Auto Enrol.
Why the Single Item Agenda?

Michelle Maher

Maynooth University

How did we get here?

Poverty alleviation by the State

Income protection
Employers / individuals
Market related

Voluntary

PRSAs

Auto Enrol

Historical Institutionalism

Historical

Recognises that political development is a process that unfolds over time

Institutionalism

Formal rules and structures
Informal norms and recurring patterns of behaviour

Path Dependency

Broad view

• Refers to the causal relevance of preceding steps in a temporal sequence

• Previous events in a sequence influence outcomes but not necessarily in the same direction

Narrow View

• Increasing returns

• Preceding steps in a particular direction induce movement in the same direction

(Paul Pierson 2000:252)

Epistemic Community

- Connects **Power** and **Knowledge**
- A network of professionals with recognised expertise and competence in a particular policy domain
- Shared beliefs about what the problem is and how it should be solved
- Common policy enterprise

(Hass 1992)

Epistemic Community

Gain Power	Retain Power
Demand for Information	Institutionalisation
Politics	Access
	Agenda Setting
	Shaping Preferences

Example of Substantive Outcome (tax)

- NPB 1988 Tax Treatment of Occupational Pension Schemes
- NPB 1993 Final Report
- OECD 1994, ESRI 1996
- NPPI 1997 Consultation Document
- NPPI 1998 Report Securing Retirement Income

Substantive Outcome

- "...the IAPF wrote a submission to the NPPI... myself and (*names another epistemic community member*) wrote it...That was the height of influence because if you actually look at the IAPF's submission and you look at the NPPI output there was incredible overlap. Everything they looked for pretty much happened. That was the height of influence"

2015 Interview with senior pensions industry individual and epistemic community member for PhD research (in progress, unpublished)

Ideational Continuity

- The best interests of the state are protected by a pension system as a partnership between the sate and private pensions

- Ideas over time acquire structural weight

- Comes to assume a self reinforcing life of its own

(Carstensen & Schmidt 2016:320-327, Widmaier 2016:345)

Conclusion

- Epistemic Community explains how ideas are introduced and gain traction as policy

- Informal and formal institutions give it structural power

- Helped by path dependency becomes cognitively locked into place