

Outline

- Introduction, Key question, argument, implications
- Diverging development trajectories, demonstrate how certain ROI institutional features account for change, way forward
- Vetoes, Institutions, Static/Change

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Mary Murphy

ISPA Dundalk October 2006

The frozen
landscape of
ROI social
security reform

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Key question

- Why has Irish social security developed the way it has?
- Critical engagement with Daly and Yeates (2003) McLaughlin (2002), McLaughlin, Kelly, Yeates (2002), McLaughlin and Kelly (2003)

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RoI/UK should face similar change

'Once almost identical'

Historical origins and institutional fit

NI, British style policy making & transfer

Same global pressures

Anglo Saxon liberal regime

Exposure to similar global discourse

Policy learning in EU policy debate

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However

- Rol commitment to adequacy and more universalism and contributory SI (except DLA McLaughlin et al 2002)
- Softer discourse and less pronounced welfare to work especially relating to low income women (wifely labour permitted)
- Less new public management impact on service delivery, tax/revenue not developed as a distributional tool
- Less behaviouralism (ASBO's, New Deal)
- Continuity not fundamental change

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Explanation for divergence

- Historical origins structural, political and ideological factors
- Catholic, colonial, conservative and nationalist culture (McLaughlin and Yeates 1999, McLaughlin 2002)
- 'Corporatist led anti poverty strategy' (McLaughlin et al, 2002)
- Ideology, policy architecture, political agency (Daly and Yeates 2003)
- Social Partnership most significant element (Daly and Yeates 2003)

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Critical engagement

- Over emphasis 'solidarity' and 'social vision' in RoI policy? 'Solidarity without equality' (O Riain and O Connell 2002).
- Evolving work welfare citizenship in ROI – one income support, JSA, obligations
- Child Benefit 'pragmatic' universalism
- Child poverty, relative income poverty, abandoning benefit recipients
- Over emphasises impact or role of social partnership, downplays other more powerful explanatory factors like consensual (D&Y 2003:91)

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Social partnership part of culture but not driver of decisions

- D & Y overplay contribution 'agency'
- Cousins 2005 'With or without social partnership Irish social security would look or more or less the same'
- CSW min rates, CDA's 22, pick UB/UA
- Restated vague, intangible (Fitzpatrick's) Spinning - 30% GAIE Towards 2016
- 2004 local elections, C+V power base still pluralist rather than corporatist
- C+V, ICTU not social security oriented
- Local part'ship and policy proofing ?

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Argument

- Global pressures strong but national political mediation determines shape of policy (Competition State Cerny 2005)
- No. vetoes in configurations of national institutions is a crucial variable determining mediation (Swank 2002, Hay 2004)
- Coordinative policy less ideational debate, not open to radical change Scharph (2000)
- Ireland experienced less and later change than all - less social dynamic

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Irish vetoes lead to consensus culture

Shift in democratic styles (Lijhpart, 1999:301)

Pre 1980 Ireland

- majoritarian (strong executive style)

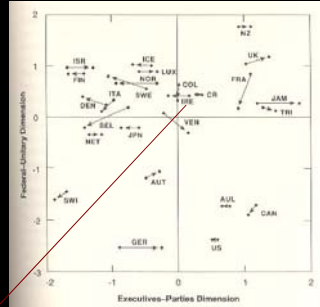
Post 1990 Ireland

- consensus governance

Ireland only Anglo Saxon welfare regime with such a style of governance

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Ireland shifted from majoritarian to consensus political culture early 1980's

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Old and new vetoes

Old vetoes (pre 1980)

Proportional Representation – clientelism/brokerage

1937 Constitution

Bimercal Cabinet

Strong Department of Finance

New vetos (post 1980)

Small parties more sustainable

Permanent Coalition government

Post 87' Social partnership

Finance and Business veto in competition state

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PRSTV - constant institutional theme

- Hay (2004) First past post - more policy dynamic than PR electoral system
- PR brokerage - less policy development but influences type/range of Irish policy
- Government decided on last seats, last seats decided on late transfers - cannot alienate last transfer - avoid blame
- In all systems but endemic in ROI
- Anglo Saxon policy in consensus regime

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Political culture of blame avoidance

Case studies

- General resistance to indexation, cost avoidance
- Obfuscation, presentation and spin, delaying tactics, no losers decisions, consensus gathering processes, ambiguity
- 1994 incremental freezing CDA's,
- Time frame on subsequent C.I.S
- 2001 strategic ambiguity re child benefit/childcare
- 10 year time frame on lone parent proposals
- 1992/2004 Dirty Dozen, Savage Sixteen,
- Patriach as veto re individualisation
- Policy paralysis

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Majoritarian Anglo Saxon style



Think the unthinkable



I'm gonna end welfare as we know it

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Consensus Irish style

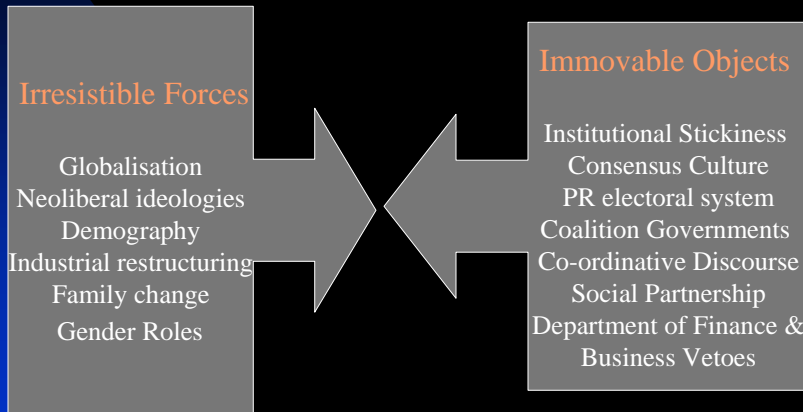


■ I don't want any messin, just stay out of trouble.

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Irresistible forces clashing against immovable objects (Pierson 2001)



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Implications for policy

- Change less radical or ambitious
- Lowest common denominator
- Policy paralysis – childcare
- Policy ambiguity – (Child benefit)
- Slower and incremental (CDA's)
- Some policy 'unthinkable' (Tax CB)
- DoF impact - less use of tax system
- Patriarchal veto remains strong - ambiguity about women and work (SW individualisation, access to ALMP's, childcare)

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Ireland has a temperate climate - not too hot , not too cold and rain all the year around ---

- The Irish political culture is like the Irish weather – not too left, not too right, and consensus all the year round.
- This dampens range and scale of policy ambition



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Social Static not necessarily a bad thing

- Frozen landscape of welfare reform and imposes upper limits and lower limits (Esping Andersen 2003)
- Less retrenchment – generous?
- Protects from negative change, militates against positive structural change
- Highest inequality – significant change required

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N/S space as dynamic for change

- Internationalisation and non devolution cross border space some potential Networking can strengthen ROI and NI social security policy community, visibility of difference create demands
 - Annex 2.5 social inclusion strategy - Special report on cross border working 'data sharing, common topics, joint approaches in a common framework'
- Frontier working – enabling or policing Migration (McDowell), Fraud control, IT Best practice on activation:lone parents

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How to realise social dynamic

- For more significant ROI change
- Conflict as well as consensus culture
- Civic society as dynamic for change
- Move from co-ordinative discourse towards communicative civic debate
- NAPS and NESF original political intention
- Take focus off corporatism and back to politics – direct link btw state and society

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