

Social citizenship beyond the nation-state

A qualitative analysis of the European parliamentary debates concerning the development of an EU welfare.

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Abstract

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Welfare and questions regarding social security have historically been a concern of the nation state, but the development of the European Union's integration project has created a necessity for an international legal framework that covers that specific field. It has been found that international cooperation on welfare issues is not such an easy task, and numerous scholars have given different answers to why this has been the case. The purpose of this study is to examine if there exists a path dependency in the argumentations in the European parliamentary debates through the following research question: Is it able to see signs of path dependency concerning welfare regimes in the debates of the European parliament and do these affect how far the EU is willing to go concerning the development of the social citizenship, or has this more to do with the ideological stances between party group affiliations? Gösta Esping-Andersen suggests an almost path dependent development of welfare regimes and suggests that they have an impact on political behavior, and his theory on welfare regimes has been used in this study.

This study has been conducted through an analysis of plenary debates in the European parliament between the years 2001-2010 using Toulmin's argumentation analysis model which focuses on deducing underlying warrants in the statements. Based on this model, the result is that the debates are an ideological conflict. The difference in opinion between the representatives are rather ideologically influenced than based on the path dependence of welfare regimes.

Key words: citizenship, EU, social policy, labor policy, European parliament

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1. Introduction

Welfare and questions regarding social security have historically been a national matter but lately, several examples indicate that there is a necessity for an international legal framework that covers that specific field.¹ First of all, there has been issues regarding so called frontier workers, people who live in the border zones of two countries and thus work in one and reside in the other. The consequence of such a scenario is that they pay tax to the country they work for but get their social contributions in the country they live in. Second of all, problems of the European integration project which have concerned the restriction of free movement of people or services on the labor market, and also the lack of common EU legislation to solve the problems of the international labor market have been highlighted through the case of Laval. During the summer of 2004 the Swedish construction company L & P Baltic Bygg began the rebuilding of a school and therefore hired a Latvian company Laval un Partneri for construction. This work was conducted by Latvian construction workers employed by Laval but stationed in Sweden. A problem arose when the Swedish union for construction workers wanted to sign a collective agreement with the Latvian employees, but Laval denied it. The union urged the Latvian employees not to perform work on Laval's workstations but Laval argued that this restricted EU's fundamental idea of free movement of services.²

The EU's economic nature is clear and we see that European labor markets have become increasingly transnational. The free movement of people and services between countries with different welfare regimes have made this possible. Meanwhile, issues regarding taxes, wage levels, working hours etc. have always been a national issue. In spite of this, the development of EU's integration project has not been unproblematic and has actually increased the demand for the Union's greater responsibility regarding its citizens' social security. This implies the development of the social dimension of the EU citizenship.³ Through the Laval case, it becomes clear how something that has previously been regarded as a national problem, and especially as a conflict between the parties on the labor market, all of a sudden becomes a matter for the European Court of Justice. This may have major consequences for the national labor market and for welfare policies.⁴

¹ Magnusson, Lars & Stråth, Bo (2004) *A European Social Citizenship – Preconditions for Future Policies from a Historical Perspective*. Brussels: P.I.E.- Peter Lang p. 11

² Berg, Linda & Spehar, Andrea (2011) *EU och välfärdens Europa: Familj – arbetsmarknad – migration*. Malmö: Liber AB p. 18

³ Berg, Linda & Spehar, Andrea (2011) p.159

⁴ Berg, Linda & Spehar, Andrea (2011) p. 17

The development of a European social dimension and the creation of a common legislation on welfare issues has led to the introduction of The European Social Model, as well as the concept “flexicurity”. The purpose of these initiatives is creating a competitive economic market able to withstand the economic globalization and foreign competition, combined with increased security for workers. Flexicurity is for the EU an important part of the European Employment Strategy that emphasizes the adaptability of companies and employees to the changes in the global economy.⁵

This development is all about common legislation, and highlights the classic difficulties of international cooperation. Gösta Esping-Andersen has developed a theory about welfare regimes and social security which stresses the impact they have on political behavior. He suggests an almost path dependent development of welfare regimes which becomes highly relevant in the context of EU, where several different welfare regimes, to a certain extent, are expected to melt into one during the process of creating common policies. By analysing the debates in the European Parliament on issues relating to an EU social citizenship one may reveal whether the representatives’ arguments are based on such premises or if rather ideological differences form the perceptive distance between different proposed solutions. Other scholars have pointed out a large number of factors that can have affected the development of the social dimension in EU in a negative way. Lars Magnusson and Bo Stråth argue that a solidarity based on other factors than nationality must be created in order to increase the cooperation between countries regarding common legislation on social security issues. The earlier research on this subject argues that national identities and financial recourses limit the cooperation, but this study investigates if also other factors such as path dependency affect the ambitions of creating a social dimension of the EU-citizenship.

1.2 Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this study is twofold. First of all the study aims to describe labor relations and policies, as one key field of social citizenship. Second of all my intention is also to examine the cause behind the differences in ambition regarding the development of EUs social dimension between the representatives in the European parliament through an analysis of its debates using Esping-Andersen’s theory on welfare regimes. This includes finding out if the debates in the European Parliament show signs of national welfare regimes and path dependency through an argumentation analysis. Since this is such a unique case and the first attempt to create an

⁵ Berg, Linda & Spehar, Andrea (2011) p. 192

international legislative framework for social policy, it is necessary to map out the obstacles. Only when the understanding of the problems and the obstacles that lie in way of creating a common legislation grows, can something be done to change it. Also, the social dimension is a field that has not yet fully been explored from the perspective of the European Parliament and can therefore contribute to the research. Thus I attempt to fill the gap concerning the social dimension of the European citizenship.

1.2.1 Research Question

- *Is it able to see signs of path dependency concerning welfare regimes in the debates of the European parliament and does it in that case affect how far the EU is willing to go concerning the development of the social citizenship, or has this more to do with the ideological stances between party group affiliations?*

1.3 Demarcation of Subject Area

Labor policy and labor relations are directly linked to welfare issues. As described in the introduction European welfare and labor policies tend to go hand in hand especially given the free movement of services and people between countries with different welfare regimes, also exemplified through “flexicurity” and the European Social Model. In conjunction with the Maastricht Treaty, EU's powers on a social level increased. Civil rights such as social protection on the labor market in terms of working conditions, minimum wages etc. which previously were exclusively a matter for the state became incorporated in the EU citizenship.⁶ The choice of examining the European Union's labor policies is based on its dynamic character and on the fact that it stretches over a relatively large area and encompasses many different components such as working conditions, pay gaps and minimum wages. Also it is a field that has direct effect on the individual citizen and touches upon a large number of aspects about how a person's social life is organized.

Furthermore, an analysis of the European parliament is interesting because there is a lack of information in earlier studies regarding the role of this institution when it comes to creating a social dimension within the EU. Also it is not often realized what kind of debate is being held and what kind of internal tension regarding this question is seen.

⁶ Berg, Linda & Spehar, Andrea (2011) p. 87

2. Earlier Research

Earlier research on the development of the EU's social dimension has oftentimes been centered on the difficulties that stand in the way of such a project. Little attention has been given the factors that affect the ambitions of this development, especially between different countries in the European Parliament and also the tensions between them. Lars Magnusson and Bo Stråth have for example written a book about the preconditions of a European social model or a European citizenship. They argue that the success of the European citizenship project requires the understanding of its necessary preconditions, and these are primarily political. They consist of promoting a European solidarity because Europeans are citizens of different states. Magnusson and Stråth's view is identity-based and according to them the problem lies in the fact that the EU is a union of many different national identities that complicates the development of a common social dimension. The success thus depends on the creation of a solidarity in the union.⁷ This has to be done not only through legislation or the creation of ethical values of solidarity, as liberals and social democrats claim, but through political and institutional conditions. We should according to Magnusson and Stråth think of solidarity as a norm of the public debate and action. Also, considering the European cultural and political heritage and the fact that Europe consist of a plurality of values, the aims should not be consensus but instead compromise. When it comes to institutional conditions they stress the importance of connecting public actions, public policies and public debates. To make this possible, a field of education and culture is necessary.⁸

Another scholar that has been interested in the difficulties of the European Union's social dimension is Håkan Johansson, which has a more economic approach. He argues that the EU has very limited financial resources to invest in policy areas linked to the social dimension. The political will to develop the social dimension tends to be weak both at an EU level and at a national level. In addition, the EU has limited administrative resources to develop and manage extensive investments similar to national social policies.⁹

The earlier research concerning welfare questions and difficulties of their development in the EU have not been able to show the problems from the perspective of the European parliament, the political body that includes elected representatives. In contrast to Magnusson and Stråth's

⁷ Magnusson, Lars & Stråth, Bo (2004). p. 166

⁸ Magnusson, Lars & Stråth, Bo (2004) p. 178

⁹ Johansson, Håkan (2013). *Socialpolitiska klassiker*. Malmö: Liber AB p. 182

thesis that different national identities are the obstacle for creating a social dimension in the EU, this study will examine if it is rather the institutional differences between nations i.e. welfare regimes that affect the development of a social citizenship. By analyzing the debates in the European Parliament, I will be able to say something about the development of a European social dimension from another point of view and thus be able to fill the void in the existing research.

3. Theoretical Framework

As this study aims to examine if the debates in the European Parliament reflect path dependency linked to welfare regimes or if party group affiliations frame the debates, it is worth mentioning the difficulties that stand in the way. Efforts to move closer together and adopt common laws are often more difficult if the differences between the countries are big.¹⁰ One common denominator that can be recognized when studying earlier research is the assumption that the differences regarding structural conditions, especially the institutional design of welfare policies in different countries, have an impact on the ability to cooperate within the EU. The institutional design of welfare policies, also referred to as welfare regimes is about who has the right to take part in welfare arrangements and who is responsible for the social care of the individual.¹¹ This speaks well of Gösta Esping-Andersen and his studies of the welfare state and social policy.

Welfare regimes are according to Esping Andersen, a cluster of states that share certain basic principles regarding the role of the states, markets and family in society. Bearing for the clusters is that the compound of social institutions and political bearing class coalitions between social classes have reproduced a certain social formation and created a path dependency when it comes to the organization of welfare. The understanding of the constitution of welfare regimes can help us express ourselves about the political style and nature of a certain country. Esping-Andersen stresses the power of history behind regime differences and means that past reforms have conclusively contributed to the institutionalization of class preference and political behavior.¹² In other words a welfare regime is the result of path dependency to an extent due to historical forces which Esping-Andersen says explain not only the past but also the future. The certain norms that create a political behavior are because of the path dependency hard to break free from, especially when discussing revolutionizing decision-making comparable to the

¹⁰ Berg, Linda & Spehar, Andrea (2011) p. 55

¹¹ Berg, Linda & Spehar, Andrea (2011) p. 56

¹² Esping-Andersen, Gøsta (1990). *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Cambridge: Polity p. 32

development of a common social dimension. Since this study focuses on the problems regarding the coordination or harmonization of certain laws in an international environment, differences between countries immediately become relevant and worth discussing. This is why the question concerning the possibility of detecting welfare regimes' effect of on national representatives in the debates about social policy in the European Parliament, is relevant. Also, as expressed in the research question, do welfare regimes affect how far the EU is willing to go concerning the development of the social citizenship, or has this more to do with the ideological stances between party group affiliation?

The demarcation of the theoretical framework and the choice to focus on welfare regimes implies of course that other important aspects of the issue of the development of a common social dimension risk getting excluded from the discussion. Alternatively one could add another theoretical framework to broaden the analysis, for example Thomas Humphrey Marshall's theory on the development of the social citizenship. This theoretical model could be interesting in the sense that it is highly relevant to the subject and would contribute to the explanation of the social citizenships' development over time. However it does not suit the aim of this study nor the method used to answer its research question. Also a larger amount of theoretical analyses is not always desirable. The quantity of theories does not have to imply a higher quality of the analysis.

Esping-Andersen's theory and differences between welfare regimes will be presented in the chapter below so that they later on in the study can be used for the analysis of the existence of path dependence in the European parliamentary debates.

3.1 Esping-Andersen's Welfare regimes

Gösta Esping-Andersen developed a theory of welfare regimes in the 1990s, which is based on the assumption that there are three different welfare regimes that states can be divided into. These three are the liberal, conservative and social democratic welfare regime in which the state, the market and the family hold different roles and have varying responsibilities when it comes to ensuring the individual with a social safety net. The theory focuses on the identification and analysis of the differences and similarities between numerous countries.

3.1.1 The liberal welfare regime

Countries that Esping Andersen categorizes into the liberal welfare regime (Australia, Ireland, Canada, UK and USA) have limited and insignificantly expanded universal benefits. This means that not everybody has the right to government subsidies. In many cases a needs

assessment is necessary to determine if an individual has the right to them. Moreover, government subsidies and allowances are for those who are most in need of them, mostly low-skilled low-income citizens. In this system, individuals, on a very large extent, dependent on the labor market in order to survive. Esping-Andersen believes that those who are unable to participate in the labor market and those who cannot contribute to it face major risks since they cannot enjoy prosperity in the form of medical care and schools, for example. Clearly traditional, liberal norms regarding work-ethic have been central to the social reform in countries with this welfare regime.¹³

3.1.2 The conservative welfare regime

The conservative welfare regimes (France, Italy, Austria and Germany) are characterized by subsidiarity when it comes to the problems and risks related to welfare. This means that the immediate environment i.e. the family, has the responsibility to provide the individual with the safety net needed. The family is therefore crucial for a person's care of for example children and the care of the elderly. The state's role in this case is to intervene only when the family fails in its task to ensure the needs of the individual. What is most interesting about countries that follow the conservative welfare regime is that the subsidiarity principle goes hand in hand with the traditional family approach, in some cases shaped by the church.¹⁴

3.1.3 The social democratic welfare regime

The Scandinavian countries Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland are known for their social democratic welfare regimes which differ considerably from both the liberal and the conservative ones, in the sense that the market's, and the family's role in social protection are very limited. Unlike these two regimes, countries with a social democratic welfare regime are characterized by extensive government intervention and the principle of universalism and social rights. This means that occupational groups and social class do not matter for the extent of the benefits an individual can acquire from the social security system. Thus, every citizen has the right to a basic safety net, combined with the benefits often determined based on previous earnings. This, Esping-Andersen calls, the promotion of an equality of highest standards.¹⁵

¹³ Esping-Andersen, Gøsta (1990) p. 26

¹⁴ Esping-Andersen, Gøsta (1990) p. 27

¹⁵ Esping-Andersen, Gøsta (1990) p. 27

3.2 Definition of Key Terms

2.2.1 Social citizenship

Social citizenship is a term that was first introduced by T.H Marshall, which includes the status and the rights and obligations of a citizen is entitled to him by the welfare state.¹⁶ The social rights that were a part of the social citizenship meant various forms of support and services as well as financial support that applied to all citizens regardless of social status, in other words they were universal.¹⁷

4. Research Methodology

This empirical study has a descriptive purpose of analyzing if path dependency concerning welfare regimes affects the politicians' ambitions of creating a social dimension, which is why this study will be based on a qualitative text analysis of the debates in the European Parliament. There are reasons to question the choice of a descriptive study due to the fact that they are not always seen as equally valuable to explanatory studies and that higher demands are put on the researcher to justify the studies existence.¹⁸ Despite this, in many cases it is necessary to increase awareness of certain issues or areas. The fact that the study aims to describe does not mean that the level of interpretation of the material is low. On the contrary, much emphasis has been placed on drawing conclusions other than those directly outspoken in the material.

Given that the analyzed material consists of debates, Stephen Toulmin's argumentation analysis is suitable, and is also the technique that will be used in this study. Toulmin's model seeks to distinguish three or four elements in an argument, and that way get to the core of it. The first element is the "claim" which one argues for. In this case, one can ask the question: What does the transmitter want the receiver to agree with? The second element is based on the question "What do you build your claim on?" This should be some kind of fact or argument that underpins the claim that is made. Furthermore, the warrant should be made clear. "How does the transmitter make the connection between the claim and the argument?" In some cases there is a need to back up the warrant, which is called backing. In other words, a backing is a claim that supports a warrant.¹⁹

¹⁶ Johansson, Håkan (2013) p. 43

¹⁷ Johansson, Håkan (2013) p. 54

¹⁸ Esaiasson, Peter, Gilljam, Mikael, Oscarsson Henrik och Wängnerud Lena. (2012) *Metodpraktikan: Konsten att studera samhälle, individ och marknad*. Lund: Studentlitteratur p. 36

¹⁹ Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina (2012) *Textens mening och makt*. Lund: Studentlitteratur AB p. 107

In conclusion, the claim, argument and warrant of the argumentation will be identified, and then presented according to Toulmin's schedule. Toulmin argues that within real argumentations there exists a hidden complexity and diversity which can be found through the identification of warrants. Therefore, to resemble arguments at logical conclusions is a simplification. Implicit information is available in all sorts of texts and is very important to deduce especially in political argumentation. This implicit information can be used more or less by purpose and with different motives. For example they can be used to avoid making a direct statement, and also they can have the purpose of rhetorical impact.²⁰ Toulmin's model allows one to get to the core of the argumentation and in that way be able to draw other conclusions than those who are directly expressed in the debates.²¹ In this way we are allowed to find possible underlying path dependency that some representatives may reflect in their statements.

The argumentation analysis has three main purposes. The first one is descriptive, the second one assesses to what extent the argumentations live up to certain norms and the third one aims to determine the argumentations probative force. The descriptive one, which will be used in this case, tries to find an argumentation by identifying arguments in an already existing context.²² By finding arguments related to social security within the European Union, and analyzing them according to Toulmin's model one can detect the intermediate warrants in the various arguments, and by doing so, it becomes clear if these in some way connect to the welfare regimes. If they do, there is a possibility to see in what way, and if they don't, what do they then relate to?

To further specify the method, this study will work with the systematization of the content in the relevant texts and in this way aim to conduct a more specific analysis through the determination of a core thesis. Studies working with systematization are alternatives of descriptive analyses and aim to clarify how the different actors have been thinking. In other words the goal is to map out the thought structures of a certain actor.²³ In this case, it is also about what arguments regarding the development of a social citizenship, the politicians in the European Parliament have brought up. In other words, it is about highlighting and explaining the essential content of the relevant texts.

²⁰ Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina (2012) p. 113-116

²¹ Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina (2012) p. 106

²² Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina (2012) p. 92-93

²³ Esaiasson, Peter, Gilljam, Mikael, Oscarsson Henrik och Wängnerud Lena. (2012) p. 211

There are numerous reasons to why the analytic method, especially the qualitative text analysis is preferable to the content analysis. One of the most important reasons is that the text analysis method enables the researcher to capture the most central part of the material, which is assumed to be something other than the sum of its parts. This suggests that certain passages in the text are more important than others and should therefore be given extra attention. Another reason is that a lot of the content in the text is not distinguishable at a first glance, but hidden under the surface and can only be accessed through a thorough interpretation. The qualitative text analysis is based on this type of procedure, and includes asking the text questions to see whether the text or you yourself can answer these.²⁴ Also, we need qualitative data to explain the long-term historical processes or to understand the formative moments in history. For example, how ideas and knowledge are spread and communicated between countries and how new values arise.²⁵ Since this study's objective is to examine the process and debate about social citizenship's development in an environment where different ideas and values are met, qualitative research is preferable.

4.1 Research Material

The data used in the following study comes primarily from conducted debate protocols from the European Parliament's debates in the plenary between 2001 and 2010, but also from secondary sources in form of earlier research on the subject. The collection of material has been made through the European Parliament's website where all the debates are free to access and in this way, they achieve the authenticity criterion. The debates which I will base my analysis on are held from 2001 to 2010 and have been chosen by searching for key words in both the title and the text. The keywords used for the search have been: social policy, social security, labor policy, labor, employment and flexicurity. The debates in Parliament are divided by election year, i.e. 1999-2004, 2004-2009, 2009-2014 and 2014-2019. The debates have been chosen from the first three election periods to give a more holistic picture of the argumentations in the parliament. The most recent debates on social policy from the current electoral period (from 2014-2019) have not fully been translated and have therefore been difficult to interpret. This is why they have been excluded from this study.

When conducting case studies one has to take in consideration the ability to generalize the results i.e. the ability to transfer ones results to other a bigger population or another setting than

²⁴ Esaiasson, Peter, Gilljam, Mikael, Oscarsson Henrik och Wängnerud Lena. (2012) p. 210

²⁵ Ahrne, Göran & Svensson, Peter (red.) (2015) *Handbok i kvalitativa metoder*. Stockholm: Liber. p. 12

the one being studied.²⁶ To be able to do so, some of the material chosen for analysis will consist of more general debates on labor and social policy.

The following party groups are represented in the debates:

PPE-DE (*European Peoples Party Group*) is currently the largest and oldest party group with a liberal conservative/Christian democratic ideology.²⁷

PSE (*Party of European Socialists*)

S&D (*Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats*) Former PSE.

GUE (*European United Left/Nordic Green Left*)

UEN (*Union for Europe of the Nations*)

Verts/ALE (*The Greens/European Free Alliance*)

ALDE (*Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe*)

ELDR (*European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party*) was between 1976 and 2004 a political group in the European Parliament. After the European elections in 2004 the group was replaced by the ALDE group.²⁸

The countries represented in the debates are the following:

Germany (DE), Netherlands (NL), Italy (IT), England (EN), France (FR), Estonia (ET), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Sweden (SV) and Denmark (DA).

The arguments have mostly been selected based on their relevance to the debate but also I have tried to get as big of a variety as possible both concerning countries with different welfare regimes and different party groups. This has been done in order to accomplish a correct analysis and to create the possibility of answering the research question as accurately as possible. It becomes clear that the European Union is characterized by very many conservative welfare regimes, which has been reflected in the debates. There is a very poor representation of liberal welfare regimes. Only one country, England, fell into the liberal welfare regime and the same applied to the social democratic welfare regime, where only Sweden and Denmark were

²⁶ Ahrne, Göran & Svensson, Peter (2015)
p. 26-27

²⁷ Phinnemore, David & McGowan, Lee (2006) *A Dictionary of the European Union*.
Europa Publications. Ltd p. 278

²⁸ Phinnemore, David & McGowan, Lee (2006) p. 278

represented in the debates, however, in very few places. Even though only two social democratic parties seems like a small amount, one needs to keep in mind that Esping-Andersen only categorized four countries into the social democratic welfare regimes. The other two are Finland and Norway. Due to the fact that Norway is not a member of the European Union, two out of three countries with a social democratic welfare regime are represented in the debates. When it comes to liberal welfare regimes, the same conclusion can be drawn because the countries that Esping-Andersen categorized as liberal (USA, Australia, New Zealand and Canada) are not members of the EU.

4.2 The study's limitations

This study's main purpose is to examine if the argumentations in the European Parliament show signs of path dependency and if welfare regimes affect how far the EU is willing to go concerning the development of the social citizenship, however the ability to generalize is rather limited. Nevertheless I do not find this to be a major problem as this study has been limited to European parliamentary debates and is not meant to be transmitted to other cases. Also, qualitative studies rarely have a generalizing ambition.²⁹ Another encountered difficulty has been the earlier mentioned lack of variation in welfare regimes in the parliamentary debates. There has been an overrepresentation of conservative welfare regimes and fewer countries that fall into the social democratic and especially the liberal and one. This may have had some effect on the outcome of this study, although this is the realistic picture of the EU, and also this is what the debates look like.

It is important to add the aspect of intersubjective research, which is very important to relate to when you aim to perform a transparent and independent study, and thereby also increase reliability. Intersubjective research implies that the scientific analysis instrument must be distinguished from the researcher. In a qualitatively oriented research, most of the scientific work is a complicated analysis, where one can never disregard himself during a process of interpretation.³⁰ A text has different meanings depending on the interpreter and therefore it is not possible to reconstruct the exact meaning of a text or the message that the author wanted to convey. This is influenced by our historically and socially determined pre-understandings that give us different points of interpretation.³¹

²⁹ Ahrne, Göran & Svensson, Peter (2015) p. 26-27

³⁰ Esaiasson, Peter, Gilljam, Mikael, Oscarsson Henrik och Wängnerud Lena. (2012) p. 25-26

³¹ Bergström, Göran & Boréus, Kristina (red.) (2012) p. 31

5. Analysis of the Debates

The illuminated problems with the EU integration process have led to the aspiration to examine the EU's labor relations and policies. One of the main subjects has been the development of an international legal framework that deals with social problems on the labor market such as... Some scholars have focused on the national characteristics such as historical experiences along with institutional and organizational arrangements and their impact on political behavior as well as their ability of cooperation with other states. Gösta Esping-Andersen's theory on path dependency is one example that is highly relevant regarding the development of a common regulation on an international level which has been the focus of this study. The area of labor markets is characterized by strong national traditions and laws where path dependency seems to have a big impact and therefore affects the political behavior and the ambition to create a common international policy.

5.1 Debate 1: January 16th 2001

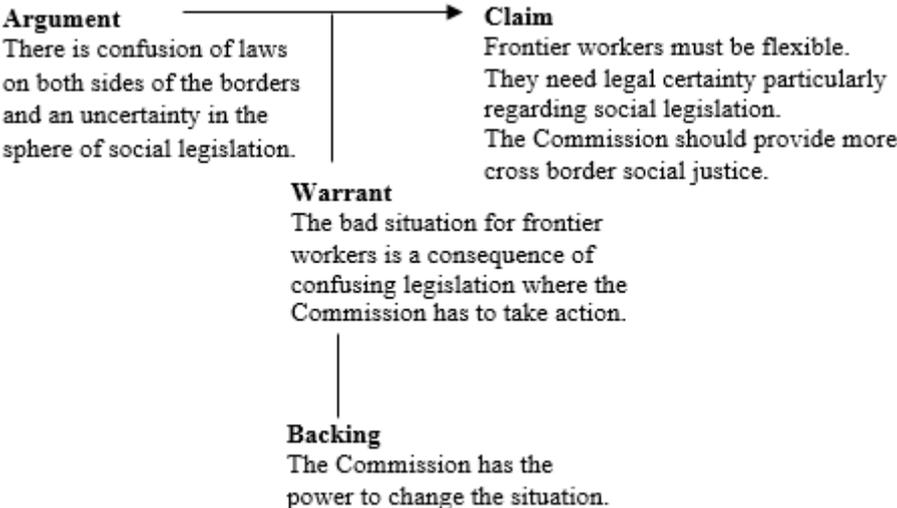
The first debate discusses the problems associated with frontier workers, which refers to the people that live in one member state but work in another. Here the representatives discuss the role of the Council and criticize it for not granting frontier work the flexibility it needs, which some of them mean results in cases being handed over to the European Court of Justice. Another problem linked to frontier work that is discussed in this debate has to do with the lack of research on the area, and therefore the drafting of a directive that provides effect reports, is requested. These reports, nearly all the representatives mean, should contain information about how the workers and their families are being affected by the changes member states make in their legislation on social security, taxation or public health. There is an agreement between all representatives that this is indeed a problem, but the question that being debated is which country should be responsible for the frontier workers' social security? A suggestion that tax law should be brought into line with social security in the country of employment is brought forward by the rapporteur, a member of PPE-DE who represents the Netherlands. In other words, taxes should be paid to the country one works for and that country should be responsible for the social security of that individual.³²

Just as Esping-Andersen explains, categorized countries according to his theory in different welfare regimes where the government market and the family have different roles in society. The relationship between the social partners also affects the regulation of labor conditions. This

³² Debate P5_CRE(2001)01-16 – Frontier workers

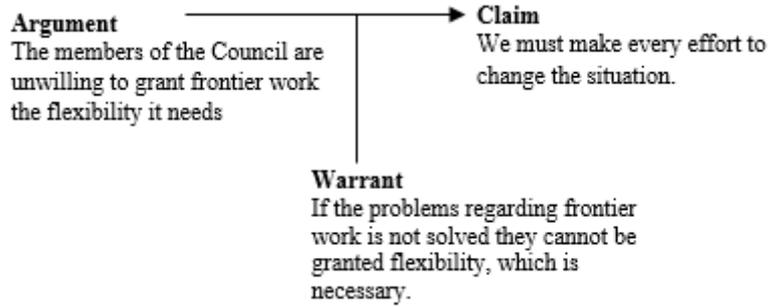
also leads to the minimum wage varies depending on the welfare regime, and compares to the two countries, such as Latvia and Sweden (as exemplified in the Laval case), it is clear what impact the EU's free movement has. Wage dumping and exploitation of labor are two of them and raise the question of how this can be counteracted. Furthermore, there is a dissimilarity between the party groups on their opinion on the responsibility of the Member States and the EU regarding this development, especially in matters concerning frontier workers. For example, some who argue that Member States should tackle this issue through greater cooperation among themselves in order to facilitate frontier workers residing and working in them. Others, call upon the European Union to provide security for these citizens and express their discontent with lack of work that has been done by the institutions of the union.

PPE-DE (DE): *“Frontier workers must be flexible, so as to be able to cope with the confusion of laws on both sides of the borders. Those who look for a job over the border within the European internal market need legal certainty in a united Europe, particularly in the sphere of social legislation. We MEPs from the border regions in the European Union call upon the Commission and the Council, to provide for more cross border social justice.”*³³

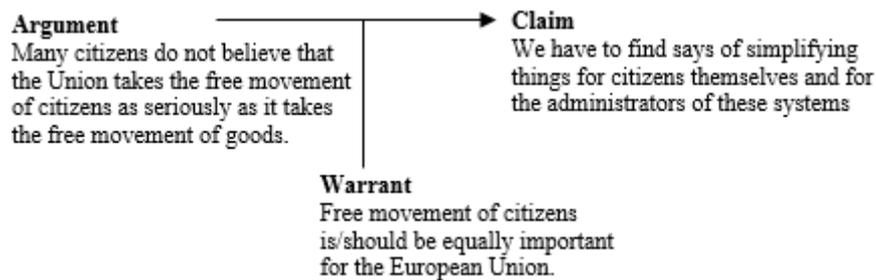


PPE-DE (NL): *“It is particularly the Council, the members of the Council, who are unwilling to grant frontier work the flexibility it needs, and so we politicians, national politicians that is, leave this for the European Court of Justice to solve. I think this is no longer acceptable, or necessary, for that matter, and that we must make every effort, and employ all means, in order to change this situation.”*³⁴

³³ Debate P5_CRE(2001)01-16 – Frontier workers
³⁴ Debate P5_CRE(2001)01-16 – Frontier workers



Verts/ALE (NL): “...it is not surprising that many citizens simply do not believe that the Union takes the free movement of citizens as seriously as it takes its commitment to the free movement of goods. We have to find a way of simplifying things for citizens themselves and for the administrators of these systems.”³⁵



5.2 Debate 2: February 7th 2002

This case debates the scoreboard on implementing the social policy agenda. Social Agenda, which was drawn up with the objective of making the European Union the world’s most competitive economy, raises the issue of responsibility and attribution of powers of all those playing a part in its implementation. It is in its dual role of ensuring openness and acting as a social instrument that the Social Agenda is a key component of economic and social modernization. PPE - DE therefore asks that the Parliament be involved in the implementation of the adjustment of the Social Agenda, as well as all the social partners, and they insist that the scoreboard clarifies the various responsibilities of the parties involved.

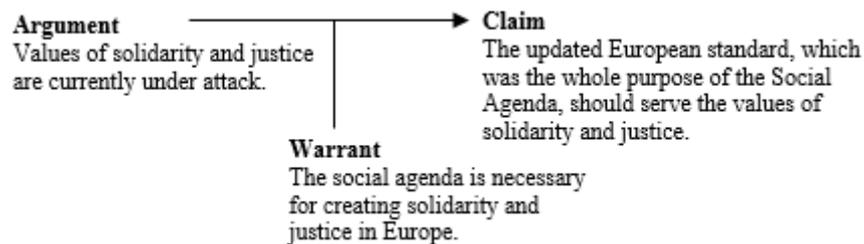
The rapporteur calls on the Commission to supply information on how it proposes to act on a number of requests that the Parliament has made, including for example, to define an appropriate legal basis for the development of civil dialogue, to provide a tax and legislative framework for the development of the social economy, to integrate the social dimension into

³⁵ Debate P5_CRE(2001)01-16 – Frontier workers

competition policy and to submit a directive on social security cover for new forms of employment.

This debate is of a more general character showing the views on social policy within the parliament and what importance it is given. The German liberal conservatives stress the importance of European solidarity and that it should be reinforced through a social agenda. Also the national conservatives seem to have a positive attitude towards this project and call upon the Commission to help make the policies effective. This shows that not only social democratic welfare regimes and not only leftist party groups advocate the development of a social dimension of the European Union. Most of the parliament seems to agree on the fact that social security for European citizens is important and worth working on.

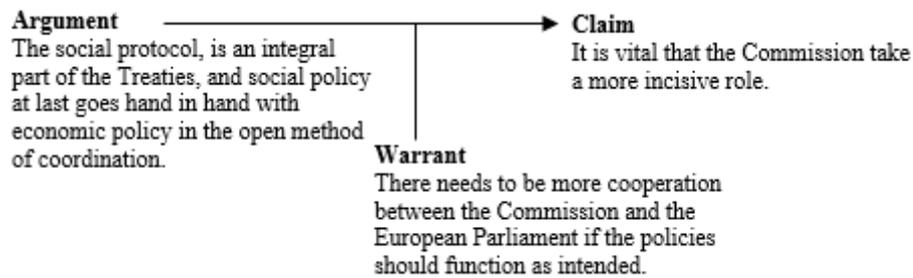
PPE-DE (DE): “...although it did point out that the updated European standard which was the whole purpose of the Social Agenda should serve the values of solidarity and justice underlying the European structure better and more efficiently, given that these values are currently under attack.”³⁶



UEN (IT): “...although much of the issue is left to the principle of subsidiarity and the active responsibility of a number of parties to manage, the social protocol, although behind schedule, is an integral part of the Treaties, and social policy at last goes hand in hand with economic policy in the open method of coordination. It is, therefore, vital that the Commission take a more incisive, specific role, which must be shared by the European Parliament in a more substantial, ongoing fashion.”³⁷

³⁶ Debate P5_CRE(2002)02-07 – Implementing a social policy agenda

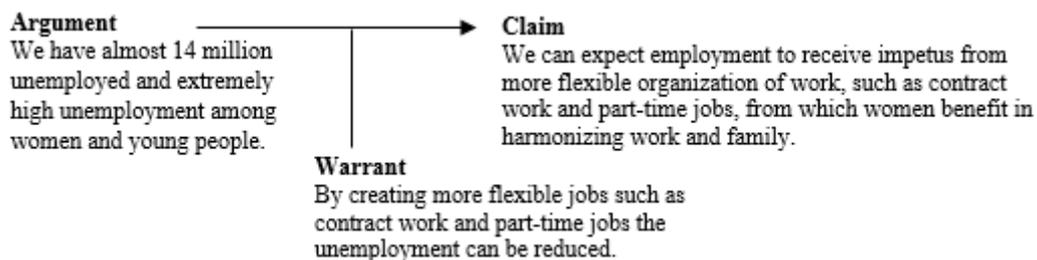
³⁷ Debate P5_CRE(2002)02-07 – Implementing a social policy agenda



5.3 Debate 3: March 11th 2003

The third debate discusses employment strategy and social policy in the European Union. This debate is of a more general character, due to the discussion of the European labor market. The rapporteur (member of PPE-DE Germany) states that the EU has 14 million unemployed due to structural problems within the member states. He also stresses the meaning of taxation and the effects high taxation has on employment and on the enterprises. Also flexibility in the labor market is encouraged by the rapporteur as he links it to the issue of unemployment.

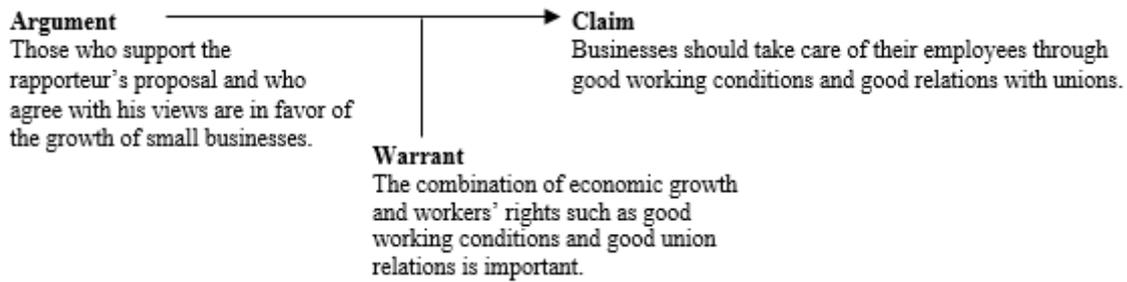
PPE-DE (DE): *“Eurostat currently tells us that we have almost 14 million unemployed [...] and extremely high unemployment among women, young people, older workers and people with disabilities... We can also expect employment to receive impetus from more flexible ways of organizing work, such as contract work and part-time jobs, from which women benefit in harmonizing work and family. We call on the Member States to do more to provide childcare facilities and tax benefits for the people who work in them.”*³⁸



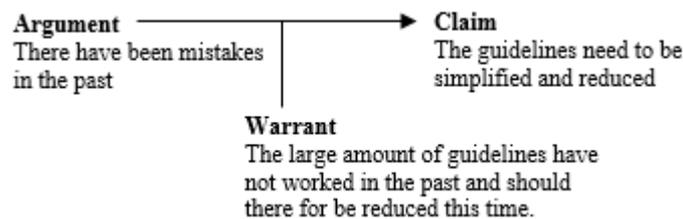
GUE (SV): *“The representatives of this approach wanted to put their faith in small businesses with good business ideas, skilled management, possibilities of growth and ambitions to (...) employ more people. We are concerned then, with small businesses that are also strong or able to become so and that can manage to pay good wages and ordinary taxes, to provide their employees with good working conditions and maintain good union relations.”*³⁹

³⁸ Debate P5_CRE(2003)03-11 – Employment strategy and social policy

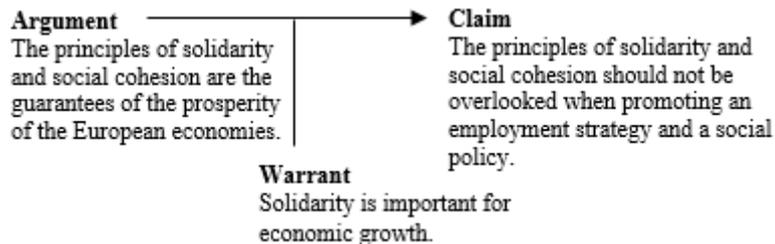
³⁹ Debate P5_CRE(2003)03-11 – Employment strategy and social policy



UEN (EN): *“However, we must also learn from the mistakes of the past. In particular, the guidelines need to be simplified and reduced... ...the question of taxation has to remain outside the responsibility.”⁴⁰*



PSE (FR): *“...In promoting employment strategy and social policy in the European Union, which is the title of the report, we cannot overlook the principles of solidarity and social cohesion, which are guarantees of the prosperity of our economies.”⁴¹*

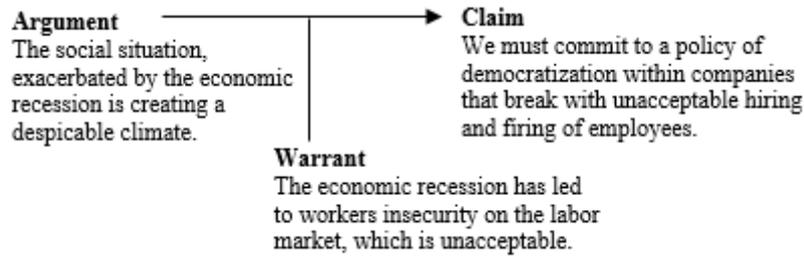


Verts/ALE (FR): *“The commitment we must make today is very clearly to a policy of democratization within companies that breaks with this unacceptable way in which employees are currently hired and fired, given intermittent work or made redundant. I believe that the social situation, which is further exacerbated by the economic recession, is currently creating a despicable climate to which this report is certainly not capable of responding in a credible way.”⁴²*

⁴⁰ Debate P5_CRE(2003)03-11 – Employment strategy and social policy

⁴¹ Debate P5_CRE(2003)03-11 – Employment strategy and social policy

⁴² Debate P5_CRE(2003)03-11 – Employment strategy and social policy



One can see clearly on the basis of the argumentation in debates of the European Parliament, and especially in the debate on social policy and employment strategy that the development of a social dimension is ultimately linked to economic aspects, which in many cases hampers the this development. In this debate, the early 2000s economic recession is highlighted as an obstacle to secure employment among workers in the EU. It is also interesting to point out the value PSE gives social solidarity in this context, because it has been pointed out as an important factor for European integration and the creation of an European citizenship by many scholars not least Magnusson and Stråth. Is it also the first time that union relations are mentioned, interestingly enough by Sweden, a country with a social democratic welfare regime but also by a representative of the Nordic Green Left party group.

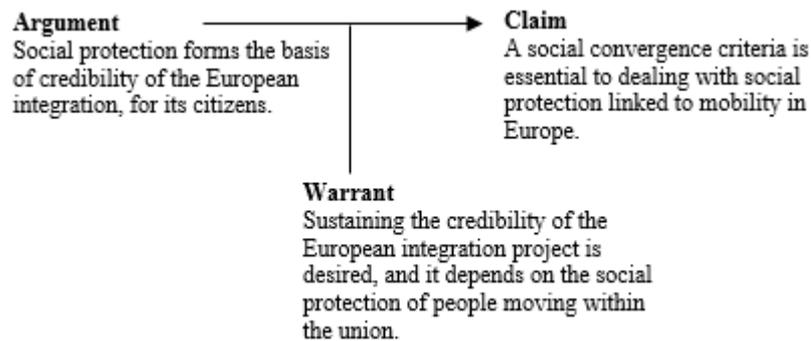
5.4 Debate 4: April 19th 2004

Discusses the adoption of a European Parliament and Council regulation on the coordination of social security systems. The reform of the treaty through simplification and modernization is debated. Specific problems related to cross-border workers and the fact that there are difficulties regarding common taxation within the Union are discussed. And also, associated with this problem are the restrictions concerning free movement of people as well as the Union's inability to grant them with social security.

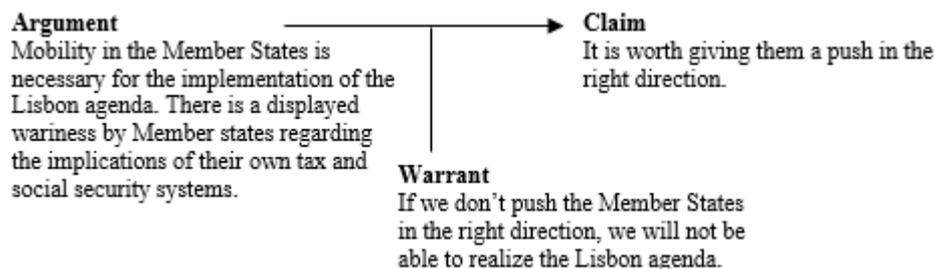
The following quotes elucidate the different opinions regarding the strategy and motivation for the development of the European social dimension. While the French socialists argue that the legitimacy of the European integration project depends on social security of EU citizens, the ELDR claims that there needs to exist a bigger push on the member states to achieve social protection. The national conservative party of England emphasizes that taxes at an EU level do not represent an effective way of solving the problem of social security and should not be treated by the EU at all, but at the same time they share the other representatives will to develop the social dimension of the EU citizenship. Interestingly the national conservative party represented in the plenary debates does not reflect the ongoing discussion on their national arenas, which

could be questioned. There are no noticeable signs of EU skepticism and overall they seem to have a positive outlook on the social security agenda.

PSE (FR): *“Social convergence criteria are essential in order to deal correctly with the subject of social protection linked to mobility in Europe, a subject which, to the citizens of Europe, forms the basis of the credibility of European integration.”*⁴³



ELDR (NL): *“Mobility in the Member States is more than necessary if we want to implement the Lisbon agenda. I am extremely anxious about the wariness displayed by Member States with regard to the implications in terms of their own tax and social security systems. Here, I think, it is worth giving them a push in the right direction in the future.”*⁴⁴

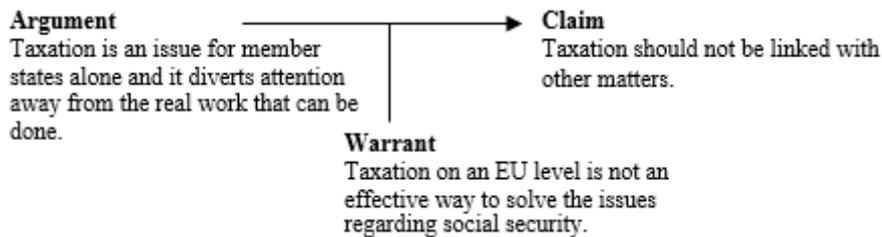


UEN (EN): *“The issue of taxation is an issue for Member States alone. It is not an issue that we should link with other matters because that merely diverts attention away from where the real work can be done.”*⁴⁵

⁴³ Debate P5_CRE(2004)04-19 – Coordination of social security systems

⁴⁴ Debate P5_CRE(2004)04-19 – Coordination of social security systems

⁴⁵ Debate P5_CRE(2004)04-19 – Coordination of social security systems

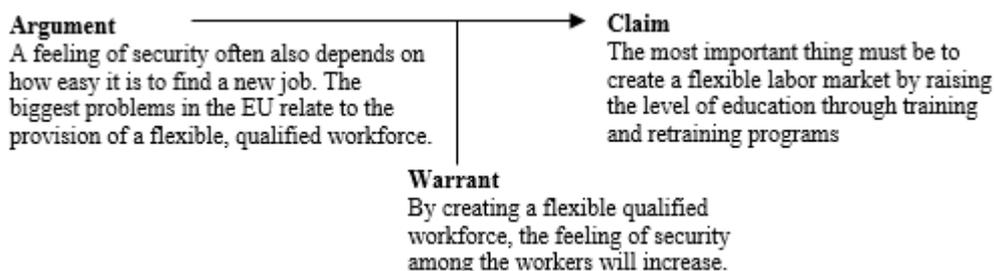


5.5 Debate 5: November 28th 2007

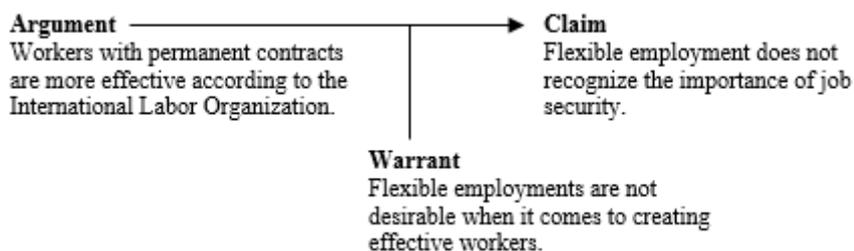
The issue on flexicurity has become a key term on the European agenda and is according to the argumentations regarded as essential for the future of Europe's economic and social models. The subject includes the capacity to manage change and promote employment and social security in a rapidly changing global context. Many representatives agree that more flexible markets are needed but this also means that the European Union must ensure better conditions and more security for its citizens. This debate discusses the topic of the common principles on flexicurity, its challenges and its future prospects.

The debate on flexicurity has many common denominators with the creation of a common international policy due to the fact that it is seen as a model for increased employment in the European Union through which convergence between the member states' labor markets is achieved. Also, this discussion puts a lot of emphasis on the economic character of the EU. Although the debate on flexicurity would be the perfect example to investigate any traces of path dependence in political behavior due to the developed discussion about the roles of the parties on the labor market, none of which has been detected. Instead most of the debates circle around the protection of the workers opposed to the economic growth of the union. Here it is clearly an ideological division between the representatives concerning their opinions on the matter. Practically all leftist parties blame flexicurity for being an idea and a project that values the economic growth more than the security of the European workers. This debate shows most clearly which party groups that advocate flexicurity and economic development and which groups take the consequences that a competitive market has on individual more seriously. The more leftist party groups and their representatives tend to go further in terms of social protection and often emphasize the EU's responsibility, while the liberal and conservative party groups emphasize cooperation between the countries in question. Also liberals have a tendency of keeping the economic development very high on the agenda, additionally emphasizing the external competition and the importance of resisting the effects of globalization. In many cases, that means subordinating the citizens' social security to the Union's economic development.

ALDE (ET): *“We must also bear in mind the fact that a feeling of security often also depends on how easy it is to find a new job [...] The biggest problems in the European Union relate to the provision of a flexible, qualified workforce, and therefore that this issue should be at the heart of Europe’s flexicurity strategy. The most important thing must be to create a flexible labor market by raising the level of education through training and retraining programs.”*⁴⁶



UEN (PL): *“Flexible employment that does not recognize the importance of job security brings short-term benefits to employers at the expense of workers. I should like to point out that research undertaken by the International Labor Organization confirms that workers with permanent contracts are more effective.”*⁴⁷

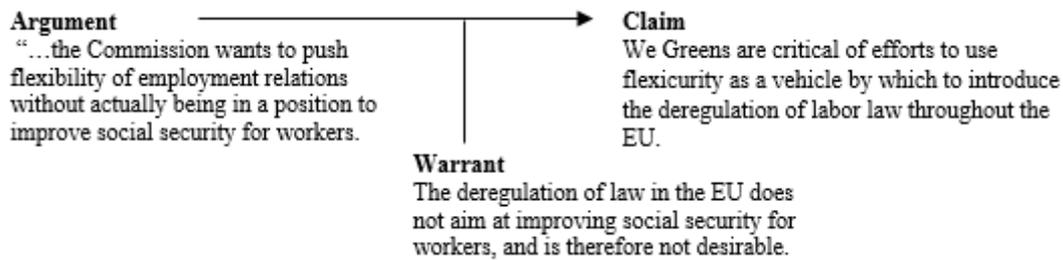


VERTS/ALE (DE): *“...the Commission wants to push flexibility of employment relations without actually being in a position to improve social security for workers: that falls within the competence of the Member States where there are many different notions of just how important it is. We Greens are critical of efforts to use flexicurity as a vehicle by which to introduce the deregulation of labor law throughout the EU, thereby achieving global competitiveness for the European Union at the expense of workers’ rights.”*⁴⁸

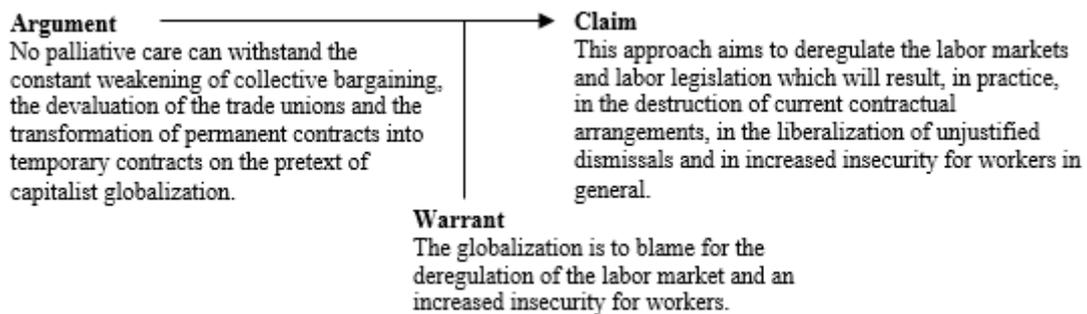
⁴⁶ Debate P6_CRE(2007)11-28 – Common principles on flexicurity

⁴⁷ Debate P6_CRE(2007)11-28 – Common principles on flexicurity

⁴⁸ Debate P6_CRE(2007)11-28 – Common principles on flexicurity



GUE (PT): *"This approach aims to deregulate the labor markets and labor legislation which will result, in practice, in the destruction of current contractual arrangements, in the liberalization of unjustified dismissals and in increased insecurity for workers in general. No palliative care can withstand the constant weakening of collective bargaining, the devaluation of the trade unions and the transformation of permanent contracts into temporary contracts on the pretext of capitalist globalization."*⁴⁹



5.6 Debate 6: October 6th 2010

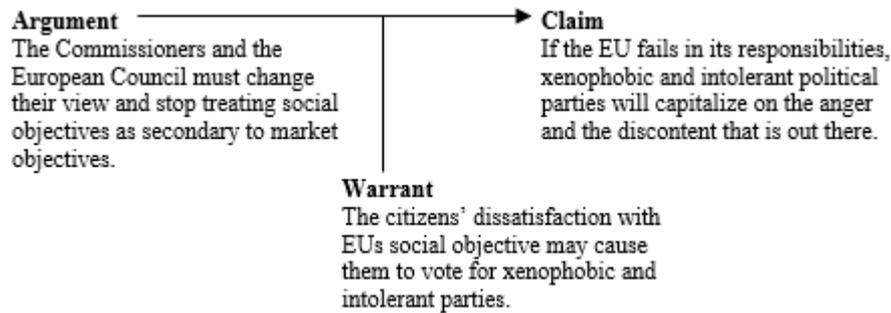
Through the discussion of the EU economic aspects versus the necessity for social policy this debate is similar to the one about employment strategy and social policy as well as the debate on flexicurity. Although, the unique feature of this debate is the discussion of the social policies after the Lisbon Treaty executive. The Lisbon Treaty, as seen in the debates, was supposed to combine high employment with social policy *"The internal market shall be constructed through policies based on a social market economy which is highly competitive and which tends towards full employment and social progress"*.⁵⁰ The debates takes place in the context of the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis and reflects a concern among European citizens that is expressed through the demonstrations against wrong policies that do not meet their social needs.

S&D (EN): *"It would be deeply destabilizing for the European Union if the College of Commissioners and the European Council were to take the view that these new treaty articles*

⁴⁹ Debate P6_CRE(2007)11-28 – Common principles on flexicurity

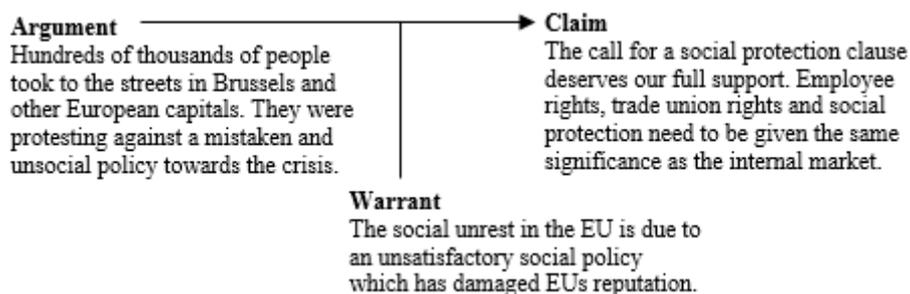
⁵⁰ Debate P7_CRE(2010)10-06 – Social provisions of the Lisbon Treaty

change nothing and continue treating social objectives as secondary to market objectives. If we fail in our responsibilities, there are waiting in the wings extreme xenophobic and intolerant political parties willing to capitalize on the anger and the discontent that is out there.”⁵¹



This argument goes in line with Magnusson and Stråth’s view that there is a lack of solidarity in the European Union that complicates the development of a social citizenship. The emergence of right populist or even nationalist parties and movements has led to an increased EU skepticism and more states are considering leaving the union as Great Britain did.

GUE (DE): “...we cannot ignore the fact that hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in Brussels and other European capitals. They were protesting against a mistaken and unsocial policy towards the crisis... The call of the trade unions for a social protection clause deserves our full support. Employee rights, trade union rights and social protection need to be given at least the same significance as – and, indeed, precedence over – the internal market and freedom to provide services. This needs to be clearly laid down in primary law... A social progress clause would improve the badly damaged reputation of the European Union amongst the populace and help to stem social fears.”⁵²



There has been no prominent development in the argumentations during these nine years and three election periods in the EU. Social security still seems to be regarded as a problem area among virtually all the representatives in the European Parliament regardless of the welfare

⁵¹ Debate P7_CRE(2010)10-06 – Social provisions of the Lisbon Treaty

⁵² Debate P7_CRE(2010)10-06 – Social provisions of the Lisbon Treaty

regime. The parliamentarians still call on the Commission and Council to tackle social policies for real. Moreover, many believe, given the social discontent among the citizens of the EU that the Lisbon Treaty is much talk and little action, that it looks good on paper but in reality not much has changed. More attention has also been given the radical right parties and movements which have been linked to the social unrest in Europe. At the same time we see arguments from the early 2000's remaining in 2010. It is still spoken of how economic aspects must not come before social rights, which is something that crosses welfare regimes, and has for that reason nothing to do with path dependency. However, we see that many leftist party groups often emphasize these arguments, indicating that their argumentation is in line with their ideology and that it is party group affiliation rather than the welfare regime that controls the ambitions for the development of social citizenship in the EU.

6. Conclusion

The study has aimed to investigate the presence of path dependency in the debates in the European parliament and if it exists, does it affect the ambitions of developing the social dimension of the EU. This study has been limited to labor policy and labor relations in the EU due to its direct link to social security. I have, using Toulmin's argumentation analysis model and with Esping-Andersen's theory of welfare regimes as background, attempted to answer the following research question:

- *Is it able to see signs of path dependency concerning welfare regimes in the debates of the European parliament and does it in that case affect how far the EU is willing to go concerning the development of the social citizenship, or has this more to do with the ideological stances between party group affiliations?*

Based on the deduced warrants (through Toulmin's model), a striking general consensus on the development of the EU's social dimension has been identified. Most of the representatives show a will to develop the social security of European citizens. Also they recognize that it is an important part of the European Union's politics and even necessary for the legitimacy of the European integration project. The differences are mostly about how far the representatives are willing to go and why.

At a closer analysis of the debates, the path dependency of welfare regimes is conspicuous by its absence. In the discussion about labor and social policy, it is rather the ideological positions than the path dependence of the welfare regimes that color the debate. Esping-Andersen claims

that different welfare regimes have different views on the market, the state and the family when it comes to providing social security for the individual, however nothing alike seems prominent in the content of the debates. What on the other hand becomes noticeable is that despite the fact that virtually all representatives agree on the development of the social aspect of the EU citizenship, there are differences in terms of the justification for this development and its approach, as stated earlier. It is first and foremost party group affiliations that stand for the differences in ambition. In other words it is the ideological dividing lines of reasoning that dictate how the ambition is motivated and what strategy is applied for the development of the European social dimension.

The overall context prominent in practically all debates, but especially in the debate about flexicurity, is the conflict between the economic growth and social security. It seems, according to most of the representatives, regardless of ideology or welfare regime that the development of the social dimension within the union is challenged by the economic recession at the time and also the pursuit and attempt to fight and place themselves in the increasing competition and economic globalization. These circumstances appear to be one of the big reasons why the development of a social dimension of the European citizenship has been deficient, and is as stated earlier, approached in different ways depending on party group affiliation. In the debates discussing economic growth versus social security one can deduce a recurrent pattern where leftist parties more often argue for the superiority of the social rights of EU's citizens over economic ambitions whereas parties with a liberal and conservative ideology tend to highlight the union's economic character and the financial problems being faced.

If we look back on the earlier research on the subject we cannot see any arguments stating that the EU has limited economic resources to invest in social policy as Johansson states. Although there exist a discussion about taxation as a form of financing this project which most of the representatives agree is hard to realize and UEN even says that it is an ineffective way of solving the problem of social security. The question of taxation does on the other hand confirm Johansson's statement that EU has limited administrative resources to develop social policies similar to the ones on a national level. There are some representatives in the debates that agree with Magnusson and Stråth's identity-based view of the European Union and they also see the link between solidarity and social security. Thus they argue for the development of the EU citizenships social dimension for the consolidation of solidarity.

In conclusion one can say that the debates in the European parliament reflect an ideological conflict. The difference in opinion between the representatives are rather ideologically

influenced than based on welfare regimes. One has to bear in mind that the lacking variety in the representation of the different welfare regimes might have played a minor role in the conclusion of the analysis, although there are numerous examples that show a very clear ideological conflict between the states that has nothing to do with the welfare regimes. Also one cannot exclude other complementing, underlying causes of representatives' argumentations.

6.1 Further research

Considering the large consensus in the European Parliament and the amount of proposals being voted through, it can seem odd that one cannot conclude that there have been major reforms in this area, and that social security is still debated in 2010. Maybe the answer lies in the fact that some members in the parliament have expressed dissatisfaction with the Council and its lack of cooperation with the European Parliament. As presented in debate one, regarding frontier workers, PPE-DE argue that the Council is unwilling to solve the problem concerning frontier workers' flexibility. Also in debate four (the coordination of social security systems), UEN urges the Commission to take a more incentive role when it comes to the social policy agenda. Based on the debates, there seems to exist a distance between the European Parliament and these two institutions' attitudes and opinions concerning the social security of EU citizens. And since there has been a very big agreement among the various parties and welfare regimes that the development of EU's social citizenship is indeed important for the reason of solidarity among others, it is surprising that the EU has done so little. As the Council and the Commissions lack of will to act clarifies, one starts to question the European Parliament's power and thus even their democratic legitimacy. A possibility for further research would be to investigate the European parliament's influence and power, because it is after the parliament that is constituted of elected representatives.

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Debate P6_CRE(2007)11-28 – Common principles on flexicurity

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Debate P7_CRE(2010)10-06 – Social provisions of the Lisbon Treaty

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