



**Reconciling Labour mobility and cohesion policies  
in relation rural areas of the European Union.**

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# Structure of Presentation

- Aims.
- Background to the Presentation.
- EU Policies –cohesion policies (territorial with a focus on rural areas) and free movement of labour in the European Union (EU).
- EU cohesion policies and experiences of EU citizens migrating for work : receiving and sending societies
- Concluding thoughts ....

# Aims

To explore :

- Policies related to free movement of EU citizens within the European Union (EU) in relation to achieving its cohesion/ equity objectives.
- Issues/tensions/implications regarding free movement of EU citizens and cohesion policies in relation to rural areas and communities .

# Background to the presentation

Presentation based on :

de Lima , P. (2014) Reconciling labour mobility and cohesion policies in Copus, A. and de Lima, P. (eds) *Territorial Cohesion in Rural Europe*, London : Routledge, Chapter 7, p126-148.

The presence of Accession 8 ( A8) nationals since May 2004 has had significant implications for rural areas which were previously unused to migration on a fairly large scale from outside their national borders.

Given the significance of A 8 migration to rural areas across many EU member states, this chapter focused on intra-EU and A 8 labour migration to rural areas to explore some of the implications for territorial and social cohesion during the post accession period ( after 2004) .

# The European Union



<http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/photo/photoDetails.cfm?sitelang=en&mgid=38#2>

# EU Cohesion Policies( 1)

Cohesion Policies have evolved since 1988; the emphasis is on reducing 'regional and social disparities' ( achieving equity) and promoting a vision for 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' across EU member states :

*' Inclusive growth means empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems so as to help people anticipate and manage change, and build a cohesive society. It is also essential that the benefits of economic growth spread to all parts of the Union, including its outermost regions, thus strengthening territorial cohesion.'*

(European Commission 2010, p17)

# EU Cohesion Policies( 2)

The EU Territorial Cohesion policies seek to :

- Reconceptualise ‘*European spatial policy by adding to it a spatial justice dimension*’ –i.e. ‘place –based’ policies ( Davoudi,2005, p433) .
- Balance governance tensions between developing ‘*European wide policy and national diversity*’ and also, regional and local diversities.
- Balance competing tensions/demands between various objectives in relation to, for example ensuring : global competitiveness , equity, developing a European identity, sustainable development , etc.

Copus & van Well 2014; Hooghe 1996; Mirwaldt et al. 2008

# EU Cohesion Policies(3)

**Seeks to also address**

Regional and / or national disparities between 'more developed' and 'lagging' regions and countries; encourage 'even' economic development across and within EU member states.

Skills gaps and labour shortages as a consequence of declining birth rates , an ageing population and in rural areas high rates of outmigration amongst youth/economically active age.

**Free movement of goods, services and people are seen as critical instruments to the achievement of Cohesion policies**



# EU Freedom of Movement Policies(1)

## **“The European Project” –‘EU without Borders’**

The right of EU citizens to move for work, family and leisure is not only a significant legal and political step forward, but is also fundamental to the EU's 'claim to legitimacy for the Union itself' (Carmel and Paul, 2013, p113 ).

Freedom of movement—between occupations and of workers from one member nation to another is also seen as key instrument for territorial and social cohesion across the EU( Barca 2009; Peri 2011).

# EU Freedom of Movement Policies(2)

Policy making on immigration in the EU context is complex , multifaceted and multilevel both in its creation and operation:

There are tensions between *'an economically driven demand for labour migration and political pressures for restriction'* (Boswell 2005, p.122).

Co- existence of two regulatory immigration regimes *'(1) intra-EU labour mobility and (2) non-EU immigration-also called 'Third Country Nationals' ( TCNS)'* . (Recchi and Triandafyllidou, 2010)

-Schengen Agreement and the EU Blue Card for TCNS.

# Cohesion Policies & Freedom of Movement

EU Policy discourses have reflected concerns (i) about the uneven economic performance of countries that joined the EU since 2004; and (ii) maintaining global competitiveness in the face of technological changes

EU citizen mobility and job mobility are emphasised as vital in :

- achieving a 'new economic dynamism' in the context of demographic changes
- ensuring social equity through the development of more balanced economies of high and low skilled workers;
- reducing regional and national disparities.

# Territorial Cohesion: Rural Context

Rural areas across the EU are diverse with so called 'well' performing and 'poor' performing areas ; definitions of rural vary across member states. Recurrent themes in relation to rural areas cited by literature :

- **Changing demographic trends**
- **Globalisation -changing economies ( e.g agri-business sector)**
- **Restricted labour markets and employment prospects**
- **Some rural areas perceived as 'lagging' behind urban areas**  
( Copus and de Lima, 2014)

Migration/free movement of people as a mechanism for (re)distributing human capital (knowledge and skills) across space, as an essential aspect of promoting rural /regional development (Stockdale 2006 )

# **Social Cohesion/Equity : EU Citizens and Labour Market Experiences in Receiving Societies**

A 8 nationals , despite qualification levels occupy mainly low skilled and low paid work exacerbated by particular constraints of rural labour markets -e.g.

- **Types of employment** – predominantly semi-skilled and unskilled work.
- **Sectors of employment** - agriculture, food processing and services/ hospitality .
- **Conditions of work**- e.g. low wages, insecure contracts, under –employed, seasonal work and 3 D (dangerous, dirty and difficult) jobs; lack of progression opportunities.

(Bell et al., 2004; Danson 2007; de Lima and Wright, 2009; de Lima; et al. 2007;2005 Findlay and McCollum 2013;Kasimis 2005 )

# **An example of the labour market working well or 'a case of 'brain waste' (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2008) ?**

The underutilization ( or wasteful use )of skills and qualifications is reinforced by a lack of :

- progression opportunities into better paid jobs in the sectors they tend to be employed in;
- other employment opportunities due to the constraints of labour market conditions ;
- recognition of their qualifications;
- training and access to English language classes.

**The wasteful use of skills and qualifications for those working in low and semi-skilled occupations, with no prospect of progression or moving into skilled /better paid employment provides a challenge to EU cohesion/equity policies from both the sending and receiving countries perspectives .**

## Cohesion/Equity : EU citizens – host societies (2)

- Stereotyping of workers based on countries of origin/ethnicities :e.g.
  - contrasting views of A8 workers as ‘good workers’ and local workers as ‘unreliable and work shy’ articulated by employers; or
  - views of EU workers as closer culturally than non EU workers leading to displacement of the latter , etc (Anderson et al. 2006; de Lima et al. 2005; 2007).
- Surveys suggest negative attitudes towards EU Citizens (‘migrants’) amongst some ‘host’ populations ( e.g. Ormston et al., 2011; CRC 2007) and they are perceived as :
  - Taking away jobs from ‘ locals;
  - Potentially displacing local workers because of the inability of national governments to control the skills levels of EU citizens who migrate ;
  - More likely to increase competition for low skilled jobs and lead to even lower wages.

## **Cohesion/Equity : EU citizens – host societies (2)**

EU citizens perceived as :

- Competing for limited resources and services such as housing with local people .
- Placing unfair burdens on public and social services – host societies as ‘Welfare magnets’. ( this, for example, is reflected in current discourses in the UK in the light of the forthcoming EU referendum)

This contrasts with evidence that suggests EU citizens in low skilled /paid work are more likely to experience social exclusion in many spheres :

- more likely to be unemployed/underemployed ; homeless; less likely to access benefits ( sometimes due to eligibility rules); don’t have access to services that meets their needs –often worse in rural areas - etc.

(de Lima and Wright, 2009; Eurofound 2015; Findlay and McCollum 2013;Kasimis 2005 ).

**So, if territorial and social cohesion are to be achieved simultaneously how can potentially negative impacts ( perceived or real) on some groups in host societies (e.g. unskilled, those with low educational qualifications, those currently underemployed, etc ) and regions or local areas be addressed ?**



## **Cohesion/Equity : Inclusive European identity**

What is happening to facilitating an inclusive 'European identity' that mobility or free movement is supposed to facilitate?

*'They are all becoming visible again: turning into immigrants who no longer enjoy unconditional European citizenship; migrants who are no longer free to be just European residents, and whose tolerated presence may be henceforth conditional on their willingness to integrate.'* (Favell, 2013, p.10)

# **Territorial Cohesion : Impacts on sending countries**

Evidence on importance of remittances to territorial and social cohesion for the A8 sending countries is ambivalent :

- Despite an increase in the scale of remittances following enlargement, remittances as a percentage of GDP for Poland and the Baltic states in 2007 was reported to be small (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski 2008).
- It is also unclear to what extent:
  - (i) these remittances are used for consumption, investment in businesses and human capital development or to help survive during periods of unemployment ; and
  - (ii) whether the remittances compensates for the loss of human capital in the sending countries (Kahanec 2012; Barcevičius et al. 2012)

## **Territorial Cohesion : Impacts on sending countries**

- Poland was reported to have experienced a 'substantial loss of working age population' - people aged 15-59 years of age (Galgóczy et al., 2013, p.21).
- Sectoral and local skills shortages arising out of the selective out migration of skilled workers from Poland and the Baltic states is an issue in the health sector, for example (Kaczmarczyk and Okólski, 2008).
- A8 countries have not gained from 'brain gain' as a result of the enhanced circulation of labour more generally within the context of the EU; West to East migration remains very limited (Fic et al., 2011 ).
- Existing demographic trends (declining & rapidly ageing population) exacerbated by the high migratory outflows has led to concerns about the sustainability of some areas as well as sustaining the social protection systems in place (Kahanec 2012)

# Concluding thoughts ...

- Concepts of 'Cohesion' and territorial cohesion in particular are vague enabling 'governments and EU institutions to define it in accordance with their own interests, preferences and development challenges' ( Faludi , 2007).
- The extent to which the free movement of labour is contributing to the EU goals of territorial (i.e. sustainable and effective rural development) and social cohesion (effective use of human skills and education; improvements in conditions of work; access to services, etc) within the EU and in relation to rural areas is difficult to pin down based on current research and evidence.
- Intra –EU labour mobility is not extensive; is complex and dynamic as all countries including the A8 are simultaneously both 'senders' and 'receivers' of EU citizens and migrants from outside the EU and the balance between these various categories changes over time in response to internal and external events.

## Concluding thoughts ...

- One of the major concerns is the lack of adequate attention paid to the 'distributional' effects of the free movement of labour on territories with constrained labour market conditions as well as the impacts on particular groups-e.g. those in low skilled work and without educational qualifications.
- Macro-level studies require to be complemented with more in-depth exploration at local /regional levels, as labour markets, employment practice, remittances are located in a complex web of globalised networks and in specific localised economic, social and cultural contexts that shape the views and experiences of employers, host communities and mobile EU citizens.

# Contact

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