Political Issues and Social Policy in the E.U.

Professor John Wilton

Lecture 8

The 'gender dimension' and E.U. social policy

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Additional source:

Sindberg Martinsen, D. 'The Europeanisation of gender equality – who controls the scope of non-discrimination?', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14:4, pp.544-562

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1. Gender policy and E.U. social policy

   - historical development

   - endogenous and exogenous circumstances and factors

2. Gender policy – harmonisation and convergence or 'mutual recognition'?

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1. <u>Gender policy and E.U. social policy</u>

   - invades and interacts with many other areas of social policy

   - Article 119, Treaty of Rome 1957, referred explicitly to the right of women to equal pay with men

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- Articles 100 and 235, Treaty of Rome 1957, enabled European Commission to prepare directives on equal pay AND equal treatment of citizens

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-Treaty of Rome, 1957, established a framework for promoting the harmonisation of national legislation to the social and economic advantage of women in paid work

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- the impact of factors external (exogenous factors) to the EEC in 1960s

  - social, cultural and economic factors in wider Europe

    - economic reconstruction and boom

    - greater employment opportunities

    - expanding education opportunities

    - changes in family structure

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1974 - EEC Social Action Programme

- implementation of equal pay principle one of priority actions

1981 - European Commission set up Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities

1983 – European Network of Women established – forum for women's NGOs

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1981 - European Parliament created Standing Committee on Women's rights

1989 - Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers

"Equal treatment for men and women must be assured. Equal opportunities for men and women must be developed."

(Social Charter, incorporated into Maastricht Treaty 1992)

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1989 - Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers referred to the need for measures "enabling men and women to reconcile their occupational and family obligations with a view to achieving greater equality of opportunity."

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1990 – European Women's Lobby formed

- by end of 1990s this group represented around 2,700 women's organisations (including European Network of Women)

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1990s – 2 important developments for E.U. gender policy;

1. adoption of measures at E.U. level to help parents reconcile occupational and family life;

2. The 'mainstreaming of gender'

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2. <u>Gender policy – harmonisation and convergence or 'mutual recognition'?</u>

- initial primary concern of EEC on gender policy was economic and 'fair competition' – in that respect, was attempt at convergence and degree of harmonisation

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- where E.U. gender policy has been extended beyond the workplace there has been more flexible implementation and 'mutual recognition' of differing approaches (i.e. through cultural differences)