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Bootstraps and Brickbats – The politics of dependency and activation in comparative perspective

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Dependency politics is growing in importance not only in the United States, but in the West as a whole. In Europe, disputes over the social behavior of low income groups, often immigrant communities, have become more contentious than traditional conflicts between organized labour and capitalism. *Lawrence Mead, 1992*

Imposing conditions on those receiving alms is not new and has never been pretty. In fact the idea that the poor should be virtuous before being deserving is a notion as old and as cold as charity itself. For everyone else the road to salvation was always bound to involve a certain amount of forced straightening and improving. The related notion that the virtuous could easily be distinguished from the rest was equally tangled in religious and secular undergrowth and just as obviously fraught with danger. Being saved might be almost as costly as being lost. As King (1995:xi) observes, the official British position in 1893 was that those receiving poor

relief “lose for the time their rights as citizen” including the vote – always assuming they had it to begin with.

The modern welfare state did much to soften the impact of the harshest regimes of charity and the ideal of social citizenship (Marshall,1950) made the right to state support a credible point of policy debate in the post-WW2 era, if not a universal guarantee of anything much. Many of the European states reformed after the war sought to express these virtues in their constitutions, linking the right to work and the right to education to definitions of what it meant to be German, Italian or Dutch. Alongside those rights came an expectation that the state should assist.

But alms-giving and poor relief did not have to await these universalist ideals in order to express clear expectation about the rationale for assistance. The nobility among the poorest classes have always been war widows and it was to them that states first extended open forms of income support. Old people came next in the line of just desert, with aged pensions well entrenched in most countries before the ‘welfare state’ had been contemplated or the term coined. In both these cases the sense of the recipients having had to earn their pension was palpable, with spilled blood and broken bodies figuring prominently in the rhetoric of the day. The implicit contract was clear enough. They had already paid a fair price and deserved to live their final days at some minimal level of practical dignity. As Murphy (2011:62) shows, these pioneering reforms in Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century which created the old-age pension had one eye on the issue of labour market incentives, arguing for “equitable aid without weakening the individual initiative”.

Acknowledgment of just desert can also be seen in the case of worker’s compensation when that policy emerged as a point of contest in the industrial societies of the mid nineteenth century. With the social price of war very much in mind, the reformers of the 1830s and 1840s sought to make the state responsible for the injuries inflicted by the regime of work that had produced products and prosperity for a while society. As Bartrip and Burman (1983) defined it,

worker's compensation was very much a struggle to bring justice for the 'wounded soldiers of industry'.

However, what made workers compensation different from the widows and pensioners policies of the day was an expectation that relief would be temporary and that the payment of a benefit was simply a financial bridge to allow most claimants to recover and return to work. And whereas the widows and pensioners were often seen as the responsibility of the whole society, compensation was viewed as the employer's obligation and this quickly became transformed into a system of compensation insurance.

Together with other forms of personal insurance, these industrial compensation funds became the first identifiable welfare scheme in which complex obligations were levied on both sides. Employers and their insurers had to set aside sufficient funds to pay injured workers or their dependents in the case of death and there was much legal wrangling about what this meant. Additionally there were obligations on employers to take injured workers back to work once they were recovered, including into new posts more suited to someone with an incapacity. On the other side, workers were obliged to undertake rehabilitation and to accept work once they were deemed able to return to the job. The state's role in all this was to regulate the payment of insurance premiums and to authorize the tribunals needed to adjudicate disputes about the level of compensation or the terms of return to work.

From these tripartite systems of contributory welfare sprang the earliest forms of employment insurance. These were designed to shield workers from the impact of downturns, recessions and bad judgment by owners forced to abandon their businesses. They became popular in countries like Great Britain, the USA and Germany where widespread industrialization and well-organized unions of both workers and employers could eventually agree on the terms of both the insurance contributions and the level of temporary payments.

In countries like Australia where state-funded pensions were established in the early twentieth century there continued to be debate about the virtues of a contributory model through into the 1940s. The Labor Party's opposition to individual contributions by either workers or employers and its steadfast insistence that services "should be free to all members of the community" (Curtin, 1938, quoted in Watts:1987:18) would set it apart from its British forebears and its American contemporaries.

In the US there was a further institutional wrangle to manage and that was the prior position of the states. The Australians had some colonial institutions for worker's compensation and pensions but the national government easily suborned these with the creation of tax-funded schemes that required no commitment from the state governments and not much loss of institutional capacity. But in the USA the states were well entrenched and much less interested in federal solutions.

In the great struggles over employment assistance Hoover's feeble attempts at a national solution served only to entrench states rights and the rhetoric of states rights also spoke to the free market ideas driving Hoover's administration. The scheme first proposed during his presidency, but vetoed by him, proposed to establish a national network of employment offices to assist the unemployed to find suitable work. This so-called 'labour exchange' model was also gaining popularity in Britain and Europe where politicians and business leaders struggled to explain the Great Depression to large sections of their democratic constituency. But whereas in the US the debate was only about assisting individual to find work, in Europe it was also about granting them income support while they searched for a job.

It would be too strong a claim to say that the labour exchange idea and the income support policies made for a natural alliance between pro-market and pro-state interests but they certainly allowed for supporters of assistance to draw a clear link between any form of 'dole' and the intention to get the unemployed back to work. What resulted, including in the US, was a complex set of public institutions at national and local level whose job it was to assess the skills of applicants, match these to the needs of employers and provide validation to the

various social security agencies charged with handing out subsidized jobs, training programs and cash support.

The proliferation of different forms of income support for those injured at work, those with established work experience and those very recently arrived into the labour market would make unemployment benefits and payments an almost endlessly complex array of entitlements and obligations. But three models can be discerned.

The first was the US type where workers in unionized industries gained entitlements to employment and health insurance paid for by their employers as a form of social wage. Once this employment insurance had been exhausted by prolonged unemployment, the only form of assistance was local emergency relief, including food stamps, but this would not cover rent or other costs of living. As part of the 'New Deal' Roosevelt and his supporters in Congress passed the 1935 Social security Act which included a program called Aid to Dependent Children, later amended to Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). While not explicitly framed as an unemployment measure, this program would carry much of the weight for providing income support for families where neither parent was in work. And while this book does not deal directly with the evolution of such program from a US perspective, many of the debates about AFDC would shape thinking about the relationship between income support and employment throughout the 1990s when the programs in our three countries were in ferment.

The second type was the dual system such as the European approach involving both employment insurance and social security payments. Those with a work history in regular employment would accumulate insurance credits and during bouts of unemployment these would cover the cost of lost wages as 60-70% equivalency. Once insurance was exhausted, or in cases where no work history existed, a standard form of income benefit was paid by the state. In the UK this was a national scheme funded by taxpayers, in places like the Netherlands and Denmark it was administered by the municipality and the national government provided most of the cost.

The third type, as we have seen, was the tax-funded residual type, as found in places like Australia and New Zealand. Every citizen (and some classes of recent immigrants) was provided with a basic form of income support if they were unable to find work. This was funded by national taxes and administered by a national system of social security offices.

The Meaning of Activation

The various schemes in OECD countries to assist injured workers and to provide relief during periods of unemployment all had expectation for return to work. During the Depression a number of countries also adopted forms of “relief” work. Paid with a mixture of food credits and minimal wages, these schemes were the first cases of state provided work linked to an income benefit. Of course one could also point to many forms of local charity including the Poor House in which support was earned through performing various forms of work but these did not involve wages and did not take the state directly into the realm of ‘employer of last resort.’ The Swedish welfare system claims credit for one of the earliest forms of activation (Johansson, 2001).

These different employment assistance schemes each required beneficiaries to search for work and to accept suitable employment. But the terms differed widely and the implementation was often imperfect. Most insurance schemes allowed claimants to do much as they pleased until the period of entitlement was in sight and it was this expectation that provided a strong incentive to both encourage and to find work. Social security schemes were minimal in nature but often continued for as long as the individual remained unemployed. When first established in the 1930s most such schemes could do little to urge workers to find jobs because the labour market was so weakened by the Great Depression. But in the post-

War period the various employment offices began to insist upon greater vigilance in the search for work. In many systems an explicit link was made between income support and registration at the labour exchange. But the legal requirement often stated that the obligation was to accept *suitable* work and this made it difficult to enforce if a claimant really did not want the job on offer. So gradually a convention emerged whereby the obligation revolved mostly around the tasks of job search and less about preparation for work or flexibility to accept what was available. Up until the early 1970s this regime of mild obligation received general political support in an environment of low unemployment and positive public budgets. But in OECD countries the average standardised unemployment rate jumped from three percent in 1973 to a high point of eight percent by 1993 and as Martin and Grubb (2001:11) point out, this changed the political climate entirely.

By the early 1970s there could be said to be two parts to the response to unemployment – passive and active labour market support. The so-called passive measures were entirely to do with income support and perhaps housing and health allowances. As we have seen, these could involve different regimes of payment and of eligibility. As Calmfors (1994:4) points out, the active labour market policy (ALMP) group was composed of (i) job broking to improve efficient matching of workers to vacancies, (ii) labour market programmes to upgrade skills to meet demands and to reduce ‘employer uncertainty about the employability of applicants’, and (iii) job creation involving public sector employment of subsidized work in the private economy.

For the economy as a whole, greater efficiency in the job matching process reduces the spend on income support and helps employers get suitable applicants without having to raise wages and stimulate inflation (Johnson & Layard:1986). There are also potential productivity gains if greater efficiency in broking leads to a greater chance of applicants getting work. This in turn would reduce their propensity to become discouraged, leave the labour market and become economically inactive. This effect would only be expected if job broking did create improved chances for otherwise likely to be discouraged workers – in other words those with greater vulnerability to long term unemployment (Calmfors,1994:6). Evaluations of such programs to encourage active search behavior do support these contentions. Such programs evidently do

change search behaviors of the most vulnerable, and these new behaviours “appear to have significant effects on job finding rates” (Calmfors,1994:7; OECD, 1993).

Perhaps the most hotly debated element of this first wave of activation programs were the various job creation schemes devised to assist workers caught in periods of low demand or whose lack of recent experience made them unattractive to employers. Most OECD countries ran such programs in the 1960s and 1970s. Sometimes they were focused on sub-groups such as youth or recent immigrants or those from disadvantages regions. Countries such as the Netherlands also developed a parallel system for disabled people in which state-run factories or horticultural institutes gave paid work to this very disadvantaged group, some of whom would then find jobs in the open economy.

Decisions concerning the distribution of these special jobs generated by this form of state subsidy were usually made by officials in the public employment service (PES), using guidelines and priorities mandated by government. This often included the type of job and the particular industry sector. In other words the policy makers needed to make good decisions about the kind of subsidized work that would assist both the individual beneficiary and would likely lead to a sustainable outcome for them once they moved to the open economy.

For labour market economists these job creation schemes posed two challenges – deadweight loss and substitution effects (Layard et al;1991). Deadweight loss is a term used to describe the open employment of candidates referred to these schemes that would have occurred without the scheme. The substitution effects refers to the extent to which newly created jobs stimulated by these methods simply replaced jobs for other categories, perhaps with no net benefit to the economy. This is generally a problem when job creation is directed at the private sector but is notoriously difficult to measure at the local level. As a rule-of-thumb policy to restrain such effects policy makers usually attempt to apply a principle of *additionality* to public job creation schemes, requiring proponents to show that they involve work that would not have been undertaken. While this helps restrain the substitution effects it also runs the risk of pushing such schemes to the margins of the market economy and in doing so, preparing

candidates for jobs that are unlikely to exist beyond the terms of the subsidy. In defense of this approach, program designers argue that the employability of candidates may still be improved by such schemes if they teach discipline, self-organisation and other such generic attributes likely to be attractive to employers.

Of course the net effects of such schemes for the economy may involve different considerations to those of advancing the welfare of individuals. A scheme which has a high substitution effect may still be valuable if it circulates available work among groups otherwise likely to become discouraged. And where such schemes typically involve the payment of award rates, not welfare benefits, the experience of being in such a program will have positive economic value for participants and their families.

Much work has been done to sift and filter these effects to maximize opportunities for the most at risk, while preventing distortions in the economy. For example, one observed effect of being involved in job creation programs is that participants do less searching for regular jobs than would have been the case if they had remained in the regular unemployment queue (Edin & Holmlund,1991; Wunsch & Lechner, 2008).

Critical awareness of the limitations of these active labour market initiatives began to grow as unemployment itself expanded and governments were required to spend more of the public budget on measures to address economic and social distress. But while spending increased, pessimism grew. As one overview put it, “the track record of many active programmes is patchy” (Martin & Grubb, 2001:19) and almost ten years later and many studies on, Kluge (2010:904) concludes that “evidence from existing evaluations remains inconclusive”. Even where the results were positive – such as those for training outcomes for adult women – it was often unclear why. Similarly, almost all programmes designed to assist young unemployed people produced worst results than for other groups without there being an obvious reason (Heckman et al 1999:2068). Perhaps the best summary of effects came from the overview by Martin and Grubb (2001:27);

While the optimal combination of additional job-placement services and increased monitoring of job seekers and enforcement of work tests is unclear, the evidence suggests that both are required to produce benefits to unemployment insurance claimants and society.

In other words, the many different kinds of support services to assist job placement would not be likely to produce positive results on their own. The best strategy would also need to include a disciplinary element that includes active monitoring of claimants and actual sanctioning where they failed a work test.

The Work Test and the ‘Synthesis of Wisdoms’

The term ‘work test’ had by this stage emerged as a general description for several kinds of requirements. The different OECD countries had local obligations which included the following enforceable conditions; to attend interviews at the public employment service (PES) to discuss work opportunities, to attend job interviews arranged by the PES, to attend training and work preparation programs organized by the PES, to search for jobs and obtain job interviews oneself, and to accept job offers. Failure to do any of these could be regarded as having failed a work test.

What became clear in many evaluations was that those responsible for running programs believed that a crucial reason why some workers did better than others was that, despite similar skills and experience, they were better motivated to find work. When searching for

reasons why youth programs were so ineffective Lerman (1997) pointed to a poor work ethic as a key problem. One important thing to emerge from these studies was an emphasis upon programs which maintained a high level of contact between the PES and job seekers in order to keep them actively searching and to coach them to remain motivated about the benefits of working.

This was supported by Martin and Grubb (2001:29-30) who also pointed to the need for policies to aim to influence the formation of outlooks and motivations from a very early period in the life course with a strategy that “reaches back to early childhood including the pre-school period.” This idea of greater emphasis upon the capacity of individuals to stay motivated and to organize their lives in a way that makes their employability greater would become more and more important over this period from the mid-1990s to the end of the century. It was not simply a story about the unemployed. Observers, theorists and commentators were also finding reasons to see redefine democracy itself as “people’s capacity to govern themselves” (Mulgan:1997:ix). What is interesting about this phrase is the way it remains open to whether or not this refers to forms of collective political agency, or refers mostly to the ideas of governmentality made popular by Foucault (1974;1991) and his followers. In this latter case the technology of power being identified is a form of self-governance wholly explained by a rationale of generalized control, not of individual agency. What is interesting about the shifting way in which unemployment gets included in this more general change in thinking is the double-edged observations about “not only the economic barriers to jobs for the long-term unemployed, but also their own cultural and attitudinal handicaps” (Perri 6:1997:275).

Of course this shift in thinking about the nature of motivations and what we might call the cultural approach to policy did not appear without warning. A furious debate had broken out in the US in the late 1980s and early 1990s and this soon consumed attention in other OECD countries. As we noted already, the US system for supporting the unemployed has unique attributes that make it difficult to compare with European and Australasian counterparts. In particular, the fact that there is no universal unemployment benefit as such has meant that the relationship between active labour market programs and income support is very different to

that found in more conventional public employment services. The American debate has therefore been characterized as a dispute about the nature of welfare and poverty.

Perhaps the most important turning point in the American debate was the emergence of an intelligent and strident neo-conservative critique of welfare, starting with Charles Murray's 1984 book, *Losing Ground*. This would help characterize the War on Poverty launched in the 1960s and cornerstone of the liberal consensus regarding racial equality and poverty, as a complete failure in which the instruments of liberal policy were themselves helping to entrench racial and economic segregation. In particular conservatives argued that welfare payments gave powerful incentives to poor women to have illegitimate children and made it less attractive for them and their partners to marry and establish economically viable households.

It would take a further ten years for these arguments to catch fire. When Murray restated his case in an influential Wall Street Journal essay in 1993 the African-American out-of-wedlock birthrate had reached 68.7 percent and the rate for whites had grown to 23 percent, leading Murray to focus upon *The Coming White Underclass* (WSJ, October 29:A14). In raising alarm about white birth and marriage patterns Murray was doing no more than extending his earlier argument about the fate of racial minorities, although of course the impact on readers of the Wall Street Journal was bound to be more open to excitement about the prospect that white communities were now experiencing similar patterns of welfare and poverty to those of traditional recipient groups. In *Losing Ground* he argued that the liberal project articulated by John F Kennedy in 1962 to deal with African-American exclusion by improving the federal social safety net was indeed a transformative moment, but not for the reasons intended.

With the slogan "Give a hand, not a handout" the War on Poverty introduced training programs for the long term unemployed and education for the young unemployed with the promise that the programs would help them back to work and self-sufficiency. Historic levels of growth and prosperity in the US economy through in the early 1960s made such programs plausible and affordable. Murray's assessment of the heyday of the War on Poverty was that it

failed to cure poverty, it entrenched a structural account of unemployment that relived individuals of responsibility and it did more to help middle class helping professions to improve their careers than to build economic independence for minorities.

What was most interesting about the Murray case and the furious debate it stirred-up in the US was not only the fact that it involved a very partial reading of the data. For example, he acknowledged that the Kennedy program to provide better training did result in increased earnings for male trainees of between \$150 and \$500 per year. But he ridiculed this as too small a figure to be seen as an answer to structural poverty (Murray, 1984:38). But then he did not believe in a structural explanation of poverty and would argue elsewhere that even small improvements in income were to be valued so long as they were based on improved self-sufficiency. What was of more long term interest was Murray's argument that welfare be considered as a system of disincentives which played an independent role in shaping the level and nature of poverty, an independent role that is of as much importance as other factors such as the availability of jobs or the level of skills of the jobless. His "synthesis of wisdoms" (Murray,1984:146) included three claims – incentives are central and carrots and stick really work; people will tend to avoid work and be amoral unless you stop them; individuals must be held accountable for their actions – regardless of general structural conditions affecting them.

These would become the cornerstone of what would be called the 'new paternalism' later championed by Lawrence Mead (1997) and others. In his landmark contribution, *Beyond Entitlement* (1986:145) Mead also argued that the "belief recipients have that their fate turns on forces outside themselves" fosters dependency and a defeated attitude to work opportunity. While Murray would advocate cutting welfare to remove disincentives to work, Mead and other so-called big-government conservatives would argue for the continuation of government programs but with much tougher requirements to seek and take work of any kind. Mead would dispute the Murray assertion that most welfare recipients would rather not work and instead argued that most unemployed people have similar attitudes to work to those poor people who work and that the challenge was to remove disincentives and impediments to them entering the workforce. Very little of this was seen to be a problem of training opportunities or better tax credits. The key for the new paternalists was mandatory

requirements to accept available work, buttressed by an effective regime of sanctions to eliminate noncompliance. This would become the Workfare doctrine of the 1990s.

By the time the Clinton administration took power in 1992 the effect of critiques of government programs such as those of Murray and others, combined with growing levels of poverty and joblessness, had created an atmosphere of pessimism among liberals and those responsible for administering programs. Longtime campaigner for welfare reform in the Congress, Daniel Patrick Moynihan summed this up in his first meeting with Clinton advisers in early 1993 when, having listened to their ideas for change he said he “looked forward to reading your book about why it failed this time” (Ellwood,1996:22). What had changed between the end of the 1970s and the start of the Clinton reforms was a widespread acceptance of the incentives argument on both the left and right of politics. Both state and federal programs had been experimenting with tighter work requirement, caps on benefits and discouragement of out-of-wedlock births. The problem they faced was that being a support program for single parents, AFDC had to balance both the needs of vulnerable children and the desire of many policy makers to punish recipients if they had more children while on benefits and to push them back into the labour market, even if this left children with inadequate care.

During the debate over the Clinton reforms the Republicans were able to build upon widespread public disaffection with AFDC. Many Democrat leaders acknowledged that welfare dependence was a problem and some even accepted that children were worse off as a result of living on welfare. Of course the Democrats were also deeply conflicted about proposals to impose time limits on benefits, believing that these more draconian initiatives could well backfire for poor children if their parents did not achieve economic independence. Having failed to get a bill before Congress before the 1994 election, the Clinton administration lost its legislative base to Newt Gingrich and his ‘Contract with America’ and was forced to accept many Republican proposals in the 1996 TANF package agreed and passed as the policy to ‘end welfare as we know it’. Weaver (2000: 191) argues that this package contained many changes “on which there was a strong consensus” and this included tighter work requirements, obligations for teen mothers to live at home and increased funding for childcare. But the imposition of five-year lifetime time limits on benefits remained controversial. There were

also positive commitments to provide jobs of last resort and local job creation, but the Republicans succeeded in pushing most of this off onto the states where it was doubtful of adoption.

Embedded in this highly partisan American debate and the legislative outcome was a number of propositions about programs for the unemployed. Obviously the Americans were more concerned than any other OECD country about the relationships between welfare and single parenthood. But if we hold this to one side we can also see that most of the other propositions being advanced in the US debate were also taking hold in other countries. And the timing was remarkably similar, suggesting some common environmental pressures.

In the early 1990s the European states faced a severe recession which quickly resulted in rising levels of unemployment and major budget pressures to deal with the costs of welfare. And for the first time these pressures impacted the Scandinavian welfare states in ways that challenged their generosity. For example, in Finland for example, the rise was sharp and reached 18 percent by 1994. Denmark had unemployment at record levels of more than 12 percent. In Sweden the rate had stayed at 1-2 percent for many years and then rose dramatically to 8 percent in 1994. Perhaps more alarming even than this was the steep climb in numbers of young people out of work with the Swedish rate rising to 18 percent in this same period. Not surprisingly these trends quickly impacted the poverty levels in these countries and stimulated a ferocious debate about the effectiveness of welfare. But the issue with the most deadly potential was the question of cost. During this period of the early to mid 1990s the cost of social assistance in countries such as Sweden doubled.

The first and perhaps most important proposition was that welfare can actually harm poor families if it creates dependency and reduces incentives to work. So-called poverty traps include rules which make part-time work unattractive because of the sudden loss of welfare benefits, or the loss of valuable health and housing subsidies, or the fact that there are often

very high transition costs for poor people trying to move from benefits to work. Not only is there a lot of paperwork to deal with but it can be difficult to align the timing of one's last welfare payment with the arrival of the first pay check. Even small gaps can be crippling if they mean one is unable to eat for two or three weeks because the initial transition to work costs money.

This critique of welfare often makes the PES a key element of the story about disincentives. Administrative processes are criticized for having little to do with employment outcomes. The bureaucracy needed to run an income support system is almost always focused upon preventing overpayments and fraudulent claims. Officers are discouraged from fraternizing with clients or getting involved in their various hardship stories. Instead the rules are applied using standard procedure. This is often at odds with the requirements of the labour market element of the bureaucracy which seeks to build trust, develop personalized responses and to differentiate between different individual claims.

A second proposition was that most programs designed to improve the employability of the unemployed did not add value. This reflected a twenty-year debate about the evaluation of programs across the OECD and with the methods used by evaluators inside and outside government. We have already seen a summary of this debate in the work of researchers like Martin and Grubb (2001). A more recent summation comes from Kluve (2010:915) who reviewed European programs and compared 137 evaluations from 19 countries. This confirms the generally negative view of program impacts;

The picture that emerges from the meta regressions is surprisingly clear-cut. Once the type of program is taken into account, the analysis shows that there seems little systematic relationship between program effectiveness and a host of other contextual factors...Traditional training programs have a modest likelihood of generating positive impact...both private sector incentive programs and Services and Sanctions show significantly better performance.

The activation debate is therefore a necessary outcome of two quite contradictory conditions. The first is an historical demand that the poor remain in the labour market and that programs to assist them should 'resemble' labour market conditions for both motivational and ideological reasons. The second is that investments in such programs have tended to be less successful than their supporters claim and expect, leading to credibility issues when national budgets come under pressure.

These conditions on their own would probably prove sufficient to make these programs precarious. But a further dimension is also important. Activation is a strategy aimed at both recipients of welfare and those who deliver the services. This means that activation is also a key element of so-called New Public Management (NPM) strategies to promote efficiency within the public sector. So while an activation policy that asks unemployed people to report for interviews in a monthly basis may look like an attempt to get these recipients working again, it may also be a strategy designed to put pressure on front line bureaucrats and contractors to earn the funds they are being given. This 'double activation' may produce a synergy of efforts where the instruments are well targeted but a confusion of signals where they are not. This is the new challenge of activation politics and early successes in doing 'more with less' should not be taken to promise an unambiguous pathway forward for either recipients or those who work with them.

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