

**European economies beyond indicators:
Structures, systems, and institutions in Western Europe since 1945**

Call for papers

University of Glasgow, 30 and 31 May 2019

The debates about the stability of the Eurozone have brought to the fore the importance of macroeconomic convergence among member countries. The question of convergence has been a crucial element of state bargaining ever since monetary cooperation has gained prominence in the late 1960s, and in particular during the discussions of the Werner Committee about the creation of an Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in 1970. The debate between the “economists”, who considered that the introduction of a single currency required a full ex ante convergence of economic conditions of the would-be currency bloc, and the “monetarists”, who argued that the introduction of such a single currency would in itself constrain member states’ economies to converge, has continued in different forms, even until the present day. However, the convergence criteria as set out in the Maastricht treaty focussed on a few indicators such as inflation, government budget deficit, or long-term interest rates, not on ‘economic structures’ and ‘economic institutions’, understood as the overall organisation and institutional framework of each national economies, including financial systems, labour markets, business models and organisation, private and public debt, or legal systems.

Just as Hartmut Kaelble famously analysed whether European societies had been converging over the 20th century (Kaelble, 1987), this conference aims at examining whether European economies have converged since 1945. While publications on convergence between European countries are plentiful in economics, convergence is often understood either in terms of performance analysed through various indicators, such as per capita real income (Yin et al., 2003, Darvas, 2015), or in terms of policy objectives set by the European institutions (Agata and Elzbieta, 2018). Economic structures and economic institutions, on the other hand, are sometimes considered as a factor of economic growth (Constantine, 2017), but rarely as an object of convergence in historical perspective. The “varieties of capitalism” literature has provided important contributions on the institutional frameworks of national economies (Hall and Soskice, 2001) and in particular within the European integration context (Fioretos, 2011, 2001). However, it focuses on understanding the comparative institutional advantages of each country more than on analysing the historical convergence or divergence of their economic structures/institutions. Broad narratives on the history of the European economy such as Eichengreen’s have focused on Europe as a whole more than on its national entities (Eichengreen, 2006). European integration historiography, by contrast, has not paid much attention to the question of national convergence or divergence between member countries, and to the extent to which these processes were linked to the integration project.

This conference thus proposes to connect comparative economic history with European integration history: to what extent have European economies converged or diverged since 1945? What are some of the criteria to make such an assessment? How did these trends interact with or influence the European integration process? To what extent could they represent a challenge to European integration today?

We are particularly interested in contributions looking at the following aspects, preferably from a comparative historical perspective (the list is not exhaustive):

- Labour: The structure and evolution of labour markets: unemployment, labour law, role of trade unions in shaping the labour market and trade unions bargaining power, professional training and education system
- Finance: The comparison of European financial systems: The structure of banking systems (savings banks, cooperative banks, commercial banks, investment banks); the evolution of insurance and non-bank financial institutions; stock markets
- Businesses and economic profile: The European business structures: models, networks, organisation, competition and governance; private debt; evolution of main industries and services, impact of crises (for instance, the 1970s), evolution of economic geography; company law, insolvency law
- State: The government revenues and role of the state in European national economies (tax systems, public debt...); the welfare state and its economic impact (social protection...); legal systems

The conference will take place on 30 and 31 May 2019 at the University of Glasgow.

Eligibility and how to apply:

PhD students, early career researchers, and confirmed researchers are invited to submit proposals. We encourage submissions from all relevant disciplines of European studies (economics, law, sociology, political science/political economy, history...) on any aspect related to this call.

Applicants should submit an abstract of no more than 500 words, and a short CV by **31 January 2019** to EURECON Project Administrators Katie Wright and David Iglesias, rso-admin-eurecon@glasgow.ac.uk, mentioning 'Economic systems conference' in the headline. Selected applicants will be informed by the end of February 2019.

Please note that should your institution be unable to do so, there are limited funds available to support your accommodation and travel expenses.

For further information please contact Katie Wright and David Iglesias at rso-admin-eurecon@glasgow.ac.uk.

References:

- Agata, S., Elzbieta, Z., 2018. Towards the Goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy: Convergence or Divergence of the European Union Countries? *Comparative Economic Research* 21, 67–82.
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- Eichengreen, B.J., 2006. *The European economy since 1945: coordinated capitalism and beyond*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.
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- Kaelble, H., 1987. *Auf dem Weg zu einer europäischen Gesellschaft eine Sozialgeschichte Westeuropas: 1880-1980*. C. H. Beck, München.
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Organisation:

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