Professor John Wilton

Lecture 3

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

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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.

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Additional sources:

- Hansen, M.P. and Triantafillen, 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.

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

CONTEXT

- historical and theoretical frame

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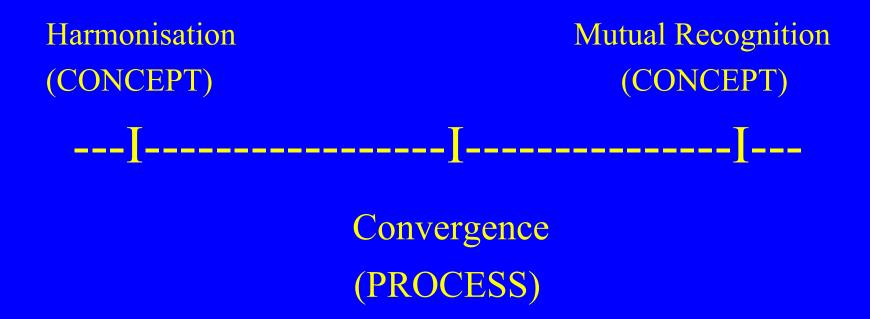
- underlying principles

- 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?

1. Harmonisation and convergence

2. Diversity and mutual recognition

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- 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.

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

- 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

- 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'

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

- *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'

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

- '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

- '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

- '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

- 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

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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

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

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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)

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

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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

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