



Until recently, European labour politics has mainly been shaped and constrained by horizontal EU market integration through the free movement of goods, capital, services and people.

After 2011, the latter has been complemented by vertical EU integration through the surveillance of socio-economic policies in EU member states.

The resulting, much more vertical, new EU economic governance regime (NEG) opens contradictory possibilities for labour movements.

This project aims to explore the challenges and possibilities that NEG poses to labour politics and the methodological nationalism in our field.

How? Analytical challenges

- 1) Re-think EU governance**
Going beyond state-centred paradigms
- 2) Re-contextualise EU NEG interventions**
(not pea counting of EU country specific recommendations)
- 3) Re-focus politicisation studies on**
Collective action (not opinion polls & media analysis)
- 4) Go beyond methodological nationalism**
National systems → transnational dynamics

1) RE-THINK EU GOVERNANCE

From the dominant state-centred paradigms ...
Staatenbund – Bundesstaat

to a corporate governance paradigm
New Economic Governance → a supranational regime that nationalises social conflict (Erne 2015)

Governance by Numbers (MIP Scoreboard) and European Semester interventions (MoUs, CSRs, ...)

2) RE-CONTEXTUALISE EU NEG INTERVENTIONS

Dominant focus:
("Socialisation" of European Semester)
De-contextualised counting of the EU's Country Specific Recommendations (CSR)

Our focus:
Contextualised analysis of NEG interventions
→ different legal constraints of CSRs
→ interrelated semantic fields in CSRs
→ different territorial contexts (EU 4+1)
→ different sectorial / policy contexts (3+2)

3) RE-FOCUS POLITICISATION STUDIES

Dominant focus

Micro Level Opinion polls & elections
Macro Level Media debates

Cultural vs economic frames (Kriesi's C POL N ERC project)

Our focus

Meso Level Collective action is driving politicisation

Our framework Integrating economic & cultural divides (Bethoux, Erne, and Golden 2018: BJIR)

4) From National Systems Designs ...

which assumes autonomous national institutions

... to Transnational Dynamics Design

which captures interrelations across sites

What: Comparing Transnational Dynamics

High risks: Selection of sectors & policy areas

	↻ Wage Policy	↻ Public Service
↻ Water	Labour movements' reactions to EU interventions	
↻ Health Care		
↻ Transport		

High gains: Allowing inferences for other cases

First Steps of the ERC Team

Mapping old & new EU interventions across DE, IT, IE, RO in the area of

Health Care Sabina Stan
Urban Transport Darragh Golden
Water Services Imre Szabó
Wage Policy Jamie Jordan / N.N.

Mapping Counter-Reactions
Multi-sited fieldwork at EU level, DE, IT, IE, and RO forthcoming

PhD Projects

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It is time for paradigm shift in the way we explore labour politics

Law/Political Science → Corporate Governance Paradigms
Re-focus EU Politicisation Studies on → Collective Action
Methodological Transnationalism

Béthoux, E., Erne, R., Golden, D. (2018) 'A primordial attachment to the nation? French and Irish workers and trade unions in past EU referendum debates', *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 56 (3): 656-78.

Erne, R. (2019) 'How To Analyse A Supranational Regime That Nationalises Social Conflict? The European Crisis, Labour Politics and Methodological Nationalism', in: Nanopoulos, E. and Vergis, F. (eds.) *The Crisis Behind the Euro-Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Erne, R. (2018). 'Labour Politics and the EU's New Economic Governance Regime (European Unions): A new European Research Council project', *Transfer*, 24(2):237-47.

Full texts available here: www.erc-europeanunions.eu