

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### **Rules & Laws of European Economic Governance: Origins, Implementation, Contestation**

Centre de recherche en droit public, Université de Montréal

**21 and 22 May 2024**

The aim of this workshop is to explore the history of European economic governance, analyze the gradual transformations of its mechanisms, rules, and laws, and reflect on the future of economic decision-making in the European Union. By European economic governance, we understand the norms, policies and activities aimed at ensuring macroeconomic, fiscal, and monetary performance in the European Union, whether formal (laws inscribed in treaties and written agreements) or informal (rules and principles based on past practices and tacit agreements).

Many questions remain contentious in the vast literature on European economic governance. Thus, **the origins and founding principles of European economic governance** are still a matter of heated debates. What theoretical and intellectual influences underlie principles of European economic governance? What do we understand by the concept of “economic constitution”, and how did it inform European integration? Furthermore, implementing the **Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)** also proved controversial, due to the magnitude of the constitutional changes involved. Since the Maastricht treaty, what have been the effects of European economic governance over social welfare? Was a monetary union compatible with the “Social Europe” promised by Jacques Delors? What have been the socio-economic and political effects of the “convergence criteria”? What power rests in national parliaments and governments in economic decision-making? How accommodating have EU institutions been in interpreting EMU provisions? Are there double standards in the ways the rules are applied, and if so, why?

Throughout the 2010s, the **management and governance of the Eurozone crisis** have generated intense discussions as well, as the Eurozone crisis arguably further altered the balance of powers between the EU and its member states. How have austerity measures been justified in economic and political discourse in Europe? How did these policies contribute to the rise of (far-right) “populism” in the European Union? With what kind of social and political consequences? What have been the mechanisms used to resist or contest European economic governance, both politically and legally? More recently, a number of **external shocks (Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine)** seem to have reshuffled the rules of European economic governance, but are these changes conjunctural, or will the EU go back to the *status quo ante* once the crises recede? Thus, could the Next Generation EU (NGEU) Plan be considered a game

changer, or a mere suspension of the rules? How could citizens have a say in European economic policies, and how could they help construct a greener, more equalitarian, and more sustainable future for the European Union in the 2020s and beyond?

At the turn of the 2020s, two very important contributions to European integration studies by Professor of International Relations and Political Science **Vivien A. Schmidt (Boston University)** and Professor of Law **Michael A. Wilkinson (London School of Economics)** addressed many of these questions:

- Vivien A. Schmidt (2020). *Europe's Crisis of Legitimacy: Governing by Rules and Ruling by Numbers in the Eurozone*. Oxford University Press.
- Michael A. Wilkinson (2021). *Authoritarian Liberalism and the Transformation of Modern Europe*. Oxford University Press.

While Michael Wilkinson's book spans the 20<sup>th</sup> century to reflect on the tensions between democratic politics and economy policy-making in Europe, Vivien Schmidt's book chiefly focuses on the political and economic responses to the Eurozone crisis. Wilkinson's approach is both legal and historical: he depicts the hollowing out of a social democratic vision of the economy and traces its ideological continuity, i.e. the extension of non-democratic, technocratic rule in European politics after the Second World War. He equates European integration to a "soft authoritarian" project which was further entrenched by the heightened surveillance exercised by the German constitutional court after re-unification. On the other hand, Vivien Schmidt's perspective employs institutionalist analysis (both historical and discursive) together with democratic theory: she considers the ideas and discursive dynamics during the Eurozone crisis that led to policies characterized by "governing by rules and ruling by numbers", i.e. imposing austerity and structural policies reforms overseen by the European Semester. Following the deleterious impact of these measures, European officials began to change economic governance incrementally, reinterpreting the rules "by stealth", without admitting it publicly. Although fundamental flaws persisted, the economic situation improved, but legitimacy remained in question. For Schmidt, the NGEU Plan in response to the Covid-19 pandemic broke the taboo on EU level debt and represented a great leap forward in addressing the green transition and inequalities. Yet, the SGP rules have only been suspended and not changed. Thus, whether the NGEU represents a paradigm shift remains to be seen, in particular in light of the debates over the reform of the fiscal rules in 2023.

### ***Workshop organization***

The workshop "Rules and Laws of European Economic Governance" will therefore consist in a forum/roundtable, or *discussion croisée*, on Vivien Schmidt's and Michael Wilkinson's respective books. These two wide-ranging contributions explore various aspects of European integration and economic governance. We thus invite early-career scholars and researchers to critically engage with some of the arguments made in these books and connect them to their own research in original ways.

The event will take place over two days. On the first day (Tuesday 21 May), we will hold a workshop with 6 early-career researchers who will have the opportunity to present their work and meaningfully engage with arguments developed in one or both

books. The workshop aims to encourage interactions between Vivien Schmidt, Michael Wilkinson and other workshop participants, who will provide feedback and engage with individual presenters. On the second day (Wednesday 22 May), we will organize a conference dedicated to Vivien Schmidt's and Michael Wilkinson's recent work, including the books, but also the research and reflections that they have carried out on topics of European economic governance in the aftermath of the books' publications, particularly in the context of the European response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine. We will then engage in a Q&A on topics of economic constitutionalism and European political economy and governance with members of the CRDP, interested colleagues, and the broader audience, as this event will be public.

Topics addressed at the workshop may include, but are not limited to:

- Emergence and history of European economic constitutionalism
- The influence of schools of economic thought on European economic governance; critical theories of European integration and European governance
- The role of states and non-state actors (citizens, NGOs, political parties, interest-groups, businesses, trade unions) in European economic governance
- Race and gender in European economic governance; Euro/EU-centrism
- Democratic capitalism in crisis; questions related to democratic legitimacy
- Authority and emergency powers in Europe; institutional and political transformations in European crisis management and recovery strategies
- Social and political contestation of European economic governance
- Prospects for the reform of European fiscal rules (“convergence criteria”, Stability and Growth Pact, etc.)
- Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine on European economic governance
- The question of redistribution and common debt issuance in a monetary union
- The Next Generation EU and the European Green Deal: implementation, limits and challenges

### **GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION**

The workshop and conference will take place on **21-22 May 2024** at Centre de recherche en droit public (Université de Montréal). The workshop aims to bring together early-career scholars and researchers from all social sciences (law, political science, history, economics, sociology...) interested in European economic governance. Proposals should be submitted in English. Applicants should submit an abstract of no more than 500 words outlining their proposal and a recent CV by **10 January 2024**. Proposals should be submitted by email to [thibault.biscahie@umontreal.ca](mailto:thibault.biscahie@umontreal.ca), mentioning “European economic governance” in the headline. Selected applicants will be informed by **25 January 2024**.

Participants should submit their contribution of no more than 10,000 words by **15 April 2024**. The papers will be distributed to Professor Schmidt and Professor Wilkinson, and to the conference organizers ahead of the event. We intend to publish selected papers in a journal special issue or a collected volume. Please note that should your institution be unable to do so, conference funds are available to support your accommodation and travel expenses. Thank you for letting us know in your email if you would like to apply for these funds.