

Re: Why Europe can't hold out – Brooks, NY Times

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From: Gistak (gistak_at_hotmail.com)

Date: 01/15/05

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royls@telus.net wrote:

> On 13 Jan 2005 18:09:07 -0800, "Gistak" <gistak@hotmail.com> wrote:

>

> >royls@telus.net wrote:

> >> On 10 Jan 2005 14:05:55 -0800, "Gistak" <gistak@hotmail.com>

wrote:

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> >> >royls@telus.net wrote:

> >> >> On 6 Jan 2005 13:12:47 -0800, "Gistak" <gistak@hotmail.com>

wrote:

> >> >>

> >> >> >royls@telus.net wrote:

> >> >> >> On 6 Jan 2005 08:59:41 -0800, "Gistak" <gistak@hotmail.com>

> >wrote:

> >> >> >>

> >> >> >> >David James Polewka wrote:

> >> >> >> >

> >> >> >> >> Already, high European taxes make the European model look

> >> >> >> >> obsolete.

> >> >> >> >

> >> >> >> >> >This doesn't make sense. How do high taxes make it look

> >> >> >> >> obsolete?

> >> >> >> >

> >> >> >> >> >The types of taxes they use, especially VAT and income tax,

> >> >> >> >> >bear

> >> >> >> >> >on

> >> >> >> >> >> production, reducing wealth creation and prosperity.

> >> >> >> >> >

> >> >> >> >> >> >Even if what you said was incontrovertable, how does that

> >> >> >> >> >> >translate

> >> >> >> >> >> >to

> >> >> >> >> >> >> being obsolete?

> >> >> >> >> >> >>

> >> >> >> >> >> >> >An older model that does not work as well as a newer one is

> >> >> >> >> >> >> >considered

> >> >> >> >> >> >> >obsolete. If the European model is going to be a permanent

> >> >> >> >> >> >> >low-growth

> >> >> *model, that is a long-term problem for Europeans. I doubt that*
> >*they*
> >> >> *want to be the Africans of the 22nd C.*
> >> >
> >> >*But maybe other parts things help or hurt in other ways. They're*
> >> >*certainly not the Africa if THIS century, so I don't think their*
> >*model*
> >> >*is obsolete quite yet.*
> >>
> >> *Sometimes by the time something is known not to work, it's too*
late
> >*to*
> >> *do anything about it.*
> >
> >*If it's not known not to work, then it's not obsolete.*
>
> ?? *No, it could very well be obsolete. Standard 19th C medical*
> *practice became obsolete the day Ignaz Semmelweiss said doctors*
should
> *wash their hands between patients. But it was not known for many*
> *years why the standard practice was harmful.*
>

Obviously we have different definitions of the word obsolete. Since you, below, say that English isn't my first language, I assume that you'll continue to use your definition. That's fine, and during this discussion, I'll pretend that it means what you say it means.

> >> >> >> >> *European and U.S. workers are about equally productive*
per
> >*hour*
> >> >> >> >*worked.*
> >> >> >> >> *But Americans work 50 percent more than Germans, French*
and
> >> >> >*Italians.*
> >> >> >> >*In*
> >> >> >> >> *the 1970s, Western Europeans actually worked more than*
> >> >*Americans.*
> >> >> >*But*
> >> >> >> >*as*
> >> >> >> >> *taxes rose and incentives to work diminished, Europeans*
cut
> >> >*back*
> >> >> >> >*their*
> >> >> >> >> *hours or dropped out of the labor force.*
> >> >> >> >
> >> >> >> >*You may as well say that as the earth got older, Europeans*
cut
> >> >*back*
> >> >> >> >*their hours or dropped out of the labor force. Both are*
true

> >> >> >> >statements, but neither backs up a claim of cause and
> >> >consequence.
> >> >> >>
> >> >> >> *In economics, there is a recognition that motivation to do
> >> >something
> >> >> >> one would not do of one's own accord depends on the reward
for
> >> >doing
> >> >> >> it.
> >> >> >
> >> >> >It depends on several things, sure. This isn't just economics,
> >but
> >> >> >psychology. The point is that taxes being raised doesn't lead
to
> >> >longer
> >> >> >vacations.
> >> >>
> >> >> ?? It could easily do so. If working is not going to get you
> >> >> significantly more money, you go on vacation.
> >> >
> >> >PAID vacation. They get much more paid vacation than people in
the
> >US
> >> >do. I'm sorry, but I thought that was well understood.
> >>
> >> ??? Uh, sorry, but I thought _you_ understood: "paid vacation"
just
> >> means that the employer accepts less work for the same amount of
> >> money. It just takes a little bit off each paycheck during the
time
> >> the employee is working and pays it when they are not working. If
> >> Europeans got less paid vacation, they'd get more pay, and
Americans
> >> vice versa.
> >
> >You said that if working isn't going to get you more money, then you
go
> >on vacation. You brought it down to a personal question, and I
> >responded.
>
> OK, let me clarify, as you do not seem to be a native English
speaker:
> the second-person pronoun "you" is often used in place of the
> third-person impersonal pronoun "one," because the latter is
> considered to sound ponderous and pedantic.
>*

Good Lord, somehow you missed the point. I said, "they," so clearly I didn't think you were talking about ME. You brought it to a personal level by talking about what individual people would do. So I responded by talking about what individual people would do. That is, *they'll*

take paid vacation when it's offered to them, REGARDLESS of the tax situation.

Individual people aren't deciding to take their paid vacation in Europe because their taxes are high.

> > *Paid vacation is given and people take it.*
>
> *_Why_ is it "given," rather than more money?*
>

But you were talking about *_why_* they'd TAKE IT. YOU said that they'd take it because their taxes are high!

> > *They're not*
> > *deciding whether to take it or not based on whether they have to pay*
> > *high taxes.*
>
> *How do you know employers are not deciding to offer it because of*
high
> *taxes?*

Because I know that they're mandated by law. And not only that, but it's beside the point. YOU said the that the workers, not the companies, would take the vacation because taxes are high. Now you want to change the discussion.

<snip>

> >
> > *And shorter work weeks are ALSO mandated by law. This isn't a worker*
or
> > *employer choice.*
>
> *What is mandated by law is not part of the discussion here, because*
> *there is no choice involved.*
>

But that's the whole point. This article and YOU suggested something that isn't true. A shorter work-week is mandated by law, so how does it have anything to do with workers choosing to work less because taxes are high? This was your contention.

> >> *>Why couldn't it be*
> >> *>more vacation vs. LESS vacation?*
> >>
> >> *Uh, why do you think employers are willing to pay people at all?*
So
> >> *they will sit around on a beach somewhere?*
> >
> > *Vacation IS pay.*

- >
- > *In a sense, I suppose. But the point is, it is not_taxed like money*
- > *pay.*
- >
- > *>Sitting around a beach IS being paid.*
- >
- > *Well, being paid while you do it is. I have certainly done it from time to time without being paid.*
- >

Being paid to sit on a beach is EXTRA from being paid to work.

- > *>And yes, they*
- > *>pay them in beach time for the same reason they pay them in cash. So*
- > *>that they can keep employees working.*
- >
- > *Right. But you still have not addressed the question of why*
- > *employers give vacation time instead of cash. If it's just a legal*
- > *mandate, there's nothing to discuss re their motives.*
- >

But you're the one who claimed that the motive was "hey, I have to pay such high taxes, why not work a shorter week and go on vacation?" You need to back that up, or recognize that you may be wrong. You don't need to do it in this conversation, but you will do it.

P