

**The ‘double dynamics’ of activation: institutions, citizens and the remaking of welfare governance.**

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## Structured abstract

### Purpose:

This paper explores activation policy as a condensate for new forms of governance in respect of welfare institutions and in relation to welfare subjects. It asks how far apparently similar concepts – contractualisation, individuation, personalisation – can be applied to the governance of institutions and the governance of persons

### Approach:

The paper draws on a model of different governance regimes – first introduced in Newman 2001 - to trace different dynamics at stake in the shift to activation policy .

### Findings:

Tensions in the dynamics of the transformation of welfare governance around notions of activation are highlighted. It is also argued that different reconfigurations of power are at stake in the governance of institutions and the governance of persons. Finally tensions between notions of active, activist and activation conceptions of citizenship are traced.

### Research implications:

The paper challenges a governmentality perspective in which managerial discourses are assumed to have similar consequences for institutions and for persons, so drawing attention to the importance of context

### Practical implications

### Limited value

### Originality/value:

This paper makes an original contribution to the field by tracing a number of different dynamics at stake in activation policy rather than assuming a coherent shift from earlier forms of welfare regime.

This is classified as a *research paper*

## Introduction

My focus in this paper is on labour market activation as a condensate for a number of discussions about new configurations of power and authority. These reconfigurations involve a double dynamic: what Bonvin and Moachon (2006) term a ‘two fold transformation’, involving on the one hand new relationships between individuals and institutions, and on the other the extension of contractual, market and network relationships between institutions in a plural state. As such activation forms a condensate through which contemporary governance trends can be analysed, and the literature has highlighted the importance of processes of decentralisation, individualisation, personalisation, contractualisation, marketisation, together with the emergence of network based and collaborative forms of governance. However the problem of viewing activation as a condensate – a single lens through which different trends and tendencies can be brought into view – is that this may collapse important differences in the forms of power and authority that are deployed, and mask potential tensions arising from their dynamic interaction in specific sites.

In this article I open up ‘governance’ to critical analysis in order to approach such questions. In the first section I ask how far apparently similar concepts can be applied

both to institutional change and to changing relationships between service organisations and their clients. The second section highlights activation policy as a site of tensions between different forms and relations of governance. The third section explores ways in which different notions of citizenship collide as activation policies interact with other modernisation goals, especially in relation to gender; and argues that ‘activation’ may be in tension with ‘active’ and ‘activist’ forms of citizenship. As such the article addresses three sets of dynamics rather than a single double dynamic: the dynamic relationship between policy and governance; the dynamic tension between different regimes of governance; and the dynamic relationship between active, activated and activist forms of citizenship. Overlaid on these is a theoretical tension between structural and post structural accounts of change.

### **Activation as a condensate for understanding new forms of governance**

Labour market activation represents a fundamental shift in mature European welfare states, and there is now a burgeoning research literature investigating how such policies are being translated in different national contexts and enacted in processes of policy development and delivery. Rather than debating the relationship between policy and delivery I want to highlight ways in which discourses of welfare are deeply entangled with discourses of governance in discussions of activation. This entanglement is rarely unpicked, and the relationship between policy and governance has, until recently, remained on the fringes of the literature on activation. Yet as Van Berkel (2006) argues, not only do activation policies have consequences for the mode of governance (here taken to mean how social policy programmes are administered and managed), but the mode of governance is likely to have consequences for policy. The governance literature has helped open up the ‘black box’ of the policy process, highlighting the way in which policy does not arrive fully formed to be ‘implemented’ in local settings; policy is made as it is shaped, understood, enacted and experienced in plurality of sites by a plurality of actors in a dispersed field of power (Rhodes, 1997). This goes beyond the idea of the ‘street level bureaucrat’ applying discretion in local offices, and opens up the idea of policy as an unfinished, dynamic domain.

A second contribution of the governance literature is the attention paid to the forms of power associated with changing regimes of welfare governance. It is here that activation forms a condensate for a range of concepts associated with both the

transformation of welfare states *and* the rise of the new public management: privatisation, marketisation, contractualisation, personalisation, collaboration decentralisation, individualisation and so on. Each of these are rather slippery concepts, and I want to argue that their application to both the content of policy and to the process by which it is made and delivered has tended to obscure important issues. That is, the collapse of questions of governance and of welfare policy that takes place in the course of using an apparently equivalent concept may be suggestive of general trends, but may also be counterproductive. I want to do so by taking specific concepts – privatisation, individualisation and contractualisation – and unpacking them a little.

### *Privatisation*

State and market stand for one representation of public and private, providing a way of understanding the process of state modernisation as a shift towards the privatisation of public goods. However the state versus market distinctions tends to omit familial and gender relationships from the analysis (Daly, 2000; Daly and Rake, 2003; Lewis, 1992, 2002; Sainsbury, 1999). It also obscures very distinct meanings of the private. One refers to a private sector of markets, governed according to the principles of demands and coordinated through the principles of impersonal exchange. Another refers to the private realms of family, household or community. A third meaning of the private is the personal – a sense of identity, values, and relationships that are now being subjected to new forms of governmental power that attempt to install new subject positions of the active, worker citizen. The privatisation of social risks associated with welfare reform both strengthens processes of informalisation and familialisation of welfare (Van Berkel, 2006) and also represents new forms of governmental power in which the personal becomes both an object (of new strategies) and a resource (to be mobilised in the process of constituting new forms of self governing welfare subjects).

### *Individuation*

The personal in discussions of activation policy tends to be conflated with notions of the individual and individuation. I want to suggest that we need to hold these two concepts apart. The individual and individualisation denote strategies and practices for delivering welfare services, often associated with a decentralisation of powers to municipalities and other local agencies who can exercise discretion rather than deliver

standardised services. The idea here is that services need to be flexible, responsive and ‘tailor made’ to an individual’s circumstances. Individuals no longer, in principle, belong to categories that can be treated as a group in terms of benefit entitlements, and thus be subject to bureaucratic processes of matching entitlement rules to category of welfare recipient; individuals are now, it seems, to be clients and consumers of new forms of service delivered in new ways. Of course how far this ideal can be realised is constrained by processes of targeting particular categories for activation measures and by constraints on the service relationship produced by standards, targets and other centralising pressures. But my point here is that individualisation as an ideal of service delivery differs in subtle ways from personalisation as a governmental strategy. Here activation measures can be understood as opening up more of the person to governmental power, requiring them to collaborate in the development of new subjective orientations to the worlds of work and welfare. This has been described in a number of ways: the redefinition of citizenship from Marshallian notions of social citizenship to new conceptions of the worker citizen, the inculcation of responsible citizenship, and so on (Dwyer, 2000; Clarke and Newman, 2004). Individuation and personalisation may be mutually reinforcing: individual relationships between client and worker allow the possibility of new forms of governmentality associated with the installation of new subject positions and normative orientations. However they cannot be conflated. Individuation may be as much about applying coercive ‘labourist’ measures as about the inculcation of reflexive, responsible subjects.

### *Contractualisation*

Rather different arguments can be made about the different inflections of the meaning of ‘contracts’ in the activation literature, and the tendency to conflate the extension of institutional contracts between purchasers and providers with the development of individualised contracts between services and citizens (for example in the form of action plans or job seeker contracts). Again the literature has highlighted difficulties in the translation of such ideals into practice: for example Bonvin and Moachon suggest that “the tendency towards contractualism encompasses a great variety of situations in which the logic of contract between equally accountable and informed partners is very unequally implemented. In the worst case, so called client contracts, contractualism mostly boils down to rhetoric” (2006: p. 8). But my argument concerns

the conflation of different forms of contract. Bifulco and Vitale draw attention to differences between market type contracts, contracts between gift and market, contract as responsabilisation and contract as policy making agreements between state and market (2006: p. 497). N.A. Andersen (2002) initially draws direct analogies between institutional and what he terms 'social' contracts, but goes on to describe the particular characteristics of the latter: "the social contract is about mutual empowerment. Only through the making of the citizen into a negotiating partner is it possible for the administration to access the self relation of the citizen and negotiate his or her sexuality, self integration, motherhood, personal development, self responsibility etc.... Through its communicative demarcation of obligations it presupposes that the ....participants are free to commit themselves and free to translate obligation into commitment" (2002: p. 284). But while the social contract appears to mirror the administrative contract in the fostering of instrumental rationalities based on notions of self – or organisational – interest, it differs from it, I want to argue, in its focus on the personal. That is, it invokes new forms of governmentality that are based on the inculcation of new forms of governable subject, subjects in which the person – his or her 'inner will' – becomes a resource enabling the transformation of welfare states through the transformation of obligations into commitments.

The use of post Foucauldian approaches to understanding the 'social contract' illuminates the subtle distinctions that may be made between the extension of purchaser-provider contracts and agency-citizen contracts, and suggests the difficulties of condensing apparently similar concepts cutting across new strategies of institutional and personal governance. The analysis also highlights the slipperiness of many of the ideas condensed in discussions of activation. For example the greater involvement of citizens in the design and realisation of policies may be associated with the general trend towards a service economy (Borghi, 2007) and its associations with a greater emphasis on consumer rationalities. However it can also be viewed as a new technology of power – including individual action plans and signed agreements - through which citizens are constituted as freely choosing actors rather than as passive welfare subjects. Similarly, Bonvin and Moachon highlight the ambivalences produced by the exercise of different strategies: those designed to help individuals comply with social norms and expectations, and those that enable individuals to define the content and mode of implementing policies. The former is viewed as a logic in which "institutions are used as disciplining tools, whereas the last one

conveys a truly reflexive view of public action” (2006: p. 6). However from a governmentality perspective so called ‘empowerment’ strategies, designed to encourage reflexive, self managing actors, might be viewed as new disciplinary logics of rule in which individuals are constituted as new forms of governable subject (Rose, 1999).

Citizens may, then, be implicated in new orders of rule in a number of different ways. They may be ‘empowered’ by the governance shifts in which questions of voice and choice, involvement and personalisation are becoming the currency of modernising reforms. However such discourses imply strategies that open out more of the person to governmental power, for example in the process of ‘responsibilising’ citizens, encouraging them to be ‘active’ (but only in certain ways), and engaging them in partnership with the state in finding solutions to the problems of welfare after the welfare state. The question is: are these two different processes that interact differently in different places at different times? Or are they strategies that are differentially targeted to different population groups? Or perhaps they can be understood simply as different perspectives on what is important about new orders of rule, the first normative, the second more critical? None of these propositions is satisfactory as a singular, global explanation: but each must be part of any attempt to develop new insights into governance and activation. And such insights are unlikely to emerge from generalising notions of transnational governance shifts.

### **Governance as a field of tensions**

As argued in the previous section, discussions of activation condense a number of different governance processes and strategies into a single trajectory of welfare reform. Here I attempt to tease out the implications of understanding governance not as a singular phenomenon – in which networks, collaboration, personalisation and so on are equivalent instantiations of a general shift from government to governance. Rather, the transformation of welfare states involves the reordering of a number of different regimes of power that are overlaid on each other in complex ways, producing tensions, ambivalences and points of disjuncture. Ways of describing these different regimes of power differ across different literatures: while social policy tends to use the language of state, market and civil society or family as domains of welfare

provision, the governance literature uses the nomenclature of hierarchy, markets and networks to denote different modes of coordination or regime of power.

In Newman (2001) I argued for two developments to this traditional triptych. First, I argued for more emphasis to be placed on ‘rational management’ as a mode of coordination because of the growing salience of targets, goals and other managerial forms of power by the state as a way of delivering central policy goals; and linked this to a top down attempt to open up services to market relationships. Second, I argued for the addition of a fourth mode - self governance. I then mapped these different modes in terms of their placing on a vertical axis of centralisation/uniformity versus decentralisation/differentiation; and a horizontal axis of legitimacy/stability versus delivery/innovation. So, for example, hierarchical governance represents strong legitimacy and stability, and the capacity to deliver uniform services through the exercise of central power. Both markets and networks are linked to weak legitimacy (in terms of accountability); but both offer more dynamic ways of delivering change and innovation. But while markets plus managerialism offer states new ways of exercising central power in efforts to transform welfare regimes, networks open up the possibility of more differentiated, open ended and flexible ways of both developing policy and delivering services. Finally ‘self governance’ – denoting phenomena as varied as individual ‘responsibility’, community ‘empowerment’ and professional autonomy – tend to be high in terms of differentiation (states find these notoriously difficult to manage in a consistent way, and each expresses the antithesis of hierarchical forms of power); but are also high in terms of legitimacy and stability once in place.

How might this framework be used to suggest some of the dynamics involved in the development and delivery of activation policy? Following my argument in the first section, I do not wish to collapse arguments about institutional change with those concerned with new ways of governing and managing the person; so have distinguished between them in the following notes on the dynamics of welfare reform in relationship to each of my four modes of governance:

*Hierarchical governance:*

*Dominant mode of power:* rule based, including legal and bureaucratic power.



- Institutions: continued bureaucracy and hierarchy together with emergence of stronger monitoring, audit and evaluation. Use of 'evidence based' policy to impose standardised templates of reform and squeeze local innovation.
- Persons: continued salience of some citizenship rights; legacies of clientalism associated with bureaucratic power; but also legal measures associated with withdrawal of rights and benefits for particular categories of person.

### *Managerial governance*

*Dominant mode of power:* incentives, based on the assumption that both organisations and persons are likely to act instrumentally.

- Institutions: contractualisation, marketisation, governance through incentives, goals, objectives. Widening of the reach of managerial power to encompass third sector and civil society organisations drawn in as deliverers of activation policies.
- Persons: governance through incentive structures; individual contracts; but also the possibility of stronger consumer power.

### *Network governance*

*Dominant mode of power:* relational, based on reciprocity, communication, collaboration, trust.

- Institutions: policy networks and advocacy coalitions; partnerships in service delivery; inter-organisational collaboration; public/private partnerships. Often associated with weaker steering roles on the part of the state in order to enable the delivery of policy outcomes in conditions of complexity.
- Persons: participative governance, involving client based or community groups in networks; collaborative governance, involving new relationships between case workers and clients.

### *Self governance*

*Dominant mode of power:* normative, inviting self regulation and self management.

- Institutions: governed by strong values and norms (as in many civil society organisations but also professional associations); high autonomy, weak external constraints, but strong organisational cultures and high degrees of ‘ownership’ of organisational missions.
- Persons: new subject positions associated with active citizenship, responsible welfare user, and worker citizen at the centre of the normative dimensions of activation programmes.

Having set out the basic framework, it is now possible to map some of the key lines of tension that open up as different governance regimes associated with activation policy are overlaid in specific trajectories of reform. In terms of institutions, the decentralisation of activation services to regions and/or municipalities in many European states is associated with a number of different objectives. As Van Berkel (2006) suggests, it makes it possible to adapt policy programmes to local needs and circumstances, enabling the development of flexible and tailor made programmes. It fosters local forms of partnership; and has an ‘inclusive’ potential in its promotion of the involvement of local stakeholders. This involves the strengthening of lateral relationships associated with network governance (Torfing et al., forthcoming). But decentralisation is also associated with the separation of national policy from local implementation and thus with the extension of new public management techniques as central governments attempt to regulate and exert control at a distance rather than governing through hierarchy. The tensions produced mean that decentralisation is likely to involve “balancing and rebalancing national and local responsibilities and powers, rather than by straightforward decentralisation” (Van Berkel, 2006: p. 5). But the continued exercise of strong hierarchical (rule based) forms of power on the part of central governments attempting to ensure uniformity and consistency often serves as a barrier to local flexibilities and freedoms.

Strong institutional tensions also become evident as ‘civil society’ organisations are drawn into new fields of power or are contracted to take on new roles as service providers. This often requires them to adopt managerial structures and systems that squeeze their capacity to sustain the flexibility and responsiveness associated with their traditional closeness to clients and communities. But this is only one difficulty. The incentive structures associated with contractualisation tend to clash

with the normative solidarities of organisations and groups with a tradition of self governance, weakening the very capacities (social entrepreneurship, strong civic values, and the capacity to engage clients as citizens rather than customers) that are among their key assets in terms of building an ‘active’ welfare order.

A third set of institutional tensions operates in the dynamic between standardisation (associated with hierarchical governance) and professional or municipal discretion (associated with self governance in a dispersed field of institutional power). I have already hinted some aspects of such dynamics in the comments above on decentralisation. Here I focus on changes to professional power bases, where we can trace a number of apparently contradictory processes of change. It would seem that the processes of marketisation, the formation of partnerships and the inclusion of a range of non-state organisations in the delivery of activation services has significantly weakened the power of the traditional professions such as social work. New occupational groups – trainers, educators, job centre workers and others – are proliferating, and can be understood as operating from a weaker power base than the ‘old’ self regulating professions associated with the unreformed welfare state. At the same time, however, the role of case work – traditionally associated with the social worker- is expanding because of the emphasis, in some aspects of activation work, on individuation and tailor made service packages, and on the involvement of clients in shaping new norms of self management and self development.

I want to deal with the governance of persons rather more sketchily because there are substantial literatures on citizenship and activation (Johannson and Hvinden, 2005; J.G. Andersen et al., 2005). However I do want to highlight two key dynamics. The first concerns the potential tensions between collaboration and coercion (in my terms, between network and hierarchical forms of power). Larsen distinguishes between ‘work first’ approaches associated with neo-liberal states and the ‘social investment’ approaches emphasised by Scandinavian countries. Although “in practice, however, the opportunity and sanction approach are often combined” in the same welfare regime (2005: p. 137), the logics of rule are fundamentally different, the former invoking new forms of self discipline and the latter inviting an instrumental calculus.

The second, related line of tension in the governance of persons is between different forms of subject position constituted in different approaches to activation: that is, between inviting citizens to be instrumental actors responding to new

incentives; to consider themselves to be consumers of services; to be collaborators and partners with service delivery staff; and/or to adopt new subject positions as active, responsible, worker citizens. Each involves a different form of identification, and such identifications may not be easily reconciled. Citizens are constituted both as partners (asked to collaborate with institutions seeking to ‘enable’ them into job readiness, or to build their capacities for work); as consumers (of marketised services); but also continue to be the object of coercive strategies. How these tensions are played out depends not only on the willingness of service recipients to enter into new forms of voluntary contract with service providers but also on the way in which the discretion of bureaucrats is deployed. It also depends on the fit between activation policies and local labour market conditions.

However the shift from notions of the passive, dependent welfare recipient to the active, responsible, self managing ‘worker citizen’ is not the only dimension of citizenship that is being unsettled by new forms and relationships of governing; and in the following section I trace some of the gendered dynamics of governance and the relationship between activated, active and activist citizenship at stake.

### **Work, welfare and citizenship: the dynamics of welfare governance**

Research on the complex dynamics of welfare reform and the specific trajectories of change in different nation states suggests that we cannot assume that activation policy is sweeping all before it in a general installation of neo-liberal governmentality based on work, rather than welfare, as the foundation of citizenship. Other notions of governance – participative, collaborative and so on – are at stake; and other dimensions of citizenship are invoked as states attempt to promote social inclusion, democratic renewal and community cohesion. Just as there may be tensions between different forms of governance, such as those described in the second section, there may well, then, be tensions between different instantiations of the ‘active’ citizen. For example, Johansson and Hvinden (2005) highlight the complex interleaving of socio-liberal, libertarian and republican forms of citizenship – and the active and passive dimensions of each - implicated in the remaking of welfare governance

Such tensions may be gendered and racialised. Those analysing the gender dynamics of activation policies have focused extensively on the changing relationship between paid and unpaid work, formal and informal care (e.g., Knijn and

Kremer, 1997). Pfau Effinger (2005) explores the relationship between work and care in different welfare regimes, contrasting regimes in which women as citizen workers are supported by the state as carer with those in which parents are both citizen worker and carer. The latter may derive from the resilience of traditional family models of the gender division of labour or be linked to the installation of modernised conceptions of care that incorporate parental choice, parental leave and other provisions. But the content of policies, as argued earlier, has to be understood in the context of modes of governing. *Hierarchical governance* is associated here with the continued significance of the law in both responding to and shaping ‘modern’ conceptions of how formal and informal care might be (at least in part) reconciled. It is also, however, associated with the exercise of coercive, rather than enabling, activation strategies. Labour market activation policies based on sanctions rather than opportunities may constrain the extent to which women may achieve the full citizenship status now associated with paid work. In terms of the framework set out in the second section, this implies a tension between the self governance model, where women can be empowered to make active choices on the basis of new opportunities, and a changed hierarchical model based not on rights (to receive support for care) but on the exercise of coercive strategies requiring particular categories of women to take up what often remains poorly paid work on the margins of the labour force in the face of the withdrawal of state benefits.

The other dimensions of the framework are also implicated in mapping the gender dynamics of activation. At stake in the *managerial/markets* model is the interaction between the reduction of ‘traditional’ markets for women’s labour as the reconfiguration or modernisation of welfare states require organisations to externalise, contract out and downsize jobs in which women have typically gained power and prestige – in the welfare professions, in state bureaucracies – and the expansion of the new service economy. Labour market activation for women, then, is activation into a very different labour market than that which provided new opportunities for their mothers or grandmothers in an expanding welfare state. There are also pulls in some countries to attract migrant labour – often female - to take up jobs in the expanding service economy developing to support the fuller labour market participation of women in the host country. This may produce global care chains in which the care responsibilities of migrant women in their ‘home’ countries are filled by others, who then pass on their own care work to yet others in an ever extending chain of family or

community obligations and commercial transactions; chains in which care gaps are likely to open up (Hochschild, 2001). The dynamics of welfare governance can no longer be understood within national frameworks of analysis: state policies in one nation have ripple effects on others, and markets are no respecter of national boundaries. However it would appear that the trans-national market for services is currently more flexible than the trans-national labour market, not least because of the attempts by nation states to constantly reassert and re-inscribe the boundaries of national citizenship and national identity.

The existing literature has tended to bypass the implications of *network* governance for the dynamics of work, care and citizenship. The modernisation of welfare governance has produced a fragmented field of agencies providing care and support across public, private and third sectors. The work of coordinating such provision to ensure joined up care for, say, elderly or disabled people can be considered to be a form of 'work' that transcends the categories of paid work and unpaid care. Women may be supported and enabled to relinquish informal care roles in order to take up more sustained paid work. However the responsibility for managing – but not necessarily delivering - care remains highly gendered, whether for women on the 'front line' of organisations managing a retreating welfare state with increasingly cash limited resources, or in families and communities trying to stitch together a fragmented array of enabling and support services while holding down paid work and plugging the gaps when support services fail or are found to be deficient (Glucksmann, 2005; Newman, 2005).

In terms of *self governance*, the ideals of fully fledged citizenship for women as worker citizens are materialising just as citizenship itself is transmuting into quasi-communitarian notions of responsibility and self reliance. But this is not the only paradox at stake. The notion of responsibility itself has different inflections, encompassing both responsibility to work in order to enable new freedoms and choices associated with the adult worker model of citizenship, and the responsibility for ensuring the development of active communities. In Britain it is traditionally women and the fit elderly who have been the main supporters of community activity, charitable organisations and volunteering work. New norms of active citizenship now ask community members to take responsibility for improving the quality of life in deprived communities, for developing self managing and self help services to fill welfare gaps, for taking an active part in children's schooling, for actively working

towards safer communities by playing roles as guardians of public spaces (volunteering to help keep the local library open, participating in the maintenance of the local park, watching out for truanting children in the local shops, and other ways of enhancing the capacity of communities to govern and manage themselves). 'Active citizenship' then may be in tension with 'activated citizenship', both in terms of the capacity of women to play multiple roles – as empowered workers and as caring and active community members - and in terms of the structural tensions between the modernisation of welfare services and the support for women taking on such roles.

### *Active, activated and activist*

The socio-liberal citizenship of welfare states has so far been complemented – but not replaced – by stronger neo-liberal elements ('market citizenship') and republican elements ('participatory citizenship') (Hvinden, 2006). Both appear to be in tension with activist conceptions of citizenship. Women, as the primary users of many welfare services on behalf of families, neighbours and communities, have traditionally been at the forefront of social movements calling for less bureaucratic, more flexible, more person centred services in which care, rather than bureaucratic rationality or managerial efficiency, are a primary value. Feminism has informed many of the current transformations of welfare states in both explicit ways (new provisions for parental leave, more legislative provisions and regulations on gender equality) and in terms of implicit values (notions of empowerment, collaboration and participation have flowed from the women's and disability social movements into mainstream organisational discourse). The question of how – and where - the activism of the future might emerge in a period where the predominant focus is on the inscription of activated and active citizenship is deeply troubling. The role of trades unions in defending labour markets from 'activated' entrants who might have an impact on wage levels, or of worker control over labour process in 'third sector' or community based projects used to provide opportunities for work experience, is largely missing from the mainstream literature.

But this is not only one dimension of activism. Hvinden (2006) suggests that governments remain reluctant to see marginalised groups as worth investing in and listening to. Such organisations and groups can provide valuable feedback on how

policies are functioning and being experienced, and can serve as intermediaries between governments and citizens. Elsewhere concern has been expressed about the capacity of third sector and community organisations to pursue advocacy and activist roles as they are drawn into new roles as service providers, and about the more general consequences of communitarian politics for the capacity for groups and individuals to engage in adversarial politics (Newman, 2001).

## **Conclusion**

This article has argued that the literature on activation often tends to sweep up a number of rather different concepts into a general – and universalising – trajectory of change (from hierarchy to networks, from bureaucracy to markets, from paternalism to personalisation, and so on). My aim has been to explore some of the different sets of dynamics at stake in the interaction between policy and governance; between different regimes of governance; and between different conceptions of citizenship. In doing so I have been drawing on concepts of governance that imply much more than policy implementation, denoting rather an ‘order of rule’ (Walters, 2004). Rather than assuming the hegemony of a singular order of ‘neo-liberal’ governance, the frameworks developed here may be suggestive for those attempting to understand emerging formations in specific welfare regimes, and the tensions, risks and opportunities – and indeed potential sources of governance failure – within them.

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## Notes

- (1) 'Governmentality' derives from Foucault's (1991) work on governance as 'the conduct of conduct'. It focuses on attempts to shape human behaviour – especially the governance of the self - in order to manage populations more effectively. See Dean, 1999; Marston and McDonald, 2006.