

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 3

**Harmonisation, mutual
recognition, and the
'europeanisation' of social
policy?**

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 3

Additional sources:

Duina, F. and Raunio, T. (2007) 'The open method of co-ordination and national parliaments: further marginalization or new opportunities?', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14:4, pp.489-506.

Journal of European Public Policy, Vol.14, no.5, 2007. (Special issue: Mutual Recognition as a New Mode of Governance)

Additional sources:

- Hansen, M.P. and Triantafyllou, P. (2011) 'the Lisbon strategy and the alignment of economic and social concerns', in ***Journal of European Social Policy***, Vol. 21, no.3, July, pp.197-209.
- Van Vliet, O. and Koster, F. (2011) 'Europeanisation and the political economy of active labour market policies', in ***European Union Politics***, Vol.12, no.2, June, pp.217-240.
- Warleigh-Lack, A. and Drachenberg, R. (2011) 'Spillover in a soft policy era? Evidence from the Open Method of Co-ordination in education and training', in ***Journal of European Public Policy***, Vol.18, no 7, pp.999-1015.

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

- what are the defining characteristics and underlying principles categorising E.U. social policy?

CONTEXT

- historical and theoretical frame

+

- underlying principles

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

- there is a parallel process of E.U. social integration accompanying developments in political and economic integration (spillover)
- What is the ‘politics’ of E.U. social integration?
- E.U. ‘single social areas’?
- A ‘europeanisation’ of social policy?

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

1. Harmonisation and convergence
2. Diversity and mutual recognition

European Union Public Policy

Lecture 1

Harmonisation
(CONCEPT)

Mutual Recognition
(CONCEPT)



Convergence
(PROCESS)

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

- Harmonisation made more urgent, but also more complex, by preparations for EMU – and aim and need to maintain principle of freedom of movement in enlarged E.U.

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

BUT, by Maastricht Treaty (1993) Social Charter stated account should be taken of “diverse forms of national practices, in particular in the field of contractual relations”

- stressed the need to maintain the competitiveness of the Community’s economy

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

Harmonisation of social policy not defined as, or suggested to mean, complete unification of social systems and social policy

- But acceptance of certain common principles and standards of social policy

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

- harmonisation seen as means of avoiding ‘welfare tourism’
 - and prevent national social policy becoming bargaining counter between member states
 - and avoid distortion of economic ‘competition’

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

Single European Act (1985) –
convergence in fiscal and
employment law

- improvement in infrastructures and standards of education and training
- for competitive Single European Market harmonisation of social policy necessary

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

- ***BUT*** Jacques Delors, as Head of the E.U. Commission, accepted various specific cultures, traditions and social policy models of member states meant harmonisation across all social policy areas impossible.
- *advocated COHERENCE/COHESION,*
- *Acceptance of diversity and 'MUTUAL RECOGNITION'*

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

COHESION = Member states 'encouraged'
to co-operate and co-ordinate their efforts in
order to bring about greater economic and
social cohesion between the regions

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

‘Community Charter of the Fundamental
Social Rights of Workers’, 1989

- harmonisation in context of freedom of
movement – object of harmonising
conditions of residence in all member states
- harmonise duration of paid leave from
work
- harmonise safety conditions at workplace

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

‘Community Charter of the Fundamental
Social Rights of Workers’, 1989

- allowed member states to continue with national differences in social protection systems
- Social Charter (Maastricht Treaty 1993) –
no mention of harmonisation
 - respect for national specificity

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

‘Open Method of Co-ordination’ (OMC)

- formerly launched as an E.U. process at
Lisbon E.U. Council of March 2000

- purpose was to spread legislative (and
therefore, policy-making) ‘best practices’
across E.U. Member States – primarily in areas
where E.U. had no formal regulatory
competence

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

- 2004 enlargement brought different issues and problems
- legacy of bureaucratic state collectivist systems
 - different institutional legacies
 - nature and character of revolutions
 - 1990s economic transformations
 - made harmonisation less likely

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

SUMMARY:

1. Each enlargement made harmonisation less likely
2. ‘Deepening’ versus ‘widening’ – contradiction between economic and monetary union necessitating social policy convergence and expansion of E.U. complicating convergence

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

SUMMARY:

3. Differences in social policy in each member state attributed to stage of social and economic development of each country – plus specific forms of national social policy resulting from social, economic, political and cultural traditions

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

SUMMARY:

- NEVERTHELESS - can identify some over-arching principles of E.U. social policy
- based on 'core values' of social progress (i.e. high levels of employment, social protection, raising living standards and quality of life, promoting social cohesion and social justice)

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

SUMMARY:

‘Europeanisation’ of social policy?

- framework, of principles of social protection, social welfare, social justice, equality of opportunity
- A balance between convergence, diversity, mutual recognition

Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Lecture 3

SUMMARY:

‘Europeanisation’ of social policy?

- A multi-level, varied approach model of E.U. social policy integration
- different social policy areas and at different social policy levels, different integrated approaches and degrees of integration employed