European Union Public Policy

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 2

The basis of, and principles underpinning, E.U. public policy: harmonisation, mutual recognition and convergence?

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Additional Sources:

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

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

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- what are the defining characteristics and over-arching principles categorising E.U. public policy?

CONTEXT

- historical and theoretical frame

+

- underpinning principles

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1. Harmonisation and convergence

2. Diversity and mutual recognition

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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

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

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

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- harmonisation seen as means of avoiding 'welfare tourism'

    - and avoiding distortion of economic 'competition'

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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 public policy necessary

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- *BUT* **Jacques Delors, as Head of the E.U. Commission,**

 - *advocated*

 COHERENCE/COHESION

 = Acceptance of diversity and 'MUTUAL RECOGNITION'

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***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**

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'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

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'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 differences

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'Open Method of Co-ordination' (OMC)

- formally launched at Lisbon EU Council, March 2000

- purpose to spread legislative (and therefore, policy-making) 'best practices' across the EU Member States – primarily in the areas where the EU had no formal regulatory competence

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SUMMARY:

1. Each enlargement made harmonisation less likely

2. 'Deepening' versus 'widening' – contradiction between economic and monetary union necessitating public policy convergence and expansion of E.U. complicating convergence

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SUMMARY:

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

BUT - can identify some underpinning principles of E.U. public policy

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SUMMARY:

-    i.e. principles of E.U. public 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)

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SUMMARY:

'Europeanisation' of public policy?

- based upon framework of principles of social protection, social welfare, social justice, equality of opportunity

- A balance between harmonisation, convergence, diversity and mutual recognition

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SUMMARY:

'*Europeanisation*' of public policy?

- A multi-level, varied approach model of E.U. public policy integration, respecting diversity through mutual recognition

- in different public policy areas and at different public policy levels, different integrated approaches and degrees of integration employed

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Communitarianism

versus

Cosmopolitanism