

Contemporary Social Policy in the E.U.

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 5b

**Labour mobility and employment
policy in the E.U.**

Lecture 5b

Is the growth of E.U. social policy a positive development?

- 2 possible answers:

- (i) from the 'right' of the political spectrum – 'free market liberals'
- (ii) from the 'left' of the political spectrum – social democrats

Lecture 5b

- (i) from the 'right' of the political spectrum
 - 'free market liberals'
 - development of E.U. social policy counterproductive (dangerous!)
 - constitutes a constraint on the functioning of the free-market
 - plus = one element in growth of E.U. 'superstate' and large bureaucracy

Lecture 5b

(ii) from the 'left' of the political spectrum – social democrats

- development of E.U. social policy is a positive and necessary development
- needed to protect E.U. citizens from worst excesses of free-market
- plus, has economic gains for the market as assists in production of highly skilled, well-trained, well educated workforce

Lecture 5b

E.U. labour and employment policy

a) the 'acceptable core'

- i.e. health and safety, training,
and 'free movement of labour'
(until recently)

b) the 'disputed extended areas'

- i.e. working conditions, employment
rights

Lecture 5b

‘Free movement of labour’

- Art. 48 to 51 Treaty of Rome, 1957 established right of freedom of mobility for workers (excluded public sector workers)

Lecture 5b

1974 to 1976 Social Action Programme:

- encouraged creation of common vocational training, and employment and social protection policies
- plus a social action programme for migrant workers and their families (for EEC and non-EEC nationals)

Lecture 5b

- 1985 White Paper on Completing the Single Market
- 1987 Single European Act
- 1988 Social Dimension initiative of the E.C. Commission
 - all moved policy on 'freedom of movement of labour' forward

Lecture 5b

‘Social Dimension of the Internal Market’

‘ Social policy must, above all, contribute to the setting up of a “single labour market” by doing away with the barriers which still restrict the effective exercise of two basic freedoms: the freedom of movement of persons and the freedom of establishment.’

(European Commission, 1988, p.2-3)

Lecture 5b

1988 Social Charter

- freedom of movement (first 'social right')
- encouraged harmonisation of conditions of residence
- encouraged mutual recognition of occupational qualifications
- included requirement of improvement of living and working conditions of immigrant workers

Lecture 5b

1997 Treaty of Amsterdam

- Art.62 demanded that within 5 years the E.U. Council of Ministers should adopt “measures with a view to ensuring ... the absence of any controls on persons, be they citizens of the Union or nationals of third countries, when crossing internal borders”.

Lecture 5b

Since May 2004 the application of one of founding principles of EEC in 1957 Treaty of Rome – on free movement of labour - has been varied:

- a) between Member states (different approaches, different application of regulations);
- b) within policy areas/sectors

Lecture 5b

Phases in E.U. labour mobility and employment policy:

Phase 1 – 1950s ‘recovery’ – ‘economic’ concerns dominant – ‘social’ subordinate

Phase 2 – late 1950s/1960s ‘boom’ – ‘economic’ and ‘political’ concerns dominant – ‘social’ concerns expedient

Lecture 5b

Phases in E.U. labour mobility and employment policy:

Phase 3 – ‘recession’ 1970s/mid 1980s – ‘economic’/ ‘political’/‘cultural’ concerns dominant – ‘social’ concerns subordinate

Phase 4 – ‘boom’ mid 1980s/mid 1990s – ‘economic’/‘political’/‘social’ concerns expedient

Lecture 5b

Phases in E.U. labour mobility and employment policy:

Phase 5 – ‘uncertainty’ late 1990s/2007 – ‘political’/‘social’/‘cultural’ concerns dominant – ‘economic’ concerns subordinate?

Phase 6 – ‘uncertainty’ 2008 economic depression, Eurozone crisis, public sector and social policy cuts, political (nationalist?) reaction?