Tim Heinkelmann-Wild, Bernhard Zangl, Berthold Rittberger, and Lisa Kriegmair:
Blame Shifting and Blame Obfuscation: The Blame Avoidance Effects of Delegation in the EU.
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Appendix

1. Assessing public responsibility attributions

To assess obfuscated blame and shifted blame, we study public responsibility attributions (PRA) in the coverage of the EU safety net policy and the EU border control policy in the quality press.

We focus on two quality newspapers – one liberal-democratic and one conservative – in Austria (*Die Presse; Der Standard*), in France (*Le Monde, Le Figaro*), and in Germany (*Süddeutsche Zeitung; Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), as well as one quality newspaper with a pan-European reach (*The Guardian*). Assessing quality newspapers in the study of the public sphere is a common research strategy (Gerhards et al. 2007; Koopmans & Statham 2010; Dolezal et al. 2016: 45; Rittberger et al. 2017). For each case-pair, we analyzed the media coverage in the two 12-month periods after the respective act of delegation. We identified relevant articles by conducting a keyword search in the Factiva news database. We used the same search string for each case-pair to allow for pairwise comparisons (see Table A.1).

To measure PRA to EU member states, we conducted a content analysis of the media coverage of the two issues. We coded all PRA statements directed at either EU member states or their respective intermediaries in order to assess the member states' shares. In our sample of 348 articles, three coders identified responsibility statements. Articles were coded in randomized order to avoid any time-dependent biases. PRA statements have to meet the following three criteria (see, Rittberger et al. 2017):

(1) There is a clearly stated *PRA sender*, i.e., an individual or corporate actor that attributes political responsibility for an EU failure.

(2) There is a *PRA object*, i.e., a clearly stated failure for which political responsibility is attributed.

(3) And there is a *PRA target*, i.e., a clearly named political actor involved in the making or implementation of the respective policies for which political responsibility is attributed.

Table A.1: Search strings and identified articles covering the two case-pairs.

Newspaper	Source	Case	Keywords	Period	Articles
Guardian	Factiva	EU financial bailout	(bailout package OR bailout fund) AND (sovereign* OR public) AND debt* AND (fail* OR problem*)	Post-May 2010	18
				Post-July 2012	13
		EU border control	refugee AND Mediterranean AND (tragedy OR distress OR fail)	Post-November 2014	52
				Post-February 2017	15
Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)	Factiva	EU financial bailout	(Rettungsschirm OR Rettungsprogramm) AND Staatsschuld* AND (versag* OR Problem)	Post-May 2010	7
				Post-July 2012	10
		EU border control	Flüchtling AND Mittelmeer AND Tragödie OR tot OR Seenot OR Leid	Post-November 2014	9
				Post-February 2017	3
Frankfurter Allgemeine (FAZ)	FAZ Archive	EU financial bailout	(Rettungsschirm OR Rettungsprogramm) AND Staatsschuld* AND (versag* OR Problem)	Post-May 2010	9
				Post-July 2012	7
		EU border control	Flüchtling AND Mittelmeer AND Tragödie OR tot OR Seenot OR Leid	Post-November 2014	8
				Post-February 2017	0
Die Presse	Factiva	EU financial bailout	(Rettungsschirm OR Rettungsprogramm) AND Staatsschuld* AND (versag* OR Problem)	Post-May 2010	6
				Post-July 2012	9
		EU border control	Flüchtling AND Mittelmeer AND Tragödie OR tot OR Seenot OR Leid	Post-November 2014	9
				Post-February 2017	3
Der Standard	Factiva	EU financial bailout	(Rettungsschirm OR Rettungsprogramm) AND Staatsschuld* AND (versag* OR Problem)	Post-May 2010	2
				Post-July 2012	6
		EU border control	Flüchtling AND Mittelmeer AND Tragödie OR tot OR Seenot OR Leid	Post-November 2014	5
				Post-February 2017	1
Le Figaro	Factiva	EU financial bailout	(fonds de sauvetage OR plan de sauvetage OR programme de sauvetage OR sauvetage financier) AND (dette* publique*) AND (échec OR échou* OR problème OR crise)	Post-May 2010	12
				Post-July 2012	6
		EU border control	refugié* AND Méditerranée AND (détresse OR mort* OR tragédie)	Post-November 2014	38
				Post-February 2017	6
Le Monde	Factiva	EU financial bailout	(fonds de sauvetage ODER plan de sauvetage OR programme de sauvetage OR sauvetage financier) AND (dette* publique*) AND (échec OR échou* OR problème OR crise)	Post-May 2010	13
				Post-July 2012	6
		EU border control	refugié* AND Méditerranée AND (détresse OR mort* OR tragédie)	Post-November 2014	47
				Post-February 2017	28

We analytically differentiated between two specific types of political actors to whom responsibility was attributed (i.e., PRA targets):

(1) The category 'EU member states' comprises the Council as well as representatives of the national governments, including prime ministers, chancellors, national ministers, and their spokespersons.

(2) The category 'agents' comprises all actors to whom EU member states delegated tasks. In the EU financial assistance case, agents of analytical interest were the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM), the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), and the European Central Bank (ECB). In the EU border control case, we focused on Frontex as well as Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA).

The following provides an example of a PRA statement: "To disguise the fact that the billions in Greece are irrevocably gone, euro governments and the ECB have launched a strange 'aid cycle' […] EU countries, the ECB, and whatever they may be called, regularly transfer 'aid' to Athens, which they then pay back one to one as interest." (Urschitz 2012; authors' translation) Here, the journalist who wrote the article (the PRA sender) assigns responsibility for the failed Euro rescue attempts (the PRA object) to both the ECB and Eurozone governments (the PRA targets).

The coding of newspaper articles was conducted by three coders in randomized order to avoid time-dependent biases. Our main coders were Coder 1 and Coder 2 (see Table A.2). In our final sample of 348 articles, the three coders identified 424 PRA statements, 201 in the financial bailout case-pair and 223 in the border control case-pair (see Tables A.3-A.6). Coder 1 coded the articles by German and Austrian newspapers as well as the Guardian covering the EU's financial bailout case-pair while Coder 2 coded those covering the EU's border control case-pair. Due to language constraints, Coder 3 coded all French newspaper articles covering both case-pairs.

Table A.2: Coders assigned to cases and newspapers.

	Guardian	SZ	FAZ	Die Presse	Der Standard	Le Figaro	Le Monde
EU financial bailout	Coder 1	Coder 1	Coder 1	Coder 1	Coder 1	Coder 3	Coder 3
EU border control	Coder 2	Coder 2	Coder 2	Coder 2	Coder 2	Coder 3	Coder 3

Importantly, the allocation of coders across case-pairs and newspapers ensured that the results of the two pairwise comparisons are not biased through individual coder characteristics. This becomes clear when considering results on the country-level (see Tables A.5-A.6): As Coder 1 coded all Austrian and German newspaper articles for the EU financial bailout case-pair, the results across periods are unaffected by coder characteristics. The same holds for Coder 2, who coded all Austrian and German newspaper articles for the EU border control case-pair, as well as Coder 3 with regards to the results for French newspaper articles. PRA patterns *within* case-pairs meet our theoretical expectations for each country, with Austria in the case of the EU financial bailout case as an expectation. (When aggregating the results for Austrian and German newspapers for each case-pair, all results are in line with our theory.) Moreover, as Coder 3 coded French newspaper articles for both case-pairs, this allows us to check whether differences across case-pairs, especially with regards to PRA frequency, actually stemmed from different characteristics of Coder 1 and Coder 2 and not the delegation design. As we observe differences in PRA frequencies in line with our theoretical expectations *across* the two case-pairs for French newspaper articles, our assumption that differences between delegation designs – and not coders – led to the results is supported.

While we can thus exclude that our results are driven by individual coder characteristics, we also assessed inter-coder reliability to ensure that the coding can be reliably reproduced (Mayring, 2010, p. 120). For this purpose, we randomly selected ten articles from our sample, five articles coded by Coder 1 and five articles coded by Coder 2. (This was impossible for the French articles coded by Coder 3 as Coder 1 and Coder 2 cannot sufficiently understand French.) We then asked the coders to identify PRA statements in the articles they had not coded originally: Coder 2 and Coder 3 coded five articles originally coded by Coder 1; and Coder 1 and Coder 3 coded five articles originally coded by Coder 2. We then compared the test codes with the original codes and calculated the co-occurrence of their respective codes. As often the case in qualitative coding, the identification of relevant statements (i.e., PRA) posed a certain obstacle for coders; but when they identified the same statement, their assessment of the target was almost always congruent. Coder 2 agreed with Coder 1's original coding with regards to 21 out of 27 identified PRA statements (64%), while Coder 3 only agreed with regards to 18 out of 32 codes (44%). In turn, with regards to

the agreed statements, Coder 2 agreed with Coder 1's PRA targets in 20 out of 21 PRAs (95%), and Coder 3 with regards to 17 out of 18 codes (94%). Similarly, Coder 1 agreed with PRA statements identified by Coder 2 with regards to 27 out of 32 PRAs (71%), while Coder 3 only agreed with regards to 17 out of 35 PRAs (33%). Turning to mutually identified statements, Coder 1 agreed with the original coding of PRA targets by Coder 2 in 25 out of 27 PRAs (93%) and Coder 3 agreed in 17 out of 18 PRAs (94%).

Overall, while intercoder-reliability is thus moderate – as common in qualitative content analysis – the allocation of coders across cases and the randomization of articles over time makes us confident that the results are not driven by differences between individual coders but delegation designs.

Table A.3: Coded PRA statements across newspapers (EU financial bailout policy).

	Guardian			SZ			FAZ			Presse			Standard			Figaro			Monde		
	MS	Intergov.	ECB	MS	Intergov.	ECB	MS	Intergov.	ECB	MS	Intergov.	ECB	MS	Intergov.	ECB	MS	Intergov.	ECB	MS	Intergov.	ECB
Post-May 2010	27	15	3	8	0	1	11	5	1	4	9	3	0	0	0	10	2	0	9	3	1
Post-July 2012	11	6	5	2	4	7	2	3	14	6	4	6	2	0	3	4	1	1	3	3	2

Table A.4: Coded PRA statements across newspapers (EU border control policy).

	Guardian			SZ			FAZ			Presse			Standard			Figaro			Monde		
	MS	Frontex	Libya	MS	Frontex	Libya	MS	Frontex	Libya	MS	Frontex	Libya	MS	Frontex	Libya	MS	Frontex	Libya	MS	Frontex	Libya
Post-November 2014	16	27	0	2	6	0	4	4	0	6	9	2	0	2	0	7	19	0	28	32	0
Post-February 2017	2	4	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	5	4	11	14	10

Table A.5: Coded PRA statements across countries (EU financial bailout policy).

	Germany						Austria						France					
	MS		Intergov.		ECB		MS		Intergov.		ECB		MS		Intergov.		ECB	
Post-May 2010	19	73%	5	19%	2	8%	4	25%	9	56%	3	19%	19	76%	5	20%	1	4%
Post-July 2012	4	13%	7	22%	21	66%	8	38%	4	19%	9	43%	7	50%	4	29%	3	21%

Table A.6: Coded PRA statements across countries (EU border control policy).

	Germany						Austria						France					
	MS		Frontex		Libya		MS		Frontex		Libya		MS		Frontex		Libya	
Post-November 2014	6	38%	10	63%	0	0%	6	32%	11	58%	2	11%	35	41%	51	59%	0	0%
Post-February 2017	1	33%	0	0%	2	67%	1	50%	0	0%	1	50%	14	30%	19	40%	14	30%

2. Statistical tests

The empirically observed patterns of public responsibility attributions for contested EU policies corroborated our expectations about the effect of delegation modes on the direction and frequency of PRA. To further strengthen our confidence in the empirical results, we conducted statistical tests to assess the significance of differences in PRA shares targeting EU member states as well as the frequency of PRA.

With regards to the *targets of PRA*, we conducted chi-square tests. For both case-pairs, we test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the independent variable (i.e., the dominant mode of delegation during a period) and the dependent variable (i.e., PRA targets). Table A.7 and A.8 show our observations for the two case-pairs with the combinations of the independent and dependent variables, contrasted by the expected absolute values for a random distribution (in brackets). The expected value for each cell is calculated by multiplying the row total by the column total, then dividing by the grand total. If the null hypothesis is true, we would expect the overall ratio of blame to EU member states and their agents (i.e. the rightmost column) to correspond to the ratio in the other two columns in both tables.

Table A.7 shows that in the EU financial bailout case-pair, the observed and expected values deviate considerably from each other. The chi-square value of 15.44 implicates that the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 0.01 level of significance (99% confidence level). We are thus confident that the observed pattern in our sample is not random. This result lends further plausibility to our 'blame shifting hypothesis' about the impact of agents' independence on PRA shares targeting governments.

Table A.7: Observed values vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) for the EU financial bailout case.

	Post-May 2010	**Post-July 2012**	**Row totals**
PRA to MS	69 (55)	30 (44)	99
PRA to agents	43 (57)	59 (45)	102
Column totals	112	89	201

By contrast, Table A.8 shows that in the EU border control case-pair, the observed and expected values are very similar. Moreover, the obtained chi-square value of 1.17 indicates that the null hypothesis *cannot* be rejected at the 0.05 level of significance (95% confidence level). This is in line with our 'blame obfuscation hypothesis' which claims that delegation to external agents does *not* impact the share of PRA targeting governments.

Table A.8: Observed values vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) for the EU border control case.

	Post-November 2014	**Post-February 2017**	**Row totals**
PRA to MS	63 (60)	18 (21)	81
PRA to agents	101 (104)	41 (38)	142
Column totals	164	59	223

Turning to the *frequency of PRA*, we conducted Wilcoxon rank-sum tests (also known as Mann-Whitney two-sample statistic) to assess for both case-pairs whether differences in the number of PRA over time are a statistically significant or not. For both case-pairs, we test the null hypothesis that the frequencies of PRA per months and newspaper do not differ across periods. In the EU financial bailout case-pair, we *cannot* reject the null hypothesis that there is no meaningful difference in PRA numbers across the two periods (see Table A.9). This is perfectly in line with our 'blame shifting hypothesis' which claims that delegation to independent agents does not decrease the frequency of PRA.

Table A.9: Wilcoxon rank-sum test for frequencies of PRA in the EU financial bailout case.

	Rank sum		**Difference**
	Post-May 2010	Post-July 2012	
	7734.5	6461.5	-0.283
n=168	84	84	

Note: *z<.05; **z<.01; ***z<.001.

By contrast, in the EU border control case-pair, we can reject the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance (95% confidence level) (see Table A.10). This lends support to our 'blame obfuscation hypothesis'.

Table A.10: Wilcoxon rank-sum test for frequencies of PRA in the EU border control case.

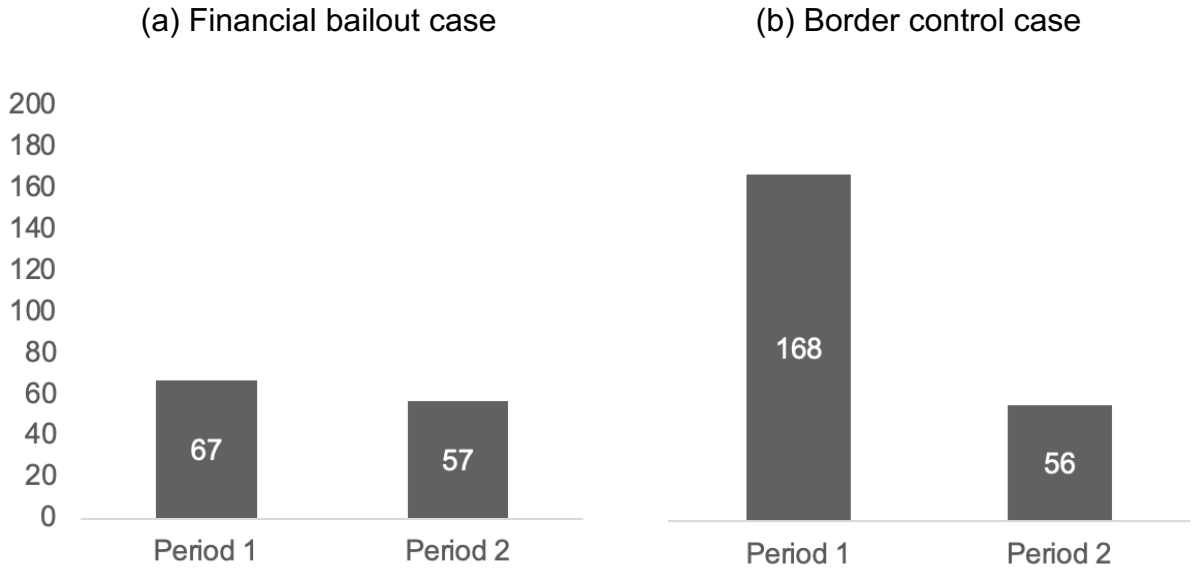
	Rank sum		**Difference**
	Post-November 2014	Post-February 2017	
	7734.5	6461.5	2.516*
n=168	84	84	

Note: *z<.05; **z<.01; ***z<.001.

3. Frequency of newspaper articles

An alternative indicator to the frequency of PRA would have been the frequency of newspaper articles covering the respective policy. As we are interested in blame avoidance outcomes and governments will be more interested in how often they are blamed than how often an EU policy is covered by the media, we believe the frequency of PRA to be a more valid indicator. This said, the number of newspaper articles addressing the respective policies also corroborate our theoretical expectations. In the financial bailout case-pair, where we do not expect a strong 'blame obfuscation effect', the frequency of newspaper articles – as the frequency of PRA – remains almost constant. In the border control case-pair, where we do expect a 'blame obfuscation effect', the frequency of newspaper articles – just like the frequency of PRA – sharply declines.

Figure A.1: Frequency of newspaper articles covering the EU policies.



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