power (Couldry and Curran 2003:7), by creating a platform for those who are excluded from the mass media, and whose interests are neglected – alternative social actors such as the poor, the oppressed, the marginalized (Traber 1985), as well as by expressing a point of view that is not commonly expressed by mainstream media. In the case of Syriza representations in the blog subcorpus, the blogs put an emphasis on the consequences of the imposed policies on the poor, and welcome the intention of Syriza to reverse them – the consequences of the memoranda on people's lives are totally absent from the newspaper subcorpora. The blogs also emphasise the connection of Syriza to the movements, and the members of the party are seen as activists.

The alternative media, or at least part of them, are also closely linked with movements and activists, and are thought to advocate social change (Waltz 2005) and fight for social emancipation (Downing 2011). Therefore, they do not claim to have an objective point of view, as the mainstream media do, but actually take a stance and actively promote their ideology. The analysis of the findings shows that the blogs do not attempt to maintain an objective representation of Syriza, but in the January subcorpus there are many instances where enthusiasm is openly expressed for the

party that they expect to change Europe, while July subcorpus and even more in the September subcorpus there are many instances where disappointment is expressed for the acceptance of the bailout deals by Syriza.

The fact that the blogs, very frequently community-oriented (Jeppesen 2016), take a stand with such clarity about the elections in Greece and about a party like Syriza, is perhaps an indication that in the alternative media there is a notion that the movements are global, and activism in one country can have positive results in other countries as well. Since the research on alternative media regarding important international events is not so extensive – especially on the Greek crisis the research on alternative media coverage is very rare – it would probably be very useful that related research be more systematic to shed more light to the aims of alternative media.

The next chapter, on the representations of austerity in newspapers and blogs, will provide additional insights into the differences between the two types of media.

## CHAPTER 6

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: REPRESENTATIONS OF AUSTERITY

#### 6.1 Introduction

Austerity was prominent in the discourse of the media, political parties and ordinary people during the years of the Greek crisis. It was at the centre of debates especially in 2015, which is the focus of this study; therefore, it was not surprising that it was one of the most prevalent economy-related words in the corpora.

The following definition of austerity describes what the proponents of this economic practice claim it achieves:

“Austerity is a form of voluntary deflation in which the economy adjusts through the reduction of wages, prices, and public spending to restore competitiveness, which is (supposedly) best achieved by cutting the state’s budget, debts, and deficits. Doing so, its advocates believe, will inspire ‘business confidence’ since the government will neither be ‘crowding-out’ the market for investment by sucking up all the available capital through the issuance of debt, nor adding to the nation’s already ‘too big’ debt.” (Blyth, 2013, p.2).

Historically, austerity was first employed as a term at the onset of World War II (Jeffries & Walker, 2019). Since then, it has been used repeatedly as a tool to help neoliberalism “supplant Keynesianism as the hegemonic economic paradigm” (Russell, 2019, p.41). In the 1970s and 1980s it was adopted in the context of a neoliberal political and economic agenda as a free market agent (Giniger & Sotiropoulou, 2019, p.81) and therefore public services and benefits were cut, as the market was supposed to replace them. After the financial crisis of 2008, austerity policies became the norm, leading scholars to suggest that the form of neoliberalism that emerged is a more aggressive one (Peck et al., 2012).

A common practice of advocates of neoliberalism is to present welfare cuts as “fiscal and economic necessity rather than a political choice” (Russel, 2019, p.42), and to highlight the need to “balance the books” (Jeffries & Walker, 2019, p.53). Discourse is “an important element of neoliberal policies [...] used as one more implementation tool” (Giniger & Sotiropoulou, 2019, p.80).

Blyth (2013) points out that austerity is the concept used to connote that the poor are not wise with their money and therefore should not be given benefits, as the money given to them by the state is in fact wasted money. Thus, social provisions have to be cut, as austerity is the remedy for people's reckless spending (Blyth 2013; Toussaint 2017). The “lazy Greeks” narrative of the crisis (Liakos & Kouki, 2015; Mylonas, 2012; Pleios, 2013), which is discussed in more detail below in this subsection, is in line with this practice.

A narrow interpretation of austerity could lead to the conclusion that it is merely a tool. However, it is far from that. As Whiteside (2016) asserts: “Austerity is a signature of the neoliberal era much as neoliberalism can be understood as austerity” (p.361). It is through austerity and fiscal consolidation that the processes of neoliberalism are activated and the recent revival of this practice in the 2008 crisis shows that “the history and hegemony of neoliberalism is intrinsically intertwined with that of austerity” (ibid). The goal of austerity is supposed to be economic growth, but, in fact, it is a means to shift the responsibility for a crisis from the market to the state, from capital to labour - and thus the burden and cost of overcoming the crisis is shifted and made to appear as the responsibility of the subordinate classes (Peck, 2014). A “state of economic emergency” presented as a temporary solution to long-standing problems, in reality becomes permanent “through cumulative and mutually reinforcing institutional change, routinization of exceptional measures, and habituation” (Jessop, 2016, p.416).

By shouldering the burden of overcoming the crisis, the already stricken lower classes are experiencing a sharp decline in their living standards. The imposition of neoliberal austerity measures generally leads to an increase in poverty, which usually results in more violent societies (Bourgois, 2001; Farmer, 2004; Springer, 2016; Wacquant, 2009). Neoliberalism and austerity have such a detrimental effect on the working class that they have been shown by health researchers to affect susceptibility to disease and reduce life expectancy (Kim et al., 2000; Rowden, 2009; Stuckler & Basu, 2013).

Austerity is inevitably accompanied by the repression of workers' rights and workers' movements, as their wages are reduced, while the state and its institutions support the capitalists (Giniger & Sotiropoulou, 2019, p.81), as its real aim is to serve “ideological commitments and material interests” (Strachman & Signorini, 2019, p. 139) and to solve a problem of wealth distribution (McDonagh 2019:159), in favour of the most powerful. It is not surprising that in the countries where austerity measures were imposed in the aftermath of the 2008 crisis, there was the emergence of anti-austerity movements, self-organized communities and new parties of the Left (e.g. Podemos in Spain) or the substantial growth of existing ones (e.g. Syriza in Greece)

In Greece, the Greek state was obliged to bail out Greek banks after the international banking crisis of 2008, which increased the deficit and public debt (Kosmidou, 2008). Consequently, Greece had to implement austerity measures under the supervision of the creditors. However, it was not the bailout of the banks that the debt was attributed to, but the "laziness" of the Greeks who wanted to live beyond their means – that is “the ultimate story or boogeyman of neoliberal discourse” (Giniger & Sotiropoulou 2019, p.92).

Even when it became obvious that austerity failed to reduce public debt, it was not abandoned, which is not surprising - it is common for proponents of austerity measures to insist on the need to implement them, even when it is obvious that they are not delivering (Hodge, 2019, p.18). Those who advocate austerity, despite its clear failure to achieve its purpose, do not try to provide an economic explanation for this choice. They simply adopt a narrative that represents austerity as a means to ensure sustainable growth rather than a narrative that represents austerity as a cause of further recession (Mitsikopoulou & Lykou, 2019, p.109).

In general, austerity is represented as the only solution, since the cause of the recession is not attributed to systemic failures, but to irresponsible spending by states and individuals (Strachman & Signorini, 2019, p.136). In the case of Greece, the myth of the "lazy Greek" is a moral story that endeavours to represent austerity as a form of moral penance (Mc Donagh, 2019, p.169). Prominent in the Greek media was the discourse of abnormality – Greece supposedly needs to be transformed into a “normal” country and this could be achieved through austerity (Stavrakakis & Galanopoulos, 2019, p.191).

This narrative dominated the mainstream Greek media. As Papathanasopoulos (2017) points out, weak regulation and ineffective independent supervisory authorities in Greece have resulted in the media being completely dominated by a few powerful businessmen and, as a result, seem to be fully oriented towards defending the interests of the elite. The strong relationship between the media and elites was further strengthened during the period of the financial crisis, when the implementation of harsh austerity measures was the choice of the political and economic leaders (ibid.), and the media strongly defended austerity policies despite the reactions of citizens and the emergence of strong anti-austerity movements.

It seems obvious that austerity is an important social actor of the Greek crisis; it was the means chosen by the major political parties and establishment to achieve the redistribution of wealth, while presenting it as the way to "normalize" an abnormal state of economy caused by irresponsible spending. On the other hand, austerity was the hateful regime that the popular movements and opposition parties were struggling to overthrow. Under these circumstances, austerity becomes more than an abstract economic term; it becomes the protagonist of political events, the issue around which the debate revolves and in relation to which the opposing camps are formed. In view of these facts, it is not surprising that austerity was so dominant in the corpus; therefore, a more detailed analysis of the representation of austerity seemed necessary.

The analysis was conducted in the same way as the analysis of Syriza/Tsipras presented in the previous Chapter, that is adopting Halliday's Transitivity Theory and van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors. The results are presented in this Chapter.

## **6.2 Overview of Representations in the NC and BC**

In the discourse surrounding the Greek crisis, the concept of austerity is not merely a policy measure; it is a pivotal social actor. Austerity is not just a series of economic strategies; it is a central element that shapes and influences public discourse, policy decisions, and social dynamics within Greece. Its role extends beyond the economic realm to symbolise the tensions and conflicts between national sovereignty and international financial obligations. Austerity's centrality in this discourse highlights its impact on all levels of Greek society, from individual households adjusting to tighter budgets to the broader political narrative of resistance and compliance with external pressures. Therefore, when we discuss austerity in this context, we are referring to a

complex interplay of economic measures and their profound social and political consequences.

The analysis of austerity is focused on the subjected cases, as the overwhelming majority of austerity instances are subjected and activation is infrequent. As explained in previous chapters, activation refers to instances where a social actor is portrayed as actively doing something or causing an action, showcasing its influence or power. In contrast, subjection happens when a social actor is acted upon or affected by other forces, illustrating a more passive role. The reason austerity is mainly subjected could be attributed to its nature as a policy measure imposed by external creditors and international bodies, rather than a self-directed actor within the Greek socio-political landscape. However, reference is also made to the activation cases for reasons of consistency with the previous chapter, although they are too limited to be used as a basis for drawing conclusions (as are beneficialisation and circumstantialisation cases).

In respect to the quantitative data, the NC and the BC are indeed very similar, as was the case in chapter 5, in the analysis of SYRIZA/Tsipras. The number of subjected cases is consistently at a very high level, peaking in July, and the number of activated cases is consistently low, with the lowest level in July. The percentages are shown in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1 Activation and Subjection rates of Austerity in all six subcorpora.

<b>SOCIAL ACTOR / SUBCORPUS</b>	<b>ACTIVATED</b>		<b>SUBJECTED</b>	
	NC	BC	NC	BC
<b>Austerity / January</b>	6.50%	8.00%	79.50%	79.10%
<b>Austerity / July</b>	0.98%	0.49%	83.3%	70.7%
<b>Austerity / September</b>	-	3.85%	74.65%	76.92%



The high level of subjection could suggest that austerity is grammatically construed merely as a tool to overcome the crisis, a policy employed by certain social actors and criticized by others. However, the qualitative analysis demonstrates the central role of austerity in shaping the discourse surrounding the Greek crisis. Austerity transcends its initial function as a fiscal strategy, becoming the primary lens through which all other social actors are categorised, either as pro- or anti-austerity.

Thus, austerity becomes a battleground where different ideological and political views clash, making it a defining element of the crisis narrative and a fundamental point of contention among various social actors. This is consistent with the view that austerity brings a more aggressive form of neoliberalism (Peck et al., 2012) and that, in essence, austerity is neoliberalism (Whiteside, 2016).

As in the previous chapter, the qualitative analysis yielded significantly dissimilar results revealing the fundamentally divergent representations of austerity in mainstream newspapers and alternative blogs. In Chapter 5, Syriza and Tsipras were shown to begin in January being represented by the newspapers as a threat, with more neutral representations in July and almost positive, and in some cases very positive, in September. The blogs followed an opposite course, starting with enthusiastically positive representations in January, continuing with more neutral in July and almost negative or negative in September. This reverse gradual change was depicted in Graphs 5.1 and 5.2.

The qualitative analysis of austerity instances shows that there is a similar reverse gradual change in the representations of austerity by the newspapers and the blogs. In this case, the representations do not change in terms of positivity and negativity; they are consistently positive in the newspapers and consistently negative in the blogs. What

changes is how threatened or stable austerity is shown to be, and how the different types of media see the stability or instability of austerity.

In the newspapers, the only negative representations of austerity are in the activated cases, which are too few to actually challenge the fact that austerity is generally represented in a positive way in all NC subcorpora.

The fact that newspapers choose to represent austerity in a positive light by subjecting it could be explained on the basis that they wish to depict it as something being acted upon, implying that it is a necessary, though perhaps unwelcome, measure imposed by circumstances or higher authorities. This representation can serve to allay public opposition or discontent by suggesting that it is an unavoidable consequence of broader economic strategies.

Conversely, when austerity is represented negatively, it is portrayed as an agent directly causing hardship, controversy, or failure. This active representation can help to crystallise public dissatisfaction, focusing blame on austerity policies as deliberate actions that negatively impact society.

In the vast majority of instances, which are the subjected instances, austerity is represented in newspapers as an indispensable practice, a necessary medicine to cure the crisis, the only way to keep the country's economy solvent. It might have some unpleasant side effects, but overall, it is the right course of action to adopt. This does not change at all throughout the three time periods under investigation.

In the January NC, the newspapers suggest that there are anti-austerity social actors, such as Syriza, which can be a threat to the continued implementation of austerity measures and the stability of the Eurozone. According to this view, those opposing

austerity are portrayed as potentially destabilizing, with the possibility of causing chaos in Greece and broader instability across Europe. On the other hand, proponents of austerity are characterized as striving to maintain stability and foster economic growth. The outcome of the elections is seen as crucial in determining whether austerity policies will persist in Greece.

In the July NC, discussions focus not on anti-austerity social actors but rather on negotiations concerning specific austerity measures. Unlike the January elections, the referendum is not portrayed as a potential destabilizing factor for Greece or Europe; the prevailing view is that austerity measures will continue regardless of the referendum's outcome. This representation contrasts markedly with that of the mainstream Greek media, which portrayed a negative referendum vote as a disruption to the bailout deal and the implementation of austerity measures, and actively campaigned for a yes vote, as highlighted by Nikolaidis (2019) and Milioni et al. (2018). In contrast, the international media do not reflect this sense of impending crisis.

In the September NC, the end of anti-austerity is declared by the newspapers. There is no alternative to continuation of austerity, all other attempts have failed. The elections are only a question of who will implement the new bailout agreement and the austerity programme it contains.

In almost all instances of austerity in the BC, a negative attitude towards it can be identified. According to blogs, austerity has had a devastating impact on Greek society, on the well-being and health of the people, and even on the economy, the recovery of which it was supposed to facilitate. Austerity is ineffective as it harms the economy and increases the debt, although it was intended as a remedy for the poor state of the economy and the level of national debt.

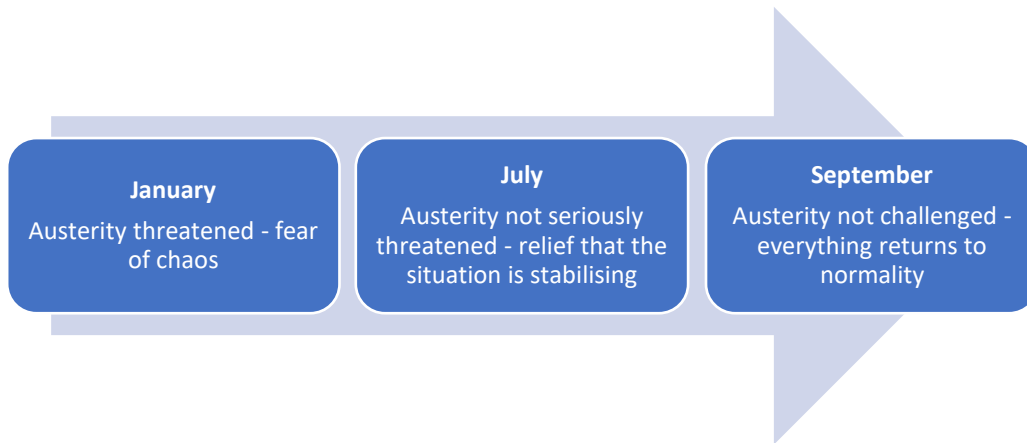
In the January BC, austerity is seen as potentially weak: there is great enthusiasm about the anti-austerity forces, such as Syriza, that can put an end to austerity in Greece and possibly all over Europe. The elections will play a decisive role in the continuation or otherwise of austerity; if the anti-austerity party of Syriza is elected, this will mean the end of suffering for the Greek people.

In the July BC, discussions continue regarding pro- and anti-austerity social actors, though it remains unclear whether Syriza is still considered part of the anti-austerity faction. The referendum has been variously interpreted. Some view it as a decisive event that could end austerity with a 'no' vote. Others see it as a tactic in ongoing negotiations, unlikely to bring about significant change. There is a prevailing sense of disappointment that austerity persists and scepticism about its resolution appears widespread.

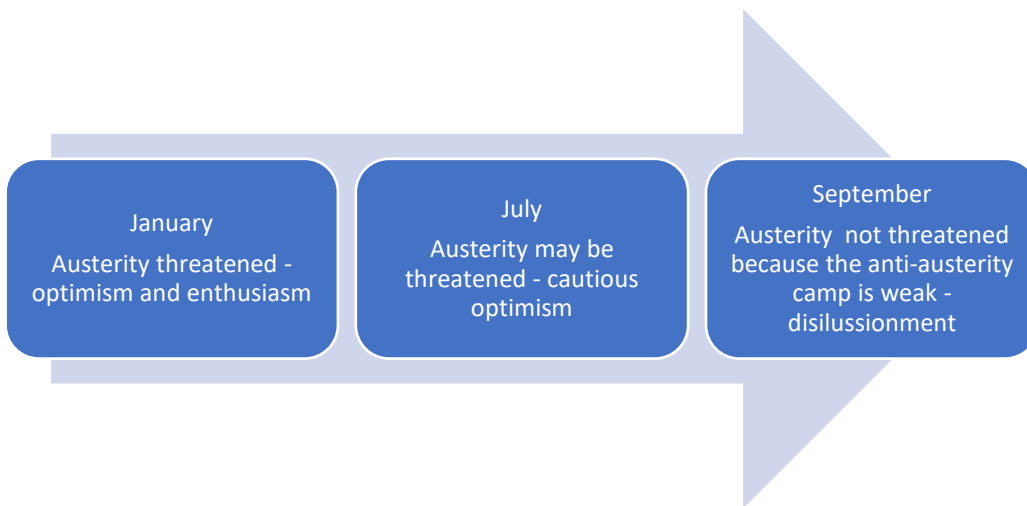
In the September BC, there are no instances that suggest that the election result might influence the austerity regime. There is disillusionment and loss of hope. There is still some reference to anti-austerity social actors, but they do not have the power to have an impact on the political decisions.

Graphs 6.1 and 6.2 provide a visual representation of the variations in how austerity is depicted over time. These graphs offer a clear, schematic overview of the shifts in the portrayal of austerity, highlighting significant changes and trends in its representation.

Graph 6.1 Representations of Austerity in the NC



Graph 6.2 Representations of Austerity in the BC



The following section will examine the qualitative analysis of the austerity instances. As was the case with the Syriza instances, this analysis is based on the theoretical frameworks of Halliday's Transitivity Theory and van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors.

### 6.3 Representations of Austerity in the January subcorpora

As highlighted in the introduction to this chapter, following Blyth's (2013) analysis, austerity is conceptualised as a strategy to correct a financial crisis attributed to

overspending. As a policy tool, it is typically not frequently personified as an active social actor in the discourse. Consequently, in both the NC and the BC, austerity is predominantly subjected. Specifically, austerity is subjected in about 80% of the instances, underscoring its portrayal as something imposed rather than as an agent of action.

Activation of austerity in both the NC and the BC is notably rare. When austerity is activated, it involves personification, where austerity becomes a metaphorical figure, and metonymy, where austerity symbolically represents the authorities that enforce it. Such representations are rare, as austerity in the corpus is predominantly subjected.

Austerity is circumstantialised somewhat more frequently than it is activated in both subcorpora. Despite this, in order to maintain consistency and due to the relatively small gap between the rates of activation and circumstantialisation, it is proposed that the approach used in the previous chapter be followed. Therefore, the focus of the analysis will be cases of activation and subjection across all three subcorpora, in order to ensure a uniform examination of the data regarding all social actors under investigation.

Table 6.2 presents the percentages of activation, subjection, beneficialisation and circumstantialisation of austerity in the January NC and BC subcorpora.

Table 6.2. 25 January, austerity, NC and BC, Activation, Subjection, Beneficialisation and Circumstantialisation rates

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
AUSTERITY	6.50%	8.00%	79.50%	79.10%	14.00%	12.93%
Total:	N=13	N=16	N=159	N=159	N=28	N=26
NC=200						
BC=201						

Table 6.3 presents a transitivity analysis of the activation of austerity in the 25 January NC and BC. The table indicates that the activation of austerity is relatively low in both corpora. In the NC, this rate is 6.50% (13 instances out of 200 total references of austerity), while in the BC it is slightly higher at 8.00% (16 instances out of 201). In the majority of instances austerity is activated as an Actor in a Material Process, in which austerity is represented as directly engaging in actions or processes. This comprises 5% in the NC and 6.47% in the BC. A smaller proportion of the activation, amounting to approximately 1.5% in both corpora, occurs through possessivation, whereby austerity is depicted as possessing or being characterised by certain qualities or consequences.

Table 6.3. 25 January, austerity, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Activated instances

<b>Activated</b> (NC 6,50%, 13 / BC 8,00%, 16)				
	NC (Total 200)		BC (Total 201)	
Actor in a material process	5%	N=10	6,47%	N=13
Through possessivation	1,5%	N=3	1,49%	N=3

Table 6.4 presents a transitivity analysis of the subjected cases of austerity in the 25 January NC and BC. Both subcorpora demonstrate a high frequency of subjection, with the subjected cases in the NC accounting for 79.50% (159 instances out of 200) and the BC closely following at 79.10% (159 instances out of 201).

A substantial proportion of these instances involves the modification of austerity through Premodification (e.g. austerity measures), accounting for 50.50% in the NC (101 instances) and 48.26% in the BC (97 instances). This indicates that austerity is presented in various ways as a complement that serves to define the nature and impact of other nouns.

Austerity is also frequently subjected as the Goal in a Material Process, indicating it as the target or recipient of actions, noted in 15% of NC cases (30 instances) and slightly

less in the BC at 14.43% (29 instances). This representation suggests its role as a passive element within the discourse, affected by external decisions or actions.

Through Possessivation, where austerity is involved in possessive constructions, also appears substantially, making up 15% of cases in the NC (30 instances) and 10.45% in the BC (21 instances). This representation tends to background austerity, further underscoring its passive representation.

Table 6.4. 25 January, austerity, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Subjected instances

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 79.50%, 159 / BC 79.10%, 159)				
	NC (Total 200)		BC (Total 201)	
Goal in a material process	15%	N=30	14.43%	N=29
Phenomenon in a mental process	2%	N=4	0.50%	N=1
Carrier in a relational process	2.5%	N=5	3.98%	N=8
Through Premodification	50.50%	N=101	48.26%	N=97
Through possessivation	15%	N=30	10.45%	N=21
Attribute in a relational process	0.5%	N=1	0.50%	N=1
Verbiage in a verbal process	-	-	0.50%	N=1
Token in a relational process	-	-	0.50%	N=1

In the next section of Chapter 6, we present the qualitative analysis of the activated and subjected instances of austerity, for which, as in the case of the Syriza/Tsipras instances in the previous Chapter, we relied on Halliday's Transitivity Theory and van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors.

### 6.3.1 Representations of Austerity in the January NC

#### 6.3.1.1 Activation in the January NC

For consistency, the activated cases are discussed first, as in the previous chapter, although in the case of austerity subjection prevails. Out of the 13 instances of activation, in all but three activation is realized as an Actor in a Material Process, while the other three are cases of activation through Possessivation. The fact that the prevalent category of activation is as an Actor in a Material Process highlights austerity's agency,



emphasizing its active role in influencing events or conditions, typically in a metonymic sense where austerity stands for the policymakers of economic strategies.

**a) Austerity activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the January NC**

Even though austerity is, as we will see in this chapter, generally supported by the newspapers, in the activated cases it is not. In almost all the cases, there is reference to the failure of austerity policies and/or the dire consequences of them on the Greek economy and society.

In Example 6.1, in order to reinforce the argument that austerity does not work, the journalist refers to the consequences of austerity in another country, i.e. Spain. In this Example, austerity is the Actor in the Material Processes of forcing people out of their homes, lifting childhood poverty and raising unemployment. In this sentence, austerity is personified and acts as a powerful agent causing significant social and economic consequences. By being the Actor in Material Processes, austerity is directly linked to driving negative outcomes such as forced displacement, increased childhood poverty, and high unemployment rates. This representation stresses the impact of austerity measures on society, representing them as direct contributors to hardship and societal strain. The use of active verbs like "forced," "lifted," and "left" emphasizes the force and effect of austerity policies, painting them as aggressive and harmful actions rather than passive occurrences.

In Example 6.2 austerity is the Actor in the material process of raising youth unemployment in Greece. By attributing such a specific and severe outcome to austerity, the sentence emphasizes the policy's profound and negative influence on a critical demographic group, highlighting the social and economic costs of such measures.

In Example 6.3 it is the Actor in the Material Process of chipping away Greek people's income. In this sentence, austerity is personified and positioned as the causative force behind significant economic hardships for the Greek people, specifically through increased taxes and reduced wages and pensions.

Example 6.1

In Spain, austerity has forced 570,000 from their homes, lifted childhood poverty to 36 percent according to UNICEF, left 23 percent unemployed, including 51 percent of those under 25.

Example 6.2

That austerity has left youth unemployment at 44 percent.

Example 6.3

Syriza, or the Coalition of the Radical Left, saw its popularity shoot up after austerity chipped away Greek peoples' income through a heavy taxation and slashing of wages and pensions in recent years.

<i>Austerity</i>	<i>has forced</i>	<i>570,000</i>	<i>from their homes</i>
	<i>lifted</i>	<i>childhood poverty</i>	<i>to 36 percent</i>
	<i>left</i>	<i>23 percent</i>	<i>unemployed</i>
	<i>has left</i>	<i>youth unemployment</i>	<i>at 44 percent</i>
	<i>chipped away</i>	<i>Greek peoples' income</i>	<i>through a heavy taxation and slashing of wages and pensions</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

While the instances where austerity is activated are relatively few, they consistently reflect a negative view of austerity in newspaper discourse. A more comprehensive understanding of the newspapers' stance on austerity emerges from the analysis of the subjected cases, which comprise the vast majority in both subcorpora. The following section will examine these instances in greater depth in order to illustrate how the newspapers typically represent austerity.

## **b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January NC**

Before proceeding to the subjected cases, some conclusions that can be drawn from the activated ones are the following:

- i. In general, when austerity is activated, it is typically in reference to the adverse consequences it incurs, rather than casting it in a positive light.
- ii. Judging only by the activated cases, one would assume that the newspapers have a negative stance towards austerity, but this is not the case, as will become evident in 6.3.1.2, where the subjected cases are analysed. However, when austerity is activated as an Actor in a Material Process, the journalist seems to have made this choice in order to represent it in a negative way. Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest a correlation between the linguistic choice of representing austerity as an Actor in a Material Process and the articulation of a negative stance towards it. By representing austerity in this way, the author emphasizes its causal role in generating adverse outcomes, rather than depicting it as an unavoidable circumstance. This rhetorical strategy allows the text to highlight the deliberate and impactful nature of austerity measures, critiquing them as choices that significantly affect societal conditions.

### **6.3.1.2 Subjection in the January NC**

The vast majority of the 200 austerity instances in the January NC are subjected. It is clear in the corpus that austerity is not represented as an actor, but rather as a point of contention, around which two different camps are formed and the other social actors choose a side.

In this subsection the most frequent category of subjection is going to be analysed: subjection through premodification (e.g. austerity measures), which is another way of

backgrounded activation or passivation (a category of which is possessivation, that is when the actor is modified by a possessive).

More than 100 out of the 159 subjected instances, are subjected through Premodification. This shows that the newspapers see austerity as a means to achieve an end (e.g. austerity policies, austerity plan, etc.), a means which has proponents and opponents (e.g. anti-austerity party).

#### **a) Austerity subjected through Premodification premodification in the January NC**

A large proportion of the instances which are subjected through Premodification contain the particle "anti" preceding the lexical item "austerity". It seems that the austerity/anti-austerity dichotomy dominated the newspapers, while there were two clearly delineated sides, the supporters and the opponents of austerity. Austerity was such an important social actor that all other actors were positioned and defined by their attitude towards it.

Among the main opponents of austerity in Greece was the party of Syriza, as the representative of all those who resisted it. In Example 6.4 austerity (preceeded by the particle 'anti') premodifies the lexical item 'party'. Thus, Syriza is called an "anti-austerity party", which not only defines Syriza by its opposition to austerity but also highlights austerity itself as a central element in the discourse, positioned implicitly as a contested issue.

In Example 6.5, (anti-)austerity premodifies the lexical item 'movement'. This sentence describes the anti-austerity movement as a broad, inclusive grouping that transcends typical political boundaries, here described metaphorically as a "huge tent." The use of "underscored" as the material process implies a strong emphasis on the significant,

unifying role of anti-austerity sentiment, capable of bridging diverse — and even conflicting — political ideologies, such as those of the far right with the left. The phrase "healthy dose of political opportunism" suggests a critical view of the motivations behind this support, indicating that the alignment with anti-austerity may be more strategic than ideologically sincere.

Example 6.4

For the first time a child of the European crisis, an explicitly anti-austerity party, will take office in the EU.

Example 6.5

If this reflected a healthy dose of political opportunism, the support from the far right also underscored how the anti-austerity movement provided a huge tent in which political lines were easily blurred.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>an anti-austerity party</i>	<i>will take office</i>	
	<i>the anti-austerity movement</i>	<i>provided</i>	<i>a huge tent</i>
	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

In Example 6.6, European leaders are depicted as staunch proponents of austerity, positioning them in direct opposition to the anti-austerity movement and Syriza, which actively represents this movement in the mainstream political arena. In this sentence, austerity is indirectly addressed through the phrase "anti-austerity insurgency," and serves as a premodifier describing the nature of Tsipras and his party's political stance. This premodification subjects austerity to a role where it is perceived as the antagonist in an upcoming conflict, emphasising its controversial nature within European politics.

In Examples 6.7 and 6.8, where Syriza is again referred to as the "anti-austerity party", it is suggested that the anti-austerity stance poses a risk to the Euro, leading to its weakening (Example 6.7), and causing "tremors of fear" in the markets which could

deter investment (Example 6.8). These examples imply that opposing austerity is economically detrimental, representing the anti-austerity movements as harmful to financial stability.

Example 6.6

If Tsipras and his Syriza party triumph Sunday, it will set the stage for an epic showdown pitting his anti-austerity insurgency against German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other titans of the European policy establishment.

Example 6.7

The prospect of a standoff between Greece’s new leftwing government and the European Union briefly sent the euro to an 11-year low against the dollar on Monday, as the world digested Sunday’s victory by anti-austerity party Syriza.

Example 6.8

Syriza is the anti-austerity party tipped for victory, sending tremors of fear throughout markets in Europe.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>(Tsipras and Syriza’s victory)</i>	<i>pitting</i>	<i>anti-austerity insurgency</i>		
	<i>The world</i>	<i>digested victory</i>	<i>by anti-austerity party</i>		
			<i>anti-austerity party</i>	<i>sending</i>	<i>tremors of fear</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Anti-austerity movements are not confined to Greek politics. In Example 6.9 another opponent of austerity, Paglo Iglesias, then leader of the Spanish leftist party Podemos, is represented as an ally of Syriza against austerity. Austerity premodifies ‘revolt’ and by referring to an “anti-austerity revolt”, the author implies that anti-austerity leaders are provocateurs who are agitating against established economic policies, suggesting a destabilizing influence on the European political landscape.

The reference to Pablo Iglesias as a “pony-tailed 36-year-old leader” probably aims to subtly undermine his credibility and seriousness as a political figure. Highlighting his youthful appearance and unconventional hairstyle can serve to stereotype him as immature or unorthodox, possibly questioning his capacity to handle serious political responsibilities. This kind of portrayal leverages cultural biases about professionalism and appearance, suggesting that Iglesias might lack the gravitas traditionally associated with political leaders. Such descriptions are strategically used to frame him as an outsider and diminish his legitimacy in the eyes of a more conservative audience. In addition, by emphasizing that the revolt “has caught fire on multiple fronts”, the sentence conveys a sense of urgency and alarm, painting the anti-austerity movements as a spreading danger that must be contained. The reference to “revolt” and to “catching fire” enhances the notion that anti-austerity is a danger for Europe.

In the NC there are numerous instances where Podemos are represented as an opponent of austerity, as well as a number of instances that represent Portugal’s Left Bloc in the same way, as in Example 6.10, where the Left Bloc is called “anti-austerity party”.

#### Example 6.9

When Pablo Iglesias, the party’s pony-tailed 36-year-old leader, stood alongside Tsipras at Syriza’s final campaign rally Thursday evening, the appearance seemed intended to warn Merkel that the anti-austerity revolt has caught fire on multiple fronts.

#### Example 6.10

One Portuguese party, however, was celebrating the Greek results: the anti-austerity party Left Bloc, which holds eight seats in the Portuguese parliament.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>the anti-austerity revolt</i>	<i>has caught</i>	<i>fire</i>
	<i>the anti-austerity party</i>	<i>holds</i>	<i>eight seats</i>
	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Goal / Possessed</b>

Austerity premodifies the noun “measures” in a high number of instances. The dichotomy pro-austerity / anti-austerity is evident in these instances too. In Example 6.11, austerity measures are claimed to be beneficial to the economy, as they were “imposed to shore up the euro” and yet there are plans to be “defied” and “abolished” by the Actor of the process, that is “the far left party” (Syriza). The phrase “inside its smoke-filled HQ”, referring to the headquarters of the party that opposes austerity measures, carries connotations that may subtly influence how the reader perceives the political group being described. The imagery of a ‘smoke-filled’ room evokes a sense of the underground or subversive activities, a perception of recklessness or disregard for societal rules and health, enhancing the portrayal of the party as radical and perhaps even carelessly defiant. This is one of the many examples where austerity is represented as beneficial and those who defy it as reckless.

In Example 6.12, another example where “austerity” premodifies “measures”, the material processes “pledged to take on” and “roll back,” which describe the actions that Syriza as the Actor intends to perform, suggest a confrontational stance. The Goals are “international lenders”, the group Syriza aims to challenge, and “austerity measures”, what Syriza plans to change or eliminate. Consequently, the international lenders are perceived as proponents of austerity, whereas Syriza is regarded as an opponent of their policies and a proponent of their abolition.



Example 6.11

Inside its smoke-filled HQ, the far-left party is making plans to defy the EU over Greece’s debt and abolish draconian austerity measures imposed to shore up the euro.

Example 6.12

Syriza has pledged to take on international lenders and roll back austerity measures

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>the far-left party</i>	<i>(is making plans to) abolish</i>	<i>austerity measures</i>
	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>has pledged to roll back</i>	<i>austerity measures</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>

Other nouns that are frequently premodified by austerity in the corpus are policies, plan, and conditions. In these cases, too, austerity is represented as the solution and those who defy it put the Greek economy at risk.

In Example 6.13, the term “austerity” modifies “conditions”, highlighting the contentious dialogue between two Sayers in Verbal Clauses: the Greek Prime Minister and the creditors. This juxtaposition emphasizes the conflict over austerity conditions, since the Prime Minister refuses to adhere to the conditions, while the creditors are represented as responding with threats to withdraw financial support if compliance is not met.

Example 6.14 is one of the instances where “austerity” premodifies “plan”, connoting that austerity is not randomly implemented; it is the core of a plan to rescue the Greek economy, and in fact a “six-year” plan, which implies that it is the result of careful consideration and design. The creditors are the Actor in the Material Process of imposing it, while the “once-shunned far left party” is the Sayer in the

Verbal Process of rejecting this plan. In Example 6.15, “austerity” is used as a premodifier for “policies,” and the Prime Minister is portrayed as the Sayer in a Mental Process, actively challenging these policies. This stance is equated with attempting to “bring down the political establishment”.

Example 6.13

Mr. Tsipras has insisted that he will not adhere to the bailout’s austerity conditions; Greece’s creditors insist that they will not disburse funds unless he does.

Example 6.14

In a vote that could strain Europe’s unity and rattle global markets, Greece on Sunday seems poised to embrace a once-shunned far-left party that vows to reject the six-year austerity plan imposed by creditors and renegotiate the southern European nation’s crippling foreign debt.

Example 6.15

In terms of other policies, he wants to bring down the political establishment and has condemned the bailout, pledging to fight austerity policies.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>Mr. Tsipras</i>	<i>(has insisted that he) will not adhere</i>	<i>to austerity conditions</i>
	<i>A far-left party</i>	<i>vows to reject</i>	<i>austerity plan</i>
	<i>He (Tsipras)</i>	<i>wants to fight</i>	<i>austerity policies</i>
	<b>Sayer/Senser</b>	<b>Verbal / Mental Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January NC**

Based on the analysis of the subjected instances of austerity, several key conclusions emerge that shed light on the overarching topics and implications of these representations.

- i. Austerity in most cases premodifies nouns such as measures, plan, policies, conditions, all of which are nouns that connote the existence of rules and regulations, showing that it is a choice made out of necessity.

- ii. The notion of two opposing sides formed according to their attitude towards austerity is very apparent in the NC. The international leaders, the creditors, the banks, are all actors who seek the stability and growth of the Greek economy by means of the invaluable tool of austerity. The governing coalition and similar anti-austerity parties in other countries pose a threat that can cause instability or even chaos in their crisis-affected countries if they achieve their goal, which is the abolition of austerity.
- iii. It was expected that the findings would show that newspapers would be hostile to those who want to abolish austerity; the mainstream media have been ardent supporters of the implementation of austerity during the years of the recession, as their interpretations of political and economic events tend to coincide with those of the political and economic elites (Touri and Kostarella 2016).

### **6.3.2 Representations of Austerity in the January BC**

As was the case in the NC, the activated cases are very infrequent, and austerity is mostly activated as an Actor in a Material Process. The content is also similar, since the activated cases in the BC stress the negative consequences and the ineffectiveness of austerity.

#### **6.3.2.1 Activation in the January BC**

This study has found that the blogs are generally against austerity measures; we could claim that they generally support the anti-austerity social actors. In most activated cases, the negative consequences on society and economy as well as its ineffectiveness as an economic policy are highlighted – two issues that were marginally addressed in the January NC, only in a few of the activated cases. Activation in the BC (as was the

case in the NC), is realized as an Actor in a Material Process or less frequently through Possessivation.

**a) Austerity activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the January BC**

In almost all cases where austerity is an Actor in a Material Process, the focus is the ineffectiveness of austerity and its negative consequences.

In Example 6.16 austerity is the Actor in the Material Processes of “making it impossible for Greeks to pay” and of having “destroyed any possibility of economic recovery”. In Example 6.17 it is the Actor in the Material Process of not making Greece solvent. In Example 6.18 it is the Actor in the Material Process of throwing the Greek economy into a “Great Depression”.

In all three instances, this representation of austerity personifies the concept as a powerful, destructive force, responsible for severe economic consequences. By having austerity as the Actor, these sentences convey a negative evaluation of austerity measures, highlighting them as direct contributors to economic hardship and instability. This representation effectively positions austerity not just as a set of policies, but as a social actor capable of significant and negative actions, reinforcing criticism of such financial strategies within the discourse.

**Example 6.16**

Austerity itself is making it impossible for the Greeks to pay; it has destroyed any possibility of economic recovery.

**Example 6.17**

If that is the definition, then austerity has not and will not make Greece “solvent.”

**Example 6.18**

Austerity threw an economy in a deep recession into a gratuitous Great Depression.

<i>Austerity</i>	<i>is making it impossible</i> <i>has destroyed</i>	<i>for the Greeks to pay</i> <i>any possibility of economic recovery</i>
<i>Austerity</i>	<i>has not and will not make</i>	<i>Greece “solvent.”</i>
<i>Austerity</i>	<i>threw</i>	<i>an economy in deep recession</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

The austerity / anti-austerity divide is more than evident in the blogs, and it is clear that most blogs are active supporters of the anti-austerity side. In Example 6.18, where austerity is the Actor in the Material Process of crushing countries, Germany is represented as the architect of the project of austerity from which the peoples of the Mediterranean must be liberated. This representation of Germany may be attributed to two factors. Firstly, Germany is a significant economic power within the EU. Secondly, the German mainstream media has been instrumental in disseminating the view that the crisis is not systemic but a Greek failure, due to cultural characteristics that are perceived to be laziness and a spendthrift mentality (Bickes et al. 2014). The underlying conflict, as is presented in this Example, between the Mediterranean countries and Germany, hinges on the perception that austerity measures are failing to revitalize affected economies (as are the Mediterranean countries) and, moreover, are causing significant harm. Despite these consequences, proponents of austerity (such as Germany) persist with these policies, primarily because they align with their economic interests and objectives.

#### Example 6.19

A controlled break-up separating Germany from the Mediterranean states whose economic needs, even in benign times, differ greatly from Germany’s would pave the way for a fresh start for countries crushed by meaningless austerity.

<i>(Meaningless) austerity</i>	<i>crushes</i>	<i>countries</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

### **b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January BC**

Although the instances of austerity being activated in the January BC are relatively few, they are significant, as they uniformly portray austerity as an actor responsible for negative outcomes.

- i. Activated cases in the blogs mostly refer to the ineffectiveness of austerity. In the newspapers (where activated cases also revealed a negative stance towards austerity) the basic issue were the negative consequences of austerity on society. In the blogs, there are no such references in the activated cases, where the focal point is the fact that austerity is not working.
- ii. The austerity / anti-austerity divide is very strong in the blogs – there are those who benefit from austerity and those who suffer, and the latter must liberate themselves from the former.

### **6.3.2.2 Subjection in the January BC**

Quantitatively, the subjected instances of austerity in the BC are remarkably similar to those in the NC, with four out of five cases being subjected and primarily through Premodification, as in the NC. However, the content and connotations of these instances are strikingly different, presenting a clear contrast in perspective.

#### **a) Austerity subjected through Premodification in the January BC**

Most of the instances refer to the anti-austerity camp which is getting stronger. The anti-austerity front is represented as being on the rise, and as having the potential to bring

political change and abolish austerity. The optimism that change is coming prevails in the subjected cases of austerity in the January BC.

In Example 6.20, austerity premodifies “bills”, referring to the legislative measures passed by the Greek parliament under a pro-austerity government. These austerity bills faced significant opposition from a robust anti-austerity movement, which sought to halt their passage through “street protests and riots”. This is a representation of austerity as a top-down imposition by politicians, enacted in defiance of widespread public dissent.

Example 6.21, where austerity premodifies “programs”, constructs an authoritative voice by listing renowned economists, which lends significant weight to the criticism of these policies. By stating that the austerity programs are “proven to be wrong and self-defeating,” the sentence underscores the negative impacts of austerity, representing them as both harmful and as having been identified as such by experts in the field.

Example 6.22, where austerity premodifies ‘movements’, is another instance where the emphasis on the blogs is on the popular opposition to austerity. This example is one of the many instances which illustrate that dissent extends beyond Greece to other countries affected by austerity measures, portraying a global resistance to such economic policies. The importance of these international movements, and the subsequent emergence of anti-austerity parties, is stressed in Example 6.23, with (anti)austerity premodifying ‘parties’. This is one of the cases where the blogs advocate for a pan-European alliance against austerity—and often against the Eurozone—portraying it as the best hope for Greece and other economically vulnerable Eurozone countries.

Example 6.20

Many of the austerity bills have been met by street protests and riots, but that hasn't stopped seven rounds of cuts from passing the Greek Parliament.

Example 6.21

Picketty, Keen, Krugman, several Nobel Prize winning economists such as Joseph Stiglitz and Chris Pissarides all agree that the austerity programs imposed on Greece are proven to be wrong and self-defeating.

Example 6.22

The bailed-out economies of Ireland and Portugal also have growing anti-austerity movements.

Example 6.23

Greece's best hope is if there is an upsurge in popularity of other anti-austerity and anti-Eurozone parties in the rest of Europe.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>			<i>(Many of the austerity bills</i>	<i>have been met</i>	<i>by street protests and riots</i>
	<i>Winning economists</i>	<i>agree that</i>	<i>austerity programs</i>	<i>are proven to be</i>	<i>wrong and self-defeating</i>
	<i>Ireland and Portugal</i>	<i>also have</i>	<i>anti-austerity movements</i>		
	<i>(If) there is</i>	<i>an upsurge in popularity</i>	<i>of other anti- austerity parties</i>		
	<b>Sayer / Carrier</b>	<b>Verbal / Relational Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

The ineffectiveness and the negative consequences of austerity are stressed in a great number of instances. In Examples 6.24 and 6.25, austerity premodifies 'policy' and 'policies.' In 6.24, it is "Germany's austerity policy" – the blogs very frequently hold Germany accountable for the imposition of harsh policies on weaker economies of the Eurozone – and this policy is represented as destroying the euro. In Example 6.25, the "European authorities" are represented as the enforcers of austerity, which is actively opposed by Syriza. This opposition is depicted as a response to austerity's



severe repercussions in Greece, including widespread depression and high unemployment rates.

Example 6.24

It does not take a prophet to predict that the latest chapter of the euro crisis will leave Germany’s austerity policy in tatters – unless Merkel really wants to take the enormous risk of letting the euro fail.

Example 6.25

Syriza also calls for reversing Greece’s devastating austerity policies, imposed by the European authorities, which have brought the country six years of depression and more than 25 percent unemployment.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>The euro crisis</i>	<i>will leave in tatters</i>	<i>(Germany’s) austerity policy</i>
	<i>Syriza</i>	<i>calls for reversing</i>	<i>(devastating) austerity policies</i>
	<b>Actor / Sayer</b>	<b>Material / Verbal Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>

**c) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January BC**

The conclusions derived from the cases examined in the January BC are consistent with those derived from the activated cases, thereby providing consistent insights.

- i. In no instance is austerity depicted positively in the January BC; it is consistently represented as detrimental, emphasizing its severe impact on the economy and society. The focus remains on the urgent need to eliminate austerity due to its harmful effects.
- ii. The blogs show a strong interest in the anti-austerity movement, which includes parties and movements from various countries impacted by austerity, as well as experts who argue that austerity measures are fundamentally flawed. They

portray these anti-austerity forces as capable of driving political change and ending austerity policies—even at the cost of disrupting the Eurozone structure.

#### 6.4 Representations of Austerity in the July subcorpora

The percentages for the July subcorpora, as shown in Table 6.5, largely mirror those from January. In July, the majority of austerity instances are again subjected, with activation playing an even smaller role than in January. Notably, there are six instances of beneficialisation in the BC for July; this is a new development, as there were no instances of beneficialisation recorded in either the NC or the BC in January. However, due to the small number of these cases, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions from this data.

As discussed in the previous subsection, the low activation percentages are primarily due to austerity being perceived as a tool rather than an active agent. In July, this trend intensifies, the activation rates in the NC and BC being lower than those in the January NC and BC.

Table 6.5 presents the percentages of activation, subjection, beneficialisation and circumstantialisation of austerity in the July NC and BC subcorpora.

Table 6.5. 5 July, austerity, NC and BC, Activation, Subjection, Beneficialisation and Circumstantialization rates

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialisation		Circumstantialisation	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
AUSTERITY Total: NC=102 BC=164	0.98% N=1	0.49% N=8	83.3% N=85	70.7% N=116	-	3.66% N=6	15.7% N=16	20.73% N=34

Table 6.6 provides a transitivity analysis of the activated instances of 'austerity' in the July subcorpora. In the NC, there is only one instance where austerity is activated as an

Actor in a Material Process, representing a mere 0.98% of the total instances, indicating an extremely rare portrayal of austerity as an active force. The BC, while still showing a limited view of austerity as activated (3.66%), depicts a slightly more active role. Additionally, in the BC, there are two instances (1.22%) where austerity is activated through Possessivation, suggesting a nuanced use of language to attribute ownership or association with austerity measures more so than in the NC.

Table 6.6. 5 July, austerity, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Activated instances

<b>Activated</b> (NC 0.98 %, 1/ BC 0.49%, 8)				
	NC (Total 102)		BC (Total 164)	
Actor in a material process	0.98%	N=1	3.66%	N=6
Through possessivation	-		1.22%	N=2

Table 6.7 presents the transitivity analysis of subjected instances of austerity in the July subcorpora for both NC and BC. Austerity most frequently appears subjected through Premodification, which occurs in around half of the cases for both corpora, suggesting that austerity is commonly contextualized within a broader narrative through modifying phrases that clarify its impact or nature. The next most frequent category is when austerity is the Goal in a Material Process, signifying that it often serves as the target or outcome of actions, a reflection of its contentious role in public and political discourse. Instances of subjection through Possessivation and as a Carrier in a Relational Process are less common

Table 6.7. 5 July, austerity, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Subjected instances

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 83.3%, 85/ BC 70.7%, 116)				
	NC (Total 102)		BC (Total 164)	
Goal in a material process	9.8%	N=10	12.19%	N=20
Phenomenon in a mental process	2.94%	N=3	0.61%	N=1
Carrier in a relational process	1.96%	N=2	1.83%	N=3
Through premodification	50%	N=51	48.79%	N=80
Through possessivation	12.74%	N=13	6.1%	N=10
Attribute in a relational process	-		0.61%	N=1
Verbiage in a verbal process	5.9%	N=6	0.61%	N=1

The qualitative analysis of the activated and subjected instances of austerity will be presented in the next subsection.

### 6.4.1 Representations of austerity in the July NC

#### 6.4.1.1 Activation in the July NC

As shown on Table 6.6, there is only one instance of austerity activation, in which austerity is activated, as an Actor in a Material Process. In the January NC it was noticed that when newspapers choose to activate austerity, it is done to represent austerity in a negative light. This tendency is repeated in the sole example of activation in the July NC, Example 6.26, where austerity is represented as an Actor in the Material Process of bringing the country “to its knees”, along with the debt, which austerity was supposed to reduce.

#### Example 6.25

Greece’s radical leftist government came to power just over five months ago with a promise to deliver a new deal for a country that has been brought to its knees by its sky-high debt and the strict austerity prescribed to reduce it.

<i>Austerity</i>	<i>brought the</i>	<i>country</i>	<i>to its knees</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

### **6.4.1.2 Subjection in the July NC**

#### **a) Austerity subjected through Premodification in the July NC**

The representation of austerity in the newspapers is consistently positive; however, there are significant differences between the representations in the January NC and the July NC. The most striking feature of the July NC is the almost complete absence of the term ‘anti-austerity’. In fact, the most impressive finding from the analysis of this subcorpus is what is not there. There is no attempt in the July NC to demonstrate the existence of two opposing sides of pro-austerity and anti-austerity, no reference to other parties in Europe that join Syriza in the fight against austerity, no division that breaks Europe into two factions. All these elements, portrayed as threats, were central in the January NC, but there is a remarkable shift in the July NC.

What *is* there is a considered analysis of the options available to Greece in the context of the ongoing financial crisis, as well as the implications of the different policy choices in terms of implementing austerity measures and ensuring financial stability. While there are a few remaining warnings suggesting that rejecting austerity could lead to chaos—a common occurrence in the January NC—such instances are now notably rare.

In many cases it is made clear that austerity is a prerequisite for rescue, and that without accepting it there can be no bailout deal to keep Greece solvent, as in Example 6.26. In this Example, austerity premodifies ‘medicine’, in a metaphor which carries significant ideological weight in this context. The metaphorical representation of austerity measures as ‘medicinal’ implies that they are beneficial and healing, despite the potential for harshness. This representation can be employed to justify stringent economic policies by suggesting that they are akin to a challenging but indispensable treatment for restoring fiscal health, emphasising their inevitability.

This inevitability is made explicit in a high number of cases, as in Example 6.27, where austerity premodifies measures, and “austerity measures” are represented as a prerequisite of a “rescue deal”. The use of the lexical item “rescue” implies urgency and necessity, which can influence public perception to view the conditions attached to austerity measures as unavoidable if Greece is to be “saved.” This view can justify stringent and often unpopular economic policies by representing them as part of an essential strategy to avert more severe consequences. It positions the austerity measures not just as economic policies but as critical, life-saving interventions that are necessary for the stability and future viability of the nation's economy.

This need for austerity emphasised in the newspapers is in line with the way austerity was represented in the January NC. What is different, however, is the lack of discussion in the July NC about the austerity being a prerequisite for the participation of Greece in the Eurozone – in fact, in some cases this possible outcome is explicitly refuted, as in Example 6.28, where austerity premodifies ‘measures’. By stating “even if they vote ‘No,’ the country will likely stay in the eurozone”, the author downplays the potential consequences of rejecting austerity measures, suggesting a predetermined stability or inevitability that regardless of public opinion, Greece's status in the eurozone will remain secure. This view could diminish the perceived impact or importance of the public's vote against austerity, subtly representing the referendum as having limited actual stakes despite its democratic appearance, as it can probably not prevent austerity measures from being implemented.

#### Example 6.26

The Europeans, led by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, won't agree to a new bailout deal unless Greece agrees to take its austerity medicine.

#### Example 6.27

The Greek government vowed Wednesday to go ahead with plans to have the people decide whether they want more austerity measures in exchange for a rescue deal.

Example 6.28

Greek voters will probably vote “Yes” on Sunday’s referendum to accept an international bailout and new austerity measures — but even if they vote “No,” the country will likely stay in the eurozone, according to Goldman Sachs analyst Huw Pill.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>agrees to take</i>	<i>its austerity medicine</i>
	<i>Greek voters</i>	<i>will (vote yes to) accept</i>	<i>new austerity measures</i>
	<i>The people decide</i>	<i>(whether) they want</i>	<i>more austerity measures</i>
	<b>Actor / Carrier</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>

In this subcorpus, the emphasis shifts from a polarised debate between pro-austerity and anti-austerity social actors over accepting austerity or not, to Greece's readiness to negotiate and accept certain austerity measures. Austerity is represented as an inevitable condition, with the scope for negotiation centred not on its rejection but on moderating its extent. This representation rules out the possibility of completely avoiding austerity measures, underscoring an acceptance that some level of austerity is unavoidable.

In the July NC, therefore, the discussion revolves around the severity and specifics of the implementation of austerity measures rather than their outright elimination. In Example 6.29, where austerity premodifies ‘measures’, the author is reassuring that Greece as a Senser in a Mental Process “is willing” to accept some austerity measures, but its leaders are negotiating with a view to reversing certain measures that they consider to be unduly harsh, in particular the significant reductions in pensions. The negotiation on austerity measures is represented not just as a financial

decision but as a moral and social conflict between the demands of international lenders and the social welfare concerns of the Greek population.

However, the emphasis of the newspapers is on the fact that Greece and its government will not reject austerity. In a high number of instances this compliance is stressed, as in Example 6.30, where the Greek Prime Minister is represented as agreeing to the austerity measures but negotiating on the terms of the agreement. In several instances, the impact of the referendum vote on the financial policies in Greece is dismissed. For example, austerity is represented as premodifying 'package' in Example 6.31, where the significance of a 'No' vote is diminished to merely a declaration that the austerity package is overly severe.

Example 6.29

Greece was willing to agree to some austerity measures like raising taxes and cutting spending, but what country leaders despised most was a demand to cut Greek pensions by as much as 40 percent.

Example 6.30

Tsipras has agreed to imposing more harsh austerity measures, but he wants eurozone lenders to grant the country better terms for bailout debt repayments.

Example 6.31

A "No" vote is an endorsement of the left-wing Syriza government's view that the austerity package attached to Greece's bail-out deal is too harsh.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>was willing to agree</i>	<i>to some austerity measures</i>		
	<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>has agreed to imposing</i>	<i>more harsh austerity measures</i>		
			<i>The austerity package</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>too harsh</i>
	<b>Actor / Senser</b>	<b>Material / Mental Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>



## **b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

The analysis of the subjected instances in the July NC reflects the newspapers' continued pro-austerity stance, while also indicating a shift in their perception of the threats to austerity policies.

- i.** In July, the stark contrast between the two sides on the issue of austerity, which was evident in January, has diminished. There is now a consensus among the parties involved, and a dialogue between the creditors and the Greek government and its people, with the aim of reaching a viable compromise.
- ii.** Austerity is not questioned. There will be austerity reforms, the need for austerity policies is not in debate; what is being negotiated is the exact nature of these reforms.

## **6.4.2 Representations of Austerity in the July BC**

### **6.4.2.1 Activation in the July BC**

There are 8 instances of activation in the July BC (out of 164), which is a higher rate than the July NC activation cases, yet it is also very low. In most cases austerity is activated as an Actor in a Material Process, and is represented in a negative way in all of them.

#### **a) Austerity activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the July BC**

The ineffectiveness of austerity policies is highlighted in all activated cases of the blogs. In Example 6.32, austerity is the Actor in the Material Process of hurting Greece's economy, which is the opposite of what it was implemented for. In Example 6.33, the author is more specific as to what the effect of austerity on economy is: austerity is the Actor in the Material Process of shrinking the economy 'faster than it reduces debt' and

the ineffectiveness of austerity is stressed by stating that ‘all the suffering serves no purpose’.

Example 6.32

Austerity Hurt Greece’s Economy More Than Experts Had Predicted

Example 6.33

A “yes” vote in Greece would have condemned the country to years more of suffering under policies that haven’t worked and in fact, given the arithmetic, can’t work: austerity probably shrinks the economy faster than it reduces debt, so that all the suffering serves no purpose.

<i>Austerity</i>	<i>hurt</i>	<i>Greece’s economy</i>
<i>Austerity</i>	<i>shrinks</i>	<i>the economy</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

The divide over austerity, the two opposing sides identified in the NC and BC in January, but absent in the July NC, is still prominent in the blogs in the July subcorpus. Hence, there is the side of European leaders trying to impose their policies even though austerity as an Actor has weakened the nation (Example 6.34) and the side of the Greek government that “have seen austerity destroy their economic society” (Example 6.35).

Example 6.34

They attempted their take it or leave it dealing seeing nothing but success in their approach to what they saw as a battered, beaten down nation, too weakened by all the imposed austerity - and such obviously has not been the case.

Example 6.35

Greek leaders have seen austerity destroy their economic society while most of the bailout was used to pay off debt interest rather than invest in the country’s economic and social infrastructure.

<i>Austerity</i>	<i>weakened</i>	<i>(the) nation</i>
<i>Austerity</i>	<i>destroys</i>	<i>their economic society</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

## **b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the July BC**

- i. In the blogs, austerity is still considered as ineffective and even catastrophic, a policy that cannot possibly offer a solution to the economic crisis.
- ii. The opposing sides that seem to be softened in the NC, are still present in the BC. More details about how the opposing sides are now seen are revealed in the subjected instances discussed below, as the subjected instances far outnumber the activated ones and are therefore more conclusions can be drawn by examining them.

### **6.4.2.2 Subjection in the July BC**

Half of the subjected cases are, as in the NC, cases of subjection through Premodification. However, the similarity is only restricted to percentages, as in terms of the way austerity is represented, the July NC and the July BC differ immensely.

#### **a) Austerity subjected through Premodification in the July BC**

In the July BC, the social actors associated with austerity are divided into two distinct groups, those supporting and those opposing austerity measures. Unlike newspapers, which have shifted their representation of austerity, blogs continue to represent it as the central issue in the debate.

With regard to the blogs, austerity is still central, as the referendum is a matter of whether or not it will continue. Consequently, there are social actors who are advocating for or against this continuation.

The Greek media and international media are represented as pro-austerity. In Example 6.36, (pro-)austerity premodifies media (denoting the mainstream media), the latter being the Actor in the Material Process of shutting out ‘smaller political parties and

movements'. The use of "systematically shut out" suggests a deliberate and structured exclusion, implying a bias within the media against these groups. Labelling the media as "pro-austerity" clearly aligns them with specific economic policies and shows a conflict between the media's stance and the positions of the smaller parties and movements. The sentence represents these groups as marginalized and silenced within the larger political conversation, highlighting a lack of diversity in the media coverage of austerity debates. This can lead to an understanding of the media landscape as not only polarized but also as gatekeeping certain political voices and perspectives.

In many instances there is a direct reference to a pro-austerity camp. In Example 6.37, Germany, which is frequently represented as the leading country in the EU, is represented as the leader of this camp, enforcing austerity policies and not excusing debts. This representation is contrasted with a historical analogy to the Marshall Plan, under which Germany's post-WWII debts were forgiven, highlighting a perceived double standard in Germany's current stance on financial leniency.

In Example 6.38, austerity premodifies "doctrine", and those who wish to implement this doctrine, like the IMF, cause harm to countries as Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy. The use of "waged" associated with "austerity doctrine" personifies the IMF's policies as an aggressive force, likening them to a military or combative operation, which implicitly criticizes the nature and impact of these policies. The historical reference to Latin America's financial struggles under similar policies serves to highlight a pattern of detrimental outcomes, casting austerity in a negative light. This representation suggests a critique of the IMF's approach to economic issues, emphasizing the repeated negative impacts across different regions and times.

Example 6.36

However, all of these smaller political parties and movements have been systematically shut out of the pro-austerity media, both in Greece and internationally.

Example 6.37

Germany, which leads the pro-austerity camp, has little moral ground to stand on given its history after World War II, when its own debts were forgiven under the Marshall Plan.

Example 6.38

Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy and other debtor countries have been under the same mode of attack that was waged by the IMF and its austerity doctrine that bankrupted Latin America from the 1970s onward.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>			pro-austerity media	<i>systematically shut out</i>	<i>smaller political parties and movements</i>
	<i>Germany</i>	<i>leads</i>	<i>the pro-austerity camp</i>		
			<i>IMF's austerity doctrine</i>	<i>bankrupted</i>	<i>Latin America</i>
	<b>Actor / Carrier</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

In the July BC, there are many instances which refer to the consequences of austerity policies on Greek society and the Greek people. This topic is conspicuously absent from the NC.

In a high number of instances, austerity is represented as having devastating effects on people's health and well-being, as in Example 6.39, where austerity premodifies rules, and these austerity rules are represented as severely affecting Greece. The severity of the situation is emphasized by the use of potent phrases such as “shattered the economy” and “wrought havoc,” which highlight the profound and destructive impact of the austerity measures. By portraying the Greek leaders' request as a last-ditch effort to mitigate these damages, the text emphasizes the desperation and critical nature of the situation. The mention of "one last time" suggests a final plea for relief, heightening the

drama and urgency. The portrayal of European leaders as the recipients of this request places them in a position of power, implying their ability to alleviate or perpetuate Greece's suffering based on their response to the plea.

Out of the numerous cases that highlight the negative impact of austerity on Greek society, several specifically cite the rise in suicide rates as directly linked to austerity policies. For instance, in Example 6.40, the lexical item 'pre-austerity' is used to modify 'rate,' drawing a stark comparison between the suicide rates before and after the implementation of austerity measures, thereby attributing the increase in suicides directly to these policies.

Example 6.39

With Greece poised to miss a debt payment to the International Monetary Fund on Tuesday evening, the country's leftist political leaders are asking European leaders one last time to loosen the austerity rules that have shattered the country's economy and wrought havoc on the health and well-being of its people.

Example 6.40

The suicide rate spiked in 2011 and 2012, with one estimate finding that 11 more Greeks killed themselves each month in 2012 than the pre-austerity rate would have projected.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>			<i>Austerity rules</i>	<i>have wrought havoc</i>	<i>on the health and well- being of its people</i>
	<i>11 more Greeks</i>	<i>killed themselves (each month)</i>	<i>than the pre- austerity rate</i>		
	<b>Actor / Senser</b>	<b>Material / Mental Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Another very common topic in the July BC is the ineffectiveness of austerity - not only is austerity imposed on the Greek people by third parties and has adverse effects on their welfare, but it is also structurally incapable of delivering the expected results.

In Example 6.41, austerity premodifies ‘package’, and the austerity package is represented as responsible for shrinking the economy, even though it was meant to revive it. In Examples 6.42 and 6.43 austerity premodifies ‘measures’. In the first Example, austerity measures are represented as the Actor in the Material Process of affecting the economy and the debt levels negatively. In the second, the collapse of the economy and the revenues are attributed to the austerity measures.

Example 6.41

That rapid economic shrinkage has defeated the very purpose of the austerity package in the first place.

Example 6.42

That means that if austerity measures hamper an economy, they can do more to hurt, not help, debt levels.

Example 6.43

Because the Greek economy collapsed, largely as a result of those very austerity measures, dragging revenues down with it.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>That rapid economic shrinkage</i>	<i>has defeated</i>	<i>(the very purpose of) the austerity package</i>		
			austerity measures	<i>can do more to hurt</i>	<i>debt levels</i>
	<i>the Greek economy</i>	<i>collapsed</i>	<i>(largely as a result of) austerity measures</i>		
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Concerning the referendum's potential to end austerity, there are instances where the author expresses optimism that a 'no' vote might herald the termination of austerity measures, suggesting a belief that the governing party remains aligned with the anti-austerity movement.

In Example 6.44, the phrase “austerity orthodoxy” represents austerity as an entrenched standard, suggesting its deep-rooted status in current policy approaches. This linguistic choice critically highlights austerity as a negative yet established force, against which the referendum might pose a significant challenge. This framing underlines a resistance to a persistently imposed economic discipline, casting the referendum as a pivotal moment to contest and possibly overturn these longstanding austerity measures.

Some instances, though considerably fewer than in the January BC, express an enthusiasm for this opportunity to abolish the ‘austerity regime’, as it is characterised in Example 6.45. In instances like this one, the pro-austerity / anti-austerity debate is still strong, with social actors that are taking sides. The Syriza government is represented in this case as still belonging to the anti-austerity movement, and as facilitators of democratic choice, who are directly involving citizens in critical economic decisions. The description of creditors as “overlords and ladies” carries a clearly negative connotation, suggesting dominance and external control, overtly criticizing the pro-austerity side as interfering with the affairs of a country in order to impose austerity.

Example 6.44

The referendum is the only substantial challenge in Europe to austerity orthodoxy.

Example 6.45

The Syriza government will grant Greek citizens the almost unprecedented opportunity to decide directly the economic policy for the country, through a referendum to accept or reject the austerity regime designed in and demanded by its creditor overlords and ladies.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>The referendum</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>the only challenge</i>	<i>to austerity orthodoxy</i>
	<i>The Greek people</i>	<i>reject or accept</i>		<i>the austerity regime</i>
	<b>Actor / Carrier</b>	<b>Relational /Material Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>	<b>Premodification</b>



Nevertheless, instances where Syriza is no longer perceived as a part of the anti-austerity movement and the referendum is not regarded as an opportunity to abolish austerity are even more prevalent. In Example 6.46, ‘austerity’ premodifies ‘deal’ and the “austerity deal” is the Goal in the process of “attempting to make”, where the “government” is the Actor. In the same example, the referendum is called a “misguided negotiation tactic”. Similarly, in Example 6.47 where austerity premodifies “medicine”, Syriza is represented as an Actor that orchestrates a plan in order to “let people swallow the austerity medicine”. Thus, the former anti-austerity party that was perceived as a staunch opponent of austerity in the January BC is now represented in numerous instances in the July BC as engaged in political manoeuvres that aim to perpetuate austerity while appearing to adhere to the anti-austerity agenda that was its electoral platform.

Example 6.46

It was primarily a negotiation tactic, a misguided one at that, from a government attempting to make an austerity deal.

Example 6.47

Should this be a well-orchestrated plan on the side of Syriza to let people swallow the austerity medicine, their bluff is already called.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>A government</i>	<i>attempting to make</i>	<i>an austerity deal</i>
	<i>(A plan on the side of) Syriza</i>	<i>to let (people swallow)</i>	<i>the austerity medicine</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>

Regarding the outcome of the referendum, there is not much optimism for abolishing austerity. Even though there are some instances which discuss the possibility for a no vote leading to Grexit (which was seen as highly desirable in the January NC and is still seen as such, albeit very unlikely), in most cases the blogs are not very optimistic.

Example 6.48 is one of the instances where a desirable outcome might be achieved, and that is Greece leaving the euro and prove that the “austerity project” is a failure. However, in the majority of cases where the potential outcomes are discussed, a disruption of the austerity policies is not seen as particularly likely. This is exemplified in Example 6.49, where the possibility of “another austerity programme” is seen as likely, regardless of the referendum result.

Example 6.48

If Greece leaves the euro and recovers, the whole austerity project will be shown up as the failure it is.

Example 6.49

Sure enough, a 'no' vote on Sunday doesn't guarantee that yet another austerity programme won't follow.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>			<i>The austerity project</i>	<i>will be shown up</i>	<i>as the failure it is</i>
	<i>A 'no' vote</i>	<i>doesn't guarantee that</i>	<i>another austerity programme</i>	<i>won't follow</i>	
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Goal / Attribute</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July BC**

The qualitative analysis of the subjected instances of the BC provides insights into the shifts in representations of austerity and other social actors in relation to it, which have occurred since January.

- i. In the July BC, the discussion about the ineffectiveness of austerity and its harsh consequences on society is still highly pertinent, with allusions even to the increasing suicide rates due to austerity cuts.

- ii. In the blog corpus there is still a strong divide between anti- and pro-austerity social actors, unlike in the newspaper corpus, where this divide has disappeared. In the blogs there is still a debate on the abolition of austerity, although the camps are slightly different.
- iii. What is different in the pro- and anti-austerity camps is that there is some dispute as to whether Syriza still belongs to the anti-austerity camp. In some cases, Syriza is still fighting austerity, in others, they are trying to implement it, albeit on slightly better terms. This, naturally, weakens the anti-austerity camp, as the governing party is not considered to belong to it, at least not by everyone.
- iv. As regards the outcome of the referendum, there is not much optimism. In most cases it seems that blogs do not exhibit the enthusiasm that prevailed in the January BC and do not believe that austerity will be repealed irrespective of what people vote in the referendum.

### **6.5 Representations of Austerity in the September subcorpora**

As explained in the methodology chapter (Chapter 3), the September elections drew much less international attention than the January elections and the July referendum, and therefore there were fewer articles in the September subcorpus. The instances of austerity were as few as 71 in the NC and 52 in the BC, with the wide majority being subjection cases. There are only two activated instances in the BC and none in the NC. Table 6.8 presents the percentages of activation, subjection and circumstantialisation of austerity in the January NC and BC subcorpora.

Table 6.8. 20 September, austerity, NC and BC, Activation, Subjection and Circumstantialisation rates

AUSTERITY	Activated		Subjected		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
Total: NC=71 BC=52	-	3.85% N=2	74.65% N=53	76.92% N=40	25.35% N=18	23.08% N=12

Table 6.9 presents the Transitivity Analysis of the activated cases in the NC and the BC. In fact, there are only two activated instances in the BC, where austerity is activated as an Actor in a Material Process. Since the total number of occurrences of the lexical item austerity is lower than in the January and July subcorpora, in which the activated austerity cases were also very low, the fact that now they are almost non-existent does not signify a shift in the representations, but rather a correspondingly lowered number.

Table 6.9. 20 September, austerity, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Activated instances

<b>Activated (NC -, / BC 3.84%, 2)</b>			
	NC (Total 71)	BC (Total 52)	
Actor in a material process	-	3.85% N=2	
Through possessivation	-	-	

Table 6.10 presents the Transitivity Analysis of the subjected cases in the NC and the BC. In the NC, 74.65% of references to austerity are cases of subjection, compared to a very similar 76.92% in the BC. The most frequent mode of subjection across both corpora involves premodification, making up approximately 43.67% in the NC and 40.38% in the BC.

The category Goal in a Material Process is also very frequent, particularly in the NC where it reaches 22.53%. This suggests that austerity is often positioned as the target or outcome of various actions or policies, although this is less prominent in the BC with

only 15.38%. Instances of austerity being subjected through Possessivation and as a Carrier in a Relational Process are very low in both corpora.

Table 6.10. 20 September, austerity, NC and BC, Transitivity Analysis of Subjected instances

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 74.65%,53 / BC 76.92%, 40)				
	NC (Total 71)		BC (Total 52)	
Goal in a material process	22.53%	N=16	15.38%	N=8
Carrier in a relational process	1.41%	N=1	9.61%	N=5
Through Premodification	43.67%	N=31	40.38%	N=21
Through possessivation	5.63%	N=4	7.69%	N=4
Attribute in a relational process	-		3.84%	N=2
Token in a relational process	1.41%	N=1	-	

The detailed analysis of subjected cases in the NC, as well as the activated and subjected cases in the BC, is presented in the following subsection.

## **6.5.1 Representations of Austerity in the September NC**

### **6.5.1.1 Subjection in the September NC**

#### **a) Austerity subjected through Premodification in the September NC**

The newspapers declare the end of anti-austerity: there are many instances suggesting that there is no viable alternative to austerity, and that there are no significant political forces that challenge the austerity agenda. The stakes at these elections are not whether to keep or abolish austerity, but who will be elected to implement the new austerity package. There are many instances in which it is asserted that the inevitability of austerity is a fundamental aspect of the current economic situation.

In Example 6.50, ‘austerity’ premodifies ‘program’, and the “EU austerity program” is not to be defied in these elections. This instance asserts that the election is not a battleground against EU austerity but a stage for managing agreed-upon financial cuts, which Syriza, having originally vowed to resist such measures, must now implement. The phrase “finally was forced to swallow” indicates a reluctant acceptance, suggesting

that Syriza's resistance was overcome by external pressures, and emphasizing a shift in Syriza's role from active resistance to passive management of the austerity regime.

Although the austerity measures cannot be avoided, in certain instances, as in Example 6.51, it is implied that they are negotiable to a certain extent, even if it is only to "soften the blow" for the most vulnerable citizens. However, the "blow" will not be entirely avoided.

Numerous instances throughout the September NC link the rationale for calling the elections directly to austerity measures. For instance, in Example 6.52 it is claimed that the government sought "a stronger mandate" to enforce austerity, since this obligation contrasted sharply with its original anti-austerity electoral promises.

Example 6.50

Some say that is because this time, the election isn't about fighting the EU austerity program but about managing the \$97 billion agreement and implementing the new and painful cuts that Syriza, which came to power vowing to defy Brussels, finally was forced to swallow.

Example 6.51

Tsipras has vowed to do all he could to soften the blow of the austerity measures for the country's poorest citizens, describing the package as a "living organism" with some areas still open for negotiation, including debt reduction, privatisations, labour relations, and how to deal with non-performing bank loans.

Example 6.52

Tsipras said he needed a stronger mandate to implement tough austerity measures.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>The election</i>	<i>isn't about fighting</i>	<i>the EU austerity program</i>
	<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>(vowed to soften</i>	<i>(the blow of) the austerity measures</i>
	<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>needed (a stronger mandate to implement)</i>	<i>tough austerity measures</i>
	<b>Actor / Carrier</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>

The newspapers frequently stress the prevalence of pro-austerity parties in the Greek parliament. In Example 6.53 a point is made that in the parliament the only anti-austerity forces are the Communist Party and the nazi Golden Dawn, implying that moderate forces are all pro-austerity and possibly employing the two-ends theory, which equals the far left with the far right. Hence, the newspapers underline that there is no powerful party to fight austerity. A number of instances mention the anti-austerity Popular Unity, formed by some the Syriza members that left the party after the compliance to the new bailout agreement, only to stress that they did not even manage to enter the parliament, as in Example 6.54.

Example 6.53

So the new coalition will face fewer anti-austerity forces in Parliament, with the exception of the Communist Party and Golden Dawn, the neo-fascist party.

Example 6.54

The anti-austerity Popular Unity, formed by the rebels in July, failed to cross the 3% threshold to enter parliament.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>The new coalition</i>	<i>will face</i>	<i>fewer anti-austerity forces</i>		
			<i>The anti-austerity Popular Unity</i>	<i>failed to cross</i>	<i>the threshold of 3%</i>
	<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>(made a) U-turn accepting</i>	<i>more tough austerity measures</i>		
	<b>Actor / Carrier</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the September NC**

The subjected instances in the September NC show that the newspapers remain proponents of austerity, while now there is no fear that the austerity programme might be disrupted. More specifically:

- i. The representation of austerity underscores its portrayal not as an option but as an inevitability within the economic and political discourse. The elections are no longer a field of conflict for or against austerity but rather a platform for selecting the most capable leaders to manage the entrenched austerity measures. This shift indicates a resignation to austerity as an unchangeable aspect of Greece's economic policies, moving the focus from resistance to administration.
- ii. Austerity measures are consistently represented as fixed, with only minor adjustments possible to alleviate the impact on the most vulnerable populations. These representations suggest that while the severity of austerity's effects may be moderated, the overall framework remains firmly in place. This inevitability of austerity, portrayed as a fundamental aspect of the current economic situation, reflects a broader acceptance that despite its severe social consequences, austerity remains unchallenged and central to economic policy discussions.
- iii. This acceptance is further emphasized by the representation of anti-austerity voices as marginalized or ineffective, indicating a shift from previous conditions where there was at least a rhetorical space for opposition. The absence of a powerful political force to advocate against austerity policies reinforces this discourse of inevitability and marginalization, suggesting a landscape where austerity is largely unchallengeable within the current political framework.

## **6.5.2 Representations of Austerity in the September BC**

### **6.5.2.1 Subjection in the September BC**

#### **a) Austerity subjected through Premodification in the September BC**

The enthusiasm for the elections that was apparent in the January BC, and which had largely subsided in the July subcorpus, is now non-existent. Austerity is still viewed as



harmful, and its impact on Greek society is discussed negatively, although not to the same extent as in January and July BC. Nevertheless, there is no expectation of an anti-austerity movement that could put an end to it. Examples 6.55 and 6.56 are two of the instances where the negative impact of austerity on societies is discussed. In both ‘austerity’ premodifies ‘policies’.

In Example 6.55 “austerity policies” are the Actor causing negative effects on the Greek economy, such as a decline in the national income, employment rates and tax revenues.

In Example 6.56 “austerity policies” are represented as having inflicted devastating effects in other countries historically and in the present.

Example 6.55

By late 2014, the continued decline in Greek national income, employment and tax revenues caused by the continuing austerity policies meant Greece again needed more loans to finance its deficit and its government debt, which was growing as a per cent of the declining national income.

Example 6.56

Austerity policies, similar to what have been called structural adjustment policies in Latin America and Africa since the late 1970’s have also been followed by Portugal, Spain, Ireland and Latvia and others with results almost as devastating as Greece.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>			<i>Continuing austerity policies</i>	<i>caused</i>	<i>decline in national income, employment and tax revenues</i>
	<i>Portugal, [...] and others</i>	<i>have followed</i>	<i>austerity policies</i>		
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

As was the case in the July BC, the blogs keep referring to pro-austerity and anti-austerity social actors, although the latter are presented as fewer and weaker than in the

recent past. In Example 6.57 ‘anti-austerity’ premodifies ‘actions’. The Actors of the anti-austerity actions are “anarchists, autonomists and anti-authoritarians” and the “anti-austerity actions” are specified as creating autonomous and self-managed centres as a form of activism. In this example, the resistance to austerity can come from marginalised groups that can build a space to counteract the effects of austerity on society. This expectation contrasts sharply with the hopes for Syriza abolishing austerity and for the rise of anti-austerity parties elsewhere in Europe. In Example 6.58 a similar hope is expressed, namely that “mass resistance” against the austerity package is beginning to gain momentum.

Example 6.57

This combined with anarchists, autonomists and anti-authoritarians who were building alternative institutions such as the non-market production and distribution of needed goods and services, free health clinics social centers to meet and build community, creating book stores and alternate media, who were also involved in militant anti-austerity, anti-fascist and anti-mining actions, and who were putting direct democracy into practice seemed to have the potential to revolutionize Greece.

Example 6.58

There is likely to be mass resistance, it is already beginning to grow as more and more as the austerity package is being voted on piece by piece at the time of this writing.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>Anarchists, autonomists and anti-authoritarians</i>	<i>were involved</i>	<i>in militant anti-austerity</i>	
			<i>The austerity package</i>	<i>is being voted on</i>
	<b>Actor / Carrier</b>	<b>Material / Relational Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>	<b>Material Process</b>

On the other hand, the social actors advocating austerity have demonstrably prevailed. In many instances, there is reference to the fact that the governmental party previously opposed austerity but is now poised to implement new austerity measures. In Example

6.60, ‘austerity’ premodifies ‘policies’, and “austerity policies” are represented as the Goal in the Material Process of being rejected. In the same instance, ‘austerity’ also premodifies ‘package’. The new “austerity package” was what the Syriza leadership “had no choice but to accept”. This sentence carries a strong tone of disappointment and surprise, highlighting a significant reversal in the stance of the Greek leadership regarding austerity measures. The decision of the leadership to accept the austerity package, despite the strong public opposition to it and their previous campaigns against such policies, can be seen as an admission that they were unable to withstand the pressures exerted upon them. (“said they had no choice”). The use of “sadly and surprisingly” underscores the emotional and unexpected nature of this decision, suggesting a betrayal of electoral promises and a criticism towards the powerful social actors (in this case EU officials and international creditors) who exert pressures that lead to such stark compromises in politics.

Example 6.60

Sadly and surprisingly even after this massive rejection of these austerity policies and proposed agreement, Prime Minister Tsipras and most of the SYRIZA leadership said they had no choice but to accept the new austerity package for the promise of a \$95 billion bailout that they had campaigned so strongly against.

<b>Austerity subjected through Premodification</b>	<i>(People)</i> <i>They (Tsipras and Syriza leaders)</i>	<i>rejected</i> <i>had to accept</i>	<i>austerity policies</i> <i>the new austerity package</i>
	<b>Actor/Carrier</b>	<b>Material /Relational Process</b>	<b>Premodification</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the September BC**

Based on the analysis of the subjected cases of austerity in the September BC, we can reach certain conclusion for the representations of austerity in the blogs in this electoral

season, which is marked by a significant shift from active resistance to more resigned acceptance and management of austerity measures.

- i. The initial fervour observed in previous analyses of elections and anti-austerity movements has significantly diminished by September. Discussions about austerity continue to carry negative connotations, highlighting its adverse impacts, yet there is a palpable decline in the expectations that any significant anti-austerity movement could effectively challenge or end these measures.
- ii. Despite a decrease in active resistance, austerity is still predominantly discussed in a negative light, emphasizing the damage it inflicts on Greek society. This sentiment persists even though the intensity of discourse has reduced compared to earlier periods.
- iii. The analysis suggests a resignation to austerity with an acknowledgment that no significant political forces are effectively challenging the austerity agenda. The focus has shifted from a potent opposition to austerity to a more resigned discourse where austerity measures are viewed as inevitable.

## **6.6 Conclusions**

The findings from the analysis of austerity instances in this chapter largely correspond with the traits of mainstream and alternative media outlined in our Literature Review and based on previous research. This continuity affirms the patterns observed in the earlier chapter focusing on Syriza/Tsipras instances. However, there are also some deviations from the established characteristics typically ascribed to mainstream and alternative media.

The first characteristic, that of mainstream media adopting the viewpoint of economic and political elites (Mercille, 2014), is irrefutable with regard to the newspapers'

stance on austerity. Throughout the three periods analysed, there is a consistent endorsement of austerity policies, with no deviation from the narrative that austerity is essential for Greece's solvency. This stance is particularly pronounced in the January subcorpus, where newspapers amplify concerns that any deviation from austerity could lead to chaos. Reflecting the opinions of creditors, European leaders, and financial markets, the media consistently convey that austerity is the only viable option, reinforcing a narrative of inevitability and lack of alternatives (Strachman & Signorini, 2019).

There is hardly any discussion of the consequences of austerity on the Greek working class, although these consequences have been severe: a sharp drop in living standards, with more than a third of the population on the verge of poverty, an alarming increase in suicide and crime, xenophobia and racism, among others (Cavero & Cortés, 2013). The fact that this important aspect of the implementation of austerity is neglected by the newspapers shows that the mainstream media do not aim at representing the people, but only the powerful social actors. There is no mention of the strong anti-austerity movements either, which were emerging across the country (Galis & Neumayer, 2016).

In claiming objectivity, mainstream media seek to demonstrate that they do not espouse a particular point of view in their reporting. Instead, they aim to convey factual information (Ostertag, 2006; Salaudeen & Onyechi, 2020). This is also evident in the analysis of austerity cases. The ideological origins of austerity are not discussed, nor is neoliberalism referenced as a general approach to economics. Arguments in support of implementing austerity are not presented. The prevailing discourse presents austerity as a universal and inevitable phenomenon, as if it were a

self-evident truth. There are no arguments in favour of austerity; it is not a subjective matter to support or refute it, it is the inescapable reality.

The findings from the previous chapter reveal a consistent stance among newspapers toward Syriza and Tsipras, which varies across the three periods examined based on their perceived threat to austerity measures. This uniformity supports the hypothesis that while mainstream media may diverge on lesser issues due to political affiliations, they uniformly align on core matters critical to the capitalist framework, suggesting a broad consensus on issues fundamental to economic and political elites (Erhard et al., 2021; Tracy, 2012). Similarly, the analysis of austerity coverage confirms this pattern: there is a unanimous portrayal of austerity as an unavoidable necessity. The newspapers consistently refrain from questioning the indispensability of austerity, echoing the priorities of economic and political elites without critique. This alignment underscores the media's role in reinforcing elite perspectives, indicating that their editorial choices are deeply influenced by overarching establishment views rather than independent journalistic inquiry.

A noteworthy distinction emerges in the July subcorpus between the Greek and international mainstream media regarding the perceived threats posed by austerity measures. The Greek media explicitly campaign for a 'yes' vote, warning that a rejection could lead to Grexit and ensuing chaos (Boukala & Dimitrakopoulou, 2017). Conversely, the international media, which previously echoed similar concerns in January, adopt a more composed tone by July, portraying the referendum primarily as a tactical negotiation step rather than a genuine threat to austerity. This discrepancy may be attributed to differing objectives: the Greek media aims to influence domestic voter behavior, whereas the international media focuses on mitigating global market anxieties.

On the other hand, the representations in the alternative media are quite different. The alternative media are supposed to give voice to those that are denied one in the mainstream media (Bruns, 2005). In the previous chapter the findings led to the conclusion that the alternative media represented the people's and the movements' views. The same is true for the findings of the qualitative analysis of the austerity cases presented in this chapter. The alternative media highlight issues such as the effects of austerity on the poor and speak about the movements and people's views on austerity. They do not prioritise the views of the elites; on the contrary, they refute them.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the alternative media do not claim to be objective. They are intended to fight for social change and therefore do not assert themselves as objective (Downing, 2001; Waltz, 2005). Consistent with this characteristic, blogs express their views on austerity using charged terminology such as 'neoliberalism', 'capitalism', and 'elites'. They declare that they are against austerity because they do not support neoliberalism and they discuss the negative effects of neoliberalism and capitalism in general on society and people's well-being. They do present arguments as to why austerity is not preferable, and do not claim that this is a universally accepted truth as newspapers do with their own view of supporting austerity.

The community-oriented character of alternative media (Atton, 2006) is not verified in this chapter as it was not in the previous one either. The blogs are greatly interested in the anti-austerity movements in Greece, and their links to anti-austerity movements elsewhere in Europe. They are discussing the possibility that developments in Greece in January could have a positive impact on the lives of ordinary people in other countries. They associate what is happening in Greece with what is happening in

other European countries, such as Spain and Portugal, or with what happened in the past, e.g. with the implementation of austerity in Latin American countries in the 1970s. This illustrates that alternative media are not confined to reporting strictly on local issues or focusing solely on their immediate communities; instead, they often adopt a global perspective on events, indicating a broader journalistic scope.



## CHAPTER 7

### QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: REPRESENTATIONS OF GREECE / EU

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the intertwined representations of Greece and the European Union (EU), despite their distinctiveness, within the context of the Greek crisis and the electoral discourse. In contrast to the individualised focus on Syriza in Chapter 5 and austerity in Chapter 6, Greece and the EU are analysed together here in order to streamline the thesis, as well as due to the extensive coverage afforded to both social actors in existing research. The decision to pair these two social actors is also based on their respective roles in the crisis and the elections. Each of them influences and defines the other's presence in public and political debates. The objective of this chapter is to elucidate the manner in which these representations are constructed and understood within the corpus, with particular emphasis on their relationship during the critical period of the Greek financial crisis.

In the early years of the Greek crisis, media portrayals, as explored in the previous chapter, sharply delineated the austerity/anti-austerity divide, categorizing key social actors on opposing sides of this issue. Within this framework, Greece and the EU emerge as central figures: Greece, often portrayed as the recipient of austerity measures, and the EU, depicted as the principal enforcer of these policies. This dichotomy underscores the complex and often contentious relationship between Greece and its European partners, framing the EU's role as crucial yet controversial in the context of Greece's financial turmoil.

As discussed in the Literature Review, the mainstream media, during the financial crisis in Greece, created a very negative image of the country. The irresponsible attitude of

its citizens is presented as the source of the crisis, as they are claimed to be lazy and wanting to live beyond their means. In some cases, these accusations are directed at the European South in general, with Italy and Spain also being represented as problematic countries, thus placing EU members in categories (Bickes, Otten & Weymann, 2014; Herzfeld, 2011; Kaitatzi, 2014; Kutter, 2014; Tseronis, 2015). This categorisation of EU member states did not appear for the first time in the 2008 crisis; as will be discussed later in this chapter, the EU has too often been represented as consisting of member states that are not all equally important.

The mainstream media adopted and reproduced the narrative of both Greek and European leaders, as well as the arguments that Greece must follow EU orders to save itself from bankruptcy (Hadjimihalis, 2018). There are even mainstream media suggesting that Greece should not be a member of the EU because it is a source of potential harm and it would be better to end its membership (Tseronis, 2015). The findings from the analysis of the subcorpora on representations of Greece and Europe are generally in line with the findings of other studies, which are discussed in Chapter 2, the Literature Review.

This chapter explores the representations of Greece and the EU during the financial crisis in Greece. Before presenting the analysis of specific media representations, it is crucial to understand the broader context of European identity, which has been shaped over decades of integration efforts and is central to interpreting these representations. The concept of European identity is particularly relevant here because it underscores how the EU, as a collective social actor, interacts with and perceives its member states during times of crisis. By examining the historical efforts to forge a European identity, we can better appreciate the dynamics at play during the crisis, where the tension between national sovereignty and European unity becomes most apparent. This

background sets the stage for a deeper analysis of how Greece and the EU are portrayed during the pivotal moments of the crisis, reflecting broader themes of unity, division, and identity within Europe.

It has been argued that the European integration would require a mass European identity (D'Haenens, 2005; Mendez & Bachter 2016; Risse, 2003). Thus, the European leaders have tried to create and reinforce a European identity; central EU institutions have even tried to provide Europeans with national symbols, such as a flag, an anthem, a national day, a European design of Euro banknotes (Bruter, 2003).

However, European integration is also heavily influenced by the news - systematic exposure to bad news about EU policies or other member states would compromise the sense of European identity (Bruter, 2003). This thesis argues that during the financial crisis in Greece, national identities were prioritised over a collective European identity. A case in point is the pervasive reluctance among German citizens to endorse financial assistance to Greece, frequently stigmatised as the 'lazy Greeks'. This perception was likely intensified by the German media's portrayal of the crisis, which may have emphasised national stereotypes and economic burdens rather than a shared European responsibility.

Kevin (2003) notes that in the years leading up to the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the adoption of the euro by several countries, news coverage across different EU states was generally balanced. The notable exception to this were British newspapers which consistently exhibited more negative and nationally biased reporting. His research, which included interviews with politicians across the EU, revealed a divide in perceptions of European identity, with politicians from southern Europe more likely to affirm its existence compared to their northern counterparts. The

study highlights how media attitudes toward the EU are shaped by the political discourse within each member state, resulting in varying 'visions of Europe' across the union.

Even before the crisis, there was not a strong sense of European identity. Mendez and Bachter (2016) indicate that during the 1990s and 2000s, only a minority of Europeans prioritised their European identity over their national identity. The majority saw themselves first and foremost as nationals of their respective countries, a sentiment Hooghe & Marks (2003) termed 'inclusive nationalism'. Clement (2005) observes that European matters are predominantly framed within the context of the nation-state, which shapes perceptions of European identity through a national lens. This frequently gives rise to an 'us versus them' narrative in journalistic coverage, as observed by D'Haenens (2005). Furthermore, the media's routine use of cross-national comparisons, as highlighted by Gavin (2001) and Semetko & Valkenburg (2000), serves to impede the formation of a pan-European identity.

Many scholars argue that Europeans' trust and attachment to the EU could be facilitated through media coverage of EU-related issues. (Bruter, 2003; Semetko, de Vreese & Peter, 2000). As D'Haenes (2005, p.420) argues: "The media can have a powerful effect in changing this 'indifferent' attitude by portraying the EU as a reality that impacts our everyday lives in numerous aspects, by emphasizing the urgency for active participation of citizens, and by focusing on social, cultural and political cohesion".

However, media coverage is not sufficient; de Vreese (2003) points out that this insufficiency is due to the distance and the time span of events (it takes long for European related decisions to be made) that makes it difficult for the journalists to cover, as well as the bureaucratic language of the EU institutions. In addition, common

people's views are not represented in the coverage of EU related events, only those of politicians and officials (D'Haenes, 2005).

In relation to the media coverage of the concluding session of the EU summit conference which took place in Brussels in December 2003, regarding whether an EU constitution would be adopted, Oberhuber, Bärenreuter, Krzyzanowski, Schönbauer and Wodak (2005) in their influential study examined the representations of the summit in particular but also of the EU in general, in mainstream newspapers of certain EU countries. As they point out (p. 229) the mass media are the only source of information on EU political processes for the vast majority of the population, and therefore the representations of the EU in the media can greatly affect people's views. The authors examine EU representation in mainstream newspapers in various countries, using some of the categories described in Van Leeuwen's work (1996), including role allocation that is also used in this thesis. Their findings, on the general representations of EU in newspapers, can be summarized as follows:

- a) The EU is seen in terms of concentric circles, where there are core states (mainly a Franco-German axis) – intermediaries – periphery. There is a struggle for power and not all states are equal.
- b) There is a division between Europe vision and Europe reality. The vision is that the EU is a medium to bring justice, progress, democracy and unity. The reality is there are varied national interests, political bargains, opponents and allies, in an environment of crisis and nationalism.

Representations of the Greek crisis are consistent with these findings. Greece is a less important country than the "creditor" countries and belongs to the EU periphery. The reality of the EU dictates the promotion of national interests over the vision of a united

Europe and therefore the mainstream media of the 'core' states present Greece not as part of the Union facing difficulties, but as a country causing problems for other member states and in some cases Greece's exit from the EU is presented as a solution.

## **7.2 Overview of representations in the NC and BC**

The analysis of the percentages of activation, subjection, beneficialisation and circumstantialisation of Greece (Table 7.1) and the EU (Table 7.2), lead to certain general observations.

Greece is subjected in approximately half of the instances in the January and July subcorpora, while the activation cases are significantly lower, in most cases less than 20%. In the September corpus, Greece is even more frequently subjected in the NC, in more than 70% of the cases, while in the BC it is again subjected in about half of the instances and there are also many cases of circumstantialisation. The cases of activation are very low both in the NC and the BC, considerably lower than the respective cases of January and September subcorpora.

The frequent subjection of Greece in the media, especially notable in the September NC where it rises above 70%, implies a representation of Greece as being acted upon rather than acting. This could indicate that Greece is seen as a passive recipient of decisions made by others, such as EU institutions or creditors. This aligns with the perception of Greece as being under external control or influence, which diminishes its agency and autonomy in public discourse.

The low frequency of Greece's activation (less than 20% in most cases), where it would be portrayed as taking decisive action or exerting influence, reinforces this image of passivity. The decrease in activation cases over time, particularly noticeable in the September subcorpora, could suggest that as the crisis continued, the media

increasingly depicted Greece as lacking the capacity or will to change its circumstances, focusing instead on its vulnerabilities and the external pressures it faces.

Table 7.1. Percentage of activation, subjection, beneficialization and circumstantialization of Greece in January, July and September NC and BC.

Lexical Item / Subcorpus / Number of instances	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
<b>GREECE</b> <b>January</b> N.C.=413 B.C.=312	19.86% N=82	13.79% N=43	57.38% N=237	48.40% N=151	7.26% N=30	8.65% N=27	15.50% N=64	29.17% N=91
<b>GREECE</b> <b>July</b> NC=549 BC=518	21.31% N=117	15.83% N=82	52.09% N=286	53.47% N=277	7.65% N=42	7.89% N=33	18.94% N=126	19.69% N=102
<b>GREECE</b> <b>September</b> NC=205 BC=132	6.34% N=13	7.58% N=10	72.68% N=149	47.73% N=63	8.29% N=17	2.27% N=3	17.45% N=26	42.42% N=56

The EU is generally activated and subjected in similar percentages. Only in the July subcorpus is there a considerable difference, with the subjection cases being substantially higher than the activation ones. There is also a noticeable difference between the NC and BC activation cases in the January subcorpus, with the NC activation cases being over 40%, while the BC activation cases were approximately 1 out of 4.

The activation percentages suggest that the EU was often portrayed as taking active steps or exerting influence during the crisis. The relatively high activation in the January NC (42.98%) and a noticeable decrease in subsequent subcorpora might indicate an initial focus on the EU's active role in enforcing austerity and then a gradual shift to other narrative aspects or actors. However, activation remains relatively consistent in the BC, though at a lower level than in the NC, suggesting that blogs may focus less on the EU as a proactive agent compared to mainstream media.

The subjection rates are consistently high across all periods, with over 40% in both NC and BC by July and September. This suggests that the EU is often depicted as being subjected to the dynamics of the crisis, reacting to developments rather than solely driving them. This could reflect media narratives that portray the EU as being at the mercy of complex economic and political forces within the member states, including the influence of internal factors such as the situation in Greece.

Table 7.2. Percentage of activation, subjection, beneficialization and circumstantialization of EU in January, July and September NC and BC.

Lexical Item / Subcorpus / Number of instances	<b>Activated</b>		<b>Subjected</b>		<b>Beneficialized</b>		<b>Circumstantialized</b>	
	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>NC</u>	<u>BC</u>
<b>EU</b> <b>January</b> N.C.=114 B.C.=102	42.98% N=49	25.49% N=26	31.58% N=36	48.04% N=49	0.88% N=1	N=0	24.56% N=28	26.47% N=27
<b>EU</b> <b>July</b> NC=73 BC=120	28.77% N=21	28.33% N=34	42.46% N=31	42.50% N=51	6.85% N=5	3.33% N=4	21.92% N=16	25.83% N=31
<b>EU</b> <b>September</b> NC=32 BC=30	37.50% N=12	33.33% N=10	31.25% N=10	46.67% N=14	N=0	N=0	31.25% N=10	20.00% N=6

### 7.3 Representations of Greece/EU in the January subcorpora

#### 7.3.1 Representations of Greece in the January subcorpora

In the first pair of subcorpora (articles about the 25 January elections), as shown in Table 7.3, Greece is subjected in approximately half of the instances, both in the newspaper corpus (NC) and in the blog corpus (BC), with the percentage being higher in the NC by about 10%. Activation occurs in a significantly lower number of cases (a little higher in the NC), while beneficialisation is even less frequent. Greece is circumstantialised in a percentage as high as 28% in the BC, which is substantially higher than the equivalent percentage in the NC.



Table 7.3. 25 January, Greece, NC and BC

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
GREECE Total: N.C.=413 B.C.=312	19.86% N=82	13.79% N=43	57.38% N=237	48.40% N=151	7.26% N=30	8.65% N=27	15.50% N=64	29.17% N=91

Despite the differences in certain respects, in both the NC and the BC it is clear that Greece is not predominantly represented as a central actor in the events being reported, as it is subjected or circumstantialized in a wide majority of cases. This is not surprising, as the discussion of the elections is closely related to the Greek economy which is collapsing, the role of the creditors in saving the economy, and the austerity measures dictated in the memoranda (Moschonas, 2015). In this discussion, Greece and the Greek people are mainly responding to action taken by third parties. Depending on which narrative of the Greek crisis the journalist adopts, they are either represented as spendthrifts who have been living beyond their means and now require assistance to save their economy (Kuntz, 2016), or the victims of the austerity and neoliberal policies imposed on them (Lekakis, 2017). In both cases, the Greek people and Greece are not the ones who initiate changes and developments. This view is reflected in Greece's very low activation rate and the remarkably high rate of subjection.

In Table 7.4, an analysis of the activated cases is shown. In the majority of the cases where Greece is activated (in both corpora), it is the actor in a material process. The instances of activation through possessivation are also not negligible in the NC, while they are very rare in the BC.

Table 7.4. 25 January, Greece, NC and BC, Activation

<b>Activated</b> (NC 19.86%, 82 / BC 13.79%,43)	
NC (Total 413)	BC (Total 312)

Actor in a material process	12.35%	N=51	11.53%	N=36
Senser in a mental process	1.46%	N=6	0.96%	N=3
Assigner in a relational process	-		0.32%	N=1
Sayer in a verbal process	0.49%	N=2	-	
Through possessivation	5.81%	N=24	0.96%	N=3

The percentage of the instances where Greece is the Actor in a Material Process is very similar in the two corpora, with the difference being less than 1%. The same is true for the subjected cases.

Table 7.5 shows the analysis into categories of the instances where Greece is subjected, that is, as already mentioned, about half of the cases in both corpora. With one out of two sentences having Greece subjected, it is abundantly clear that there was more importance attached to the actions of other stakeholders concerning the Greek crisis than to the actions of Greece itself. The most frequent way Greece is subjected is through Possessivation, while the instances of Greece being the Goal in a Material Process and a Carrier in a Relational Process are also high.

The fact that the most common representation of Greece is through Possessivation, indicates that aspects of Greece, such as its economy or debts, are often shown as being severely impacted by external forces, reflecting a lack of control or agency within Greece itself. This representation emphasizes Greece's passive role in the crisis, subjected to decisions made elsewhere. Additionally, the frequent depiction of Greece as the Goal in Material Processes and as a Carrier in Relational Processes further underscores this passive portrayal. Being the Goal suggests Greece is often the endpoint or recipient of actions, highlighting the influence of external actions on the nation. As a Carrier, Greece is shown in terms of states or conditions, focusing on descriptions of the country's situations rather than its actions. Together, these representations paint a picture of Greece as more acted upon than acting, influencing perceptions of its role and status in the crisis.

Table 7.5. 25 January, Greece, NC and BC, Subjection

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 57.38%, 237 / BC 48.40%, 151)				
	NC (Total 413)		BC (Total 312)	
Goal in a material process	10.41%	N=43	12.82%	N=40
Phenomenon in a mental process	7.02%	N=29	6.09%	N=19
Carrier in a relational process	10.41%	N=43	12.82%	N=40
Verbiage in a verbal process	1.21%	N=5	-	
Through possessivation	28.32%	N=117	16.67%	N=52

The percentages of activation and subjection in the NC and the BC are similar, but the content of the sentences differs significantly, as a detailed transitivity analysis of all the instances revealed. This suggests that while the overall representation patterns are consistent, the specific portrayals diverge, reflecting distinct perspectives and emphases in the mainstream and alternative media.

The results of the transitivity analysis are presented in the next subsection.

### **7.3.1.1 Activation of Greece in the January NC**

#### **a) Cases where Greece is activated in the January NC**

In the NC, the vast majority of cases concern financial matters, with only three cases referring to the election without any reference to the economy. Given that the economy was at the centre of the election, with the two main parties campaigning on two opposing paths to alleviate the critical state of the economy, that is hardly surprising. In almost all cases, Greece and/or its financial situation and prospects are presented in a negative light. Mainstream newspapers have generally adopted the narrative that Greece has been reckless and that the EU institutions must come up with a plan to save the Greek economy from destruction. Greece is therefore generally represented not as a victim but as a culprit.

Among these instances, a significant number describe the serious financial situation, usually in combination with the measures that have been taken and that are seen as

essential to recover from the recession. In Example 7.1, Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of emerging, signifying movement or transition out of a negative state, in this case the recession. The way Greece managed to do this is specified, that is with bailouts and austerity measures.

Since these policies are represented in the NC as the factor that is keeping Greek economy afloat, there are many instances in which it is asserted that not adhering to these policies and not repaying the debt will cause Greece, a weak member of the EU, to collide with other member states. In Example 7.2 Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of setting itself “on a collision course with the rest of Europe” by electing a party that intends to reject austerity and cancel the debt. The decision of the Greek people regarding their preferred government and economic policies is linked to instability within the European Union, and it is not solely their decision to make. This choice has broader implications for the EU as a whole.

Example 7.1

While the bailouts and austerity measures saved the Greek economy from collapse — technically, Greece emerged from recession late last year — they failed to instill the business confidence and investment that advocates said would result from a balanced budget and economic reform.

Example 7.2

Greece set itself on a collision course with the rest of Europe on Sunday night after handing a stunning general election victory to a far-Left party that has pledged to reject austerity and cancel the country’s billions of pounds in debt.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>emerged</i>	<i>from recession</i>
	<i>set itself</i>	<i>on a collision course with the rest of Europe</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

There are many instances in which leaving the eurozone is presented as the inevitable consequence of Greece ending austerity and defaulting on its debts (Example 7.3). For the newspapers, staying in the Eurozone is undeniably a prerequisite for Greece's economic survival, and the dire consequences of leaving are almost never questioned. In most of the mainstream media, the assumption was that any reckless behaviour by the Greek government, any refusal to comply with the creditors' terms, could lead to a Grexit, usually associated with disastrous consequences for Greece. In Example 7.3, Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of defaulting, in a conditional clause that establishes Greece's default on payments as the critical factor that would lead to the occurrence of Grexit.

There are also a significant number of cases where this danger for Greece is linked to a potential danger for the Eurozone as a whole. This was a major issue during the Greek elections in January 2015, which were closely linked to the Grexit debate, and there was some diversity in the mainstream media as to whether and to what extent Greece's potential 'downfall' would affect the EU as a whole (Gruszczyński, 2016). For instance, in Example 7.4, Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of exiting the euro and “imperiling the rest of the currency union”

#### Example 7.3

The only chance of Grexit is if Greece defaults on its payments.

#### Example 7.4

The creditors, dominated by Germany, are unlikely to yield easily — raising fears of a showdown that ends with Greece exiting the euro, imperiling the rest of the currency union along the way.

	<i>defaults</i>	<i>on its payments</i>
<i>Greece</i>	<i>exits</i> <i>imperils</i>	<i>the euro</i> <i>the rest of the currency union</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

### b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January NC

Overall, in the vast majority of cases where Greece is activated, there seem to be certain assumptions:

- i. Greece is obliged to repay its debts and if it fails to do so, there is a risk that it will leave the euro, which would be devastating for the country and would also put Europe in a dangerous situation.
- ii. The crisis in Greece is not seen as an EU problem, but as a Greek problem, and it is obvious that Greece must comply with the dictated measures or leave. It is clear that there is no sense of European identity in the way this issue is being handled. On the contrary, there are conflicting national interests, and the core states will not allow a peripheral state to cause more damage.

#### 7.3.1.2 Subjection of Greece in the January NC

##### a) Cases where Greece is subjected in the January NC

Almost all subjected instances concern financial issues, apart from only four which refer to the elections without linking them to the economy. In several cases, there is a reference to the economy in relation to the currency, suggesting the possibility of a Greek exit from the eurozone if Greece does not comply with the measures dictated by its creditors (Example 7.5). In this Example, Greece is the Goal in the Material Process

of being driven to default by the Prime Minister’s demands. In all of these instances, the prospect of a Grexit is a disastrous one that should be avoided at all costs.

In the majority of cases where financial issues are mentioned, the inescapable reality of austerity and/or the dangers looming if Greece does not comply with the conditions dictated by the creditors are mentioned. In Example 7.6 Greece is the Goal in the Material Process in which Syriza as an actor positions Greece on a collision course with the EU. In Example 7.7, it is stressed that there are no options for Greece to choose its own economic policies despite the election of an anti-austerity party; Germany, as a core member of the EU and a powerful social actor, is the Actor in the Material Process of holding Greece, the Goal, to austerity terms.

Example 7.5

Some officials, however, have characterized Mr. Tsipras’s demands as unrealistic and rife with potential to drive Greece toward default — or even out of the eurozone, the group that shares the currency.

Example 7.6

Syriza’s historic win puts Greece on collision course with Europe

Example 7.7

Germany holds Greece to austerity terms despite election of Syriza leftists

<i>Mr Tsipras’s demands</i>	<i>drive</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>toward default</i>
<i>Syriza’s win</i>	<i>puts</i>		<i>on collision course with Europe</i>
<i>Germany</i>	<i>holds</i>		<i>to austerity terms</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

## **b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January NC**

The analysis shows that the representations of Greece in subjected instances revolve predominantly around financial issues, exactly as was the case with the activated instances. The newspapers consistently assert the following:

- i. Greece's economic fate is deeply intertwined with austerity measures and the expectations of its creditors.
- ii. Greece is in a precarious position with potential severe consequences if it deviates from the prescribed economic path. These consequences often include the threat of Grexit, portrayed as a catastrophic outcome for Greece.
- iii. Greece's political decisions are represented as essentially inseparable from their economic implications, emphasizing a lack of autonomy in deciding its own economic policies. Even the electoral victory of an anti-austerity party is depicted as having limited impact on Greece's economic directions, which are largely dictated by external actors like Germany.
- iv. The material processes in which Greece is the Goal highlight the country's vulnerability and the external control exerted over its economic policies. This portrayal aligns with the broader theme that Greece's economic crisis is not only a national issue but a significant point of contention within the European Union, and therefore more powerful EU members are entitled to making the decisions.

### **7.3.1.3 Activation of Greece in the January BC**

#### **a) Cases where Greece is activated in the January BC**

At the time of the January 2015 elections, there seemed to be two prospective, opposing strategies in Greek politics: one to comply with the creditors' terms, and one to defy them and reject austerity. Many proponents of the latter approach also



supported Grexit as the only way to save the Greek economy and recover from the consequences that the measures dictated by the Troika had had on the Greek economy and society. The blogs seem to adopt this view. The percentage of activation remains low, as in the newspapers, so Greece appears to be seen as an actor with little power to influence, one that is mostly dependent on the actions of others. The newspapers, however, accept this as a natural state of affairs, while the blogs point to the alternative course of action.

In the cases where the possibility of Greece leaving the euro is mentioned, it is presented as a beneficial development for Greece. In Example 7.8 is the Actor in the Material Process of leaving the Euro and devaluing, which is the condition for having more chance of saving its economy.

In general, in the debate on Grexit, the blogs argue that leaving the Eurozone is the only way for the Greek economy to become sustainable again. There have also been suggestions that Greece's exit from the eurozone is primarily a Eurozone problem. In Example 7.9, Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of leaving the Euro, which is the condition for causing a financial crisis in the Eurozone.

#### Example 7.8

If Greece left the Euro, devalued in line with market movements, and had access to her own Central Bank to decide how much money to create and have in circulation, she would have more chance of rebalancing her economy and meeting her large obligations.

#### Example 7.9

If Greece leaves the Euro it will cause a financial crisis in Euroland.

<i>(If) Greece</i>	<i>left the Euro and devalued</i>
	<i>leaves the Euro</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>

There are a number of sentences in the blogs that refer to the serious social and economic consequences of austerity in Greece, an issue that is not present in any of the corresponding cases in the NC. In Example 7.10, Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of continuing “its bitter medicine prescribed by the Troika”. The choice of words like "bitter" and "severe cuts" conveys a negative impact, highlighting the depth of the austerity measures’ effects on Greece’s public sector and welfare state.

Example 7.10

In the interim, Greece has continued its bitter medicine prescribed by the Troika, in the form of severe cuts across the board to the public sector and social, welfare state.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>has continued</i>	<i>its bitter medicine</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January BC**

Like the activated cases, the subjected cases point to very different representations than the newspapers, the only similarity being the low percentage of activation.

- i. The blogs, as the newspapers, represent Greece as a passive actor, significantly influenced by external forces rather than as an active agent in shaping its destiny. However, unlike the newspapers which tend to normalize Greece’s compliance with creditor demands, the blogs frequently highlight alternative strategies, suggesting that defiance against austerity and a potential exit from the Eurozone could restore economic stability and autonomy to Greece.
- ii. Discussions about Grexit in the blogs typically present it as a potentially positive option for Greece, emphasizing it as a necessary step for economic recovery.

- iii. The blogs also critique the severe social and economic impacts of austerity measures, an angle which is not emphasized in the newspaper coverage. This difference underscores the alternative media's focus on the human costs of economic policies and their challenge to the mainstream narrative.

#### **7.3.1.4 Subjection of Greece in the January BC**

##### **a) Cases where Greece is subjected in the January BC**

In the blog corpus, most instances in which Greece is subjected focus on the nation's economic challenges, particularly issues related to the euro and austerity. Unlike the representations in newspapers, where austerity appears as an inevitable reality, blogs present it as a misguided and unjust policy that warrants revision. This perspective highlights the blogs' role in challenging mainstream narratives and advocating for alternative approaches to Greece's economic predicament.

In numerous instances, Greece is depicted as a victim of austerity policies and those who impose them, often using strong and vivid language to characterize these social actors and their actions. A characteristic example of this tendency is Example 7.11, where Greece is the Goal in the Material Process of circling, performed by “the continent’s austerity hawks”

In a significant number of these cases, there is reference to the implications of the austerity to the Greek society, as well as its inability to restore the economy as in Example 7.12, where Greece is the Goal in the Material Process of being forced into a Great Depression by the Actor, who is austerity.

##### **Example 7.11**

Already the continent’s austerity hawks are circling Greece with dire warnings of impending chaos and penury.

### Example 7.12

Austerity has forced Greece into a Great Depression – the opposite of “reviving” the economy.

<i>The continent's austerity hawks</i>	<i>are circling</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>with dire warnings of impending chaos and penury</i>
<i>Austerity</i>	<i>has forced</i>		<i>into a Great Depression</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

Regarding the Eurozone, in the subjected instances of Greece in the blog corpus, the problem seems to be the participation and not the exit, as in Example 7.13 where it is the Euro that is forcing Greece to follow an austerity programme. Strong language is once more used, as Greece is represented as being “impaled on austerity”.

### Example 7.13

Greece is impaled on austerity by the Euro.

<i>The Euro</i>	<i>impales</i>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>on austerity</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

### b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January BC

The representations of Greece in the subjected cases of the January BC demonstrate a critical perspective on austerity and its implementation, advocating for a reassessment of Greece’s economic policies and challenging the prevailing narrative of unavoidable austerity. More specifically:

- i. The blog subcorpus predominantly focuses on Greece's economic struggles, specifically in relation to the euro and austerity. Unlike the newspapers, which

often depict austerity as unavoidable, blogs critically portray it as a detrimental and unfair policy that needs reevaluation. In addition, membership in the Eurozone is represented as harmful for the Greek economy.

- ii. Greece frequently appears as a victim in the BC, suffering under the weight of externally imposed austerity measures. The language used in these instances is particularly forceful, emphasizing the detrimental effects of these policies on Greek society and economy. They do not only criticize the policies but also those who enforce them, framing them as aggressors in a moral and economic conflict.
- iii. The discussion extends beyond mere economic consequences, touching on the broader social impact of austerity. Blogs emphasize the deep and painful effects on the populace, likening the economic conditions to a "Great Depression" and suggesting a dire need for a change in direction.

### **7.3.2 Representations of the EU in the January subcorpora**

Table 7.6 outlines percentages of activation, subjection, beneficialization, and circumstantialization of the EU in both the NC and the BC.

The EU is activated significantly more frequently in the NC (42.98%) compared to the BC (25.49%). This suggests that newspapers portray the EU as taking more direct actions or being more influential in developments than blogs do. In contrast, subjection is higher in the BC, where it occurs in approximately half of the instances, compared to the NC, where it occurs in approximately one third of the instances. This indicates that blogs are more likely to represent the EU as impacted by external factors than newspapers.

An interpretation of this divergence in the activation/subjected rates of the EU in the NC and the BC could be that newspapers represent the EU as a more active agent, reflecting a narrative that aligns with official or mainstream perspectives on European policy actions. Blogs tend to emphasize the EU as subjected to external influences, which may reflect not only skepticism or criticism regarding the EU's role or effectiveness but also a questioning of its perceived dominance. This portrayal suggests a belief that the EU's power is not absolute and can be challenged or countered.

Beneficialisation is minimal, whereas circumstantialisation is substantially higher than that of the other social actors which have been analysed in both the NC (24.56%) and the BC (26.47%).

Table 7.6. 25 January, EU, NC and BC

EU	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialised		Circumstantialised	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
Total:								
N.C.=114	42.98%	25.49%	31.58%	48.04%	0.88%		24.56%	26.47%
B.C.=102	N=49	N=26	N=36	N=49	N=1	N=0	N=28	N=27

The realization of activation in the NC and the BC is shown in Table 7.7. The EU is activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the NC more frequently than in the BC, showing that in the newspaper the EU is represented as an influential and action-taking social actor. In contrast, the BC tends to minimize these characteristics, instead presenting the EU less frequently as an Actor in material processes.

The use of possessivation across both types of media suggests a view where the EU's identity is shaped by its relationships or possessions, focusing on its resources, responsibilities, or associated policies.

Table 7.7. 25 January, EU, NC and BC, Activation

**Activated:** (NC 42.98%,49 / BC 25.49%, 26)

	NC (Total 114)		BC (Total 102)	
Actor in a material process	22.80%	N=26	8.82%	N=9
Senser in a mental process	2.63%	N=3	-	
Through possessivation	17.54%	N=20	16.67%	N=17

Table 7.8 depicts the realization of activation in the NC and the BC. Subjection through possessivation occurs in 18.42% of instances. The percentage is significantly higher in blogs (31.37%), indicating a strong focus on what the EU owns or is associated with. It could also indicate a tendency to critically assess the EU's control over policies, resources, or its influence over member states.

Less frequent but still significant is the realisation of subjection of the EU as a Goal in a Material Process, representing the EU as the endpoint or recipient of actions. It occurs in approximately 10% of the instances in the NC and approximately 8% in the BC, a slightly lower percentage. The representation of the EU as a Goal in material processes, although not overwhelmingly high, shows that both media types regard the EU as an important player affected by various actions, possibly reflecting its centrality in European political and economic affairs.

The EU is subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process in a very limited number of cases in the NC, and more frequently in the BC, suggesting a greater tendency of the blogs to describe the EU in terms of its characteristics or relationships.

Table 7.8. 25 January, EU, NC and BC, Subjection

**Subjected** (NC 31.58%, 36 / BC 48.04%, 49)

	NC (Total 114)		BC (Total 102)	
Goal in a material process	9.65%	N=11	7.84%	N=8
Phenomenon in a mental process	0.88%	N=1	1.96%	N=2
Carrier in a relational process	2.63%	N=3	6.86%	N=7
Through possessivation	18.42%	N=21	31.37%	N=32

### 7.3.2.1 Activation of the EU in the January NC

#### a) Cases where the EU is activated in the January NC

In the NC, in almost all the cases where the EU is activated as the actor in a material process, it is involved in an economy-related action relevant to the Greek crisis and usually the EU is the social actor which dictates the austerity measures and reforms adopted by Greece. In these instances, the EU is consistently represented as the social actor attempting to enforce reforms, suggesting its active and directive role in the economic policies. In Example 7.14, the EU is the Actor in the Material Process of trying to implement reforms. The term 'reforms' typically carries positive connotations, implying improvements or modernizations intended to address inefficiencies or outdated practices within a system. In the context of EU policies, 'reforms' suggest deliberate changes aimed at enhancing economic stability and growth through structural adjustments. The use of the verb "trying" implies that these reforms are not readily accepted by the Greek people, as does the mention that these reforms are "vastly unpopular" and seen as "a humiliating symbol of servitude" within Greece which highlights a critical view of the EU's actions. It indicates resistance and dissatisfaction among the Greek populace towards the EU's approach, framing the EU's efforts as not just unwelcome but also as damaging to national pride. However, the phrase "in return for its money" serves as a circumstantial modifier that provides the reason for which the EU's reforms are being implemented.

#### Example 7.14

But the early elections called by Mr Samaras and the likely victory of Syriza are strong pieces of evidence that the sort of reforms the EU has been trying to implement in return for its money are vastly unpopular within Greece, where they are seen as a humiliating symbol of servitude.



<i>The EU</i>	<i>has been trying to implement</i>	<i>reforms</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

The EU is represented as a very powerful social actor which can control and define Greek politics.

The EU is depicted as a dominant social actor with significant influence over Greek politics, effectively shaping and dictating the terms of governance. The representation suggests that resisting EU-mandated reforms is a formidable challenge. Newspapers appear to advocate for acceptance of these reforms by the Greek populace, representing them as beneficial for the country's future prosperity and stability, despite any immediate hardships they may entail. This kind of representation depicts the reforms not merely as external impositions but as necessary measures for Greece's long-term good.

In Example 7.15, the EU is the Actor in the Material Process of waiting. More specifically, the EU is represented as waiting for a financial shortfall to compel Greece to adhere to the existing bailout terms. The depiction of the EU as "economic overlords" waiting for Greece's financial desperation to force compliance is indicative of the power dynamics as viewed in the NC. The EU is not seen as a coercive social actor but as a powerful one, whose demands are inevitable and must be met. The representation suggests that any resistance by Greece is ultimately futile and that it is only a matter of time before Greece must succumb to the EU's demands. This representation also reinforces the image of the EU as an authoritative and dominant force in European politics, emphasising the inevitability of its economic policies and the limited agency of smaller member states like Greece in altering their course.

### Example 7.15

The Greek rebellion against its EU economic overlords may provoke a prolonged economic siege as Syriza seeks to negotiate new terms for a bailout while the EU waits for a lack of money to force Greece to comply with existing agreements.

<i>The EU</i>	<i>waits</i>	<i>for a lack of money (to force Greece)</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

#### **b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January NC**

Some conclusions which can be drawn from the qualitative analysis of the activated instances in the NC are the following:

- i. The activation of the EU in the discourse underscores its significant role as an enforcer of economic directives in Greece, highlighting its powerful position in shaping Greek economic policies during the crisis.
- ii. The portrayal of the EU as an initiator of reforms, which are often viewed unfavorably by the Greek populace, emphasizes the tension between the EU's objectives and the societal impact within Greece. This suggests that the EU's influence is both transformative and contentious.

#### **7.3.2.2 Subjection of the EU in the January NC**

##### **a) Cases where the EU is subjected in the January NC**

Most of the instances where the EU is subjected concern the tense relationship/conflict with Greece as well as the question whether Greece is leaving the EU or not, with regard to what policy SYRIZA is going to follow although the newspapers are frequently reassuring that the conflict is not going to escalate. In Example 7.15, the EU is the Goal, the social actor that is being challenged, in a Material Process where the "Greek radical left" is the Actor. Example 7.15 is one of the several instances in which reassurances

are given that the EU is not threatened; in this case, the EU is the Phenomenon in the Mental Process which Tsipras, the Actor, wants to reform and not break up.

Example 7.15

The Greek radical left is likely to defeat the centre-right governing party in today's elections, challenging the EU over repayment of Greece's €240bn debt and enforced reduction of living standards.

Example 7.16

Insisting he is pro-European, Tsipras wants to reform rather than break up the European Union, and wants to renegotiate Greece's debt.

<i>The Greek Radical left</i>	<i>challenges</i>	<i>the EU</i>
<i>Tsipras</i>	<i>wants to reform and not break up</i>	
<b>Actor / Senser</b>	<b>Material/Mental Process</b>	<b>Goal / Phenomenon</b>

However, the potential consequences of electing an anti-austerity government in Greece are downplayed, as it is frequently asserted that Greece occupies a subordinate position compared to other member states of the EU, and that other, more powerful member states are entitled to intervene in Greek affairs.

In Examples 7.17 and 7.18, the EU is subjected through possessivation, in relation to EU capitals and EU nations. In Example 7.17 the EU is represented in relation to the capitals of the countries that participate in the EU, used metonymically to represent their governments. The use of "softened" in reference to Tsipras's stance juxtaposed with the reaction of "alarm" in several EU capitals underscores a narrative of tension and conflict within the EU regarding austerity policies. This representation suggests that even a moderated stance by Tsipras is sufficient to cause significant concern among

other EU members, reflecting ongoing disputes over the appropriateness and impact of stringent economic policies.

In Example 7.18 the EU is represented in relation to the nations that comprise it. The phrasing “plagued by a corrupt and indebted government” carries a negative connotation that suggests internal issues are a significant part of the country's economic challenges. This representation could influence perceptions of Greece's responsibility for its economic difficulties, potentially affecting how policies or assistance are directed towards it, and also reinforce an image of Greece as a weak link in the European Union, which cannot hold any demands.

Example 7.17

Tsipras’s line has softened markedly in recent weeks, but several EU capitals are still alarmed by promises to cancel the most draconian budget cuts imposed as part of the country’s €240bn bailout package.

Example 7.18

When the bottom dropped out of the global economy, Greece, plagued by a corrupt and indebted government, was the most vulnerable of the European Union nations.

<i>Several EU capitals</i>	<i>are alarmed</i>	<i>by promises to cancel budget cuts</i>
<i>(the most vulnerable of )the European Union nations</i>	<i>was</i>	<i>Greece</i>
<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Token / Carrier</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January NC**

The representation of the EU in the subjected instances of the NC do not differ substantially from those of the activated cases.

- i. The subjected cases predominantly focus on the EU’s interaction with Greece, especially regarding austerity debates and Syriza's policies. Though

frequently depicted in situations of challenge or potential conflict, the narratives generally reassure readers of the EU's stability and resilience.

- ii. Despite the portrayal of tensions, the discourse in the newspapers often minimizes the potential impact of Greece's anti-austerity stance, suggesting that Greece remains a less influential member within the EU framework. This representation underscores a hierarchical perspective within the EU, where decisions and interventions are seen as predominantly driven by the more powerful member states.

### **7.3.2.3 Activation of the EU in the January BC**

#### **a) Cases where the EU is activated in the January BC**

In the BC, when the EU is activated, it is frequently the social actor which imposes austerity. However, unlike the NC where this is simply reported as a fact, in the BC there is criticism against this practice.

In Example 7.19, the EU is the Actor in the Material process of enforcing austerity. This action signifies a deliberate and authoritative imposition of austerity measures, suggesting a strong and directive influence from the EU over economic policies. It is also claimed that the EU is "led by Germany", adopting the viewpoint of core and peripheral countries. The reference to the negative effects of austerity ("cutting spending in the midst of economic crisis has made the slump longer and more painful") presents the EU's role in a negative light. The circumstance "in the name of promoting economic stability" indicates that while the official reason for enforcing austerity is economic stability, the outcome may not align with the intent. This adds a layer of critique or skepticism regarding the effectiveness of the policy.

Example 7.19

While the European Union, led by Germany, has enforced austerity in the name of promoting economic stability, evidence shows cutting spending in the midst of economic crisis has made the slump longer and more painful.

<i>The EU</i>	<i>has enforced</i>	<i>austerity</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

In Example 7.20, the EU is activated through possessivation, in relation to its austerity politics. The phrasing "European elites, most notably German Chancellor Angela Merkel," highlights Merkel as a representative figure of broader European authority, making her personal commitment emblematic of the EU's stance. This representation of European elites, with a focus on Merkel, underscores their significant influence over economic policies across the EU. The inclusion that she views a potential Grexit as unproblematic suggests a readiness to maintain austerity policies despite their potentially disruptive effects on member states. This can be seen as emphasizing the EU's rigid adherence to economic doctrines, possibly at the cost of unity or stability within the union.

Example 7.20

European elites, most notably German Chancellor Angela Merkel, has reaffirmed her commitment to the EU's austerity politics and has even stated that a Greek exit from the Eurozone is not problematic.

<b>The EU activated through Possessivation</b>	<i>Merkel</i>	<i>has reaffirmed</i>	<i>her commitment</i>	<i>to the EU's austerity politics</i>
	<b>Sayer</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the January BC**

The activated instances of the January BC demonstrate a markedly divergent stance towards the EU from that expressed in the NC.

- i. In the BC, the EU is not only shown as enforcing austerity but also critiqued for the adverse outcomes of these policies that are said to prolong economic downturns rather than promoting stability.
- ii. The EU is frequently represented as a dominant force over Greek politics, capable of dictating terms that significantly affect Greece's economic landscape.
- iii. Although the activation rate of the EU in the BC is lower than in the NC, the instances that do occur are accompanied by a substantial amount of critical commentary. This indicates that while the EU's active role may be less frequently discussed in the BC, when it is mentioned, it is done so with pointed criticism, thereby emphasising the contentious nature of its policies.

#### **7.3.2.4 Subjection of the EU in the January BC**

##### **a) Cases where the EU is subjected in the January BC**

In the BC, many of the subjected cases of the EU concern the conflict with Greece, but the stress is more on the consequences for the EU in case of Greece exiting the Eurozone. Germany is once again portrayed as the main social actor determining the EU's policies. However, it does not have the power to force Greece to accept the terms of the bailout. In Example 7.21, the EU is the Goal which runs the risk of being blown up, in a Material Process in which Germany is the Actor. In general, in the BC, the EU role is not so vital and the EU itself not so powerful.

##### **Example 7.21**

However, my basic view is that Germany, having been one of the central countries at the origin of the European Union and at the origin of the Eurozone, will wisely not take the step of blowing up the European Union and the Eurozone over an argument about the conditionalities attached to past financial bargains.

<i>Germany</i>	<i>will not blow up</i>	<i>the EU</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

There is often a degree of irony when talking about the EU authorities. For instance, in Example 7.22, the EU leaders are called hegemons and the German chancellor, Angela Merkel, is one of the “austerity advocates”, in a sentence where the EU is subjected through possessivation in relation to “hegemons” and the Greek people are represented as fighting back in a conflict, as they have voted for a party that will “stand up against EU hegemons”.

The blogs seem to adopt the view that not all EU member states are equal. There are core members, the “hegemons”, and there are also members that are in a similar, weak position as Greece.

In Example 7.23, Spain, Ireland, and Portugal are collectively referred to as “bailout states,” which categorises them together based on their common experiences with bailout deals. This grouping highlights their shared interests, potentially in opposition to the stronger EU members. These countries are discussed in the context of a potential debt conference that Syriza hopes will support its push for debt restructuring. The blogs often discuss the negotiation or cancellation of debt, reflecting a prevalent opinion that the EU should not enforce repayment of what is viewed as unjust debt. This perspective underscores a critical stance towards the EU's financial policies, suggesting a collective challenge to the austerity measures imposed by the EU.

#### Example 7.22

With this in mind, it’s no wonder that the Greek people have chosen a party that will stand up against EU hegemons, Merkel, and the other austerity advocates.

#### Example 7.23



What Syriza is hoping for is that other EU bailout states such as Spain, Ireland and Portugal will see the advantages for themselves in an EU debt conference, but it looks as if the reaction will be the exact opposite.

<i>A party</i>	<i>that will stand up against</i>	<i>EU hegemons</i>
<i>Syriza</i>	<i>is hoping that</i>	<i>EU bailout states (will see the advantages of a debt conference)</i>
<b>Actor / Senser</b>	<b>Material / Mental Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the January BC**

The analysis of the subjected instances, which in the BC are more than the activated ones, leads to the following conclusions:

- i. Many instances where the EU is subjected in the blogs highlight the conflict with Greece, particularly focusing on the repercussions for the EU should Greece exit the Eurozone. This emphasis suggests a significant concern within the blog discourse about the stability of the EU itself.
- ii. Germany's role is frequently underscored as the primary influencer of the EU's policies. However, the representation in the blogs implies that Germany, despite its influence, cannot compel Greece to accept bailout terms unconditionally. This portrayal diminishes the perceived omnipotence of the EU, suggesting a more complex interplay of power within the Union.
- iii. The blogs often inject a tone of irony when discussing the EU's leadership. This critical perspective frames the EU's leadership as imposing and out of touch with the socio-economic realities faced by member states like Greece.
- iv. The discussion in the blogs reflects a perception that not all EU member states are treated equally. Core members are seen as dominantly imposing policies,

while peripheral members like Greece are portrayed as disproportionately affected by such policies.

- v. Resistance to Austerity: The blogs depict a persistent critique of the EU's austerity measures, viewing them as unjust and advocating for renegotiation or cancellation of debts.

## 7.4 Representations of Greece/EU in the July subcorpora

### 7.4.1 Representations of Greece in the July subcorpora

As in the case of the 25 January subcorpus, Greece is mainly subjected, in more than half of the cases (Table 7.9). The activation rates are notably low, particularly in the BC. It is evident that Greece is not yet perceived as a driving force for change. The country is still in a recession, in need of bailouts and subject to measures and reforms imposed by creditors. The beneficialisation rate is low, whereas the circumstantialisation percentage is substantial, as was the case in the January subcorpus.

Table 7.9. 5 July, Greece, NC and BC

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialized	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
GREECE	21.31%	15.83%	52.09%	53.47%	7.65%	7.89%	18.94%	19.69%
Total: NC=549 BC=518	N=117	N=82	N=286	N=277	N=42	N=33	N=126	N=102

Table 7.10 presents an analysis of the activated cases. In the majority of the cases where Greece is activated (in both subcorpora), it is the Actor in a Material Process. Similarly to the January corpora, there are several instances of activation through Possession in the NC, while they are very rare in the BC.

Table 7.10 5 July, Greece, NC and BC, Activation

**Activated** (NC 21.31%, 117 / BC 15.83%, 82)

	NC (Total 549)		BC (Total 518)	
Actor in a material process	16.39%	N=90	15.83%	N=82
Senser in a mental process	0.91%	N=5	0.19%	N=1
Sayer in a verbal process	-		0.39%	N=2
Through possessivation	4.01%	N=22	0.58%	N=3

Greece is subjected in more than half of the instances, mainly through Possessivation (Table 7.11). There are also several instances of subjection as a Carrier in a Relational Process and as a Goal in a Material Process. The high rate of subjection in both types of media is an indication of the less central role attributed to Greece; the qualitative analysis will highlight the differences between the two types of media in how this role is represented.

Table 7.11 5 July, Greece, NC and BC, Subjection

**Subjected** (NC 52.09%, 286 / BC 53.47% , 277)

	NC (Total 549)		BC (Total 518)	
Goal in a material process	8.92%	N=49	10.81%	N=56
Phenomenon in a mental process	4.01%	N=22	3.09%	N=16
Carrier in a relational process	10.02%	N=55	13.71%	N=71
Verbiage in a verbal process	1.09%	N=6	0.39%	N=2
Through possessivation	28.05%	N=154	25.48%	N=132

#### 7.4.1.1 Activation of Greece in the July NC

##### a) Cases where Greece is activated in the July NC

In the vast majority of instances in which Greece is activated, the action is negatively evaluated. It is frequently observed that Greece has defaulted on a payment to the IMF, which has been described as unprecedented for a developed country. Furthermore, it has been noted that by defaulting, Greece had to suspend its banking operations and also lost access to EU billions, in addition to damaging the chances of reaching an agreement. For the newspapers, calling a referendum to decide on whether to accept a

bailout deal, which the country desperately needs, is an irresponsible move that will put Greece in a dangerous situation.

In Example 7.46, Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of defaulting on an IMF loan repayment. The dire circumstances currently facing Greece are depicted in a compelling manner, with the country portrayed as being in a state of economic recession, experiencing a severe shortage of capital, and witnessing high levels of unemployment. Example 7.25 illustrates one of the instances where Greece is depicted as facing significant risks due to the no vote in the referendum. Here, Greece is portrayed as the Actor in a Material Process, specifically entering "uncharted territory." This phrase evokes a sense of danger and uncertainty, suggesting that the country is venturing into a situation with unpredictable and potentially hazardous outcomes. This representation emphasizes the perceived peril associated with the referendum's consequences for Greece.

Example 7.24

Besieged by a prolonged recession, high unemployment and banks dangerously low on capital, Greece defaulted on an International Monetary Fund loan repayment last week, becoming the first developed nation to do so.

Example 7.25

Greece enters uncharted territory after referendum 'no' vote

<i>Greece</i>	<i>defaulted</i>	<i>on an IMF loan repayment</i>
	<i>enters</i>	<i>uncharted territory</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Greece is portrayed as a problematic member, one which causes problems for other members and is responsible for the crisis.

In Example 7.26, Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of joining the common currency. In this sentence, it is presented as the country's responsibility that it could not overcome the 2008 and was in need of rescue. Thus, the crisis is seen as a problem originating outside the EU and it is the responsibility of the members to be able to withstand it - if they cannot, they will suffer the consequences. In a number of instances, the 'spendthrift' argument is employed to give an explanation as to why Greece could not endure the crisis, as in Example 7.52.

Example 7.26

Greece joined the common currency but couldn't endure the 2008 financial crisis and needed a bailout from Europe and the International Monetary Fund that totals \$270 billion and counting.

Example 7.27

If money were booze, Greece drank too much.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>joined</i>	<i>the common currency</i>
	<i>drank</i>	<i>too much (booze)</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

In general, Greece is a weak member of the EU and therefore not in a position to decide its own fate through a referendum, as it needs the other EU members to save it from economic ruin - and therefore has to follow the rules set by the other members. In addition, Greece is responsible for the economic crisis. So, Greece as an actor has created problems for itself as well as for the other members of the EU. This is the view adopted by the newspapers, which is also reflected in the cases of subjection, as will be shown in the next subsection.

**b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the July NC**

In July's coverage within the NC, the activation of Greece predominantly paints a picture of the nation grappling with severe economic challenges. More specifically:

- i. Greece's economic actions, such as the IMF default and banking suspensions, are depicted as direct consequences of its fiscal policies, emphasizing the severity and international significance of its financial crisis.
- ii. The decision to hold a referendum is criticized as imprudent, placing Greece in a precarious position by potentially exacerbating its economic instability.
- iii. Coverage suggests that Greece's past financial mismanagement has led to its current predicaments, reinforcing a narrative that the crisis is self-inflicted to some extent.

#### **7.4.1.2 Subjection of Greece in the July NC**

##### **a) Cases where Greece is subjected in the July NC**

The severity of the situation in Greece after the announcement of the referendum and the default on IMF payments is discussed extensively in the NC, in a particularly negative way.

In Example 7.28, Greece is a Carrier in a Relational Process, represented as being “in a financial limbo” because of the expiration of the bailout programme. This representation emphasises Greece's vulnerability and precarious position due to external economic controls and decisions. By focusing on the consequences of the bailout expiration, the sentence highlights Greece's dependency on external financial support. This contributes to an image of Greece as passively enduring the effects of decisions made elsewhere, underlining the theme of external imposition that pervades discussions of Greece in the economic crisis.

In Example 7.29, Greece is subjected through Possessivation, and it is Greece's banking system that is in danger of being cut off by the creditors, in which case the situation will resemble a “horror show”.

### Example 7.28

Greece is in a financial limbo now that its bailout program has expired, cutting it off from vital financing and pushing it one step closer to leaving the euro.

<b>Attributive Relational Clause</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>in a financial limbo</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

### Example 7.29

However, if Mr Tsipras is wrong and the creditors cut off Greece's banking system that is when the horror show really begins.

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>The creditors</i>	<i>cut off</i>	<i>Greece's banking system</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>

Greece is represented as being in conflict with more powerful social actors, who dictate the terms to which the country is obliged to comply. The creditors are demanding reforms in order to provide the necessary aid, as in Example 7.30, where Greece is the Verbiage in a Verbal Process in which the creditors are dictating what it should do "if it hopes to get aid".

In some instances, it is stated that as an outcome of this conflict, Greece could be expelled not only from the eurozone but also from the EU, as in Example 7.31, where Greece is the Goal that could be left to default and financial collapse if the creditors decide to cancel the bailouts.

### Example 7.30

The creditors say Greece must lay out a detailed reform program if it hopes to get aid.

### Example 7.31

There remains the possibility that they could walk away, leaving Greece facing default, financial collapse, and expulsion from the eurozone and, in the worst case, from the European Union.

<i>The creditors</i>	<i>say</i>	<i>Greece must lay out a detailed reform program</i>
<i>They (the creditors)</i>	<i>could leave</i>	<i>Greece facing default</i>
<b>Sayer / Actor</b>	<b>Verbal / Material Process</b>	<b>Verbiage / Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

In the subjected cases of the July NC, the representations of Greece highlight the country's vulnerability and the external control over its economic destiny.

- i. Greece is generally represented as a passive victim in the economic crisis, subjected to the harsh realities of external financial decisions and austerity measures imposed by its creditors. This representation underscores Greece's precarious situation and its diminished autonomy in the face of international economic policies. The discourse in the NC consistently positions Greece at the mercy of more powerful external actors, such as the EU and the IMF, who control the financial aid and stipulate stringent conditions for its provision.
- ii. The emphasis on Greece's financial and political crisis in the NC serves not only to report on events but also to reinforce a notion of inevitable compliance with creditor demands. The representation suggests that any resistance to these external pressures is not only futile but also potentially catastrophic for Greece's future. The language used in the descriptions of Greece's situation—terms like "financial limbo" and "horror show"—evokes a sense of inevitable decline and chaos, further dramatizing the narrative of crisis and underscoring the perceived severity of Greece's economic conditions.



### 7.4.1.3 Activation of Greece in the July BC

#### a) Cases where Greece is activated in the July BC

The representations and the emphases in the blogs diverge significantly from those in the newspapers. The consequences that Greece has suffered as a result of the imposed policies, an issue largely ignored in the NC, are addressed in several cases in the BC.

In Example 7.32, Greece reduces public health spending as directed by the bailout terms, highlighting its role in implementing austerity measures that impact social welfare. Similarly, Example 7.33 portrays Greece as initiating pension reductions, another requirement of the bailout agreement, which is crucial to social welfare provisions. In both cases Greece is the Actor in a Material Process, indicating that it has an active role in introducing these painful measures dictated by the creditors.

#### Example 7.32

Greece has pulled back on public health spending dramatically in order to meet bailout demands, and the cuts have produced a measurable increase in human suffering.

#### Example 7.33

Greece offered what amounted to a pension cut of 0.4% of GDP by tightening up on early retirement and by increasing health care payments on retirees, which is a de facto pension cut, and committed to a total pension cut of 1.0% of GDP the following.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>has pulled back</i>	<i>on public health spending</i>
	<i>offered</i>	<i>a pension cut</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

There are many instances in which the blogs express their admiration for Greece who stood up to the creditors and rejected the measures they had been imposing on the country, in which the ‘opponents’ of Greece are represented negatively. However, there are also instances where Greece is criticized as having lost invaluable time in its struggle against the more powerful EU members. In both kinds of instances, Greece is the Actor, highlighting contrasting perspectives within the blogs. Some view Greece as

a symbol of resistance, while others see its actions as inadequate in overcoming powerful adversaries. For instance, in Example 7.34 Greece is represented as giving lessons of democracy, while in Example 7.35 it is represented as having consumed valuable time in a futile strategy.

Example 7.34

Today Greece gave us all a valuable lesson on what can be achieved when democracy prevails and an entire society refuses to be trampled under the foot of the worst excesses of neoliberal capitalism.

Example 7.35

Greece consumed an enormous amount of time, running up against deadlines in what the other side saw as brinksmanship, which was a bizarre strategy given that Greece had a weak bargaining position.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>gave</i>	<i>us a valuable lesson</i>
	<i>consumed</i>	<i>an enormous amount of time</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Regarding Greece's chances of "winning the war" against the creditors, there seem to be opposing views in the blogs. The optimism that was unanimous in the January BC about the future of Greece and the EU and the defeat of neoliberal policies seems to have receded. There are both instances that predict that Greece will be victorious and will manage to stand up to the creditors and others which express fears that Greece will not be able to withstand the conflict. There are also instances where the possible outcome of this conflict is seen as unknown, as in Example 7.36, where Greece is the Actor of having won a battle but not the war. In all cases, however, the relationship between Greece and its creditors is perceived as one of conflict.

Example 7.36

Nobody is quite sure what will happen next and while Greece have not yet won the war, they have certainly won a very important battle.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>have not yet won</i> <i>have won</i>	<i>the war</i> <i>a very important battle</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

- i. Greece is frequently represented in the BC as a social actor grappling with painful decisions, such as cutting public health spending and pensions to comply with bailout terms. These actions are shown not merely as bureaucratic necessities but as choices laden with heavy social implications.
- ii. Additionally, Greece is frequently represented as resisting external pressures, sometimes portrayed as a beacon of hope and sometimes criticised for strategic missteps in its negotiation tactics.
- iii. Overall, in the July BC, the activation of Greece not only serves to illustrate the severe socioeconomic consequences of austerity measures but also provides an insight into the complex relationship between Greece and its creditors. The discussion extends beyond mere fiscal adjustments to include the power dynamics that define Greece's interactions with the EU and other financial authorities. The blogs engage in a discourse on the manner in which Greece, while being compelled to implement strict economic measures, also emerges as a symbol of resistance against the dominant neoliberal agenda enforced by its creditors.

**7.4.1.4 Subjection of Greece in the July BC**

**a) Cases where Greece is subjected in the July BC**

The subjected cases of Greece in the blogs seem to lead to similar observations as the activated cases. Greece is at a difficult spot, facing powerful and dangerous

opponents. Examples 7.37 and 7.38 are two of the several cases in which Greece is represented not just in a passive role, but one of being forcibly constrained and threatened, indicating a severe lack of autonomy or ability to act freely. In these two instances, Greece is represented as the Carrier in a Relational Process, illustrating a situation where Greece is portrayed as being under extreme duress or coercion. The phrases "pressed against a wall with a gun to her head" and "under financial attack" which are the Attributes in the two Relational Processes, are both metaphorical expressions that intensify the sense of urgency and danger.

Example 7.37

And Greece is pressed against a wall with a gun to her head.

Example 7.38

Greece was under financial attack just as deadly as a military attack.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>pressed against the wall</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

Once again, it is clear that the blogs are not as optimistic about the future of Greece as they were in January. In this respect, they have moved closer to the view of the newspapers, that Greece cannot survive a Grexit and even in certain instances they agree with the newspapers in that a possible Grexit will not harm the EU as much as it will harm Greece. In Example 7.39, Greece is represented as a Carrier in a Relational Process and is attributed a very weak position in the eurozone.

Example 7.39

It would hurt the euro too, but not as much – Greece is just 2 per cent of the eurozone economy.

<b>Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>just 2 per cent of the eurozone economy</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

There are certain respects in which the stance of the blogs remains unchanged since January. The first is that the blogs still consider the policies imposed to Greece to be ineffective and catastrophic. Another point that persists is the emphasis on the propaganda of the mainstream media, which are accused by the blogs of trying to instill fear in the Greek people to vote 'yes'. In Example 7.40, Greece is represented as a Carrier in a Relational Process in which it is described as being in a worse situation because of austerity. In Example 7.41, Greece is subjected through Possessivation, in relation to its media, which are depicted as “oligarch-owned” and “pro-austerity”, and as trying to influence the Greek people to cast a yes vote.

Example 7.40

First, we now know that ever-harsher austerity is a dead end: after five years Greece is in worse shape than ever.

	<i>Greece</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>in worse shape than ever</i>
<b>Attributive Relational Clause</b>	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

Example 7.41

This has given fuel to Greece's oligarch-owned, pro-austerity media, who have successfully transformed the public debate into a dilemma between voting "yes" to "stay in Europe" and maintain Greece's "European prospect," and voting "no" and bringing "catastrophe" and "chaos" to Greece in the form of a "grexit."

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>Greece's oligarch- owned, pro- austerity media</i>	<i>transformed</i>	<i>the public debate</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

In the July BC, the subjected instances of Greece consistently represent Greece as facing severe external pressures and constraints.

In the July BC, the subjection of Greece in the blog discussions presents a consistent narrative of Greece facing severe external pressures and constraints. These narratives

paint Greece as a victim of the harsh economic policies dictated by stronger EU members, particularly emphasizing its limited autonomy and the dire consequences of these imposed measures.

- i. Greece is frequently represented as a Carrier in a Relational Process, to describe its dire circumstances. In several of these instances, vivid metaphors are employed to dramatize the situation, highlighting the country's vulnerable and endangered state.
- ii. The blogs in the July BC reflect a shift towards a less optimistic view about Greece's future compared to the January BC.
- iii. The blogs continue to critique the role of mainstream media, accusing it of propagating fear to sway public opinion towards a 'yes' vote in referendums. This perspective underscores a distrust in the media, perceived as manipulated by pro-austerity interests, and aligns with the broader critique of the power dynamics within the EU.
- iv. While the blogs acknowledge Greece's resistance to austerity measures, there is also a recognition of the futility of such efforts against the overwhelming force of EU economic policies.

#### **7.4.2 Representations of the EU in the July subcorpora**

In the July subcorpora, the subjection rates are higher than the activation rates, both in the NC and the BC, as shown in Table 7.12 In the January NC, the rate of activation was higher and the rate of subjection was lower than in the July NC. In the July NC, the percentages are similar to those in the July BC. It seems although the EU is perceived as powerful social actor, both media types frequently portray it as also being affected by or reacting to crisis situations.

Table 7.12. 5 July, EU, NC and BC

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
EU Total: NC=73 BC=120	28.77% N=21	28.33% N=34	42.46% N=31	42.50% N=51	6.85% N=5	3.33% N=4	21.92% N=16	25.83% N=31

Table 7.13 presents the categories of activation realization of the EU in the July BC. The EU is allocated the role of an Actor in Material Processes more prominently in blogs (14.17%) compared to newspapers (5.48%), suggesting blogs are more attentive to the EU's direct actions. As a Senser in Mental Processes and a Sayer in Verbal Processes, the EU's involvement is minimal in both types of media, indicating less emphasis on its emotional or communicative actions. The percentage of activation through Possessivation, where the EU is shown as possessing or controlling aspects like policies, is notably higher in newspapers (15.07%) than in blogs (10.00%). This highlights a portrayal of the EU as a social actor with substantial control and authority, particularly in newspapers, which emphasize its influence over policy and decision-making more than blogs.

Table 7.13. 5 July, EU, NC and BC, Activation

**Activated** (NC 28.77%, 21 / BC 28.33 %, 34 )

	NC (Total 73)		BC (Total 120)	
Actor in a material process	5.48%	N=4	14.17%	N=17
Senser in a mental process	4.11%	N=3	1.67%	N=2
Sayer in a verbal process	4.11%	N=3	2.50%	N=3
Through possessivation	15.07%	N=11	10.00%	N=12

Table 7.14 presents how the EU subjection is realised in the July NC and BC. The EU is most frequently subjected through Possessivation in both types of media, with newspapers showing a slightly higher rate (31.51%) compared to blogs (29.17%). This

indicates that both the newspapers and the blogs often portray the EU in relation to its possessions or qualities.

Furthermore, in blogs, the EU is notably portrayed as a Phenomenon in a Mental Process (31.17%), a category absent in the NC. This significant difference suggests that blogs are more likely to discuss the EU in terms of perceptions, beliefs, or mental attitudes directed towards it, reflecting a more critical or contemplative approach towards the EU's impact or image.

Table 7.14. 5 July, EU, NC and BC, Subjection

<b>Subjected (NC 42.46%, 31/ BC 42.50%, 51)</b>				
	NC (Total 73)		BC (Total 120)	
Goal in a material process	6.85%	N=5	5.00%	N=6
Phenomenon in a mental process	-		31.17%	N=41
Carrier in a relational process	4.11%	N=3	7.50%	N=9
Through possessivation	31.51%	N=23	29.17%	N=35

#### **7.4.2.1 Activation of the EU in the July NC**

##### **a) Cases where the EU is activated in the July NC**

In the activated cases of the EU in the NC, the EU is represented as being in conflict with Greece, in the same way that Greece was activated as being in conflict with the EU. In Example 7.42, the EU is allocated the role of the Actor in the Material Process of proposing a bailout package, which Greece as an Actor rejected. In Example 7.43, the EU is the Sayer in the Verbal Process of refusing to extend the bailout deal, resulting in banking restrictions for Greece.

##### **Example 7.42**

Greeks overwhelmingly voted against a bailout package proposed by the European Union.

##### **Example 7.43**



The banking restrictions were imposed following the showdown between Mr Tsipras and Eurozone finance chiefs over the weekend, when the EU refused to extend the terms of Greece's existing bail-out deal beyond June 30.

<i>The EU</i>	<i>proposed</i>	<i>a bailout package</i>
	<i>refused</i>	<i>to extend the terms of Greece's existing bail-out deal</i>
<b>Actor/Sayer</b>	<b>Material/Verbal Process</b>	<b>Goal/Verbiage</b>

In several cases of the activated instances of the EU in the NC, it is asserted that the EU is the actor who makes the decisions and has the power to influence the future of Greece. In Example 7.44, the EU is activated through Possessivation in relation to the EU summit is metaphorically called a “conclave” where “all eyes were”, elevating its importance and secrecy, drawing parallels to the confidential and significant nature of papal conclaves in the Catholic Church. This metaphor suggests that the decisions made at the summit are both crucial and made behind closed doors, emphasizing the weight of the outcomes and the exclusive, elite status of the participants.

Example 7.44

All eyes were on a European Union conclave on Tuesday that promises to be decisive for Greece, whose banks risk running run out of cash within days.

<b>Greece activated through Possessivation</b>	<i>All eyes</i>	<i>were</i>	<i>on a European Union conclave</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

In the July NC, the activated instances of the EU portray a vivid picture of conflict with Greece, mirroring the tense negotiations and financial disagreements highlighted throughout the crisis.

- i. The EU is portrayed as decisively influencing the outcomes of Greece's financial struggles. This portrayal not only emphasizes the EU's control over the bailout terms but also illustrates the stark power dynamics between the EU and Greece, suggesting that the EU's decisions are pivotal to Greece's financial future.
- ii. The use of strong, evocative imagery and language in these instances serves to emphasize the EU's dominant role and the challenging position of Greece within these dynamics.

#### 7.4.2.2 Subjection of the EU in the July NC

##### a) Cases where the EU is subjected in the July NC

The EU is represented as a powerful social actor even in instances where it is subjected. In Example 7.45, the EU is subjected through Possessivation in relation to its officials, and in Example 7.46, in relation to its leadership, essentially denoting the same thing. In the first instance, the leaders are campaigning against the Greek government and could influence the vote. In the second, they can determine what happens after the vote, as their loss of confidence in Greece following the 'no' vote could result in the country's collapse and expulsion from the Eurozone.

##### Example 7.45

This time, however, with the banks closed and European Union officials themselves campaigning against him, polls suggest it is too close to call.

##### Example 7.46

The verdict confronts the EU's leadership with one of its most severe -crises of confidence and leaves Greece facing potential financial collapse and exit from the euro.

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>			<i>EU officials</i>	<i>campaign</i>	<i>against him (Tsipras)</i>
	<i>The verdict</i>	<i>confronts</i>	<i>the EU's leadership</i>		
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

As in the activated cases, the conflict between Greece and the EU is also emphasised. In Example 7.47, the EU is subjected through Possessivation in relation to the governments of member states, which “will be furious” at being obliged to continue negotiating with the Greek Prime Minister and the Greek Minister of Finance, whom they “have come to loathe”. This representation aligns with narratives about core EU members interfering in the domestic politics of weaker states, particularly in contexts like the Greek financial crisis. The portrayal of EU governments being "furious" at having to deal with specific Greek politicians underscores the tension and the stakes involved, suggesting that the core members not only influence but also have strong opinions about who should hold power in these peripheral nations.

Example 7.47

EU governments will be furious at having to continue to deal with Alexis Tsipras, its prime minister, and Yanis Varoufakis, the finance minister, whom they have come to loathe.

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>EU governments</i>	<i>will be furious</i>	<i>at having to deal with Tsipras and Varoufakis</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

The subjected EU instances in the NC are represented in the same way as in the activated ones: as a powerful social actor in conflict with Greece and its government.

More specifically:

- i. The representations frequently highlight the EU's substantial influence and control over the crisis situations involving Greece.
- ii. Moreover, the strained relationship between Greece and the EU is highlighted through the portrayal of the EU in contexts that suggest conflict and frustration.

In discussions, EU member states' governments are depicted as having strong feelings about the political situation in Greece, illustrating the ongoing tensions and the influence of core EU members over the political dynamics within weaker member states like Greece.

#### 7.4.2.3 Activation of the EU in the July BC

##### a) The EU activated in the July BC

In the July BC, the EU is represented as a powerful social actor able to impose its decisions on Greece, as it was in the July NC. In Example 7.48, the EU is the Sayer in a Verbal Process, warning Greece that it has to comply with what the EU dictates, otherwise there will be repercussions.

##### Example 7.48

EU To Greece: Do What We Say Or Else

<i>The EU</i>	<i>(says)</i>	<i>to Greece</i>	<i>Do What We Say Or Else</i>
<b>Sayer</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Receiver</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>

In contrast to the NC, however, these decisions are portrayed as unjust and the EU as an oppressor. The EU is accused of being authoritarian and undemocratic, as in Example 7.49, where it is the Actor in the Material Process of demonstrating “how authoritarian and undemocratic it is”. EU administration is often pictured as terrible, as in Example 7.98 where the EU is activated through Possessivation in relation to its governance, which is characterised “true horror”.

##### Example 7.49

Of course, the EU increasingly does a fine job of demonstrating just how authoritarian and undemocratic it is even in its public statements.

<i>The EU</i>	<i>demonstrates</i>	<i>how authoritarian and undemocratic it is</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

Example 7.50

But the true horror of EU governance appears in the various ‘pacts’ that constrain fiscal policy.

<b>The EU activated through Possessivation</b>	<i>(the true horror of) EU governance</i>	<i>appears</i>	<i>in the various ‘pacts’</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

The criticism of the blogs towards the EU is in many cases explicit, accusing the EU for the situation Greece is currently in. In Example 7.51, for instance, the EU is allocated the role of the Actor in the Material Process of causing “asphyxia” to the banking sector and obliging Syriza to impose capital controls that left the poor pensioners without access to their pensions – and all that in cooperation with the “Greek bourgeoisie”.

Example 7.51

Thus, once the referendum was called the EU, in close co-operation with the Greek bourgeoisie, created a condition of asphyxia for the banking sector and obliged SYRIZA to impose very severe capital controls on the very day that the huge mass of Greece’s badly paid pensioners (that support also another big portion of the population) were paid.

<b>The EU activated as an Actor in a Material Process</b>	<i>The EU</i>	<i>created</i> <i>obliged</i>	<i>asphyxia to the banking sector</i> <i>Syriza to impose capital controls</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

In the July BC, the EU’s representation significantly contrasts that in the NC, emphasizing its role as a domineering force that negatively affects weak member states.

- i. Many activated instances in the BC critique the EU's decisions as oppressive, representing it as an enforcer of harsh measures on Greece, often described as unjust and authoritarian. Warnings to Greece to comply with EU demands are depicted as threats, illustrating a coercive relationship.
- ii. Moreover, the EU is criticized for demonstrating undemocratic tendencies and for policies that severely affect the Greek populace, particularly the vulnerable, suggesting that its governance methods are seen not just as stringent, but also fundamentally unfair and damaging to social welfare.

#### 7.4.2.4 Subjection of the EU in the July BC

##### a) Cases where the EU is subjected in the July BC

In the majority of the subjected instances, there is criticism for the EU, its institutions and its actions. These are often presented as being arbitrary and yielding no tangible results. In Example 7.52, the EU is the Carrier in a Relational Process, attributed the quality of lacking an efficient legal system. In Example 7.53, it is the Carrier in the Relational Process that attributes it the quality of being “packed full of losers”.

##### Example 7.52

The EU does not even have a meaningful legal system empowered to fight fraud and financial crime, prosecute or clean up insider dealing and corrupt oligarchies.

##### Example 7.53

But the EU is packed full of losers too, who just can't admit to the disastrous error of the entire integrationist project.

<b>Possession/ Attributive Relational Clauses</b>	<i>The EU</i>	<i>does not even have</i>	<i>a meaningful legal system</i>
		<i>is packed</i>	<i>full of losers</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Possession/ Attribute</b>

The EU is not represented as particularly powerful, as was the case in the activated instances. In a number of instances, it is claimed that the EU is not unbeatable, and its

actions are not well calculated but “quite clumsy”, as is mentioned in Example 7.55, where the EU is subjected through Possessivation, in relation to its leaders. The process they are engaged in is described as "manifesting" their “near hysteria” through "attempts to influence" the outcome of a democratic vote in Greece.

#### Example 7.55

The near hysteria of the EU leaders in anticipation of the democratic vote in Greece on 5 July manifests itself in quite clumsy and extraordinary attempts to influence the outcome.

#### **b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the July NC**

As with the January BC, the representations of the EU in the July BC are generally unfavourable.

- i. In the July BC, the EU is frequently subjected in a way that portrays it as lacking competence or being disconnected from the consequences of its actions. These representations underscore a skepticism about the EU's ability to manage its affairs or achieve meaningful outcomes.
- ii. Additionally, the EU's responses to crises, such as the democratic vote in Greece, are shown as desperate and poorly executed. This contrasts sharply with representations in the NC in which the EU might be seen as a more stable and authoritative force, highlighting a significant discrepancy in how the EU's power and effectiveness are perceived in the two types of media.

### **7.5 Representations of Greece/EU in the September subcorpora**

#### **7.5.1 Representations of Greece in the September subcorpora**

In the last pair of subcorpora (articles about the 20 September elections), Greece is subjected in the wide majority of the instances in the NC and in approximately half of the instances in the BC. Activation is quite marginal in both the NC and the BC, while

circumstantialization is low in the NC and high in the BC, almost as high as the percentage of subjection (Table 7.15). However, for the purposes of consistency, we will analyse the activated and subjected instances.

Table 7.15. 20 September, Greece, NC and BC

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialization	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
GREECE Total: NC=205 BC=132	6.34% N=13	7.58% N=10	72.68% N=149	47.73% N=63	8.29% N=17	2.27% N=3	17.45% N=26	42.42% N=56

The activation cases are very low, as shown in Table 7.16, and in almost all of them Greece is activated as an Actor in a Material Process. The number of activated cases was not high in the January and July corpora. However, it is now strikingly low. This could be a reflection of the situation in Greece at the time: Greece no longer had any room for initiative, but was obliged to follow the EU's dictates to the letter.

Table 7.16. 20 September, Greece, NC and BC, Activation

<b>Activated</b> (NC 6.34%, 13 / BC 7.58%,10)				
	NC (Total 205)		BC (Total 132)	
Actor in a material process	4.88%	N=10	7.58%	N=10
Senser in a mental process	0.68%	N=1	-	-
Sayer in a verbal process	-	-	-	-
Through possessivation	1.51%	N=2	-	-

In the NC, Greece is subjected through Possessivation in half of the instances, while in the BC it is subjected through Possessivation in one out of five instances (Table 7.17). The percentages of subjection as a Goal in a Material Process and as a Carrier in a Relational Process are also not negligible.



Table 7.17. 20 September, Greece, NC and BC, Subjection

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 72.68%, 149 / BC 47.73% , 63)				
	NC (Total 205)		BC (Total 132)	
Goal in a material process	10.73%	N=22	12.12%	N=16
Phenomenon in a mental process	2.44%	N=5	3.79%	N=5
Carrier in a relational process	9.76%	N=20	6.82%	N=9
Verbiage in a verbal process	2.93%	N=6	2.27%	N=3
Attribute in a relational process	-		0.76%	N=1
Through possessivation	46.83%	N=96	21.97%	N=29

### 7.5.1.1 Activation of Greece in the September NC

#### a) Cases where Greece is activated in the September NC

There are not many activated cases in the NC, on the contrary, the number of activated cases is as low as 13. None of them represent Greece as taking important action that could change the course of events.

A number of these instances refer to the elections without reference to any other issues, such as the financial crisis or the measures that are to be taken, as in Example 7.56, in which Greece is the Actor in the Material Process of calling the elections.

#### Example 7.56

Greece just called new elections.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>called</i>	<i>new elections</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

In half of the instances there is reference to the fact that Greece is going to take the necessary measures in order to qualify for another bailout as in Examples 7.57. In none of these instances is Greece the Actor of opposing these measures.

#### Example 7.57

23. Under the terms of the bailout, Greece must pass dozens of laws before the end of the year, many of them measures that were supposed to have been passed years ago.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>must pass</i>	<i>dozens of laws</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

In certain instances, the turbulent past is mentioned, when Greece confronted the EU leaders and refused to comply with their rules. However, it is clearly argued that this is not the case anymore, as in Example 7.58.

Example 7.58

Earlier, Greece missed debt payments to the International Monetary Fund before Mr. Tsipras struck the new bailout deal, raising the prospect that it might leave the eurozone.

	<i>Greece</i>	<i>missed</i>	<i>debt payments</i>
<b>Greece activated as an Actor in a Material Process</b>	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the September BC**

In general, Greece is not represented as an important actor, as its actions can only be in accordance with the demands of the EU.

- i. In the September NC, the representation of Greece's role in the context of the EU financial crisis shows a notable lack of assertiveness or significant action that could alter the trajectory of events. There are a limited number of activated cases, centred on procedural actions like calling for elections without tying them to broader, more impactful economic or political issues. Consequently, the stance of the newspapers towards Greece is more neutral, as they no longer perceive the country as a threat to the financial stability of the EU.
- ii. The activated cases in the September NC highlight a state that is more reactive than proactive, focusing on meeting existing obligations rather than challenging or renegotiating them. This subdued representation aligns with a broader narrative of inevitability and resignation to external economic pressures, marking a significant narrative shift from previous periods of active resistance.

### 7.5.1.2 Subjection of Greece in the September NC

#### a) Cases where Greece is subjected in the September NC

In the September NC, Greece is represented as a relatively passive participant in its own affairs, subjected in approximately 73% of the instances. This subdued portrayal aligns with the context of the Greek elections, where Greece appears as a secondary actor due to acceptance of the bailout terms across all political parties involved in the elections, indicating a closure of the contentious conflicts with the EU.

In many instances it is explicitly stated that Greece will comply to the creditors as there is no other alternative for the country. In Example 7.59 Greece is subjected through Possessivation, in relation to the creditors. In this case, as in several others, the author explicitly states that the creditors have predetermined the national agenda, effectively undermining the significance of the elections. Similarly, in Example 7.60, Greece is subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process determining that it “had no alternative sources of funding” and therefore the political parties had no choice but comply.

#### Example 7.59

The national agenda, to a large degree, has already been set by Greece’s creditors.

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>Greece's creditors</i>	<i>have set</i>	<i>the national agenda</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

#### Example 7.60

But, not for the first time, accepting the bailout was equally overdetermined, given that Greece had no alternative sources of funding and the logic of political survival kicked in.

<b>Possession Relational Process</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>had</i>	<i>no alternative source of funding</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Possession</b>

The relations of Greece with the EU and the other member states are frequently referenced in the NC as having been damaged by the past irresponsible behaviour of Greece, which has left them in a fragile state. In Examples 7.61 and 7.62, Greece is subjected through Possessivation in relation to the relations with Europe and to the debt.

Example 7.61 portrays the relations as fragile, positioning Greece in a distinctly subordinate role that necessitates compliance and the fulfillment of the demands of more powerful actors, several of the EU leaders, who are activated in this instance as Sensors “showing impatience”.

In Example 7.62, the reduction of interest rates on Greece’s debt is presented as an unfair burden on the taxpayers of other member states, who are depicted as not receiving repayment of their contributions. This representation presents the relief for Greece as unjust to those who have funded it, suggesting that Greece's past irresponsible behaviour has been a burden on others, reinforcing the 'spendthrift' argument.

Example 7.61

Greece’s relations with Europe are in a fragile state, and several of its leaders are showing impatience, unlikely to tolerate the foot-dragging of past administrations.

Example 7.62

Extending payment deadlines and reducing interest rate costs on Greece's debt means Europe's taxpayers will not be paid back in full.

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>		<i>Greece's relations (with Europe)</i>	<i>are</i>	<i>in a fragile state</i>
	<i>Reducing</i>	<i>Greece's debt</i>	<i>means</i>	<i>Europe's taxpayers will not be paid back in full</i>
	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

A significant number of instances highlight what the newspapers describe as the most urgent issue: the delayed reforms. In Example 7.63, Greece is allocated the role of the

Carrier in a Relational Process in which it is claimed it “needs” the reforms – contrasting them with a current situation of “tax evasion and clientelism” and thus representing them as beneficial.

Example 7.63

The most important question is whether the next government will be prepared to tackle the reforms Greece needs, and that so far have been halfhearted or nonexistent: deregulation, liberalization of the economy, a turn away from tax evasion and clientelism.

<b>Greece subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>needs</i>	<i>the reforms</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the September NC**

In the subjected cases in the September NC, Greece is predominantly represented as a passive social actor, with a marginal role in shaping its own political and economic destiny.

- i. Greece appears subordinated due to the universal acceptance of the bailout terms by all contending political parties. This acceptance marks the end of significant conflicts with the EU and reduces the scope for any dramatic shifts in policy or national direction.
- ii. The newspapers often emphasize Greece's compliance with creditor demands as unavoidable, illustrating a lack of alternatives and reinforcing its secondary status.
- iii. The representation of Greece's relationship with the EU and other member states often highlights the residual strain from past fiscal irresponsibility. For instance, discussions around the reduction of Greece's debt interest rates are framed as unfair to the taxpayers of other member states, thereby casting Greece as a burden and reinforcing stereotypes of fiscal imprudence.

### 7.5.1.3 Activation of Greece in the September BC

#### a) Cases where Greece is activated in the September BC

In September, Greece continues to be portrayed favourably in the blogs. Greece is the victim of the EU, suffering the consequences of EU policies. However, there is little optimism that Greece will be able to stand up to the EU and resist its policies, as there was in the January BC. In the activated cases, very rarely is Greece represented as an actor able to take initiatives.

The blogs attribute Greece's failure to challenge the EU decisively to two main factors. The first is that the people of Greece are hesitant to boldly oppose EU leadership (as in Example 7.63). The explanation that is given they associate the country's membership in the EU with stability, and are reluctant to exit. In Example 7.64, Greece is activated through Possessivation in relation to its path, which backgrounds its agency with regard to forging its own path.

#### Example 7.63

The bigger picture is the popular support towards underlying Eurozone membership as the key underlying factor behind ensuring that Greece's path towards stabilization is in place.

<b>Greece activated through Possessivation</b>	<i>Greece's path towards stabilization</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>in place</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

The second explanation is the influence of both domestic and international “economic and political elites” (as in Example 7.64). These elites are often represented as being afraid that a successful challenge by Greece could inspire other nations to reject the prevailing neoliberal and global capitalist structures. In Example 7.64, Greece is

activated as an Actor in demonstrating that there is alternative – in the hypothetical scenario that it was victorious against those who impose policies.

Example 7.64

There is a lot of fear by the economic and political elites inside and outside of Greece, of Greece demonstrating in practice that there is an alternative to neoliberalism and capitalist globalization.

<i>Greece</i>	<i>demonstrates</i>	<i>that there is an alternative</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the September BC**

In September, Greece is still depicted as a victim of the EU, dealing with the adverse effects of EU policies, yet there is a noticeable lack of optimism about Greece's ability to resist these policies.

- i. Greece is rarely portrayed as an actor capable of initiating significant changes, reflecting a continued perception of its limited agency within the EU framework.
- ii. The blogs suggest two main reasons for Greece's inability to effectively oppose the EU: the Greek public's reluctance to challenge EU leadership and the influence of both domestic and international elites who fear the precedent a successful challenge might set against neoliberalism.

**7.5.1.4 Subjection of Greece in the September BC**

**a) Cases where Greece is subjected in the September BC**

In a high number of the subjected instances, the blogs portray the situation in Greece as a result of blackmailing by more powerful social actors. One characteristic example of this portrayal is Example 7.65. in which Greece is subjected as part of the verbiage, with the EU as a Sayer declaring that they will “kick Greece out of the Eurozone”, if

they do not accept the bailout deal, which is even worse than the one the Greek people rejected in the referendum.

Example 7.65

The European Union then demanded an even worse package than they had originally offered with even more privatization, more control over the Greek government and even larger increases in tax rates and bigger cuts in government pensions saying they would kick Greece out of the Eurozone if they didn't accept their latest offer.

<i>The EU</i>	<i>say</i>	<i>they would kick Greece out of the Eurozone</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>

In a significant number of instances, the imposed measures are represented as having destructive consequences on Greek society and economy. In Example 7.66 Greece is subjected through Possessivation in relation to its social services, who are negatively impacted by the agreement in a time when Greece is undergoing a humanitarian crisis. In Example 7.67, Greece is subjected as a Carrier in a Relational Process as having an unemployment rate similar to that of the Great Depression in the United States.

Example 7.66

These reforms will make Greece's social services less generous at a time when economic conditions are already so dire as to constitute a humanitarian crisis.

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>These reforms</i>	<i>will make</i>	<i>Greece's social services</i>	<i>less generous</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Circumstance</b>

Example 7.67

Greece today has over 25% unemployment and an unemployment rate of 60% for people under 25, rates equal to or worse than the 1930's depression in the United States.

<b>Possession Relational Process</b>	<i>Greece</i>	<i>has</i>	<i>over 25% unemployment</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Possession</b>

The optimism which was widespread in the blogs in January that Greece can defeat the EU is now very rare; there are very few instances where hope is expressed. In most



cases it is evident that this kind of optimism has almost disappeared, as in Example 7.68, where Greece is subjected through Possessivation in relation to its future, and it is stated that the optimism for this future is now decreased, along with the activism in Greece.

Example 7.68

Optimism about the future of Greece has markedly decreased as has activism across the left and radical spectrum.

<b>Greece subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>(Optimism for)the future of Greece</i>	<i>has markedly decreased</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material Process</b>

**a) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the September BC**

There are certain conclusions to be drawn by the subjected instances in the September BC:

- i. Blogs in September continue to depict Greece as pressured by more powerful social actors within the EU, often portrayed as being blackmailed into accepting harsh economic measures.
- ii. Their discourse emphasizes the destructive impact of these measures on Greek society and economy, portraying Greece as a victim suffering under the weight of imposed austerity and external control.
- iii. The earlier optimism seen in the blogs about Greece's potential to resist and reform EU-imposed conditions is significantly reduced.

**7.5.2 Representations of the EU in the September subcorpora**

There are not many instances of the EU in the September subcorpus, which is much smaller than the January and July subcorpora. In fact, there are just 32 instances in the

NC and 30 in the BC (Table 7.18), which does not allow for in-depth conclusions. However, as the EU is equally activated and subjected, it seems that its role is not so active in the September elections. This may be due to the fact that the EU does not have to intervene, as Greece has accepted the terms of the bailout and the result of the elections is not going to change that, as all major parties are in agreement in this respect.

Table 7.18. 20 September, EU, NC and BC

Lexical Item	Activated		Subjected		Beneficialized		Circumstantialized	
	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC	NC	BC
EU Total: NC=32 BC=30	37.50% N=12	33.33% N=10	31.25% N=10	46.67% N=14	N=0	N=0	31.25% N=10	20.00% N=6

There are 12 activations instances in the NC and 10 in the BC. The EU is mainly activated through Possessivation in the NC and as an Actor in a Material Process in the BC, an indication that its agency is backgrounded in the newspapers, now that the goal of Greece accepting austerity has been achieved, and foregrounded in the blogs who continue to emphasise the EU's negative role in obliging Greece to accept austerity.

Table 7.19. 20 September, EU, NC and BC, Activation

<b>Activated</b> (NC 37.50%, 12 / BC 33.33%, 10)				
	NC (Total 32)		BC (Total 30)	
Actor in a material process	12.50%	N=4	20.00%	N=6
Senser in a mental process	-		-	
Sayer in a verbal process	-		10.00%	N=3
Through possessivation	25.00%	N=8	3.33%	N=1

There are 10 subjection instances in the NC and 14 in the BC (Table 7.20). The EU is mainly subjected through Possessivation in both the NC and the BC.

Table 7.20. 20 September, EU, NC and BC, Subjection

<b>Subjected</b> (NC 31.25%, 10/ BC 43.67%, 14)				
	NC (Total 32)		BC (Total 30)	
Goal in a material process	-		6.67%	N=2
Carrier in a relational process	-		6.67%	N=2
Through possessivation	31.25%	N=10	33.33%	N=10

### 7.5.2.1 Activation of the EU in the September NC

#### a) Cases where the EU is activated in the September NC

The EU in the activated sentences is represented as the social actor which has determined the policies that the elected government in Greece will adopt, as all parties have already accepted the EU bailout plan. The EU's powerful position and influence over Greek policies is emphasised, portraying the EU as controlling and Syriza as being forced to conform, despite previous vows to oppose such measures. In Example 7.69, the EU is activated through Possessivation in relation to its austerity programme, which Syriza will have to implement despite the “painful” cuts it contains.

#### Example 7.69

Some say that is because this time, the election isn't about fighting the EU austerity program but about managing the \$97 billion agreement and implementing the new and painful cuts that Syriza, which came to power vowing to defy Brussels, finally was forced to swallow.

<b>The EU activated through Possessivation</b>	<i>The election</i>	<i>isn't</i>	<i>(about fighting) the EU austerity program</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>

The EU's role extends beyond simply offering a bailout package; it also dictates the terms and enforces consequences for non-compliance. In Example 7.70, it is activated through Possessivation, in relation to its reaction, highlighting its anticipated stern response to any Greek deviations from the stipulated rules. In Example 7.71, the EU is subjected through Possessivation in relation to its “tricky politics”, which the next Prime Minister will have to “navigate” or risk being expelled from the Eurozone.

#### Example 7.70

If this time rules agreed to are not respected, the reaction of the European Union and the eurozone will be different.

#### Example 7.71

The next prime minister will have to navigate the tricky politics of the European Union at a time when some European leaders have made clear that their patience for keeping Greece in the eurozone is running out.

<b>The EU activated through Possessivation</b>			<i>The reaction of the EU</i>	<i>will be</i>	<i>different</i>
	<i>The next Prime Minister</i>	<i>will have to navigate</i>	<i>the tricky politics of the EU</i>		
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Attribute</b>

### b) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the September BC

In the subjected cases of the EU in the September NC, what is mainly stressed is the EU's dominance and the forced compliance of Greece.

- i. The EU is portrayed as a decisive force, influencing Greece's political decisions significantly. All political parties in Greece have accepted the EU's bailout terms, which solidifies the EU's influence and control over Greek policies.
- ii. The representation of the EU emphasizes its authority and the inevitability of its policies, framing Greece as a passive recipient rather than an active participant. The EU's response to deviations from its rules is highlighted as stringent, enforcing compliance and shaping the trajectory of Greek governance.

### 7.5.2.2 Subjection of the EU in the September NC

#### a) Cases where the EU is subjected in the September NC

In the subjected instances, the EU is consistently represented as a powerful and influential actor. All instances of subjection are through Possessivation, representing the EU as exerting absolute control over Greece, underscoring the EU's dominance.

In Example 7.72 the EU is subjected through possessivation in relation to its officials, who are in the position to warn Athens that there is no room for negotiating. In Example

7.73 the Possessivation occurs in relation to EU ‘sources’ express opinions as to who they prefer to be elected, revealing a deep involvement in Greek political affairs.

On both Examples verbal processes are involved, with EU officials and EU sources dictating what should be done regarding the elections.

Example 7.72

In the runup to the “express” election, EU officials have insisted that bailout commitments leave Athens with almost no room for manoeuvre.

Example 7.73

Before what is expected to be an explosive winter, EU sources said it was better the leftist was in government, applying policies, than potentially rabble rousing on the streets.

<b>The EU subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>EU officials</i>	<i>have insisted</i>	<i>that bailout commitments leave Athens with almost no room for manoeuvre.</i>
	<i>EU sources</i>	<i>said</i>	<i>it was better the leftist was in government</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Verbal Process</b>	<b>Verbiage</b>

**b) Concluding remarks from subjected instances in the September NC**

The conclusions drawn by the subjected instances of the EU in the September NC could be summarised as follows:

- i. The EU is consistently portrayed as a powerful and influential actor within the subjected instances, highlighting its dominant role over Greek political and economic decisions.
- ii. The portrayal of the EU across various discussions suggests it not only dictates terms but also heavily influences political outcomes and public policy in Greece. Its directives and preferences significantly shape Greece's political landscape and policy decisions.

### 7.5.2.3 Activation of the EU in the September BC

#### a) Cases where the EU is activated in the September BC

In the BC, the EU is also represented as a dominant social actor that has the power to make decisions. The difference is that the blogs evaluate these decisions negatively and have a very critical stance towards the EU, which is portrayed as authoritarian and imposing. The EU is mainly activated as an Actor in a Material Process in the BC, unlike the NC where it is mainly activated through Possessivation, and therefore the blogs emphasise the EU's agency in the political affairs of Greece instead of backgrounding it.

In Example 7.74, the EU is 'unbending and neoliberal', and demands painful and unjust measures for the Greek society, such as cutbacks in pensions. The EU has the absolute power to dictate Greek policies, to the point that in Example 7.75 it is the Actor in the Material Process of issuing an ultimatum.

#### Example 7.74

6. The negotiations were led in the winter and spring, 2015 by the Greek finance minister, Yanis Varoufakis, who was met by an unbending and neoliberal European Union who demanded even more cutbacks in government spending, especially of pensions for older workers, more privatization and further increases in taxes before they would extend new loans to Greece and help keep the Greek banks from collapsing.

#### Example 7.75

10. The European Union made an ultimatum of take it or leave the Eurozone.

<i>The EU</i>	<i>demanded</i>	<i>even more cutbacks</i>
	<i>made</i>	<i>an ultimatum</i>
<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

#### a) Concluding remarks from activated instances in the September BC

Therefore, in the instances where the EU is activated, its actions are harmful to Greece. More specific conclusions:

- i. In the blogs, the EU is depicted as a dominant and authoritative actor, capable of decisively influencing Greek policy decisions.
- ii. The representation of the EU in the blogs is markedly negative, emphasizing its role in enforcing harsh austerity measures that are viewed as detrimental to Greek society. The blogs explicitly criticize the EU's actions as authoritarian, highlighting its aggressive involvement in Greek affairs.
- iii. The EU's agency is emphasized through its portrayal as an Actor in Material Processes, illustrating its active role in imposing conditions on Greece.

#### **7.5.2.4 Subjection of the EU in the September BC**

##### **a) Cases where the EU is subjected in the September BC**

The subjected cases do not greatly differ from the activated ones as to the negative evaluation of the EU and its actions.

The blogs suggest that what the European peoples need is a different, more progressive European Union, as in Example 7.76 in which the EU is subjected as a Token in a Relational Process. In a number of instances, as in Example 7.77 in which the EU is subjected through Possessivation with regard to its “right wing economics”, it is stated that what is also needed is a strong European Left to change the right-wing economic policies of the EU. The EU is also accused of being designed to affect democracy negatively, and cause a ‘post-democratic regression’, as in Example 7.78, where the EU is subjected through Possessivation in relation to its design.

Example 7.76

Their solution is a more progressive European Union.

<b>Attributive Relational Process</b>	<i>The solution</i>	<i>is</i>	<i>a more progressive European Union</i>
	<b>Carrier</b>	<b>Relational Process</b>	<b>Token</b>

Example 7.77

At the present time, there is not a strong European left capable of effectively challenging the right wing economics of the EU and Eurozone

<b>The EU subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>A strong European left</i>	<i>will challenge</i>	<i>the right wing economics of the EU</i>
	<b>Actor</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Possessivation</b>

Example 7.78

Especially when we take into account – as Nobile points out – that the problem of the balance of power in Europe is further complicated by another issue: ‘on the one side, the post-democratic regression of national political regimes; on the other, the institutional design of the European Union and monetary union, which constitutionalises post-democracy at a much higher level.

<b>The EU subjected through Possessivation</b>	<i>the institutional design of the European Union</i>	<i>constitutionalises</i>	<i>post-democracy</i>
	<b>Possessivation</b>	<b>Material Process</b>	<b>Goal</b>

It is apparent that in the blogs there exists a view that the design and policies of the EU have a negative impact on member states and that there should be a transition to a more left-wing and democratic EU. More specifically:

- i. The subjected instances of the EU in the blogs are consistently negative, mirroring the critical tone seen in the activated cases.



- ii. The blogs articulate a vision for a reformed European Union, advocating for a shift towards more progressive policies that better meet the needs of the European peoples.
- iii. A recurring theme is the need for a robust European Left to counteract the prevailing right-wing economic policies enforced by the EU, suggesting a desire for significant political and economic changes within the Union.

## **7.6 Conclusions**

The analysis of the instances of Greece and the EU shows that the findings are largely consistent with the bibliography on the views of the EU and its member states. More specifically:

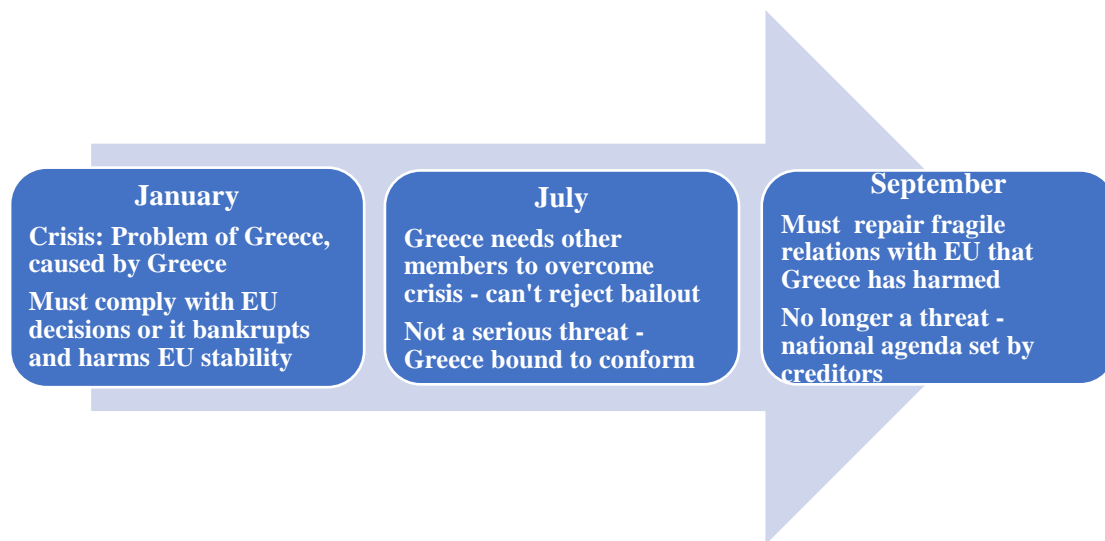
- i. The EU is seen in the corpora as consisting of core and peripheral members. Greece is a peripheral, weak member, while countries such as Germany are the strong economies and core members of the EU.
- ii. The member states are approaching the economic crisis in Greece from the perspective of national interests.
- iii. The media reinforces this lack of collective European identity by reporting the news from a strictly national perspective, thus exacerbating the conflict.
- iv. The EU is a more powerful social actor than Greece and can determine the country's future.

In all three periods, these aspects are present in both mainstream and alternative media. However, there are also features that differ between the two types of media and across the three periods.

### 7.6.1 Representations of Greece in the NC

The representations of Greece in the newspapers in the three periods are depicted in Graph 7.1.

Graph 7.1 Representations of Greece in the newspapers



The newspapers represent Greece as a weak member of the European Union, necessitating support from other members to avert bankruptcy. This portrayal obliges Greece to adhere to the demands of the EU. The economic troubles of Greece are often characterized not as systemic failures but as the result of poor policy choices by the country itself.

In the January NC, Greece is viewed as a threat to the stability of the EU, and it is claimed that the outcome of the elections could be detrimental to the country and the European Union as a whole if the new government deviates from the bailout programme. Greece is a problematic peripheral member that is causing damage to the core members and stronger economies of the EU.

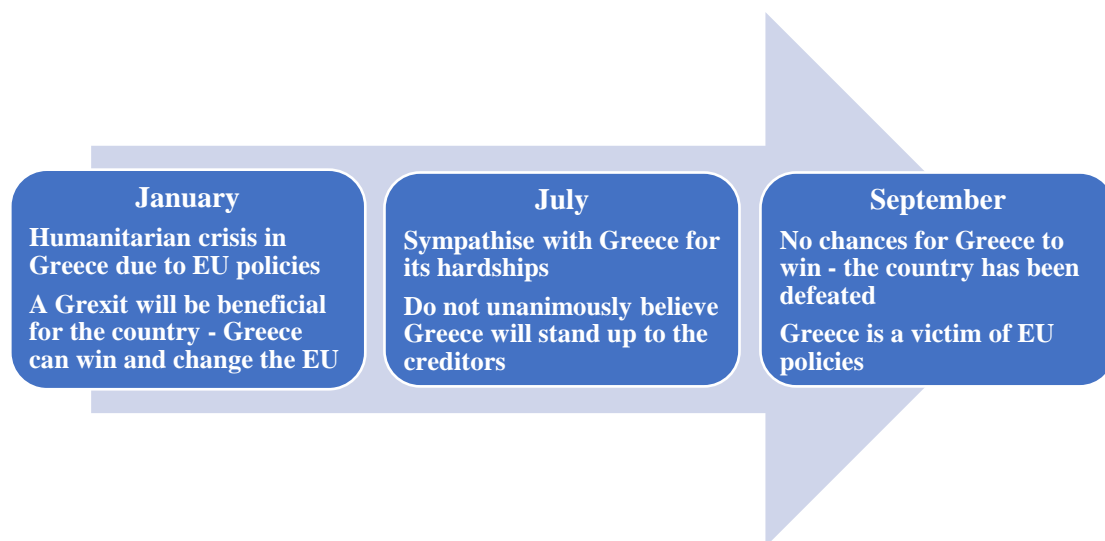
In the July NC, the same narrative for blaming Greece is adopted, but this time the country is not seen as posing as big a threat - the creditors are more powerful and Greece will eventually have to comply.

In the September NC, Greece is a considerably less important social actor. There are no doubts that they will implement the programme dictated by the EU and the creditors. Greece is hardly a threat anymore as the national agenda is completely set by the EU.

### 7.6.2 Representations of Greece in the BC

The representations of Greece in the blogs in the three periods are depicted in Graph 7.2.

Graph 7.2 Representations of Greece in the blogs



In the BC, Greece is represented as a victim, not a culprit. The crisis is attributed to systemic causes and the exploitation of weak members by stronger members. The EU is the source of Greece's problems, so a Grexit would be beneficial.

In the January BC, there is faith in Greece's potential to confront the EU and optimism for the country's future. Grexit is a real possibility that will put an end to the problems

of Greece and even contribute to the transformation of the EU into a more progressive institution.

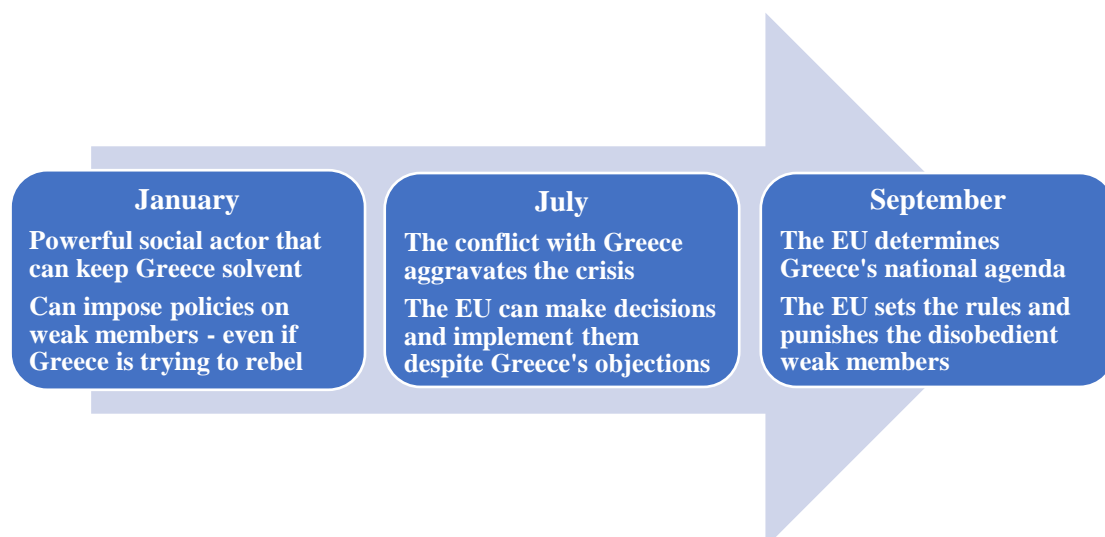
In the July BC, there is still sympathy for Greece's hardship, but optimism about the future is not unanimous. The belief that Greece will prevail over its creditors is far less widespread - although leaving the EU is still seen as the best option for the country.

In the September BC, Greece is plainly the victim of the political manoeuvres of the strong members and has been defeated. There is no room for optimism, Greece can not anymore represent a hope for the peoples of Europe to change the neoliberal course of the EU, a belief that was widely held in the January BC.

### 7.6.3 Representations of the EU in the NC

The representations of the EU in the newspapers in the three periods are depicted in Graph 7.3.

Graph 7.3 Representations of the EU in the newspapers



The EU is generally represented as a powerful and respected social actor in the NC in all three periods. It is the social actor that is bailing out the Greek economy and

demanding from Greece measures to ensure that its economy is made solvent again.

The measures are harsh but necessary and Greece must comply.

In the January NC, the EU is threatened by the irresponsible behaviour of Greece, but it is a powerful social actor that can restore the normality of the state of affairs.

It is to the advantage of the weak members to follow the EU's lead in order to overcome any problems they may be facing.

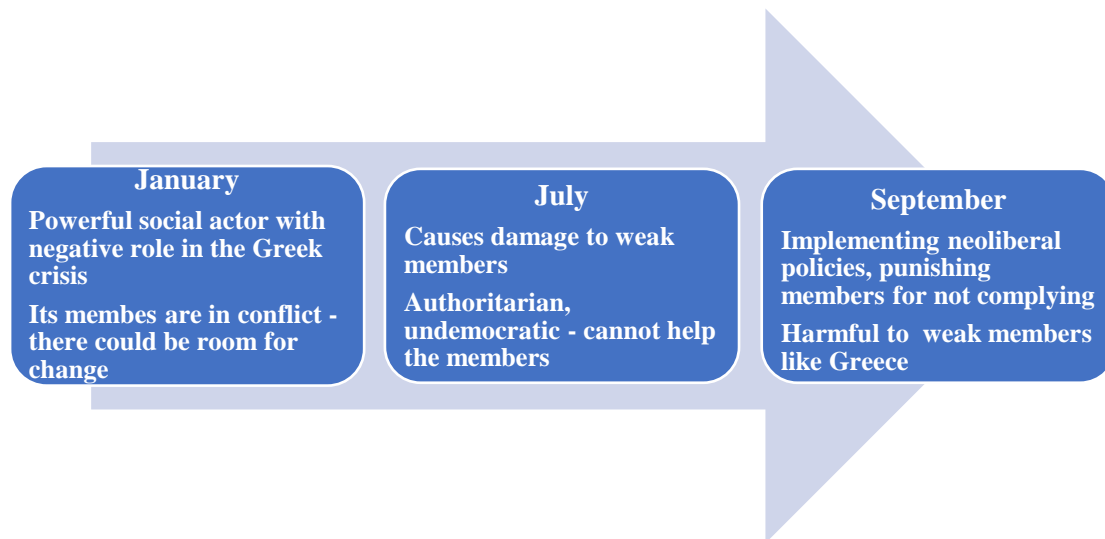
In the July NC, the representation is largely identical to that of January - the EU is still portrayed as a powerful actor. The EU's leadership is less threatened by Greece, which will most certainly comply.

In the September NC there is no dispute that the EU is the absolute leader and weak members like Greece cannot oppose its will. The EU now completely sets the agenda for Greece.

#### **7.6.4 Representations of the EU in the BC**

The representations of the EU in the blogs in the three periods are depicted in Graph 7.4.

Graph 7.4 Representations of the EU in the blogs



The EU is portrayed in the blogs as a powerful institution that oppresses and exploits its weakest members. The EU is responsible for the economic crisis in Greece and is imposing austerity measures on the country because it is a neoliberal institution. The EU is indifferent to the devastating consequences of the dictated policies on the Greek society.

In the January BC, the negative role of the EU in the Greek crisis is emphasised. The EU is portrayed as an institution whose members do not function in harmony but are in constant contention and have conflicting interests. However, the EU could be threatened by Greece if its government were to decide to defy the EU's demands.

In the July BC, the negative representations of the EU are maintained. The EU is seen as an undemocratic institution that only harms the weaker members. In order for it to be useful to the weak members, it should take a more progressive turn and abandon neoliberal policies. However, it seems to be very powerful for Greece to resist or for any of the weak members to instigate changes.

In the September BC, the EU has prevailed and is not threatened. No turn towards more progressive policies will take place. On the contrary, the EU will remain an authoritarian institution, exploiting Greece and dictating its national agenda.

## CHAPTER 8

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 8.1 Introduction

This thesis has explored the media representations of the economic crisis in Greece during the pivotal election periods of 2015. The January elections marked the rise of Syriza, with their strong anti-austerity stance capturing international attention. The referendum in July centered around the austerity measures in the bailout deal, which heightened tensions between Greece and its European creditors. The elections in September demonstrated that Syriza's revised approach to austerity was a reflection of the intricate political and economic circumstances currently facing the country.

The thesis investigated how the social actors related to the crisis were represented in both mainstream and alternative media across the United States and the United Kingdom. It also examined the differences in the coverage of the events between newspapers and blogs during the three distinct election periods in Greece and offered a comprehensive analysis of the evolving representations of central social actors.

The core objective of this research was to unravel the complex interplay between media discourse and the socio-political landscape in Greece during a time of significant economic and political turmoil. By employing a combination of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL), the study provided a dual analytical lens to examine the ideological underpinnings of linguistic choices in the media. This methodological approach facilitated a detailed exploration of how austerity, as the dominant policy response to the crisis, was either challenged or reinforced through media representations.



As we transition into the discussion and conclusions of these findings, it is imperative to reflect on the initial questions that guided the research. The questions focused on the representation of key social actors and the differences of these representations between mainstream and alternative media and across the three election periods. More specifically the research questions were:

1. Who are the most prominent social actors in the corpora and how are they represented in the mainstream and alternative media?
2. How do representations of prominent social actors differ in mainstream and alternative media?
3. How do representations of prominent social actors differ across the three election periods?
4. How does stance towards austerity affect representations of the other social actors in mainstream and alternative media?

The next sections will recapitulate the theoretical foundation and methodological process of this study, and present detailed answers to the research questions derived from the analysis. This chapter also examines the study's contributions to corpus-based Critical Discourse Analysis, particularly through the application of Halliday's Transitivity Theory and van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors framework. In addition, it presents the study's limitations and possible extensions for future research.

## **8.2 Reflecting on the research process**

The theoretical foundation of this thesis primarily draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and integrates Corpus Linguistics (CL) to examine media discourse surrounding the economic crisis in Greece. CDA is rooted in a critical theory tradition that aims to uncover implicit social relationships, power structures, and ideologies embedded within

texts. As posited by scholars such as Fairclough (1995, 2010) and Van Dijk (2001), CDA explores the intricate ways in which language influences societal structures and helps to maintain or challenge existing power dynamics. This approach is crucial for analysing how language in media representations shapes public understanding and attitudes towards socio-economic crises.

Corpus Linguistics provides a methodological complement to CDA, offering tools for the systematic analysis of large text collections through computational techniques. By quantifying linguistic features across extensive data, CL allows for the empirical verification of patterns that CDA theorises qualitatively. This synergy enhances the robustness of CDA, facilitating a more objective examination of media language and its potential ideological effects (Baker, 2006; Partington, 2004). The findings of this study also confirm the effectiveness of this synergy.

In this thesis, the combination of CDA and CL was strategically employed to dissect media representations of central social actors of the economic crisis in Greece during the three critical electoral periods in 2015. This methodological framework was crucial in examining the layers of discourse that shaped public and international perspectives on the crisis.

The application of CDA allowed for an in-depth qualitative analysis of ideological stances within the media texts, revealing how social actors were represented. The incorporation of CL, on the other hand, provided a quantitative assessment that bolstered the qualitative findings, allowing for a more rigorous examination of discourse patterns across the extensive corpus.

A specific challenge encountered in combining these methods involved aligning the detailed, interpretative analysis of CDA with the broad, quantitative output of CL. At

times, the elements of discourse uncovered through CDA were difficult to quantify in CL terms. Furthermore, the reliance on frequency lists meant that some less frequent but potentially significant social actors might have been underrepresented in the analysis.

The adopted methodological approach has demonstrated significant utility in bridging the gap between qualitative and quantitative discourse analysis, providing a view that is both detailed and validated through empirical data. Using corpus tools has made it possible to examine an extensive corpus of a total of 224,828 words; with such a large corpus of all the articles written about the elections in the selected newspapers and blogs, it was possible to obtain a solid overview of the main themes that dominated the discussion.

Moreover, the application of van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors framework (1996) and Halliday's Transitivity Theory (1985) for the qualitative analysis of the most frequently mentioned social actors in the corpus yielded interesting and varied findings.

This approach was particularly valuable in revealing how media variously positioned these actors as agents or patients within actions, thus shaping representations around blame, responsibility, and capability. The transitivity analysis also illuminated how the representations shifted over time, reflecting changing political dynamics and media attitudes towards the actors. The primary limitation of this aspect of the methodology was the interpretive complexity involved in the analysis.

This detailed focus on grammatical structures offers profound insights into how language functions to construct social realities in media discourse and underscores the importance of linguistic choices in shaping public opinion and policy discourse.

### **8.3 Research Question 1: Prominent Social Actors in the Mainstream and Alternative Media**

In addressing the first research question regarding who the most prominent social actors in the corpora are, the study employed Corpus Linguistics methodologies to systematically analyse the data. The process for determining the importance of social actors involved several key steps.

First, a corpus was compiled consisting of articles from both mainstream and alternative media sources, published during the significant periods surrounding the 2015 Greek elections. Then, using corpus analysis tools, a frequency analysis was conducted on each subcorpus, generating frequency lists for all six subcorpora, namely January Newspaper Corpus (NC) and Blog Corpus (BC), July NC and BC, and September NC and BC.

In the analysis of the frequency lists generated from the corpora, it was apparent that the majority of nouns and adjectives clustered into four primary thematic categories: country-related, party-related, economy-related, and Europe-related. This classification emerged as a consistent pattern across the texts, encapsulating the core focus areas within the media discourse. The country-related category included lexical items specific to Greece and its people. The party-related category encompassed mentions of political parties, particularly Syriza, and key political figures. The economy-related category comprised lexical items associated with economic policies, financial conditions, and austerity measures. Lastly, the Europe-related category featured lexical items related to the European Union and its institutions.

The first two are expected in any national election since journalists naturally refer to the country where the elections take place as well as to the participating political parties.

The economy and EU membership were also important concerns in relation to the elections; since the beginning of the crisis, these two issues have generally monopolised public discourse (Barnes & Hicks, 2018).

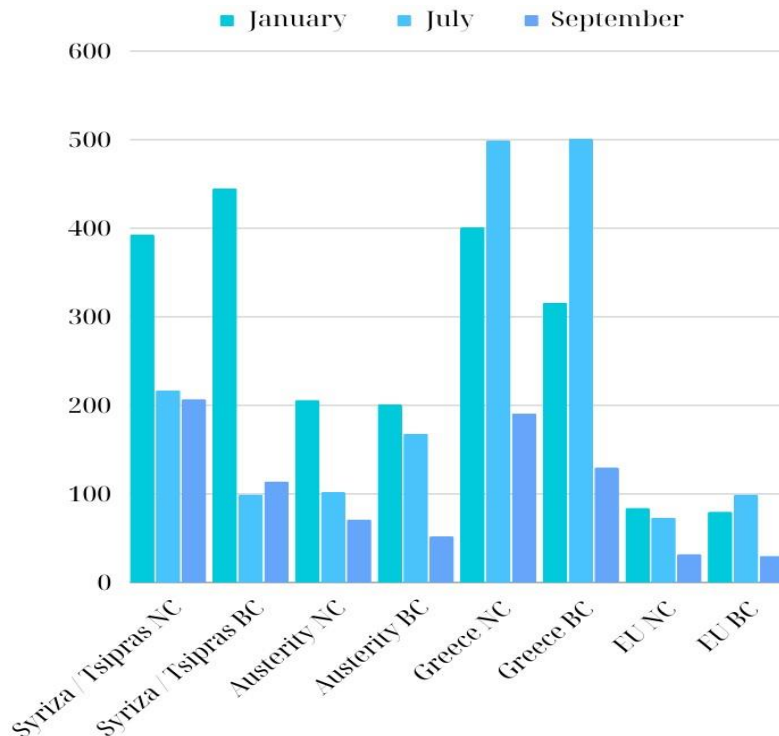
In the January NC, lexical items related to Greece and its people are frequent, almost as frequent as those related to parties. References to the EU and the economy are relatively common, but not as frequent as during the July referendum. This is not surprising as the referendum was mainly about the economic agreement with the EU and other creditors such as the ECB and the IMF. In the September NC, there appears to be a higher frequency of party-related lexical items compared to country-related ones, in contrast to the January elections. Additionally, there are fewer EU-related lexical items in the September elections than in previous periods. This may result from the fact that issues of economic policy and agreements with the EU have been resolved and there is no option but to comply with EU rules, regardless of which party wins the elections. This may explain why the current discourse focuses on the typical aspects of elections, namely the participating parties. Therefore, the frequency lists obtained through corpus analysis tools indicate that newspapers suggest normality has been restored and that the focus of the elections is once again on parties rather than the future of the country.

With regard to the blogs, the general tendencies do not greatly differ from the newspapers, although there are some discernible differences. In all three periods, the percentages of economy and EU-related words are higher in the blogs than in the newspapers. For instance, the September NC shows a low frequency of EU-related words, suggesting that the impact of the EU may be considered irrelevant at present. In the blogs, the percentage does not decrease as much compared to previous periods.

The analysis of the frequency lists identified the most prominent social actors, one from each category, selected for detailed examination as Greece, the European Union, and austerity, consistently across all election periods. Additionally, Syriza and Alexis Tsipras emerged as significant social actors but varied in their prominence depending on the specific election period. Specifically, Syriza was a focal point in the January and September election periods, reflecting its central role in the political landscape during these times. In contrast, Alexis Tsipras was more prominently mentioned than Syriza in the July election period, highlighting his personal influence and leadership during the critical referendum.

The rate of occurrences of each of these social actors in the subcorpora is illustrated in Chart 8.1 below.

Chart 8.1 Occurrences of the social actors in January, July and September NC and BC.



The Chart illustrates a significant similarity between the mainstream and alternative media subcorpora for all social actors and in all periods. Syriza appeared far more

frequently in January NC and BC, especially the BC, compared to Tsipras in July and Syriza in September. In July and September NC, the instances of Tsipras and Syriza are higher than in July and September BC respectively. It is notable that the September subcorpus is markedly smaller than the others, which is indicative of a decline in international interest in the economic crisis in Greece. Overall, we can safely assume that Syriza was a much more important actor for the blogs in January, when the discussion about the party was very extensive; it was at that time that Syriza was expected to bring about a significant political change. The blogs showed a significant interest in Syriza in January, which declined considerably afterwards, more so than the newspapers.

The discussion about austerity is gradually decreasing from period to period in both the NC and the BC, the only notable difference being that it is still quite high in the July BC, while in the July NC it has decreased significantly. This variation may suggest that the newspapers are representing austerity more as an inevitable economic policy rather than a subject of debate. As a result, there is less emphasis on explicitly naming it, reinforcing its presentation as the only viable option.

References to Greece are frequent in January and even more so in July, with a decrease in September due to the smaller size of the September subcorpus, which in turn is due to the less emphasis the media placed on Greece. The relevance of the country in which elections take place, however, is always a pertinent aspect of the discussion.

The number of occurrences of the EU is comparable in the NC and the BC. The only difference is that while in the NC it gradually becomes less significant, in the BC the frequency is higher in July than in January and decreases again in September.

While the first part of the first research question about who the most prominent social actors are, was answered with corpus linguistics analysis, the second part of the question (how these social actors are represented in the corpora) required qualitative analysis, which was carried out using van Leeuwen's Representation of Social Actors (1996), more specifically Role Allocation, and Halliday's Transitivity Theory (1985).

Representation of Social Actors, as conceptualized by van Leeuwen, refers to the ways in which individuals and groups are depicted in discourse. Representation can include various dimensions, one of which is Role Allocation, which focuses on the roles assigned to different actors in discourse. This involves determining whether actors are represented as active participants in events or as passive recipients of actions. Each of the representational choices are tied to specific linguistic or rhetorical realisations (van Leeuwen, 1996). This framework is valuable for understanding how media narratives construct identities and roles for various social actors within a given context.

Halliday's Transitivity Theory is a fundamental component of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and examines how actions, events, and states are represented in language. Transitivity analysis focuses on the types of processes (such as material, mental, relational, and verbal processes), the participants that are involved, and the circumstances surrounding these processes. In this study, transitivity analysis was used to dissect how media narratives construct the actions and attributes of the key social actors.

This thesis focused on cases of activation and subjection to analyse the representation of key social actors during the economic crisis in Greece. By applying Role Allocation, the study identified instances in the subcorpora where these actors were activated, subjected, beneficialised or circumstantialised. Transitivity analysis was then employed



to examine the specific processes associated with these roles, providing insights into how the media constructs their actions and influence.

Chart 8.2 below depicts the percentages of activation of all four social actors in the January, July and September NC and BC. The initial observation to be noted is that, in almost all cases, the percentages in the NC and BC are similar. However, a notable exception is the EU, which is significantly more activated in the January NC compared to the January BC. This disparity underscores the central role that mainstream media attribute to the EU in Greek affairs, highlighting its perceived dominance and influence in shaping economic policies during the crisis.

In the January subcorpora, Syriza is mainly activated, in the July subcorpora Tsipras is activated even more often, while in September there is a significant drop in activated rates. Chapter 5 demonstrated that Syriza played a more central role in the events of January and July. However, by September, they had lost the ability to effect change, which is reflected in the low activation rate.

The activation rate of austerity is negligible. This could be due to the fact that austerity is seen as an instrument of change rather than an actor. In order to show that austerity is in fact an important actor, and that it even occupies a central position, a more detailed analysis was required, based on Transitivity Theory and Representation of Social Actors.

The activation percentages of Greece are also low in all subcorpora. Greece is a struggling member of the EU, currently facing a severe crisis and having to implement decisions made by others. As expected, the EU is more frequently activated and therefore represented as a more powerful social actor.

Chart 8.2 Activation percentages of the social actors in January, July and September NC and BC.

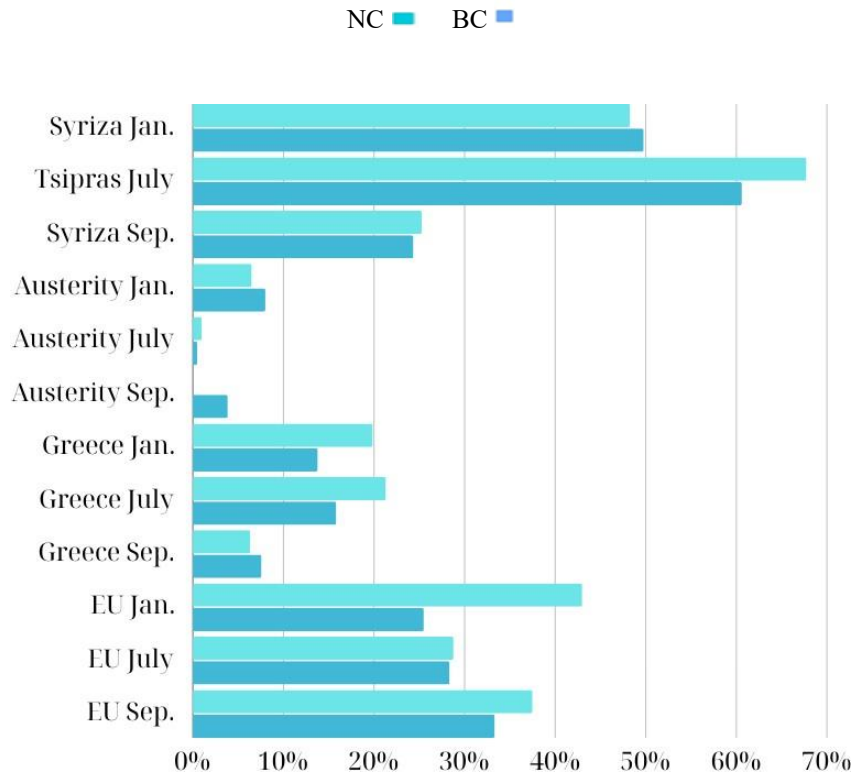
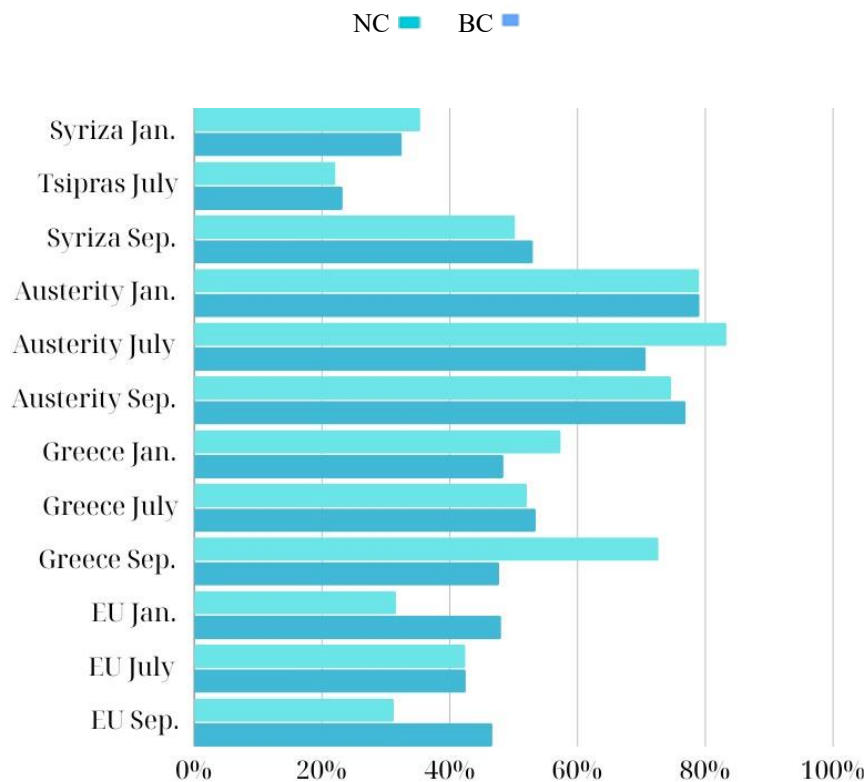


Chart 8.3 shows the percentages of subjection for all social actors in all subcorpora. The chart presents no significant discrepancies between the NC and the BC, with the exception of Greece's subjection percentage in September, which is much higher in the NC than in the BC.

Syriza's subjection rate is higher in September, when they have already signed the memorandum agreement, and thus the party is not expected to play a vital role in the economic policies adopted by Greece, and lower in July, when Tsipras has taken initiative and announced the referendum. Austerity is mainly subjected in all subcorpora. Greece has high percentages of subjections in all subcorpora, particularly in the September NC. The EU is subjected at a lower rate in comparison to Greece in all subcorpora.

Chart 8.3 Subjection percentages of the social actors in January, July and September NC and BC.



Transitivity analysis allowed for a detailed examination of the processes described in the media texts, identifying whether actors were represented as initiating actions or being affected by them. By analyzing the processes in which the social actors were involved, the study uncovered the different ways in which agency and passivity were linguistically constructed. This methodological approach was essential in revealing the ideological underpinnings of media discourse during the Greek economic crisis.

Regarding activation, an important category of realisation of activation which emerged from the analysis was activation as an Actor in a Material Process. Syriza and Tsipras were often depicted as actors in material processes, especially in alternative media. For example, Syriza was frequently portrayed as "implementing policies" or "challenging austerity," emphasizing their agency and proactive stance against economic measures.

In mainstream media, the EU was often activated as an actor in material processes, such as "imposing austerity measures" or "enforcing fiscal policies," highlighting its authoritative role in managing the economic crisis.

In several instances, Tsipras was activated as a Senser in a Mental Process, such as "considering options" or "evaluating strategies," particularly during the critical decision-making period of the referendum. This representation reflects his cognitive engagement and leadership in navigating the crisis.

Tsipras and Syriza were also activated as a Sayer in a Verbal Process such as "announcing policies" or "negotiating terms," which underscores their communicative roles and efforts to influence public opinion and policy outcomes.

EU Officials were also often activated in verbal processes like "demanding compliance" or "reaffirming commitments," emphasizing their authoritative voice and directive role in the austerity measures.

Regarding subjection, Greece is frequently subjected through Possessivation, and therefore represented as a passive recipient of external actions. For instance, the media often referenced "Greece's economy" or "Greece's leaders", indirectly representing Greece as being affected by external forces. Such instances of possessivation show background subjection by emphasising what Greece has or what it endures, rather than depicting it as an active agent. This method of representation highlights Greece's lack of agency and represents the country as being subjected to external economic policies and decisions, underscoring the power dynamics at play and Greece's subordinate position.

Syriza is often subjected, especially in blogs, in relational processes, portrayed as "being the anti-austerity party" or "representing the people's will." These relational

clauses help construct their identity and ideological stance in the media discourse. In contrast, newspapers tend to avoid direct characterizations through relational processes, opting instead for more indirect characterisations through actions. For example, Syriza is presented in the January NC as a dangerous party, but this is not realised through relational processes, attributing negative traits to Syriza. Instead, the party is represented as the actor in material processes that involve danger, as risking the recovery of Greece's economy or the stability of the EU. This strategic avoidance serves to maintain a veneer of objectivity, while subtly influencing the reader's perception of Syriza and its political stance.

The EU is frequently represented in relational processes in newspapers as "the stabilising force" or "the enforcer," solidifying its role and identity as a key player in the economic governance of Greece. This portrayal emphasizes the EU's authority and responsibility in maintaining economic stability. Conversely, blogs often represent the EU as a Carrier in Relational Processes which emphasise its imposing and authoritative nature. The EU is depicted as "imposing austerity measures" or "dictating economic policies," presenting it as an external force exerting control over Greece. These relational clauses in blogs highlight the EU's coercive role, portraying it as prioritising financial discipline over the welfare of the Greek populace.

These findings were integral in demonstrating the differential treatment of social actors across the different types of media under investigation. Transitivity analysis revealed how linguistic choices in media texts constructed varying degrees of agency, responsibility, and ideological positioning. By systematically categorising these activations and subjections, the study highlighted the varied ways in which media representations influence public perception and political discourse during the Greek

economic crisis, uncovering the biases and allowing for a detailed understanding of the power dynamics at play and the role of language in shaping socio-political realities.

## **8.4 Research Question 2: Representations of Prominent Social Actors in Mainstream and Alternative Media**

### **8.4.1 Representations of Greece**

As discussed extensively in the literature review, previous research has shown that Greece, especially during the first years of the crisis, was represented in mainstream media in a negative light (see for example Kutter 2014, Herzfeld 2011, Tzogopoulos 2013). This was observed mainly in the mainstream media, as research in the alternative media is very limited. Greece was portrayed as a corrupt country, with corrupt politicians and citizens who lived beyond their means (for example, Kaitatzi 2014, Antoniadis 2012). This was attributed to cultural characteristics. The causes of the crisis were therefore not of a systemic nature, but were related to the weaknesses of the country (for example, Bickes et al. 2014, Tseronis 2015).

In the analysis of 2015 articles, representations proved to be less hostile. The focus was on the weaknesses of the economy rather than the corrupt nature of the country. This could be explained by the fact that, at the beginning of the crisis, the strict measures and reforms had to be justified and presented as essential, and the negative impact on the lives of Greek citizens had to be seen as punishment for their previous reckless behaviour, which naturally led to the current circumstances. The aim of the narrative was to prove that the suffering of the Greek people was entirely due to their own mistakes, and thus to legitimise the economic policies that were being pursued (Hadjimichalis, 2018).

By 2015, the measures had been in place for five years and this was an established state of affairs. The justification of the adopted measures was not required. The issue at hand was the uninterrupted continuation of the acceptance of agreements with creditors, reforms, and privatizations. Consequently, the weak Greek economy was portrayed as a threat to the stronger EU economies, and it was claimed that the peoples of Europe would suffer if Greece did not comply. There was no room for sympathy towards the people of Greece, as according to the mainstream narrative, non-compliance would harm others as well. In the three election periods of 2015, the focus has turned to austerity, which is now of greater importance than placing the blame for the origins of the crisis on 'Greek culture'.

Regarding the NC, the 'living beyond their means' argument has subsided, although it can still be found in certain instances. The financial situation of Greece is represented as the most pressing issue, and it is considered necessary to implement the measures dictated in the agreements with the EU, proceed with the necessary reforms, and repay the debt.

In January, Greece is portrayed as an unreliable debtor that requires constant surveillance to ensure repayment to creditors. Additionally, Greece is depicted as a weak peripheral member of the EU that may cause damage to the core members. In many instances, Greece is the Actor in a Material Process in actions that cause Greece to collide with Europe and which are self-destructive. The crisis is often viewed as a problem specific to Greece. It is argued that Greece must comply, otherwise it may face expulsion from the Eurozone and potentially from the EU, which would have disastrous effects on the country. The majority of instances of subjection are associated with financial concerns, with Greece as a Goal facing the prospect of economic devastation

or the possibility of being expelled from the Eurozone as a result of the actions of the anti-austerity party, Syriza, or the influence of the EU.

In the July NC there is criticism of Greece for defaulting on a payment and causing further problems for the EU with the referendum. Greece has been accused of implementing economically unsound policies in the past and present, which have resulted in the country's current unfavourable economic circumstances. It is argued that the decision on whether to accept the agreement should not be left to the Greek people, as the country is dependent on the support of other EU members for its survival and must therefore follow their directives.

The selected newspapers do not support the view that Grexit is a real possibility, as Greece is expected to comply in the end, since the country is currently in conflict with more powerful actors. In fact, in a number of cases where Greece is an Actor in a Material Process, it is allocated the role of introducing the reforms and cuts that the creditors demand, thus highlighting the active role of the country itself in the aforementioned reforms.

In relational clauses where Greece is the Carrier, which are typically clauses used to characterise and assess, there is often a focus on disaster discourse. This is evidenced by the use of terms such as "horror show" and "financial limbo," which indicate that there is an imminent danger for Greece to worsen its situation if it does not comply.

In September, Greece becomes a less prominent social actor as the creditors take the lead and dictate what actions should be taken. This is reflected in the even lower activation rate of Greece in September. Moreover, the activated instances in the September NC emphasize a state that is more responsive than initiative-taking, concentrating on fulfilling current commitments rather than disputing or revising them.



The elections in Greece will not be a decisive factor in the country's economic policy, as decisions cannot be made by Greece alone. The EU has decided on bailout terms, reforms, and debt repayment, which Greece must comply with. The newspapers view this as a positive development because it suggests that the Eurozone has avoided danger and stability will be restored.

To summarise, although the criticism of the people of Greece is less severe, the newspapers focus on the dire financial situation and the idea that there is no alternative. Austerity and reforms are presented as the only viable solution to Greece's problems. Compared to previous research, there has been a shift in emphasis. However, the country is still negatively represented as a source of problems.

The representations of Greece in the blogs are very different. In the January BC, Greece is not represented as the source of the crisis, but as a country suffering from a crisis caused by systemic failure, and in addition suffering the economic and social consequences of the ineffective and disastrous policies imposed by the creditors, policies that were supposed to be the remedy for the crisis. The blogs point to a humanitarian crisis in the Greek society, while in the newspapers there is no reference at all, the issue of the consequences of austerity policies is ignored and possibly seen as irrelevant.

Greece is represented as a country that has stood up to stronger EU members and is resisting the imposed neoliberal policies. Optimism is expressed in the blogs that Greece can successfully confront its creditors and set an example for other weak economies in the EU facing similar problems. The country is frequently the Actor in the Material Process of leaving the Euro and devaluing, which in the blogs is seen as an action from which the country will benefit. Greece is portrayed as a social actor that

is not powerful but can successfully stand up to more powerful social actors and pave the way for others to do so. As a Goal, Greece is represented as led into depression and a humanitarian crisis by actors such as austerity and the creditors.

The representations in July are similar in certain respects. Greece is depicted as a country that is being mistreated, with more powerful actors imposing destructive policies. The references to the consequences of austerity are still very frequent. Greece is frequently represented as a Carrier in a Relational Process, in which cases frequently vivid metaphors are employed to dramatise the situation, and where the country's vulnerable state, endangered by creditors, is underscored.

However, optimism regarding the outcome of the conflict has diminished. There are still some instances where admiration is expressed for Greece for standing up to its powerful opponents who are trying to intimidate it into accepting their demands. Nevertheless, in most cases, doubts are expressed about Greece's chances of winning this conflict. Criticism has been levelled at the country for losing valuable time, which has put it in a more difficult position, and for a perceived lack of decisiveness. The country is no longer seen as a beacon of hope for change in Europe, but rather as a nation in a weak negotiating position.

The blogs also represent Greece as the victim of media propaganda, who repeatedly use the 'spendthrift' argument and accuse the country and its people of having caused the crisis. Mainstream media is also accused of attempting to frighten Greek citizens into voting 'Yes'. However, the blogs do not assert as strongly as they did in January that Grexit would be advantageous. The prevailing opinion is that valuable time has been wasted and that the situation is now more challenging.

There is little interest in Greece among blogs, as evidenced by the relatively low number of articles written about the September elections compared to the previous periods. Greece is not a significant actor in the European economic policies. It is a country that has faced defeat and missed the opportunity to influence the course of these policies. Its only option now is to comply. There are still some instances in which optimism is expressed that the referendum can bring about positive change, but those cases are rare.

#### **8.4.2 Representations of the EU**

Previous research on the EU has shown that although the formation of a European identity was considered crucial for the effective completion of the Union (D'Haenes, 2003; Mendez & Bachter, 2016; Risse, 2003), national identities were far more important and emphasised in the news of each member country (Mendez & Bachter, 2016), which did not help European citizens to develop a sense of European identity. In fact, news on European affairs have consistently been found to be reported in the media of the member states through the prism of national interests (Clement, 2005).

Furthermore, the media portray the EU as a non-uniform institution. The EU is represented as an organization of core and peripheral member states, who are in conflict and struggling for power, which differs greatly from the European vision of justice and unity (Oberhuber et al., 2005).

The findings of this study with regard to the representation of the EU, especially in the NC, are in line with what has been discussed above with regard to previous relevant literature. The findings of this study indicate that in the NC, there is a clear distinction between Greece and other Southern European countries on the one hand, and the strong economies on the other, which are obliged to contribute more to bailing out the Greek banks.

In this thesis, the reality of the EU is often depicted as prioritising national interests over the vision of a united Europe. It highlights media representations that align with this perspective, portraying the European Union not as a cohesive entity but as an institution where member states primarily pursue their own interests. In this context, mainstream media often depict Greece as a threat to the stability of other member states, while alternative media portray Greece as a victim oppressed by more powerful nations. These representations emphasize the EU's role as an enforcer of austerity measures, showcasing the power dynamics and conflicts within the union rather than a sense of genuine unity. The European Union is depicted not as a genuine union, but rather as an institution in which members pursue their own interests.

The results of the analysis of the newspaper subcorpora indicate that the EU is represented as a strong and stabilising force. In January, when the conflict with Greece is more tense and the outcome more uncertain, the newspapers emphasise the role of the EU, which provided financial assistance to the Greek banks and is currently supporting the Greek economy. It has the authority to determine the terms and expects them to be respected. As an Actor in material processes, the EU is the enforcer of economic directives in Greece, underscoring its significant influence in shaping Greek economic policies during the crisis. The EU is a very important social actor who played a significant role in mitigating the impact of the Greek crisis and as such, they may have a legitimate interest in influencing Greek politics.

The relationship between the EU and Greece is strained, but the EU does not acquiesce to demands. It becomes clear that the EU consists of both strong and weak members, with Greece being among the weaker ones. The majority of the subjected cases concentrate on the EU's involvement with Greece, particularly in relation to the discussions surrounding austerity measures and the policies of Syriza.

The same representations are apparent in the July NC. In fact, the newspapers maintain a consistent representation of the EU across all three periods. It is argued that the extension of the agreement is within the power of the EU and is dependent on Greece's actions. It is an institution for decision-making, not decision-following. Therefore, the will of the Greek people does not supersede it. The newspapers undermine the referendum by portraying it as having less decisive power than other players.

The September NC expresses a similar notion that the elections will not have any impact on the economic policies and that the agreement with the EU will be respected. The central role of the EU is no longer emphasised to the same degree, as the desired outcome has already been accomplished. Austerity policies will be followed without interruption.

On the contrary, the EU in the blogs is consistently negatively represented. While the newspapers acknowledge the EU's involvement in decision-making in Greece as a necessary and beneficial intervention, the blogs represent the EU as an authoritative and undemocratic institution whose interference is having negative results. As an Actor, the EU is not only shown as enforcing austerity but also critiqued for the adverse outcomes of these policies.

The blogs represent the EU as consisting of strong core members and weak peripheral members, in line with previous research on representations of the EU; however, they argue that the strong members, especially Germany, oppress and exploit the weak members for their own interests. The role of the EU is not to offer stability to its members, and in fact, weaker members may be harmed by their participation.

Yet the EU is not seen as invincible in the January blogs. While it is undoubtedly powerful, it is not as rigid as it is often portrayed in newspapers. The weaker members have opportunities to escape from its oppressive hegemony.

In July the EU is still widely represented as authoritarian and undemocratic, and as enforcing the will of the dominant capitalists. The EU has had a negative impact on the economies of weaker member states, for instance by requiring them to halt their industrial and agricultural production, which is an argument raised in the blogs. It is often claimed that the peripheral members have no rights and they do not participate in the decision-making. Although there are still a number of instances expressing hope, there is much less optimism about defeating the EU, compared to January.

The EU is allocated the role of a Phenomenon in a Mental Process in a significantly high percentage (31.17%) in the BC, while this kind of representation is absent in the NC. This variation indicates that blogs tend to portray the EU in terms of perceptions, beliefs, or mental attitudes, thereby reflecting a more critical stance on the EU's influence or reputation.

All hope that was left in the blogs disappeared in September. The EU is now portrayed as dominant and powerful, with a detrimental impact on small economies and no possibility of a change in its neoliberal course. It can issue ultimatums, as seen in the case of Greece, and impose its demands.

#### **8.4.3 Representations of Syriza / Tsipras**

Syriza was a very important actor in the discussion of the economic crisis in Greece. During its initial rise to power, the political party was perceived by alternative media as a voice for the common people of Greece, presenting an alternative narrative of the crisis that shifted blame from the people to the elites. This narrative attributed the crisis

to the systemic failure of current economic policies, rather than the “Greek culture” of corruption and living beyond one’s means (Cinalli & Guigni, 2018; Roose, Sommer, Scholl & Papanikolopoulos, 2016; Venizelos, 2020). The mainstream media, on the other hand, represented Syriza as a threat to the stability of Greece and the Eurozone, as a party whose election could have unforeseeable consequences.

Syriza was the party that most eloquently incorporated the debate on the memorandum/anti-memorandum or austerity/anti-austerity (Kountouri & Nikolaidou, 2019; Markou, 2017). Syriza opposed the European institutions during a period when they were losing legitimacy among the general public due to the consequences of austerity (Rüdiger & Karyotis, 2013; Teperoglou & Tsatsanis, 2014). At the same time, these institutions were gaining importance for the markets, which were demanding the imposition of austerity to overcome the debt crisis (Jessop, 2016). In January 2015, Syriza became the focal point of the debate by promising to eliminate austerity measures.

The representations of Syriza and Tsipras in the subcorpora are inconsistent. They vary greatly from period to period, following opposite trajectories. The newspapers begin with very negative representations and end with quite neutral or even positive ones. In the blogs, the staunch support and enthusiasm of January ends up in indifference in September. Variations depend on Syriza's attitude towards austerity. It can be assumed that Syriza is not an important social actor in its own right, but borrows its importance from austerity - seeking to fight austerity generates strong feelings towards the party, whether positive or negative.

Concerning the mainstream subcorpora, in January Syriza was perceived as a potential threat to the stability of the Greek economy and the Eurozone in general. The party's

rise to power was feared to lead to social unrest and economic turmoil. The EU's conflict with Syriza was expected to worsen due to the party's anti-austerity stance. Syriza in the January NC was commonly associated with instability and chaos.

Syriza is often portrayed as an unstable party due to internal conflicts between different factions and a lack of defined hierarchy. Additionally, they are unable to form a government on their own and will need to form a coalition with a right-wing fringe party, which will further add to the instability of the government. The new government's pledges to abolish austerity are unrealistic and potentially risky. The election of Syriza is a development that may lead to negative changes.

The prevalent categories of subjection are Carrier in Relational Processes and through Possession, thereby depicting Syriza as attributed with states or qualities by others. This portrayal shows Syriza as both an agent of change and as subject to external actions and decisions, highlighting a nuanced view of its political stance and influence during this time.

The newspapers also associate the election of Syriza with the risk of Grexit, even though Syriza had a pro-eurozone position. Additionally, the leader of Syriza and the party's supporters are represented in a negative way, characterised as radicals and associated with danger.

However, Syriza is frequently the Actor in Material Processes related to election activities. This framing emphasizes their active participation in the democratic system, underscoring their integration within established political frameworks, and thus reassuring that the party does not constitute a threat to the political establishment. The same is true for the cases in which Syriza is activated through Possession; in more



than half of the times, the Possessivation concerns the electoral success and rise of Syriza to power, and in most of the cases seen as a negative prospect.

On the other hand, the cases in which Syriza is subjected through Possessivation, mostly refer to the Syriza officials, i.e. the Prime Minister, ministers, etc. This preference indicates a hierarchical approach by the newspapers, where the party's leadership is prioritised over its members.

In the instances where Syriza is subjected as a Carrier in Relational Processes, clauses which are typically used to describe social actors' qualities, the party is mostly represented as a possessor of electoral results, positioning it within specific electoral contexts rather than attributing broader qualities or characteristics directly to the party. This portrayal not only emphasises Syriza's influence based on electoral outcomes but also links its public perception strongly to these results, making it vulnerable to changes in electoral performance. By contrast, the newspapers avoid negative representations of Syriza directly as a Carrier with negative attributes, since this linguistic choice as this could potentially compromise their credibility and perceived objectivity.

There was a significant increase of the instances of Tsipras activated as an Actor in a Material Process and a Sayer in a Verbal Process, highlighting his prominent and outspoken role in the events. However, although Tsipras was heavily criticised in the July NC for the announcement of a referendum, which was seen as an illegitimate and irresponsible move, and yet his actions and his words are not associated with the risk of Grexit, as they did in January with Syriza coming to power.

Despite criticism of the referendum, newspapers are optimistic that the implementation of austerity measures will not be disrupted. Tsipras reassured that there is no intention for Grexit and that the referendum will be used as negotiation leverage. The newspapers

seem to share this view and do not associate Tsipras with grave danger, unlike in January NC when there was disaster discourse, and unlike the Greek mainstream media and Greek supporters of ‘yes’, who associate a ‘no’ vote with Grexit and chaos.

In September, Syriza is represented in a neutral or in many cases even positive way. It is now viewed as a pragmatic party with realistic expectations of governing the country, able to ensure stability and growth. The most dangerous factions have left, and although there are still some radical elements that may cause problems in the future, they are not a significant threat.

Concerning the alternative media, in January, Syriza was highly regarded in the blogs subcorpora. The prospect of Syriza coming to power was greeted with enthusiasm and optimism for change in Greece and Europe, change that would benefit the people. Syriza was praised for being linked to the social movements and the poor, as their voice and political representation.

The promises of Syriza to abolish austerity are not represented as unrealistic, as they are in the newspapers; on the contrary, they are represented as realistic and essential, as dangerous for the elites and very likely to stop neoliberalism and bring positive change for the people.

There is an *Us* versus *Them* divide very promiscuous in the blogs. Syriza is on one side, along with the movements, the unions and the poor, those fighting to abolish austerity. On the other side there are the elites, the mainstream politicians, the mainstream media and the financial markets, all those fighting to preserve the neoliberal order.

As an Actor in a Material Process, Syriza is associated with positive actions such as “bringing hope” and “fighting austerity”. When Syriza is subjected through Possessivation, the focus shifts to its members rather than its leadership, aligning with

the party's activist roots. This contrasts with the newspapers' typical emphasis on leadership. Regarding the cases where Syriza is a Carrier in a Relational Process in the BC, the party is frequently and positively evaluated through attributive relational processes. Unlike in the NC, where journalists refrain from direct characterizations of Syriza, the BC openly and extensively discusses the party's characteristics.

In July, much of the enthusiasm has dissipated. Criticism has arisen due to Syriza's concessions to the creditors, and the referendum is seen as unhelpful. There is significant disappointment and disillusionment with the party that was once seen as the hope for the future of Europe. It is worth noting that the Greek alternative media were actively promoting a 'No' vote at the time and expressing optimism for change (Kountouri & Kollias, 2020).

In September there is bitter disappointment at Syriza's transformation into a compromised political party. The same transformation praised by the newspapers was met with resentment by the blogs. As an Actor in a Material Process, Syriza's actions such as 'implementing austerity cuts' and 'making concessions' are assessed negatively. There is no acceptance of Syriza's claim that it had no choice in the face of adverse circumstances, or that Syriza's implementation of the memorandum would be preferable to New Democracy's implementation. Syriza is accused of making mistakes that led to this situation. For example, it made concessions to the creditors and failed to explain to the Greek people that leaving the eurozone was essential for change. There is a certain amount of interest in the part that has left Syriza, but there is no great hope that they will be able to fight austerity effectively.

#### **8.4.4 Representations of Austerity**

Austerity seems to be the most significant social actor in the corpora, to the extent that the representations of the other social actors in the media depend on their attitudes towards austerity. Mainstream media consistently present austerity as the only solution to the crisis - since it is the solution adopted by the economic and political elites. Alternative media, by contrast, portray austerity as a disastrous policy that severely damages the quality of life of ordinary people and is not even effective in saving the economy. In this respect, mainstream media represent favourably the actors who support austerity and negatively those who oppose it, while the exact opposite is true for the alternative media.

The findings of this thesis on austerity are consistent with previous research on the topic. It has been argued that austerity is often applied on the pretext that it is the answer to poor people's overspending, as cutting social services will train them to be wiser with their finances (Blyth, 2013). It is evident that this view of austerity policies can be associated with the “lazy spendthrift Greeks” narrative, and thus it is hardly surprising that it is so foregrounded in the discussion about the economic crisis in Greece.

Furthermore, austerity measures are often used to shift the responsibility for economic crises from the markets to the state, in order to demonstrate that the crisis is not a result of systemic failure, but rather caused by excessive spending on social welfare (Peck, 2014). The concept of austerity appears to be central to neoliberalism as it suggests that there should be no state intervention or provisions for the less privileged strata of the population as this interferes with the smooth functioning of the economy (Blyth, 2013).

Another characteristic of austerity evident in the data is that it is presented as a state of emergency in response to a severe crisis, but ultimately leads to permanent reforms and

cuts in social provisions through institutional change and habituation (Jessop, 2016). This seems to be the case in Greece, where most of the measures that were introduced and represented in the mainstream media as necessary to overcome the debt crisis, are still in place 15 years later, when the Greek economy is claimed by financial experts to present growth (Kim, 2023).

Research in the representation of austerity regarding the economic crisis in Greece has shown that austerity is frequently represented as a form of moral penance (Mc Donagh, 2019), and as a means to make Greece a “normal” country, since the discourse of abnormality was frequent in the mainstream media of Greece (Stavrakakis & Galanopoulos, 2019, p.191).

In the data of this thesis, austerity is consistently represented as essential in the newspapers, as the only way for Greece to remain solvent, while in the blogs it is portrayed as ineffective and damaging in all three periods.

Austerity is represented in the mainstream media as a necessity to which there is no alternative, as the only rational way out of the crisis. It is a significant social actor, in such a way that all other actors are defined by their attitude towards it; they are either pro-austerity or anti-austerity.

In January the anti-austerity front is emphasized. There are extensive references to Syriza, for example, as an anti-austerity party. Austerity is so important that a party that is questioning it is necessarily a threat to stability and growth, as are all social actors who do not accept the inevitability of austerity measures.

Austerity modifies in most cases nouns such as measures, conditions, policies and plans. It is represented as the central EU policy that will make the economies of all EU members stronger, and help get rid of the irrational spending of certain weak economies

such as Greece – irrational spending being mostly identified as social welfare, as most of the austerity reforms are targeted against social services.

In July this anti-austerity front is strikingly absent. It is claimed that austerity is unanimously accepted as necessary; in some cases, it is represented as medicine, which can be at times unpleasant, but is nonetheless essential. The newspapers stress that the referendum is not about accepting or abolishing austerity, merely about negotiating the harshness of the austerity measures. Austerity is represented as non-threatened.

In September the newspapers declare the end of anti-austerity. Austerity is not questioned by any major political parties; they all have voted in favour of the bailout agreement which dictates new austerity measures. Thus, there is no doubt that austerity policies will be implemented regardless of the election result. According to the newspapers, only some marginalised radicals are against austerity, like the part that left Syriza and could not be elected in the parliament. Of the parliament parties, only the communist party and the nazi party are against austerity – the newspapers employ the two ends theory to underscore that austerity is accepted by all moderate political forces.

The newspapers express satisfaction that austerity has prevailed, as they consider it the only viable solution to the debt-related crisis. This is in line with previous research. However, in 2015 articles on the elections, there seems to be less effort to convince the readership that austerity is necessary. Austerity is represented as a universally accepted fact that these measures are indispensable for Greece to remain in the EU and avoid catastrophe and chaos.

The blogs consistently represent austerity as ineffective and even harmful for the economy and disastrous for the Greek people and Greek society, as the enemy of social welfare and social security. It is a focal point of the debate, dividing all other social

actors into two camps based on their stance towards it. Austerity is seen in the blogs as a powerful tool used to transform societies in favour of the elites.

What varies along the three periods in question, is the strength of the anti-austerity camp and the possibility to abolish austerity. In January there is great optimism in the blogs that this is possible, Greece and Europe can be transformed and become friendlier to the interests of simple people, by adopting more social policies. Political change is considered possible.

In July the pro-austerity camp, including mainstream media, the Troika, and powerful European leaders, are represented as trying to scare the Greek people into voting yes and accepting the agreements and the austerity measures. It is generally believed that austerity is unlikely to be defeated, although there are still some instances where optimism is expressed.

In September, there is little hope left. There are no powerful anti-austerity social actors who could bring about political change, while there are more and stronger pro-austerity social actors. Austerity will continue to harm the Greek economy and society.

### **8.5 Research Question 3: Representations of Prominent Social Actors across the three electoral periods**

The preceding subsections have presented a comprehensive account of the findings pertaining to the representations of each social actor. This subsection will present a summary of the key findings in order to highlight the differences across the electoral periods, addressing the fourth research question.

### **8.5.1 Syriza/Tsipras in Mainstream Media across the three electoral periods**

In January, Syriza was portrayed in a negative light, often focusing on the potential risks and instability associated with their anti-austerity stance. The prevailing discourse in the mainstream media was one of scepticism regarding the capacity of the Syriza party to renegotiate the terms of the bailout, accompanied by a focus on the potential consequences of Syriza assuming power.

In July, the focus shifted to Tsipras, who was depicted as an unreliable leader during the referendum, with media questioning his capability to manage the crisis effectively. Tsipras was perceived as making imprudent decisions that further destabilized Greece's financial situation. However, the newspapers reassured their readers that a Grexit was neither a desired outcome for Greece nor a probable scenario.

Syriza was depicted more favorably in September, due to their shift in stance towards accepting the bailout terms and austerity measures. Mainstream media trusted Syriza more because of this pragmatic shift, representing the party as a more responsible and credible government willing to make difficult decisions for the country's stability.

### **8.5.2 Syriza/Tsipras in Alternative Media across the three electoral periods**

In January, Syriza was lauded as a potential agent of transformative change, with a notable focus on their capacity to challenge the prevailing austerity measures and advance more progressive policies. Alternative media outlets portrayed Syriza as being closely connected to social movements and marginalised social groups.

In July, Tsipras was viewed with mixed sentiments. While in some instances he was praised for his courage in calling the referendum, there was also significant criticism for having lost time and having made concessions. The initial optimism had waned, with a growing sense of disappointment and disillusionment among supporters.



In September, the blogs expressed deep disappointment and a sense of betrayal as Syriza accepted new bailout terms that included austerity measures. The party was now seen as complicit in enforcing the very policies it had vowed to oppose

### **8.5.3 Austerity in Mainstream Media across the three electoral periods**

The newspapers maintained a consistent pro-austerity position, portraying it as a necessity and warning of the dangers of Greece attempting to deviate from this course of action.

Austerity was generally defended as a necessary economic measure in January. The newspapers framed it as unavoidable for Greece's economic recovery, highlighting the necessity of fiscal discipline.

In July, the discussion on austerity was less pronounced but framed within the necessity of economic stability and compliance with EU directives. Media portrayed austerity as a reality that Greece must accept.

In September, austerity was presented as an established reality, with little debate on its necessity. The focus was on the implementation and consequences of austerity measures.

### **8.5.4 Austerity in Alternative Media across the three electoral periods**

Contrary to the newspapers, the blogs are vocal in their opposition to austerity measures. They highlight the detrimental impact of these policies on the Greek people and the Greek economy, as well as their ineffectiveness and the unjust imposition by external actors, including creditors and the European Union.

In January, austerity was heavily criticized as an unfair and damaging policy. The blogs emphasised the negative social impacts and framed austerity as an instrument of economic oppression, and expressed optimism that it can be abolished.

Criticism of austerity intensified in July, focusing on its adverse effects on Greek society and economy. The referendum was seen as a crucial moment to challenge austerity measures, although the blogs are less optimistic than they were in January.

The critique of austerity persisted in September, highlighting its ineffectiveness and social harm. There was a sense of resignation, with austerity seen as an unavoidable burden imposed by external forces.

#### **8.5.5 Greece in Mainstream Media across the three electoral periods**

In January Greece was depicted as fiscally irresponsible, needing strict oversight and reform. Mainstream media emphasized Greece's economic struggles and the necessity of adhering to EU mandates.

In July, the portrayal of Greece included defiance against EU-imposed austerity. The referendum was seen as a destabilizing factor, but ultimately, Greece was expected to comply with EU demands.

Greece was shown as reluctantly compliant in September, with the newspapers focusing on the inevitability of adhering to EU mandates and implementing austerity measures .

#### **8.5.6 Greece in Alternative Media across the three electoral periods**

In January, Greece was represented as a victim of harsh economic policies, with strong emphasis on the humanitarian crisis caused by austerity. The narrative was sympathetic towards Greece's plight.

Coverage in July highlighted Greece's defiance against EU austerity demands, praising the referendum as a democratic act of resistance. Greece was seen as standing up to oppressive policies.

In September, Greece continued to be portrayed as suffering under external economic pressures. Alternative media focused on the social costs and the struggle of the Greek populace against imposed austerity.

#### **8.5.7 The EU in Mainstream Media across the three electoral periods**

In January, the EU was depicted as a stabilizing force, essential for ensuring economic discipline and recovery in Greece. It was seen as a powerful authority enforcing needed reforms.

In July, the EU's role was portrayed as authoritative and necessary, emphasizing its responsibility to maintain eurozone stability against Greece's unpredictable actions.

The EU in September was seen as a crucial overseer of Greece's economic policies, with less direct conflict and more emphasis on its role in ensuring compliance.

#### **8.5.8 The EU in Alternative Media across the three electoral periods**

In January, the EU was criticized as an enforcer of damaging economic policies. Alternative media portrayed the EU as prioritizing financial institutions over people, highlighting its role in exacerbating the crisis.

In July, the EU was depicted as a coercive power, with its austerity measures seen as undemocratic and oppressive. The narrative focused on the social injustice linked to EU policies.

Criticism persisted in September, focusing on the EU's continued enforcement of austerity and its impact on Greek society, but also highlighting the broader implications for democracy in Europe.

#### **8.6 Research Question 4: Stance towards Austerity and Representations of other social actors**

One important finding of this study is that the stance towards austerity taken by key social actors profoundly influenced how they were portrayed in mainstream and alternative media.

During the January elections, when Syriza strongly opposed austerity measures, mainstream media represented the party in a negative way in most cases. The coverage highlighted risks and uncertainties associated with their anti-austerity agenda, framing it as potentially destabilizing for Greece and the broader European economic landscape. Conversely, the blogs were more supportive, celebrating Syriza as a representative of the people's will against harsh economic impositions. These portrayals emphasized courage and a commitment to social welfare, resonating with a narrative of resistance against perceived economic oppression by external forces.

By July, the government had demonstrated a clear intention to implement at least some austerity measures, and it was evident that they would not oppose austerity in its entirety. This shift was welcomed by the newspapers, which now represent Tsipras as slightly irresponsible but not a dangerous politician. His decision to call a referendum is perceived as unnecessary and frivolous, yet it is not considered a threat to the stability of the country or the EU. Instead, it is viewed as a strategic move to gain leverage in negotiations. In contrast, Tsipras is depicted in a less favourable light in blogs compared to Syriza in the January BC, as he is no longer seen as an anti-austerity politician.

By the September elections, as Syriza's stance on austerity softened, mainstream media's representation became more neutral. The earlier critiques subdued, acknowledging Syriza's pragmatic turn towards compromise and negotiation.

In contrast, the level of enthusiasm observed during January declined significantly by September in the alternative media. The softened stance on austerity led to a more critical portrayal of Syriza, in some instances expressing disappointment or betrayal. The narrative shifted to one of compromised ideals, reflecting a sense of disillusionment among those who had previously regarded the party as a bastion of anti-austerity.

Throughout the crisis, the portrayal of Greece was also influenced by the prevailing political stance towards austerity. The mainstream media consistently depicted Greece as needing to adhere to fiscal discipline. This representation often highlighted Greece's financial mismanagement and the necessity of austerity measures to rectify its economic policies. However, as the Greek government's stance shifted towards a more conciliatory approach to austerity, the tone in mainstream media coverage softened. This change suggested a narrative of cautious optimism, where adherence to austerity was seen as a step towards stability and recovery, albeit a painful one.

Alternative media, on the other hand, maintained a sympathetic portrayal of Greece, emphasizing suffering and resistance. Stories often focused on the human cost of austerity, including increased poverty and social unrest, painting a vivid picture of a nation under duress. However, as the Greek government began to accept austerity measures, the tone in alternative media shifted towards one of resignation or even criticism. This change reflected a sense of betrayal or disappointment among supporters who had hoped for a stronger stand against austerity.

Throughout the Greek economic crisis, the EU was consistently portrayed as the principal enforcer of austerity measures. This portrayal varied between mainstream and alternative media, reflecting their respective editorial stances and the evolving context of austerity.

In mainstream media, the EU's portrayal underwent noticeable shifts, influenced by the political developments around austerity. During the January election period, when austerity measures were under significant threat from anti-austerity sentiments led by Syriza, the EU was depicted as a powerful, almost authoritarian figure imposing necessary fiscal discipline on Greece. This representation underscored the EU's role in maintaining economic stability not only in Greece but across Europe. As Greece's stance on austerity became more conciliatory later in the year, the depiction of the EU in mainstream media started to wane in intensity. The narrative shifted towards portraying the EU as a cooperative partner in Greece's economic recovery rather than just an enforcer. This softer portrayal reflected a period of reduced conflict over austerity, as the Greek government began to implement agreed-upon measures.

Conversely, alternative media consistently cast the EU in a negative light, intensifying particularly when austerity measures were enforced or accepted by the Greek government. Initially, the EU was portrayed as an oppressive force, complicit in the economic suffering of the Greek populace. This perspective aligned with the alternative media's broader critical stance on austerity, emphasizing the social injustice and hardship linked to EU-imposed fiscal policies. As the crisis progressed and particularly after the Greek government's acceptance of austerity in the later periods, the portrayal of the EU became even more negative. The EU was frequently depicted as having defeated the anti-austerity movement, effectively quashing any hopes for a different economic approach. This narrative highlighted feelings of defeat and disillusionment

among those opposed to austerity, painting the EU as the victor in a battle over Greece's economic future.

Overall, this study has shown how austerity, far more than a mere fiscal policy, serves as a linchpin in the broader framework of neoliberalism, shaping the media representations of key social actors during the economic crisis in Greece. The stance towards austerity taken by these actors significantly influenced their representation both in mainstream and alternative media, highlighting the ideological dimensions that underpin media narratives.

Austerity is not just a set of economic actions aimed at reducing government deficits; it is a central tenet of neoliberal thought. It emphasizes reduced government expenditure, privatization, and free-market policies, purportedly to foster economic stability and growth (Blyth, 2013; Whiteside, 2016). In the context of Greece, austerity policies were advocated by international institutions like the EU and IMF and were deeply contentious, symbolizing a broader ideological battle between neoliberal orthodoxy and alternative economic approaches that prioritize social welfare (Giniger & Sotiropoulou, 2019).

The media's treatment of Syriza/Tsipras, Greece, and the EU in relation to their stance on austerity reflects this ideological conflict. These media representations reveal the profound impact of neoliberal ideology on public discourse, shaping perceptions of economic policies and their protagonists. The central role of austerity in these representations is indicative of the ideological underpinnings of different types of media, highlighting how deeply entrenched neoliberalism is in the discourse surrounding economic crises.

## **8.7 Media Landscapes: Contrasting Mainstream and Alternative Narratives**

### **8.7.1 Mainstream Media**

This thesis provides strong evidence for three main characteristics of the mainstream media, as outlined in previous research. These are:

- a) Mainstream media adopt the views of the powerful social actors, and it is their voices they mostly represent (Bailey et al.; Reese, 1990).
- b) In matters of central importance to the capitalist system, there is little room for disagreement. Mainstream media tend to have the same views, irrespective of political affiliations (Hadjimichalis, 2018; Liakos & Kouki, 2015; Tracy, 2012).
- c) Mainstream media claim to be objective. They claim not to take a stand, but to report objective reality (Hackett, 1984; Ostertag, 2006).

The analysis confirms that the newspapers adopt the views of the political and economic powerful social actors. As previous research has shown, the economic crisis in Greece was represented in the mainstream media, both domestic and international, as a local problem caused by specific characteristics of the Greek economy, such as corruption and overspending, and even cultural characteristics of the Greek people, who were accused of being lazy and living beyond their means (Mylonas, 2012). This is the view adopted by mainstream politicians and financial experts; it is a view that logically leads to the assumption that austerity and cost cutting are the answer, and therefore the policies imposed by the bailout agreements should continue to be implemented unimpeded.

Thus, mainstream media seem to answer to the need to prepare the ground for the implementation of very harsh measures in order to minimise reactions both inside and outside Greece (Mavroudeas & Paitaridis, 2014). Therefore, they seem to use their



representations to facilitate the implementation of policies that mainstream politicians and financial institutions have decided to implement, and that aim can account for the particularly negative representations of Greece and the Greek people.

In 2015, the measures had been implemented for several years, causing suffering to the Greek people. There was no reason to continue making generalisations to shift the blame on them. In January, the views on Greece are milder than before, but still negative. They become less negative in July and neutral in September, when the threat to reject the measures has been removed. In fact, all social actors are being assessed in terms of their attitude to austerity, the central choice of economic and political elites as a response to the crisis. There is never any evaluation of austerity; austerity is accepted as an absolute reality, as the only solution, and no further explanation is necessary. Syriza and Greece are represented in a very negative way in January, when they question austerity.

As far as objectivity is concerned, the newspapers never describe austerity as ideologically charged; there is never any mention of neo-liberalism or capitalism. There is no discussion of the economic implications of resorting to austerity cuts and reforms, or of the historical context in which austerity has been employed as an approach. They present austerity as the only solution, without any subjective evaluations based on political choices.

There is no discernible difference in the newspapers' stance towards austerity, regardless of their political affiliations. The EU's decision to adopt austerity as a response to the 2008 crisis was central to the capitalist establishment. This decision is generally accepted and not disputed by any of the selected newspapers, due to its importance.

### 8.7.2 Alternative Media

This thesis has found the following attributes of alternative media to be present:

- a) Alternative media can help to prevent media power from being concentrated in limited sections of society by giving a voice to those neglected by mainstream media (Traber, 1985; Waltz, 2005).
- b) They are closely linked to social movements (Atton, 2002; Schuman, 1982).
- c) They do not necessarily claim to be objective; they often admit to be fighting for social change (Atton, 2002; Dowmunt & Coyer, 2007).

The blogs give a voice to ordinary people, reporting on the impact of austerity reforms on their lives and highlighting the cost to vulnerable citizens of cuts to health and pensions and reductions in the social welfare budget. The blogs often refer to the situation inflicted on Greek society as a humanitarian crisis. The consequences of austerity measures is an area that is almost completely ignored by the newspapers.

The blog reports on the anti-austerity movements that spread across the country early in the crisis and remained prominent in 2015. They highlight the connection between Syriza and the social movements, and discuss how most Syriza members are activists who participated in them. This is another area that is widely overlooked in the newspapers.

They link austerity to a specific political stance, neoliberalism, and position themselves on the opposing side. They use terms such as capitalism, elites, and working class. They reject austerity because of the negative effects it has on the poor and generally view it as an instrument of oppression. They do not hesitate to express their desire for change in Europe and their belief that fighting austerity can be an effective way to achieve it.

This research does not confirm a frequently attributed characteristic of alternative media: their community-based nature (Atton, 2002; Jeppesen, 2016; Schuman, 1982). Previous research suggests that alternative media focus on specific communities and their social and political movements. In this thesis, there is evidence that their activist interests can be global and that they can be of the opinion that a movement in one place can have an impact on other places as well. In January, when the anti-austerity party Syriza emerged, along with strong anti-austerity movements in Greece, they claimed that these movements could lead to similar developments in other EU member states and alter the course of Europe. Thus, in the case of Greece, American and British blogs showed a great interest in movements outside of their community. This finding challenges the notion that these movements are solely community-based.

### **8.8 Contributions of this Study**

The study addresses a gap in the existing literature by focusing specifically on the discourse surrounding austerity measures within the recent economic crisis context in Greece. It illuminates the complexities of austerity as both a fiscal policy and a neoliberal ideology, detailing how media representations can either challenge or reinforce these economic policies. The thesis also provides a detailed analysis of key social actors such as Syriza, Alexis Tsipras, and the EU, exploring how their representations shift in response to their political actions and stances towards austerity. This contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the role of individual and institutional actors in shaping media narratives.

By focusing on British and American media, this study offers insights into how international perspectives influence the representation of a national crisis. This cross-national comparative analysis contributes to the understanding of global media

dynamics and their impact on local political and economic situations. Furthermore, by analyzing both mainstream and alternative media from British and American sources, this study contributes to a better understanding of ideological biases in media representations during economic crises. It highlights how different media outlets frame political actors and policies, influenced by their ideological stances. This is particularly significant in the study of austerity, where media framing can significantly influence public opinion and policy outcomes.

A significant contribution of this study is the integration of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) with Corpus Linguistics (CL). This methodological synthesis, which is becoming increasingly employed in CDA studies, has provided a comprehensive framework that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis, enhancing the depth and rigor of media discourse analysis. This research extends the scope of typical CDA and CL applications by providing a richer contextual analysis that considers not only the textual content but also the socio-political and economic contexts in which the media content is produced and consumed.

Most importantly, this study has relied on close grammatical analysis, following Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, specifically transitivity analysis. Most importantly, this study has relied on close grammatical analysis, following Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar, specifically transitivity analysis at the sentence level. In Systemic Functional Linguistics, language is viewed as a resource for construing the world around us, enabling us to represent experiences and relationships through linguistic choices (Halliday, 1993). Halliday's framework allows us to analyse how different processes, participants, and circumstances are encoded in language, revealing the underlying patterns of meaning-making.

Employing linguistic analysis which is based on Halliday and van Leeuwen's theories, has enabled the thesis to make carefully substantiated claims. By applying transitivity analysis, the study uncovers how media narratives construct agency and responsibility, particularly in the context of the economic crisis in Greece. The analysis reveals how the social actors that emerged through the frequency analysis as key social actors are either activated or subjected in media texts, and in what ways, thus highlighting the ideological biases in these representations.

Through this detailed sentence-level analysis, the thesis demonstrates the power of language in shaping public perception and discourse. It shows how media can represent political and economic realities by the choice of linguistic elements, thereby influencing how audiences interpret these events.

This approach contributes to the field of linguistics by advancing methodological applications of SFL and CDA. The findings underscore the importance of understanding language as a tool for constructing social realities, particularly in times of economic and political crises. One of the contributions of this study is to show how linguistic tools can be used to reveal socially based attitudes to contemporary historical events at the time they take place.

The present analysis provides a useful account of media approaches to a political series of events through the investigation of the data in terms of methodology based on SFG. Since it was shown that syntactic configurations fail to clearly distinguish between attitudes in the PC and the BC, we then proceeded to a content analysis. During the process of our analysis, it emerged that lexical meaning is also important in uncovering social attitudes towards the events that form the core of our investigation, and for this

reason this finding opens up a fruitful area of further research that the present study has revealed.

During the investigation, we observed that some utterances do not strictly reflect a positive or negative attitude towards the social actor that is being analysed, given that no incriminating vocabulary is used, nor a favourable one. Rather the terms used are purely descriptive rather than evaluative. Grey areas are always welcome in linguistic research. Moreover, they typically lead to formulating further research questions. In this case, the possibility arises that, apart from grammar and vocabulary, socio-cultural considerations can contribute attitudes to utterances, such as the political orientation of a specific newspaper or blog in which the respective utterances occur. This is, then, another line of investigation that the present work has inspired.

This study transcends the boundaries of linguistic research, making significant contributions not only to linguistics but also to media studies, communication studies, and political discourse analysis. It confirms the distinctive roles of mainstream and alternative media in political event coverage, verifying characteristics such as mainstream media's alignment with established political frameworks and alternative media's propensity to challenge these narratives. Specifically, it was found that mainstream media often depicted austerity measures as necessary reforms during Greece's economic crisis, while alternative media presented them as oppressive policies detrimental to societal welfare. However, contrary to the expected community-based character of alternative media, the study revealed that blogs displayed significant interest in the Greek movements and the consequences of the EU policies on Greek people, thus challenging the notion that alternative media are predominantly focused on local contexts.

Furthermore, the historical significance of this thesis warrants special mention. It offers a comprehensive overview of the media representations surrounding a pivotal moment in Greek political history: the economic crisis and the 2015 elections and referendum, which were significantly shaped by the crisis. By documenting how different media outlets depicted key social actors Austerity, Syriza, Tsipras, Greece and the EU, this study captures the nuanced discourse strategies employed during this period. Furthermore, it provides a meticulous analysis of the representations of specific events, primarily the 2015 elections and the referendum. It offers future researchers a comprehensive archive of how these events were framed by various media channels and serves as a valuable historical document that chronicles the influence of media on public perception and policy during a defining moment.

### **8.9 Limitations of this Study**

The thesis was based on research focusing primarily on British and American media. Although this provides valuable insights into how these countries' media portray economic crises, it may not fully capture the diversity of global media narratives. Media from other regions, especially from within Greece itself, could offer additional perspectives that were not explored due to the geographical and linguistic scope of the study.

Following from the above, analysis was limited to English-language sources. This exclusion of Greek language media and potentially relevant non-English international sources means that some local differences and broader international perspectives may have been overlooked. Future studies could benefit from incorporating these sources to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse.

In addition, this study focused on specific election periods in 2015, providing a snapshot of media representations during these critical times. However, media representations and their impact evolve, and the limited temporal scope may not fully reflect how ongoing economic developments or subsequent political events have influenced or altered these representations.

Regarding the selected sources, the selection of media outlets, driven by their availability and prominence, might introduce biases. Mainstream and well-known alternative media were chosen for analysis, while less prominent but equally influential media voices or emerging digital platforms that could offer different perspectives may have been omitted.

Although efforts were made to standardise the analysis, interpretations of qualitative data inherently involve a degree of subjectivity. Different researchers might emphasise various aspects of the data, potentially leading to different conclusions.

### **8.10 Suggestions for Further Research**

The following are suggestions for further research that could expand upon the findings of this thesis.

a) The 2015 elections, especially the January elections and the July referendum, drew the attention of the international media, both mainstream and alternative. Exploring media representations over a longer period could provide insights into how the representation of social actors and austerity measures evolve as economic conditions and political stances change. This could involve extending the timeframe beyond the 2015 elections to include more recent political developments and economic policies. A comparative analysis of the level of interest in the 2019 and 2023 elections



and the representation of social actors, in comparison to the 2015 elections, would be a valuable contribution to the existing literature.

b) This study primarily examines British and American media representations. Future research could beneficially expand to include media from other European countries or from within Greece itself to offer a deeper, more nuanced understanding of how varying cultural contexts and national interests influence media discourse surrounding austerity and economic crises. While existing research has explored mainstream media in various countries, there remains a significant gap in the study of alternative media. Addressing this gap could provide critical insights into the diversity of perspectives and resistance narratives that alternative outlets might offer. The community-based nature of the alternative media is challenged in this thesis, as the American and British blogs included in the corpus demonstrate a passionate interest in the anti-austerity movements in Greece, suggesting that there may be a global character to their activist concerns. Limited research has been conducted on the interest of blogs in global movements. Research in alternative media is typically restricted to their coverage of local events. It is worth examining whether the interest of international blogs in the Greek anti-austerity movements was a rare occurrence, or whether the alternative media do take an interest in and passionately support movements in other parts of the world.

c) There is an interesting difference between the coverage of the July referendum in international newspapers, as demonstrated in this thesis, and what research on domestic newspaper coverage has shown. The international newspapers generally reported that the referendum would not lead to a Grexit and that the prime minister's intention was merely to gain negotiating leverage. This was in line with the intentions of the government and the Prime Minister, who assured that they were pro-European

and did not intend for this conflict to end with Greece leaving the EU, but it was simply a statement that the measures were too harsh for Greece to withstand. The Prime Minister repeatedly stated that a 'no' vote would give the government leverage to negotiate a better deal. However, the Greek mainstream media warned of the threat of Grexit and the ensuing chaos that would accompany a 'no' vote (Constantinou, 2018; Serafis & Herman, 2018). One possible explanation could be that since the newspapers target different audiences, they might have different goals; the goal of the international newspapers might be to reassure their readers that the economy is heading towards stability after the crisis and that this referendum will not cause any deviation from this path, while the main goal of the Greek newspapers might be to influence Greek voters to vote yes. For this reason, they actively campaigned for a yes vote (Aslanidis & Kaltwasser, 2016) by presenting a no vote as a dangerous choice. It would be of significant value to have a closer look at this divergence, in a comparative study of Greek and international mainstream media regarding the coverage of the referendum.

d) A very interesting finding in this thesis is the divergence of the representations of Syriza from period to period, the fact that the newspapers gradually accept Syriza more and represent the party more positively, while the blogs gradually lose interest in the party, their representations starting with vivid enthusiasm and ending with indifference or even criticism. The variable that leads to these fluctuations is the attitude of the party to the austerity measures. Syriza came to power despite being a small party to a large extent because of its strong anti-austerity stance. This thesis examines how Syriza was represented by both mainstream and alternative international media, from its strongly anti-austerity phase to its acceptance of austerity measures. It would be interesting to examine the evolution of these representations from the years when Syriza

implemented austerity while in power to its current state as a floundering party in search of a new identity, seeking a place in the political arena of Greek politics.

e) Transitivity and role allocation led to findings regarding the importance of social actors, but not the stance towards them. In a number of CDA studies where the analysis was conducted with transitivity and role allocation, researchers reached similar conclusions as to how powerful social actors were and to what extent they were considered to play a crucial role (Saleh et al., 2006; Qasim 2014; Roohani & Heidari, 2012). This observation could be an indication that in order to evaluate how positively or negatively predisposed a writer is towards a social actor, more detailed analysis by interpreting representations is required, and verifies the hypothesis that the subjective judgment of the researcher cannot be eliminated (Baker, 2012).

f) This study concentrated on newspapers and blogs; further research could incorporate other forms of media, such as television, radio, and social media platforms. This would offer a more comprehensive view of the media landscape and its influence on public perception.

### **8.11 Concluding Remarks**

This thesis has provided a comprehensive linguistic analysis of media representations during the critical periods of Greece's economic crisis in 2015, shedding light on how language shapes and is shaped by broader societal and economic contexts. Through an integrated approach using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (CL), this research not only mapped the ideological landscapes of different media but also demonstrated how linguistic choices in media discourse influence public perception and political dynamics.

The findings underscore the centrality of language in constructing social reality, particularly in how austerity is discussed and understood in public discourse. The application of transitivity analysis and role allocation has been especially effective, demonstrating their strength in revealing the representations of key social actors. These tools provided deep insights into how media represent social actors and assign agency, thereby influencing audience interpretations and responses.

The study deepens our understanding of the specific media landscape during Greece's financial crisis and serves as a reflective lens on the broader role of media in society. As media continues to evolve in its form and function, the insights from this study make a contribution to navigating and understanding the increasingly complex media ecosystem.

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## APPENDIX I

Link to the subcorpora.

Please refer to the following link for the subcorpora utilised in this thesis, which includes January NC, January BC, July NC, July BC, September NC, and September BC:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1pDgtoAk6zKdxij4Waoy-UtrUL2-RlPph?usp=sharing>

## APPENDIX II

Appendix II includes a list of articles that form the subcorpora used for the analysis in this thesis, complete with their respective links.

### 1. January NC

#### US Newspapers Articles

##### New York Times

1. 25-1-15 [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/26/world/europe/greek-election-syriza.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/26/world/europe/greek-election-syriza.html?_r=0)
2. 11-1-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/12/business/international/after-elections-greece-will-be-in-race-against-time.html>
3. 26-1-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/27/world/europe/alexis-tsipiras-greece-coalition.html>
4. 26-1-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/27/business/international/after-vote-in-greece-alexis-tsipras-seeks-to-address-debt.html>
5. 25-1-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/27/business/euro-weakens-and-stocks-fall-in-asia-after-election-in-greece.html?action=click&contentCollection=International%20Business&module=RelatedCoverage&region=Marginalia&pgtype=article>

##### Los Angeles Times

1. 25-1-15 <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-greece-election-tsipras-bailout-20150125-story.html>
2. 29-12-14 <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-greece-elections-20141229-story.html>

##### New York Post

1. 25-1-15 <http://nypost.com/2015/01/25/radical-left-party-wins-historic-victory-in-greek-elections/>
2. 29-1-15 <http://nypost.com/2015/01/29/new-radical-left-greek-leader-shocks-germans-with-defiant-moves/>

##### The Washington Times

1. 27-1-15 <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jan/27/germany-holds-greece-to-austerity-terms-despite-el/?page=all>
2. 22-1-15 <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jan/22/greeces-ties-to-eu-strained-by-surge-from-left/?page=all>

##### The Washington Post

1. 25-1-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/greeks-expected-to-elect-leftist-syriza-party-in-sunday-vote/2015/01/25/6e273dea-a246-11e4-91fc-7dff95a14458\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/greeks-expected-to-elect-leftist-syriza-party-in-sunday-vote/2015/01/25/6e273dea-a246-11e4-91fc-7dff95a14458_story.html)
2. 3-2-15 <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/02/03/hey-alexis-tsipras-you-just-got-elected-prime-minister-of-greece-what-are-you-going-to-do-now/>
3. 3-2-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/katrina-vanden-heuvel-for-europes-sake-greece-needs-a-new-deal/2015/02/03/50fcaa4e-ab19-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/katrina-vanden-heuvel-for-europes-sake-greece-needs-a-new-deal/2015/02/03/50fcaa4e-ab19-11e4-ad71-7b9eba0f87d6_story.html)
4. 24-1-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/leftist-syriza-party-set-to-win-greek-vote-setting-up-showdown-with-europe/2015/01/23/a2a9cbe2-a0b5-11e4-91fc-7dff95a14458\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/leftist-syriza-party-set-to-win-greek-vote-setting-up-showdown-with-europe/2015/01/23/a2a9cbe2-a0b5-11e4-91fc-7dff95a14458_story.html)
5. 29-1-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/greeces-leftist-government-sparks-fears-of-a-russian-beachhead-in-europe/2015/01/29/79cca26a-a7dd-11e4-a06b-9df2002b86a0\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/greeces-leftist-government-sparks-fears-of-a-russian-beachhead-in-europe/2015/01/29/79cca26a-a7dd-11e4-a06b-9df2002b86a0_story.html)

#### Chicago Tribune

1. 25-1-15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/chi-greece-election-20150125-story.html>
2. 27-1-15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-greece-euro-zone-exit-0127-20150126-story.html#>

#### UK Newspapers Articles

##### The Guardian

1. 26-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/25/greece-election-vote-austerity-leftwing-syriza-eu>
2. 23-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/23/syriza-poll-lead-greek-elections-alexis-tsipras-antonis-samaras>
3. 26-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/26/-sp-syriza-election-victory-greece-europe-reacted>
4. 17-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/17/greek-elections-syriza-europe-eurozone-alexis-tsipras>
5. 25-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/24/austerity-greece-election-syriza-party-alexis-tsipras>
6. 26-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/25/syriza-historic-win-greece-european-union-austerity>
7. 28-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/28/greek-people-wrote-history-how-syriza-rose-to-power>
8. 25-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jan/25/guardian-view-greek-election-new-deal-new-era>
9. 25-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/25/athens-celebration-of-alexis-tsipras-syriza-win>

10. 26-1-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/26/greece-elections-euro-hits-11-year-low-after-anti-austerity-party-victory>

#### The Independent

1. 25-1-15 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-elections-syriza-and-eu-on-collision-course-after-election-win-for-leftwing-party-10001701.html>
2. 27-1-15 <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/greece-elections-in-times-like-these-the-eu-has-far-more-dangerous-adversaries-than-syriza-10006699.html>
3. 26-1-15 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-elections-who-are-syriza-and-what-effect-will-their-new-government-have-on-europe-10002756.html>
4. 25-1-15 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-elections-voters-will-choose-the-syriza-party--and-send-a-defiant-message-to-the-eu-10000776.html>
5. 25-1-15 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-elections-exit-polls-suggest-strong-victory-for-radical-left-syriza-party-10001470.html>
6. 24-1-15 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-elections-what-will-it-mean-for-the-eurozone-if-leftwing-party-syriza-wins-10000213.html>
7. 22-1-15 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/greece-elections-syriza-party-tops-polls-raising-fears-that-a-win-will-lead-to-devastating-european-exit-9996400.html>

#### The Telegraph

1. 26-1-15 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/11369232/Greek-election-Syriza-forms-new-government-with-Right-wing-populist-party.html>
2. 23-1-15 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/11365901/Greece-election-Syriza-not-to-be-trusted.html>
3. 25-1-15 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/11368798/Greeks-hand-stunning-victory-to-anti-austerity-Syriza.html>
4. 26-1-15 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/11369309/Greek-election-who-are-Independent-Greeks.html>
5. 23-1-15 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/greece/11363002/Who-are-the-Greek-parties-leading-the-polls-A-users-guide-to-the-elections-in-Greece.html>

## 2. January BC

### US Blogs Articles

#### Think Progress

1. 23-1-15 <http://thinkprogress.org/world/2015/01/23/3614794/greece-election/>

#### Daily Kos

1. 25-1-15 <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/01/25/1360106/-Why-the-Greek-election-is-a-BIG-deal>
2. 1-2-15 <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/02/01/1361568/-Anti-Capitalist-Meetup-The-Mouse-Has-Roared-Greece-post-Elections>
3. 11-1-15 <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2015/01/11/1357059/-Anti-Capitalist-Meetup-Greek-Elections-and-the-dangers-of-Pyrrhic-Victories>

#### Zero Hedge

1. 24-1-15 <http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2015-01-24/syriza-leading-7-points-greek-incumbents-fear-monger-looming-toilet-paper-run>
2. 28-1-15 <http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2015-01-28/barricades-are-down-syriza-already-rolling-back-austerity-reforms>

#### Crooks and Liars

1. 26-1-15 <http://crooksandliars.com/2015/01/greek-voters-rebel-against-austerity>

#### Crooked Timber

1. 25-1-15 <http://crookedtimber.org/2015/01/25/greek-games-and-scenarios/>

#### Outside the beltway

1. 25-1-15 <http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/syriza-wins-greek-elections/>

#### Naked Capitalism

1. 26-1-15 <http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2015/01/much-success-syriza-likely-ending-austerity.html>
2. 26-1-15 <http://www.nakedcapitalism.com/2015/01/media-demonization-syriza-pretending-neoliberalism-popular-mainstream.html>

#### Truthdig

1. 25-1-15 [http://www.truthdig.com/eartothe-ground/item/greeces\\_ascendant\\_syriza\\_party\\_blatant\\_anticapitalists\\_or\\_20150125](http://www.truthdig.com/eartothe-ground/item/greeces_ascendant_syriza_party_blatant_anticapitalists_or_20150125)



2. 27-1-15 [http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/a\\_21st\\_century\\_left\\_rises\\_syrizas\\_victory\\_and\\_its\\_relevance\\_for\\_the\\_us\\_and](http://www.truthdig.com/report/item/a_21st_century_left_rises_syrizas_victory_and_its_relevance_for_the_us_and)

#### Counterpunch

1. 27-1-15 <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/01/27/greek-voters-have-tossed-a-grenade/>
2. 30-1-15 <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/01/30/the-greek-earthquake/>

#### Z net top

1. 2-1-15 <https://zcomm.org/znetarticle/if-syriza-wins-the-greek-election-what-will-happen-next/>
2. 25-1-15 <https://zcomm.org/znetarticle/on-the-doorstep-of-a-syriza-victory/>

#### Alter Net

1. 31-12-14 <http://www.alternet.org/why-snap-elections-are-good-news-greece-and-europe>
2. 23-1-15 <http://www.alternet.org/world/greece-has-big-opportunity-smash-politics-austerity>

### **UK Blogs Articles**

#### Left Foot Forward

1. 26-1-15 <http://leftfootforward.org/2015/01/syriza-what-the-victory-of-the-greek-left-means-for-europe/>
2. 28-1-15 <http://leftfootforward.org/2015/01/comment-how-syriza-became-the-most-radical-force-in-european-politics/>
3. 28-1-15 <http://leftfootforward.org/2015/01/what-the-british-left-can-learn-from-greece/>

#### The Commentator

1. 27-1-15 [http://www.thecommentator.com/article/5569/greece\\_is\\_impaled\\_on\\_austerity\\_by\\_the\\_euro](http://www.thecommentator.com/article/5569/greece_is_impaled_on_austerity_by_the_euro)
2. 23-1-15 [http://www.thecommentator.com/article/5558/perfect\\_european\\_storm\\_approaches\\_from\\_greece](http://www.thecommentator.com/article/5558/perfect_european_storm_approaches_from_greece)

#### Hope Not Hate

1. 25-1-15 <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/news/world/article/2383/syriza-and-nazis-run-out-real-winners-in-greek-election>

2. 25-1-15 <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/news/world/article/2382/how-historic-will-today%E2%80%99s-greek-election-be>
3. 1-2-15 <http://www.hopenothate.org.uk/news/world/article/2395/greece-%E2%80%93-a-guest-blog-by-dan-trilling>

#### The Slog

1. 31-1-15 <https://hat4uk.wordpress.com/2015/01/31/the-saturday-essay-why-the-ramifications-of-syriza-are-much-greater-than-robin-hood-giving-the-sheriff-a-bloody-nose/>
2. 26-1-15 <https://hat4uk.wordpress.com/2015/01/26/greece-analysis-syriza-hits-ground-running-as-tsipras-brokers-anel-coalition-deal-to-seal-majority-rule/>

#### Slugger O'Toole

1. 27-1-15 <http://sluggerotoole.com/2015/01/27/now-in-power-policy-will-affect-the-extent-which-syriza-can-continue-to-wing-it/>
2. 24-1-15 <http://sluggerotoole.com/2015/01/24/sundays-election-could-be-a-significant-day-for-europe/>

#### Social Europe Journal

1. 5-1-15 <http://www.socialeurope.eu/2015/01/greek-election-2015/>

#### Libcom

1. 26-1-15 <https://libcom.org/blog/quick-look-greek-elections-results-26012015>

#### Open Democracy

1. 19-1-15 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/elati-pontikopoulouvenieri/on-election-day-young-greeks-will-be-voting-for-syriza>
2. 25-1-15 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/cas-mudde/after-syriza%E2%80%99s-landslide-five-predictions-of-much-similar-future>
3. 30-1-15 <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/iosif-kovras-neophytos-loizides/syriza-radical-left's-greek-spring>

### 3. July NC

#### US Newspapers Articles

##### New York Times

1. 2-7-15 [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/world/europe/yes-no-greek-voters-are-perplexed-by-a-momentous-referendum.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/03/world/europe/yes-no-greek-voters-are-perplexed-by-a-momentous-referendum.html?_r=0)
2. 3-7-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/04/world/europe/alexis-tsipras-greece-debt-crisis-referendum.html>
3. 5-7-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/06/world/europe/greek-referendum-debt-crisis-vote.html>
4. 4-7-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/05/world/europe/bailout-referendum-lays-bare-deep-schisms-among-beleaguered-greeks.html>
5. 5-7-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/06/world/europe/with-no-greek-vote-tsipras-wins-a-victory-that-could-carry-a-steep-price.html>
6. 5-7-15 <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/07/business/daily-stock-market-activity.html>

##### Los Angeles Times

7. 5-7-15 <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-greece-referendum-20150705-story.html>
8. 6-7-15 <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-greece-merkel-20150706-story.html>
9. 3-7-15 <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-greece-bailout-referendum-20150703-story.html>
10. 7-7-15 <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-greece-referendum-debt-20150707-story.html>

##### New York Post

11. 3-7-15 <http://nypost.com/2015/07/03/poll-shows-both-sides-neck-and-neck-before-greek-referendum/>
12. 1-7-15 <http://nypost.com/2015/07/01/greece-makes-concessions-but-no-deal-seen-before-referendum/>
13. 2-7-15 <http://nypost.com/2015/07/02/greece-will-likely-stay-in-eurozone-after-referendum-vote/>

##### The Washington Post

14. 5-7-15 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/07/05/why-the-greek-referendum-is-the-referendum-from-hell/>

15. 7-7-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/with-greeces-fate-on-the-line-european-leaders-to-gather-for-critical-summit/2015/07/07/ca99ab8a-242d-11e5-b621-b55e495e9b78\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/with-greeces-fate-on-the-line-european-leaders-to-gather-for-critical-summit/2015/07/07/ca99ab8a-242d-11e5-b621-b55e495e9b78_story.html)
16. 4-7-15 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2015/07/04/the-greece-referendum-explained-for-normal-folks-who-dont-follow-european-politics/>
17. 6-7-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/a-day-after-historic-referendum-greeks-are-uncertain-what-comes-next/2015/07/06/6183ce16-2363-11e5-b621-b55e495e9b78\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/a-day-after-historic-referendum-greeks-are-uncertain-what-comes-next/2015/07/06/6183ce16-2363-11e5-b621-b55e495e9b78_story.html)
18. 6-7-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/greeks-cast-ballot-on-nations-future-in-europe/2015/07/05/cbb0a734-20d7-11e5-a135-935065bc30d0\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/greeks-cast-ballot-on-nations-future-in-europe/2015/07/05/cbb0a734-20d7-11e5-a135-935065bc30d0_story.html)
19. 6-7-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/greeks-reject-bailout-offer-in-landslide/2015/07/06/827b840f-f803-443d-a478-5d257b1af1fe\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/greeks-reject-bailout-offer-in-landslide/2015/07/06/827b840f-f803-443d-a478-5d257b1af1fe_story.html)
20. 3-7-15 [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/confusion-reigns-in-greece-on-last-day-of-campaigning-before-sunday-vote/2015/07/03/fb403d14-20f7-11e5-a135-935065bc30d0\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/confusion-reigns-in-greece-on-last-day-of-campaigning-before-sunday-vote/2015/07/03/fb403d14-20f7-11e5-a135-935065bc30d0_story.html)
21. 4-7-15 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/07/04/why-the-greek-referendum-is-like-a-badly-designed-game-of-three-dimensional-chess/>

#### Chicago Tribune

22. 6.7.15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-greece-bailout-referendum-20150705-story.html>
23. 3.7.15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-greece-debt-crisis-20150703-story.html>
24. 6.7.15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/editorials/ct-greece-euro-vote-edit-0707-20150706-story.html>
25. 7.7.15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-greece-no-bailout-vote-20150706-story.html>
26. 6-7-15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/opinion/commentary/ct-greece-referendum-garvey-column-met-20150706-story.html>
27. 8-7-15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/ct-greece-tsipras-20150708-story.html>
28. 2-7-15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-greece-debt-crisis-20150702-story.html>
29. 1-7-15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-greece-bailout-20150630-story.html>
30. 1-7-15 <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/nationworld/ct-greece-debt-crisis-20150701-story.html>

## UK Newspapers Articles

### The Guardian

31. 1-7-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jul/05/greek-referendum-no-vote-signals-huge-challenge-to-eurozone-leaders>
32. 4-7-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/04/greek-referendum-germany-no-vote>
33. 5-7-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/05/greeks-begin-voting-in-referendum-as-the-euro-faces-its-biggest-challenge>
34. 3-7-15 <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2015/jul/03/greek-referendum-voters-greece-creditors-proposals>

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