Combating Inequality: The Between- and Within-Group Effects of Unionization on Earnings for People with Different Disabilities

David Pettinicchio & Michelle Lee Maroto

To cite this article: David Pettinicchio & Michelle Lee Maroto (2020): Combating Inequality: The Between- and Within-Group Effects of Unionization on Earnings for People with Different Disabilities, The Sociological Quarterly, DOI: 10.1080/00380253.2020.1820918

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2020.1820918

Published online: 24 Nov 2020.

Submit your article to this journal

Article views: 207

View related articles

View Crossmark data
Combating Inequality: The Between- and Within-Group Effects of Unionization on Earnings for People with Different Disabilities

David Pettinicchio and Michelle Lee Maroto

ABSTRACT
This article addresses whether and how unions help to dismantle workplace inequality experienced by people with different types of disabilities. Using pooled 2009–2018 CPS MORG data of 630,799 respondents covering almost a decade, we find that union membership benefits workers with disabilities more than other groups and workers with the severest disabilities benefit the most from being in unionized work. Because union membership increases disabled workers’ weekly earnings by more than double the increase experienced by people without disabilities, it brings unionized disabled workers closer to overall average earnings with important implications for inequality. Unionized work reduces earnings inequality between disabled and non-disabled workers, but earnings boosts associated with union membership generate more pronounced inequality within groups of workers with disabilities depending on whether individuals have access to unionized employment. We find that gaps among employed unionized and nonunionized disabled workers are significantly larger than those experienced by unionized and nonunionized female, Black, and Hispanic workers.

KEYWORDS
Inequality; stratification; unions; disability; earnings

Introduction
The plight of workers with disabilities presents an acute example of how broader policies and workplace structures maintain and reproduce inequality. Despite protections provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – a law intended to improve labor market outcomes – people with disabilities continue to experience particularly low employment levels (Blanck et al. 2007; Bruyère 2016; Erickson, Lee, and von Schrader 2014; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014a; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). Workers with disabilities earn considerably less than those without disabilities, and disparities tend to be largest for people with more severe disabilities, like those reporting multiple, cognitive, or functional limitations that diminish self-care and independent living (Brucker, Houtenville, and Lauer 2016; Jones 2011; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b, 2015).

Although individual factors like education and training shape labor market outcomes, workplace structures like wage policies governing employer–employee relations tend to have larger and more lasting effects on worker outcomes (Acker 2006; Tomaskovic-Devey...
and Avent-Holt 2019). However, the kinds of inequalities generated by these organizational and institutional dynamics are difficult to observe. Unions are thought to mitigate some of this inequality and improve workers’ economic wellbeing through collective bargaining. Presumably, unions play an important part in improving disabled workers’ earnings as much as they have other marginalized groups of workers (Farber et al. 2018). Yet, disability is underrepresented in research on unions and earnings, reflecting a broader neglect of disability in the sociology of work, inequality, and stratification. 1

Through its purported universalizing effects, unionism challenges workplace inequality and shields workers from negative policy contexts such as right-to-work-laws (Hacker 2006; VanHeuvelen 2018). Unions improve the economic wellbeing of workers directly through union wage premiums and indirectly when employers in nonunionized environments increase wages to preempt unionization of their workforce (Corneo and Lucifora 1997; Lewis 1986). Unions further mitigate labor market inequality by increasing baseline wages among marginalized groups of workers, moving them closer to an overall average wage (Mishel 2012; Schmitt 2008). This makes unionized employment a particularly important mechanism for addressing earnings inequality.

Despite these benefits, not all union workers see similar earnings boosts (Borwser 1985; McCall 2001). Part of this has to do with whether collective bargaining agreements actually emphasize efforts to “democratize” the workplace for all groups (Wright 2009). In the case of African Americans and women, union organizations were not always inclusive (Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000; Kilbourne, England, and Beron 1994; Reid 1998; Western and Rosenfeld 2011). With disability, unions have not necessarily been pro-active in integrating people with different types of disabilities or promoting workplace accommodations within their mandates even when they count disabled workers as members (Lurie 2017).

Consequently, unionization has the potential to reduce between-group inequality – inequality between unionized minority and majority group members, e.g., people with different disabilities and people without disabilities. However, because not all group members have equal access to unions, this often occurs at the expense of within-group inequality – inequality within or among minority groups based on union membership, e.g., unionized and nonunionized workers with disabilities. 2 This means that the more salient locus of inequality after considering the moderating effects of unionization is not between workers with and without disabilities but rather, within disabled worker groups based on whether workers are in unionized employment or not.

This within-group inequality results in part from workers’ unequal access to unions that is shaped by structural, organizational, and individual-level factors. These factors include broad de-unionization trends, how firms and unions define jobs as temporary or part-time precluding union membership, and the way some members of marginalized groups are clustered in industry sectors where union strength is relatively low. This means that while some workers with disabilities benefit from unionized work, disabled workers left out of unionized employment remain among the most marginalized in the labor market.

In light of the potential varying effects of union membership on economic wellbeing, we address the following research questions: Does unionized employment provide additional earnings benefits for people with disabilities? In turn, how does unionized employment influence inequality between workers with and without disabilities? What does this mean for inequality within groups of workers with disabilities who do and do not have access to
union jobs? And, finally, how do these relationships vary across people with different types of disabilities, i.e., cognitive, physical, sensory, and independent living disabilities? These questions are especially salient when embedded in the broader economic and political challenges unions face today.

We use data from one of the largest on-going labor market surveys in the United States, the Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Groups (CPS-MORG), pooled over nine years (2009–2018) with a series of models with statistical interactions to examine the relationship between disability, unionized employment, and earnings. We find that unions directly improve economic wellbeing for all workers, but people with disabilities, especially those with severe disabilities, benefit the most from union membership. Being in unionized work increased weekly earnings for workers with disabilities by 28%, almost twice the increase seen by people without disabilities, and unionized employment was associated with a 35% increase in earnings for people with independent living (IDL) limitations. Thus, unionized work brings disabled workers’ already low earnings closer to a higher overall average reducing inequality between unionized people with and without disabilities. At the same time, because unionized workers with disabilities earn considerably more than nonunionized workers with disabilities, union membership is associated with more pronounced earnings gaps within disability groups.

Our paper highlights the importance of studying mechanisms that both reproduce and mitigate stratification across different status groups (Brady and Leicht 2008; Leicht 2008, 2016; Morris and Western 1999; Reskin 2003). By focusing on disability, we are able to shine light on the power dynamics underlying structures labor unions confront when seeking to mitigate labor market inequalities. Namely, we address how the effects of union membership manifest across status characteristics, on the one hand, and within status groups based on their access to unionized employment, on the other. This latter point should not be lost. Unions benefit members of certain marginalized groups when they have access to union jobs.

**The Mitigating Effect of Unionization on Inequality**

The formalization of the worker-employer contract by the 1935 National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) resulted in increased employment security and upward mobility for many American workers through the 1970s. Unions and collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) have since come to represent one of the primary ways in which groups gain access to important resources, opportunities, and rewards (Reskin 2003). Unions seek to challenge everything from unfair organizational requirements of work to informal interactions among employees to wage setting and supervisory practices that directly impact labor market inequality.

As a “historical guarantor of good wages and benefits” (Hudson 2007: 287), unions require employers to establish set pay for certain jobs, especially in sectors with weak internal consensus about hiring, firing, and promotion – so-called weak internal labor markets (ILMs). They also set rules across occupations and sectors, particularly where covered by the same CBAs, such that wages across firms consistently reduce wage gaps (Blau and Kahn 2000; Elvira and Ishak 2001). Unions help stabilize and bureaucratize decision-making surrounding promotions and wages, especially because they seek to include employees in the decision-making process (Cornfield 1991). This can also mitigate
labor market inequality because codification (see Bridges and Villimez 1991) reduces arbitrariness in decisions affecting earnings.

Because of their inclusive strategies and provision of tangible resources, such as education, apprenticeships, and job training, unions also play a critical role in improving workers’ positions in the labor market (Jeffrey and Cohen 1984; Knoke and Ishio 1994; Knoke and Kalleberg 1994; Rosenfeld, Arne, and Kalleberg 1990). Unions can reduce exposure to nonstandard work arrangements and encourage stable, well-paying jobs (see Dickens and Lang 1992). For instance, Finnigan and Hale (2018) found that union membership in states with higher union density reduced the inconsistent assignment of work hours – a situation common among low-wage service workers – and improved wages among workers regardless of scheduling standards (Alexander and Haley-Lock 2015; Halpin 2015; Henly and Lambert 2014). Indeed, unions historically worked to prevent the rise of low-paying and insecure employment (Kalleberg, Reskin, and Hudson 2000) prevalent among people with disabilities (Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b, 2015). As a result, unions have, in varying degrees, become especially important forces for improving earnings among different status groups.

**The Varying Effects of Unionization between and within Marginalized Groups**

Labor market studies have consistently found disparities in earnings and rates of promotion across race, gender, and disability groups that span occupations and industries (Blau 2012; Blau and Kahn 2017; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014a, 2014b). Although female, Black, and Hispanic workers still tend to earn less than male and non-Hispanic white workers, respectively, these between-group gaps have declined over time (Leicht 2008, 2016). Scholars have attributed this observed decline in earnings disparities between different status groups to various intrapsychic, interpersonal, societal, and organizational mechanisms, including access to unionized employment (Acker 2006; Reskin 2003; Tilly 1998). Primarily instituted through CBAs, unions counter the negative effects of inequality by making power relations more egalitarian (Card, Lemieux, and Craig Riddell 2004; Freeman 1980; Freeman and Medoff 1984).

When low-wage workers, including many from marginalized status groups, gain access to unionized workplaces, they tend to benefit considerably (Gautie and Schmitt 2009). Unions increase earnings for low-wage and low-skilled workers (Applebaum et al. 2003; Card, Lemieux, and Craig Riddell 2004; Farber et al. 2018) while reducing rates of working poverty across states (Brady, Baker, and Finnigan 2013). For instance, Schmitt (2008) found that unionization increased the wages of Hispanics by 18%, and Mishel (2012) reported union premiums of 17.3% and 23.1% for Hispanic and Black men, respectively, compared to 10.9% for whites. Minority women also tend to benefit from higher union premiums compared to white women (Wunnava and Peled 1999). By codifying and standardizing workplace policies around wage setting, promotions, and the provision of job skills training and workplace accommodations, unions are partly responsible for declining wage gaps between men and women (Blau and Kahn 2017), between African American and white workers (Rosenfeld and Kleykamp 2012), and we presume, workers with and without disabilities.

Although a well-developed sociological literature has documented wage inequality between white, Black, and Hispanic workers and male and female workers, scholars like
Leicht (2008, 2016) and Western and Rosenfeld (2011) have pointed to the salience of wage inequality within race and gender groups. Deindustrialization, immigration, and globalization; socioeconomic policies favoring the privileged; and evaluation, promotion, and hiring practices within firms all bear some responsibility for adversely affecting low-income groups. These factors have exacerbated wage inequality within gender and race groups, leaving many women, African Americans, and Hispanics further behind (Morris and Western 1999). Where unionized employment may mitigate these negative effects, members of marginalized groups who are not in union jobs are especially disadvantaged, illustrated by large earnings gaps between union and nonunion workers, regardless of status group.

Unionized employment, therefore, brings equality into the workplace, reducing earnings differences between status groups. However, it also compounds earnings inequality among workers within marginalized groups. Black, Hispanic, female, and disabled workers in union jobs benefit while those in nonunion jobs are, by comparison, largely disadvantaged.

**Expectations about Unionization’s Effects on Earnings for People with Disabilities**

Disability presents a useful case for examining the potential between- and within-group effects of unionized employment on wages. Compared to African Americans and women, people with disabilities are significantly un-or-underemployed. In 2019, only 19% of people with disabilities were employed (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). When people with disabilities do work, they earn on average 26% less than similar workers, but this can range from 10 to 37% less based on the type of disability (Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b, 2015). They are also often isolated into low-paying and precarious jobs, especially those in the food preparation and service industries (Jones 2008; Kaye 2009; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b). These sectors offer nonstandard and nonunion jobs where workers are more likely to experience unmet needs due to a lack of necessary accommodations in turn leading to work interruptions and low earnings (Shuey and Jovic 2013).

Labor market outcomes also vary considerably by type of disability. Individuals with more severe disabilities, which tend to include cognitive, IDL, and multiple disabilities, experience even greater barriers (Brucker, Houtenville, and Lauer 2016; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b, 2015; Pettinicchio and Maroto 2017). Employer misperceptions regarding productivity and performance among people with more severe disabilities and, relatively, the perceived cost and alleged undue hardship of accommodations also shape job assignments (Houtenville and Kalargyrou 2015; Schur et al. 2009). Although unionized employment might undermine irrational job assignments based on these misperceptions, contributing to better working conditions and higher earnings, people with more “prejudiced disabilities” are less likely to be in unionized employment (Baldwin and Johnson 1994; Bowe et al. 2005; McMahon Brian et al. 2005; O’Hara 2004).

Additionally, people with disabilities are sometimes confronted with potentially contradictory norms and values generated by the interplay between employer preferences, the nature of the work, disability type, and workplace accommodations mandated by law. Legislation meant to increase employment and earnings among people with disabilities requires that employers provide reasonable accommodations, such as shift changes, transfers, or reassignments. Reasonable accommodations increase retention and, in the long term, overall earnings (Burkhauser, Butler, and Kim 1995; Chow, Cichocki, and Croft 2014;
Schur et al. 2005; Solovieva, Dowler, and Walls 2011). Unions play an integral role by providing information and training to supervisors who make decisions about accommodations (Bruyère, Erickson, and Sara 2000), as well as support for those who must be absent from work (Baldwin and Johnson 1994; Daly and Bound 1996; Johnson and Ondrich 1990).

Unions can therefore be instrumental in institutionalizing reasonable accommodations but only if they are able to integrate an individual’s right to reasonable accommodations with the principles of collective bargaining. However, laws are relatively ambiguous about how collective agreements should be considered when determining an individual’s right to a reasonable accommodation (Neil and Giampetro-Meyer 1989; Rottenberg 1993; Stalhut 1993). Some have suggested that these policy “tensions” (Roberts and Catherine Lundy 1995) and “irreconcilable conflicts” (O’Melveny 1993; Schoen 1997) generate “competing expectations” for employers in addressing accommodations by employees with disabilities (Balser 2000).

Reaching common ground between collective agreements, policy, and employer practices is complicated because accommodations can vary considerably across disability type and occupational demands. There is no universal accommodation (Lurie 2017). This situation is further problematized by accompanying (mis)perceptions about the alleged unreasonableness associated with different accommodations, leading many people with different disabilities to leave their jobs or the labor market altogether.

Despite research showing significant variation in disability-based labor market outcomes, surprisingly little is known about whether people with disabilities have access to unionized employment and how unionized employment shapes earnings among workers with different types of disabilities. To shed light on the disability union effect, we bring disability into the growing conversation about the effect of unionized employment on earnings gaps and what this means for inequality. In that vein, we include sets of expectations regarding how unions affect inequality when looking at union and nonunion workers between and within status groups, which we address through a series of models with statistical interactions.

With lower earnings than the rest of the population, we expect that people with disabilities will experience greater wage benefits associated with unionized employment than people without disabilities (hypothesis 1). This will result in a positive interaction term between disability and unionized employment within our models. The greater effects of unionized employment on earnings among people with disabilities will bring disabled union workers’ earnings closer to other workers. This will result in smaller between-group differences in earnings by disability status among unionized workers compared to disparities by disability status among nonunionized workers (hypothesis 2). However, workers with disabilities left out of unionized employment will not experience such benefits, resulting in larger within-group disparities. In other words, the differences in earnings based on unionization status will be larger among workers with disabilities than workers without disabilities (hypothesis 3).

Furthermore, we expect the relationship between unionized employment and earnings to vary by disability type. The benefits of unionized work will be greatest among workers with more severe disabilities, specifically disabilities that include cognitive limitations or barriers to independent living. (hypothesis 4). These workers tend to experience the greatest disadvantages within the labor market. This means that the interaction term between IDL disability and unionized employment will be largest in magnitude. As a result, we expect smaller between-group differences when comparing union workers with cognitive and IDL disabilities
to unionized workers without disabilities (hypothesis 5). We also expect larger within-group differences between union and nonunion workers with cognitive and IDL disabilities than between union and nonunion workers with other disabilities (hypothesis 6). Finally, although differences in demographics, education, and occupation likely explain part of these disparities, we expect to find continuing gaps net of these controls.

Data

We analyze pooled Current Population Survey Merged Outgoing Rotation Group (CPS-MORG) data, also referred to as the Earner Study, for 2009–2018. The CPS is a national monthly household survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The CPS uses a household rotation pattern where households are included in the survey for four consecutive months, left out of the survey for eight months, and then re-interviewed for four months. In addition to the monthly CPS questions, employed CPS respondents age 15 and older also answer specific earnings- and work-related questions (including union affiliation) when rotating out of the survey at months 4 and 8. Thus, although other surveys, such as the American Community Survey (ACS) and the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), contain information on disability status, the CPS is one of the few datasets that also contains detailed information on employment and union membership.

We include 2009 as the first year in our analysis because this is when the CPS revised their set of disability-related questions to provide better information regarding different types of potential functional limitations. To ensure that we only observe each individual once, we restrict our sample to respondents exiting in month 4 of their rotation (MISH = 4). We also limit our sample to working-age employed adults between 25 and 61 years of age in order to account for continued schooling and early retirement. After restricting our sample to employed respondents with weekly earnings of 1 USD or greater and at least some work hours in the previous week, we obtained a sample of 630,799 respondents for 2009–2018. Finally, we weight all descriptive statistics and model estimates using survey-provided weights divided by 12 to account for the inclusion of all monthly samples per year (EARNWT/12).

Methods and Measures

We use a series of linear regression models to estimate a respondent’s logged weekly earnings at their current job. We log this variable in order to account for the skewed earnings distribution and to satisfy model assumptions. All monetary amounts are adjusted for inflation and appear in 2018 U.S. dollars. As shown in Table 1, average weekly wage and salary income between 2009 and 2018 amounted to 1,023. USD

Our primary predictor variables relate to the respondent’s membership in unionized employment and their disability status and disability type. Unionized employment is a dichotomous variable, indicating whether the respondent is covered by a union or employment contract in their current job. Disability status includes limitations based on six questions used by the CPS to identify the population with disabilities (Livermore et al. 2011). In addition to disability status, we also include five variables to measure the type of disability. These variables indicate whether the respondent reported a cognitive, physical
Table 1. Descriptive statistics for CPS MORG data, 2009–2018.

| Description                                      | Estimate | SE  |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------|-----|
| Mean weekly earnings (2018 dollars)              | 1,023.06 | (1.00) |
| Union member                                     | 13.36    | (0.05) |
| Any disability                                   | 3.32     | (0.03) |
| Hearing disability                               | 1.09     | (0.01) |
| Vision disability                                | 0.58     | (0.01) |
| Cognitive disability                             | 0.87     | (0.01) |
| Physical disability                              | 1.25     | (0.02) |
| Independent living disability                    | 0.50     | (0.01) |
| Mean number of reported disabilities (number)    | 0.04     | (0.00) |
| Mean age (years)                                 | 42.13    | (0.02) |
| Female                                           | 47.61    | (0.07) |
| Race/ethnicity                                    |          |     |
| Non-Hispanic white                               | 64.19    | (0.07) |
| Non-Hispanic Black                               | 11.52    | (0.05) |
| Hispanic                                         | 16.35    | (0.06) |
| Non-Hispanic other                               | 7.94     | (0.04) |
| Non-citizen                                      | 9.54     | (0.04) |
| Marital status                                   |          |     |
| Currently married                                | 60.67    | (0.07) |
| Never married                                    | 24.04    | (0.06) |
| Formerly married                                 | 15.29    | (0.05) |
| Any children present                             | 52.28    | (0.07) |
| Mean family size (persons)                       | 2.99     | (0.00) |
| Education level                                  |          |     |
| High school diploma                              | 26.88    | (0.06) |
| Less than a high school diploma                  | 7.76     | (0.04) |
| Some college, no degree                          | 16.46    | (0.05) |
| Associate’s degree                               | 11.21    | (0.04) |
| Bachelor’s degree                                | 24.32    | (0.06) |
| Master’s, professional, or doctorate degree      | 13.37    | (0.05) |
| Currently enrolled in school                     | 2.02     | (0.02) |
| Part-time worker                                 | 12.30    | (0.05) |
| Mean hours worked last week (hours)              | 39.92    | (0.02) |
| Government employee                              | 16.58    | (0.05) |

Estimates are adjusted by sample survey weights. All estimates are provided as percentages unless otherwise specified in parentheses next to the variable name.

Current Population Survey, MORG, 2009–2018, working age adults 25–61 years old with employment and earnings, N = 630,799

Cognitive difficulties include those related to learning, remembering, concentrating, or making decisions. Ambulatory difficulties include anything that limits a respondent in one or more basic physical activities. Vision difficulties indicate whether the respondent was blind or had serious difficulty seeing even with corrective lenses. Hearing difficulties indicate whether the respondent was deaf or had serious difficulty hearing. Independent living difficulties (IDL) indicate the presence of any condition lasting six months or more that makes it “difficult or impossible to perform basic activities outside the home alone,” and self-care difficulties include personal needs, such as bathing and dressing. Approximately three percent of the employed working-age population reported one or more disabilities, but these rates varied across type of disability (Table 1).  

The relationship between disability, unionized employment, and earnings is also likely influenced by groups’ varying demographics, education, work hours, and occupation – factors that are associated with both earnings and unionization (Blanck et al. 2007; Jones 2008; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b). For example, men continue to have higher...
unionization rates than women, and unionized Black workers are still disadvantaged compared to unionized white workers (Denice and Rosenfeld 2018; Rosenfeld and Kleykamp 2012). We therefore include a series of demographic and human capital control variables to account for these relationships.

Gender is a categorical variable of male (the referent) or female. We indicate race/ethnicity with a categorical variable measured as Non-Hispanic white (the referent), Non-Hispanic Black, Hispanic, or Non-Hispanic other.\(^1\) We measure age in years and include a quadratic age-squared term to account for its non-linear relationship with earnings. We measure educational attainment with a categorical variable that indicates whether the respondent obtained a high school diploma or equivalent degree (the referent), did not complete high school; attended some college without obtaining a degree; obtained an Associate’s (two-year) degree; completed college with a Bachelor’s (four-year) degree; or obtained a Master’s, professional, or Doctorate degree. We measure marital status with a categorical variable that indicates whether the respondent was currently married (the referent), never married, or formerly married (separated, divorced, or widowed).

In addition to demographics, the labor market position theory of unionization (Rosenfeld and Kleykamp 2012) posits that where status groups are located in the labor market determines their respective access to union jobs and higher earnings. Unionization levels range from less than 5% unionized in the agricultural sector to over 40% unionized in transportation manufacturing (Western and Rosenfeld 2011). Given that prior research shows that people with disabilities are located in sectors with low unionization levels (Jones 2008; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b; Shuey and Jovic 2013), controlling for occupation should account for some of the union and earnings differences between and within groups. We therefore control for detailed occupation, which includes 569 occupational categories.\(^1\) We also include measures to indicate whether the respondent was a government employee and whether they worked part time, as defined by their work status in their current job.

Finally, states vary in their economic, labor market, policy, and union contexts. As Brady, Baker, and Finnigan (2013) note, states are polities, especially given that implementation of social policy has devolved from federal to state governments over time (Zylan and Soule 2000; Brady, Fullerton, and Cross 2010). These sub-national institutional contexts may shape how unions work to alleviate working poverty across states. To better account for differing legal and policy environments, we also include indicator variables for the respondent’s state of residence and for the survey year.

In two sets of linear regression models, we interact disability and disability type with union membership to estimate the varying effects of unionized employment on logged earnings across groups. We present models with and without control variables to broadly address our expectations in hypotheses 1 and 5 with a discussion of unionization rates and earnings by disability. We then discuss predicted percent differences in earnings between union workers with and without any disability and different disabilities to address hypotheses 2 and 5 and within groups of unionized and nonunionized workers with disabilities to address hypotheses 3 and 6.\(^1\)

**Results**

Although union strength is far weaker today than it was decades ago, our results show union membership still improves workers’ earnings, especially among workers with disabilities. We begin with a discussion of rates of unionized employment among workers with
disabilities to provide context for our main findings related to unionization and earnings. We then discuss how the benefits of unionized employment across groups present varying consequences for between- and within-group inequality.

**Unionized Employment among Workers with Disabilities**

Access to unions varies according to disability status. Figure 1 tracks rates of unionized employment among workers with different disabilities from 2009 to 2018. It shows that rates have generally decreased since 2009. Across all disabilities, 16% of workers were unionized in 2009, but only 12% were union members in 2018. Although there was some variation over time, workers with vision and IDL disabilities tended to experience greater declines from about 15% unionized in 2009 to 9% in 2018. Declines were less apparent among workers with physical or hearing disabilities who reported much higher rates of unionized employment with 16% being union members in 2018.

To expand on the descriptive information provided in Figure 1, Table 2 regresses logged weekly earnings on disability status, incorporating a set of interactions between disability status and union membership. Table 3 does the same for disability type. In both tables, Model 1 presents results with no controls, and Model 2 includes all controls.

On average, union membership was associated with a 23% increase in weekly earnings in Table 2 Model 1 without controls, and a 15% increase in weekly earnings after accounting for demographic, human capital, and work variables in Model 2. The positive and significant interaction terms in Table 2 show that unionized employment was more beneficial for workers with disabilities than for workers without disabilities, as indicated in hypothesis 1. Prior to incorporating control variables in Model 1, union membership was associated with a 54% \((e^{0.204-0.230}) - 1\) increase in weekly earnings among workers with disabilities. After incorporating control variables in Model 2, however, union membership still resulted in an earnings boost of 30% for employed people with disabilities. Table 3 then presents results for similar models with disability disaggregated into disability type. It shows that the effects of unionization varied with the type of disability. Workers with cognitive, physical, hearing, and IDL disabilities also received greater benefits from unionized employment, as indicated by the positive and significant interaction terms in Table 3 and supporting hypothesis 4.

This first set of results shows that even though union membership may have positive universalizing effects for all groups, union jobs especially benefitted workers with disabilities, supporting our first and fourth hypotheses. Importantly, these findings held even after accounting for human capital differences, work situation, occupation, and state context. This shows that although unionized employment varies across occupations where occupational segregation can negatively affect workers’ wages, the positive effects of union membership transcend workers’ position in the labor market.

To better illustrate union membership’s varying wage effects across different groups, Figures 2 and 3 present the results of the interaction effects in Tables 2 and 3 as a predicted percent change in weekly earnings associated with unionized employment and disability. Figure 2 highlights between-group differences, and Figure 3 illustrates within-group differences.
Figure 1. Rates of Unionization among Workers with Different Types of Disabilities. Weighted estimates. Error bars refer to 95% confidence intervals. CPS MORG, 2009–2018, working age adults 25–61 years old with employment and earnings, N = 630,799
Table 2. OLS regression results estimating logged weekly earnings by unionization and disability status.

|                                | Model 1                  | Model 2                  |
|                                | $e^{b-1}$ | $b$ | SE  | $e^{b-1}$ | $b$ | SE  |
| Intercept                      | 6.677*** | (.001) |          | 7.316*** | (.010) |          |
| Union member                   | .226     | .204*** | (.003) | .146     | .137*** | (.002) |
| Any disability                | −.290    | −.342*** | (.008) | −.126    | −.134*** | (.005) |
| Female                         | −.167    | −.183*** | (.002) |          |          |          |
| Race/ethnicity (Ref: Non-Hispanic white) |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Non-Hispanic Black            | −.095    | −.100*** | (003) |          |          |          |
| Hispanic                      | −.080    | −.083*** | (.003) |          |          |          |
| Non-Hispanic other            | −.052    | −.053*** | (.003) |          |          |          |
| Age                            | .006     | .006*** | (.000) |          |          |          |
| Age squared                   | .000     | .000*** | (.000) |          |          |          |
| Marital status (Ref: Married) |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Never married                  | −.049    | −.050*** | (.002) |          |          |          |
| Formerly married               | −.028    | −.028*** | (.002) |          |          |          |
| Any children present           | .038     | .037*** | (.002) |          |          |          |
| Family size                    | −.010    | −.010*** | (.001) |          |          |          |
| Education level (Ref: HS diploma) |          |          |          |          |          |          |
| Less than a high school diploma| −.157    | −.171*** | (003) |          |          |          |
| Some college, no degree        | .037     | .036*** | (.002) |          |          |          |
| Associate’s degree             | .056     | .055*** | (.003) |          |          |          |
| Bachelor’s degree              | .286     | .252*** | (.003) |          |          |          |
| Master’s, professional, or doctorate degree | .458 | .377*** | (.003) |          |          |          |
| Part-time worker               | −.532    | −.759*** | (.003) |          |          |          |
| Government employee            | −.021    | −.022*** | (.003) |          |          |          |
| Disability*Union               | .258     | .230*** | (.016) | .114     | .108*** | (.011) |
| R Squared                      | .016     | .501 |          |          |          |          |
| AIC                            | 336,882  | 171,234 |          |          |          |          |

Continuous variables are mean centered. “eb-1” refers to the percent change in weekly earnings associated with the predictor variable. All models control for detailed occupation, state of residence, and survey year. Models also incorporate survey-provided weights.

Current Population Survey, MORL, 2009–2018, working age adults 25–61 years old with employment and earnings, N = 630,799.

*** p <.001, ** p <.01, * p <.05

Unionized Employment and Between-Group Inequality

Figure 2 shows how unionized employment reduced between-group inequality. Because union membership had stronger effects on weekly earnings for people with disabilities, as indicated by the positive interaction term in Table 2, earnings inequality was also smaller among disabled union members (hypothesis 2). Nonunionized workers with disabilities earned approximately 13% less than other nonunionized workers without disabilities, but unionized workers with disabilities earned only 3% less than unionized workers without disabilities, net of other individual characteristics and labor market factors. So, while disabled unionized workers still earned less than non-disabled workers, their earnings were much closer to non-disabled workers’ earnings than nonunionized workers with disabilities were to non-disabled workers’ earnings.

Inequality between workers with most types of disabilities was also smaller among unionized workers, as shown in Figure 2 and posited in hypothesis 4. Because the benefits of unionization were greater for people with cognitive and IDL disabilities, members of these groups also saw smaller gaps in inequality. Unionized workers with cognitive disabilities earned 9% less than other similar unionized workers compared to nonunionized workers who earned 17% less, and unionized workers with IDL disabilities earned 7% less than other workers compared to nonunionized workers who earned 22% less. For workers
with physical, hearing, and visual disabilities, where the smallest disparities already existed, being in unionized work removed earnings disparities entirely, once other factors were controlled for.

Unionized employment clearly reduces between-group inequality but the effects are not the same for all disabilities, as we expected in hypothesis 3. Compared to other disabilities, workers with cognitive or IDL disabilities benefit the most from union membership. This may be because baseline wages and earnings among these groups are already relatively low compared to other historically disadvantaged groups; even the small premium union membership provides do a great deal to improve earnings for disabled workers. Given where people with disabilities are situated in the labor market, collective bargaining agreements, increased transparency, and wage setting structures supported by unions may indeed be helping to combat workplace attitudes and norms that limit opportunities for workers with disabilities. Selection may also be a factor where more productive workers with

### Table 3. OLS regression results estimating logged weekly earnings by unionization and disability type.

|                        | Model 1 |          |          | Model 2 |          |
|------------------------|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|
|                        | \( e^{\beta} \) | \( b \) | SE       | \( e^{\beta} \) | \( b \) | SE |
| Intercept              | 6.676*** | (.001)   | 7.164*** | (.010)   |         |
| Union member           | .227    | **.206*** | (.003)   | .147    | **.137*** | (.002)   |
| Cognitive disability   | −.398   | −.507*** | (.016)   | −.170   | −.186*** | (.012)   |
| Physical disability    | −.168   | −.164*** | (.013)   | −.052   | −.053*** | (.009)   |
| Hearing disability     | −.019   | −.019    | (.012)   | −.024   | −.024**  | (.008)   |
| Vision disability      | −.124   | −.132*** | (.017)   | −.036   | −.037**  | (.012)   |
| IDL disability         | −.351   | −.433*** | (.026)   | −.216   | −.243*** | (.019)   |
| Female                 | −.167   | −.183**  | (.022)   |         |          |
| Race/ethnicity (Ref: Non-Hispanic white) |         |          |          |         |          |
| Non-Hispanic Black     | −.095   | −.100*** | (.003)   |         |          |
| Hispanic               | −.080   | −.083*** | (.003)   |         |          |
| Non-Hispanic other     | −.052   | −.053*** | (.003)   |         |          |
| Age                    | .006    | .006***  | (.000)   |         |          |
| Marital status (Ref: Married) |         |          |          |         |          |
| Never married          | −.048   | −.049*** | (.002)   |         |          |
| Formerly married       | −.027   | −.028*** | (.002)   |         |          |
| Any children present   | .038    | .037***  | (.002)   |         |          |
| Family size            | −.010   | −.010*** | (.001)   |         |          |
| Education level (Ref: HS diploma) |         |          |          |         |          |
| Less than a high school diploma | −.157 | −.171*** | (.003)   |         |          |
| Some college, no degree | .036 | .036***  | (.002)   |         |          |
| Associate’s degree     | .055    | .054***  | (.003)   |         |          |
| Bachelor’s degree      | .286    | .251***  | (.003)   |         |          |
| Master’s, professional, or doctorate degree | .458 | .377***  | (.003)   |         |          |
| Part-time worker       | −.531   | −.756*** | (.003)   |         |          |
| Government employee    | −.021   | −.021*** | (.003)   |         |          |
| Cognitive disability*Union | .295 | .259***  | (.037)   | .100    | .096***  | (.027)   |
| Physical disability*Union | .121 | .114***  | (.027)   | .057    | .055***  | (.019)   |
| Hearing disability*Union | .079 | .076**   | (.023)   | .052    | .051**   | (.018)   |
| Visual disability*Union | .016   | .016     | (.041)   | .010    | .010     | (.028)   |
| IDL disability*Union   | .303    | .267***  | (.060)   | .183    | .168***  | (.041)   |
| R Squared              | .010    | .501     | .171,234 | .335,746 |         |

Continuous variables are mean centered. \( e^{\beta} \) refers to the percent change in weekly earnings associated with the predictor variable. All models control for detailed occupation, state of residence, and survey year. Models also incorporate survey-provided weights.

*Current Population Survey, MORG, 2009–2018, working age adults 25–61 years old with employment and earnings, \( N = 630,799 \).

*** \( p < .001 \), ** \( p < .01 \), * \( p < .05 \)
disabilities could be more likely than other workers with disabilities to gain entrance into unions. Regardless, our findings cast some doubt on the notion that potential conflicts generated by unionism lead to negative labor market outcomes among disabled workers.

**Unionized Employment and Within-Group Inequality**

Because unionized workers with disabilities earned a greater premium than nonunion workers, union membership resulted in widening inequality among people with disabilities. As shown in Figure 3, unionized workers without disabilities earned, on average, 15% more per week. However, unionized workers with disabilities earned 28% more than otherwise similar nonunionized workers. These greater effects mean larger gaps by union membership among workers with disabilities, making access to union jobs an important component of wage inequality.

In line with our fourth hypothesis, disaggregating disability into different types showed that union membership was most beneficial to workers with the severest disabilities, but this resulted in greater within-group inequality among disabled workers, as predicted in
hypothesis 6. For instance, after incorporating control variables, weekly earnings were approximately 36% higher for unionized workers with IDL disabilities and 26% higher for those with cognitive disabilities compared to nonunionized workers with these same disabilities. The results in Figure 3 confirm that union membership greatly benefitted workers with disabilities while increasing inequality within disability groups based on whether workers were unionized.

Our analyzes situate the effects of union membership on earnings within a context of unions’ universalizing positive effects across historically disadvantaged workers. We find that unionized employment reduces inequalities between workers with and without disabilities, acting as a countervailing force on the earnings penalties associated with disability. We also find that the effects of unions vary among disabled workers where unionized employment significantly increases within-group inequality, much like with other groups. Finally, even after accounting for the varying effects of unionized employment, workers with different disabilities continue to experience earnings disparities suggesting that unions only go so far in combatting labor market inequality.
Discussion

Nearly thirty years ago, the influential labor movement scholar Daniel Cornfield asked whether union membership has differing effects across segments of the working population. Our results provide a resounding “yes” to this question. This is especially relevant given declining union membership in the United States and mounting political resistance constraining the ability of unions to protect already marginalized workers. We make three general conclusions based on our analyses. First, due to the positive effects on wages, union membership reduces earnings inequality between workers with and without disabilities while simultaneously increasing inequality within groups of workers with disabilities. The latter is attributable to workers in union jobs earning more than nonunionized workers even within the same occupations. While especially acute, these reflect broader patterns found between union and nonunion Black and white workers and male and female workers. Uneven access to unionized employment means that only some workers from marginalized groups are able to experience the important benefits of unionization.

Second, ours is one of the few studies thus far to test how unionized employment is associated with labor market outcomes for people with different types of disabilities. We found that even in light of de-unionization and potential legal conflicts, the effects of union membership on weekly earnings were greatest for people with more severe disabilities who started out with much lower earnings. Among workers with physical, hearing, or visual disabilities, who experienced smaller wages gaps, union membership completely closed the disability wage gap.

Third, our analyses point to the critical role of unionized employment in combatting inequality and working poverty among marginalized groups in the labor market. The interplay between disability rights and collective bargaining can serve as an opportunity for unions to institutionalize the provision of reasonable accommodations and antidiscrimination norms, especially in sectors where disabled workers experience significant structural, organizational, and attitudinal barriers. Our paper, therefore, represents an additional step in situating disability more centrally within sociological theories of stratification, work, and organized labor.

Despite the contributions of this work, our study does have some limitations. First, because we examine union membership and earnings outcomes, our study includes only employed people with disabilities, which is a small subset of the disabled population. With an employment rate of 19% in 2019, this means we omit the 80% of people with disabilities without employment. However, understanding barriers among employed workers with disabilities can still provide insight into how the labor market functions to exclude those without jobs, including unemployed persons and discouraged workers.

Second, we could not directly test the effects of potential conflicts between collective bargaining agreements and accommodations or how these might vary by the nature of the disability. Nonetheless, if policy challenges indeed diminish the ability of unions to improve economic wellbeing, we would not see as great of a wage benefit for unionized workers with disabilities. In turn, between-group differences with disability would be larger because people with disabilities would not be experiencing the same positive effects of unionization. Conversely, within-group differences would be smaller because we would see less of an earnings difference between union and nonunion workers with disabilities.
Qualitative and quantitative studies combining cross-sectional or longitudinal data with state-level legislation would help illustrate the connections between collective bargaining and disability rights policies in shaping earnings. In the case of disability, much of the relationship between unions and a firm’s ability to negotiate accommodations depends on the content of CBAs (see Balser 2007). It is not always clear if CBAs promote institutional discrimination by supporting corporate culture and certain managerial practices (Schur et al. 2005), or whether unions are simply left out of any decision-making related to labor allocation. This requires more specific and detailed accounts about whether and how unions proactively promote equality (see Voss and Sherman 2000; Lurie 2017).

Third, although incorporating variables for disability type allowed us to assess how the relationship between disability, union membership, and earnings varied with the severity of a disability, we were still limited by the available data. Other measures, such as the number of disabilities and the combination of different types of disabilities, can also help to assess disability severity. Results from supplemental models (provided within the online appendix) show that persons with more severe disabilities, measured as the number of disabilities and the presence of a concurrent IDL disability, experienced the largest earnings declines but the greatest benefits from unionization, supporting the results presented in the paper. Additional studies examining other measures of disability, as well as those related to health status, would be helpful to further elaborate on these findings.

Fourth, as with most cross-sectional studies, we were unable to fully control for selection into employment, unionized jobs, and occupations within our models. We include a variety of controls for education, work hours, and prior history; however, it is still possible that better and more productive workers might end up in unions, thereby increasing wages. Nevertheless, our controls for detailed occupation further help to address issues of selection, allowing us to compare union and nonunion workers in the same occupations, which require similar skill sets.

Using longitudinal data to assess within-person variation in earnings before and after entering a union would address issues of selection while also controlling for unobserved individual-level factors. However, few longitudinal datasets include large enough samples of employed persons with disabilities to analyze the effects of unionization over longer periods of time. Long-term longitudinal analyses could also provide a more direct understanding about how union decline and rising economic inequality differentially hurts already marginalized workers as well as the dynamics of between-and-within group disparities (see Blanchflower and Bryson 2003; Bound and Dresser 1999; Crutchfield 2014; Hudson 2007; Jacobs and Myers 2014; Kollmeyer and Peters 2019; Rosenfeld and Kleykamp 2012). Although CPS data do allow for analyses of certain household changes over a period of 16 months (Drew et al. 2014), this is often too short a period to examine how changes in CBAs, specific union efforts, and, importantly, changes in disability status, shape outcomes in the long-term.

Finally, although we control for gender and race and compare the effects of union membership on disability earnings to those same effects among Black and white workers and male and female workers (see online appendix), this line of inquiry would benefit from a more formal intersectional analysis. Recent work points to how disability intersects with other status characteristics like race, gender, and class in shaping employment, earnings and economic security (see Maroto, Pettinicchio, and Patterson 2019; Pettinicchio and Maroto 2017). For instance, women with disabilities may be twice penalized in the labor market,
placing them in “double jeopardy” (Doren and Benz 2001; O’Hara 2004). More theoretically motivated and empirically rigorous work is needed to uncover the ways in which the negative effects of multiple intersecting disadvantages is mitigated by unions and under what conditions.

**Conclusion**

The relationship between economic inequality and unions depends a great deal on how different groups gain access to unionized work in a context of de-unionization. Even though rates of unionization remain low for workers today, union membership increases wages for all unionized workers. Unions’ purported universalizing effects have reduced differences in earnings between people with and without disabilities, between men and women, and between white, Black, and Hispanic workers. But, gaps based on union/nonunion status within race, gender, and disability groups have widened given the stronger effects of union membership on earnings within these historically marginalized groups. Consequently, more earnings inequality exists within groups than between groups today.

As the “chief effort” to reduce social inequalities, unions counteract inequalities that work norms and cultures help maintain and often exacerbate (Cornfield 1991). They improve wages and job security, advocate for educational and training programs, limit precarious employment, and increase worker say within organizations. When unions engage with precarious workers and those in nonstandard work arrangements (arrangements that often contain a disproportionate share of individuals from historically marginalized groups), they significantly improve those workers’ earnings (Gomez and Lamb 2019).

Unions are especially important for workers from vulnerable groups who often lack voice in the labor market (Freeman and Medoff 1984). Yet, their efforts are filtered through specific institutional arrangements, including policies working against them (Kollmeyer and Peters 2019). Variability in unions’ positive influences must be understood against a backdrop of political efforts threatening organized labor (Bound and Dresser 1999; Blanchflower 2007; Freeman 1993; Milkmann 2007; Mishel 2012; Western and Rosenfeld 2011; Rosenfeld and Kleykamp 2012; Telles and Ortiz 2008). With the recent Supreme Court ruling in *Janus vs. AFSCME*, which limited unions’ abilities to collect fees from nonunion members, it is likely that union strength will continue to decline, particularly within the public sector, compounding already rising inequality. But, even with their declining economic and political influence, our research shows that unions are substantially beneficial for workers with disabilities and their positive efforts would be even more so if not for the current climate of de-unionization.

The debate about how and when unionized employment helps people with disabilities continues as legislative, judicial, labor market, and union contexts remain in flux (Pettinicchio 2017, 2019). Labor market trends raise questions about whether and how unions combat inequality given an undesirable political and legislative climate. Limited work in the area points to situations where unions have not been proactive in promoting rights to reasonable accommodations, treating flexible scheduling and working from home as undermining the collective interests of other workers (Balser 2002, 2007; O’Hara 2004). It may very well be, as Lurie (2017) suggested, that unions increase job security for all employees indirectly, but they may not be advocating for reasonable job accommodations if these are seen as challenging collective agreements.
Although we do not deny the existence of such situations and experiences, our findings suggest that accommodations are not inherently problematic for unionized workers with disabilities. Unions can, as Campolieti (2005) found, provide accommodations to disabled employees so that they remain in their jobs thereby reducing the duration of worker compensation claims. They may even help turn low-paying, nonstandard jobs, prevalent among disabled workers, into pathways to full-time stable work (Schur 2002, 2003). In other words, collective agreements can be used as tools to mitigate conflicts rather than treated as challenges to disability rights legislation (O’Melveny 1993).

Our findings and discussion raise broader concerns about how the legitimacy and visibility of certain inequalities might influence outcomes among minority groups. Inequalities that are seen as legitimate (or not seen at all) are more likely to persist (Acker 2006). Most employers and workers view gender and race inequality as illegitimate – as having no reasonable basis (Gotter, Hermsen, and Vanneman 2011; Marsden 2012). In the case of disability, however, unequal outcomes are still predominately viewed as legitimate. Many assume that people with disabilities are simply unable to work and that a disability will limit productivity, despite data that directly contradict these sentiments. This is compounded by a lack of awareness of the barriers that people with disabilities face within the labor market, despite antidiscrimination and equal rights legislation meant to rectify these wrongs. Given these broader concerns, it is important to ask how unions interact with employers to change widespread negative attitudes that continue to act as barriers to employment and promote the kinds of mechanisms outlined by legislation (like reasonable accommodations) to help people with disabilities retain gainful employment.

Notes

1. We incorporate both person-first language (people with disabilities) and identity-first language (disabled people) out of respect for varying language preferences in disability communities.
2. Throughout the paper, we use the terms, “between-group” and “within-group” inequality. Between-group inequality refers to differences between status groups, particularly disability. We use this term when discussing earnings disparities between people with and without disabilities. Within-group inequality refers to differences within status groups, in this case within or among people with disabilities. We use this term when discussing earnings differences within groups of people with different disabilities in relation to whether they have access to unions.
3. Typically, well-developed ILMs are more common in occupations that require a specific or technological skill set, are core rather than peripheral occupations, and in larger firms with personnel departments (Jeffrey and Cohen 1984) – jobs in which members of historically disadvantaged groups tend to be underrepresented. The public sector is generally thought to have strong ILMs, as do professional/technical and craft occupations, while tourism/hospitality and management and sales have weak internal consensus (Cullen 1978; Bridges and Villemez 1994; Tolbert 1996).
4. However, Rosenfeld and Kleykamp (2012) also show that white and African American workers received similar benefits from unionization.
5. The ADA’s precursor, the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, made no mention of collective bargaining or seniority systems.
6. Courts have for the most part ruled that any reasonable accommodation request seen as violating a collective agreement is an “undue hardship” (Lee 2003; see also Daly-Rooney 1993 on the 1984 Daubert v. USPS case). In turn, the courts in some cases have used collective bargaining agreements to limit the options regarding accommodations (Daly-Rooney 1993),
pitting the interests of disabled workers against the interests of workers without disabilities (O’Melveny 1993).
7. Prior to 2009, the CPS included questions related to only work-limiting disabilities (McMenamin and Hipple 2014).
8. Due to the small percentage of individuals reporting an IDL or self-care disability and the overlap in reporting of these disabilities, we combine independent living and self-care into a single measure.
9. We also include a series of supplemental models with additional measures for the number of reported disabilities and the severity of the disability within the online appendix.
10. Due to the small sample sizes of other racial and ethnic categories, we combined these groups into a non-Hispanic other category. This category also includes individuals who identified with multiple racial groups.
11. Our large sample size permitted the incorporation of more detailed occupational categories beyond the more commonly used major categories. Detailed occupation codes are available on the IPUMS CPS website: https://cps.ipums.org/cps/codes/occ_20112019_codes.shtml.
12. In order to situate the effects of unionization on earnings for people with disabilities within a broader context, we also interact the respondent’s reported gender and race/ethnicity with unionized employment in the online appendix.
13. Predicted values and standard errors are also presented in the online appendix.
14. Effects are presented as percent changes in weekly earnings and calculated using the formula \((e^b - 1)*100\).

**Disclosure Statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

**Notes on contributors**

David Pettinicchio is an Associate Professor of Sociology and affiliated faculty member in the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto. His research interests lie at the intersection of political sociology and the study of inequality. His recent book, Politics of Empowerment, examines the back-and-forth dynamics between political mobilization and policy-making. He is currently studying how policy responses to COVID-19 have shaped public perceptions about government and policy, as well as the ways in which people with disabilities and chronic health conditions are economically impacted by the pandemic.

Michelle Maroto is an Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Alberta. Her research interests include social stratification, gender and family, race and ethnicity, labor and credit markets, and disability studies. Her recent projects address the many dimensions of wealth inequality, the role of household structure in determining economic security, and labor market outcomes for people with different types of disabilities.

**ORCID**

Michelle Lee Maroto  
http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7506-0046

**References**

Acker, Joan. 2006. “Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations.” Gender & Society 20 (4):441–64. doi: 10.1177/0891243206289499.
Alexander, Charlotte and Anna Haley-lock. 2015. “Underwork, Work-Hour Insecurity, and A New Approach to Wage and Hour Regulation.” Industrial Relations 54 (4):695–716.

Applebaum, Eileen, Peter Berg, Ann Frost, and Gil Preuss. 2003. “The Effects of Work Restructuring on Low-Wage, Low-Skilled Workers in U.S. Hospitals.” Pp. 77–117 in Low Wage America, edited by Eileen Applebaum, Annette Bernhardt, and Richard, J. Murnane. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Baldwin, Marjorie and William G. Johnson. 1994. “Labor Market Discrimination against Men with Disabilities.” The Journal of Human Resources 29 (1):1–19.

Balser, Deborah B. 2000. “Perceptions of On-the-job Discrimination and Employees with Disabilities.” Employee Responsibilities and Rights Journal 12 (4):179–97.

Balser, Deborah B. 2002. “Agency in Organization Inequality: Organizational Behavior and Individual Perceptions of Discrimination.” Work and Occupations 29 (2):137–65.

Balser, Deborah B. 2007. “Predictors of Workplace Accommodations for Employees with Mobility-related Disabilities.” Administration and Society 39 (5):656–83.

Blanchflower, David G. and Alex Bryson. 2003. “Changes over Time in Union Relative Wage Effects in the UK and the US Revisited.” Pp. 197–245 in International Handbook of Trade Unions, edited by John. T. Addison and Claus Schnabel. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar,

Blanchflower, David G. 2007. “A Cross-country Study of Union Membership.” British Journal of Industrial Relations 45 (1):1–28.

Blanc, Peter, William N. Meera Adya, Deepti Samant Myhill, and Pei-Chun Chen. 2007. “Employment of People with Disabilities: Twenty-five Years Back and Ahead.” Law and Inequality 25 (2):323–54.

Blau, Francine D. 2012. Gender, Inequality and Wages. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Blau, Francine D. and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2000. “Gender Differences in Pay.” Journal of Economic Perspectives 14 (4):75–99.

Blau, Francine D. and Lawrence M. Kahn. 2017. “The Gender Wage Gap: Extent, Trends, and Explanations.” Journal of Economic Literature 55 (3):789–865.

Bound, John and Laura Dresser. 1999. “Losing Ground: The Erosion of the Relative Earnings of African American Women during the 1980s.” Pp. 61–104 in Latinas and African American Women at Work: Race, Gender, and Economic Inequality, edited by Irene Browne. New York: Russell Sage,

Bowe, Frank G., Brian T. McMahon, Tai Chang, and Joanna Louvi. 2005. “Workplace Discrimination, Deafness and Hearing Impairment: The National EEOC ADA Research Project.” Work 25 (1):19–23.

Bowser, Benjamin P. 1985. “Race Relations in the 1980s: The Case of the United States.” Journal of Black Studies 15 (3):307–24.

Brady, David, Andrew Fullerton, and Jennifer Moren Cross. 2010. “More than Just Nickels and Dimes: A Cross-National Analysis of Working Poverty in 18 Affluent Democracies.” Social Problems 57 (4):559–85.

Brady, David and Kevin T. Leicht. 2008. “Party to Inequality: Right Party Power and Income Inequality in Affluent Western Democracies.” Research in Social Stratification and Mobility 26 (1):77–106.

Brady, David, Regina S. Baker, and Ryan Finnigan. 2013. “When Unionization Disappears: State-level Unionization and Working Poverty in the United States.” American Sociological Review 78 (5):872–96.

Bridges, William P. and Wayne Villenez. 1991. “Employment Relations and the Labor Market: Integrating Institutional and Market Perspectives.” American Sociological Review 56 (6):748–64.

Bridges, William P. and Wayne J. Villemey. 1994. The Employment Relationship: Causes and Consequences of Modern Personnel Administration. New York: Plenum Press

Brucker, Debra L., Andrew J. Houtenville, and Eric A. Lauer. 2016. “Using Sensory, Functional, and Activity Limitation Data to Estimate Employment Outcomes for Working-Age Persons with Disabilities in the United States.” Journal of Disability Policy Studies 27 (3):131–37.

Bruyère, Susanne M, ed 2016. Disability and Employer Practices: Research across Disciplines. Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press.
Bruyère, Susanne M., William Erickson, and VanLooy Sara. 2000. “HR’s Role in Managing Disability in the Workplace.” Employment Relations Today (Autumn) 27 (3):47–66.

Burkhauser, Richard, J. Butler, and Yang Woo Kim. 1995. “The Importance of Employer Accommodation on the Job Duration of Workers with Disabilities: A Hazard Model Approach.” Labour Economics 2 (2):109–30.

Campolieti, Michele. 2005. “How accommodations affect the duration of post-injury employment spells.” Journal of Labor Research 26:485–499.

Card, David, Thomas Lemieux, and W. Craig Riddell. 2004. “Unions and Wage Inequality.” Journal of Labor Research 25 (4):519–59.

Chow, Clifton M., Benjamin Cichocki, and Bevin Croft. 2014. “The Impact of Job Accommodations on Employment Outcomes among Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities.” Psychiatric Services 65 (9):1126–32.

Corneo, Giacomo and Claudio Lucifora. 1997. “Wage Formation under Union Threat Effects: Theory and Empirical Evidence.” Labour Economics 4 (3):265–92.

Cornfield, Daniel. 1991. “The U.S. Labor Movement: Its Development and Impact on Social Inequality and Politics.” Annual Review of Sociology 17 (1):27–49.

Cotter, David, Joan M. Hermsen, and Reeve Vanneman. 2011. “The End of the Gender Revolution? Gender Role Attitudes from 1977 to 2008.” American Journal of Sociology 117 (1):259–89.

Crutchfield, Robert D. 2014. Get a Job: Labor Markets, Economic Opportunity and Crime. New York: NYU Press.

Cullen, J. B. 1978. The Structure of Professionalism. New York: Petrocelli Books.

Daly, Mary C. and John Bound. 1996. “Worker Adaptation and Employer Accommodation following the Onset of a Health Impairment.” The Journals of Gerontology Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences 51 (2):S53–S60.

Daly-Rooney, Rose. 1993. “Reconciling Conflicts between the Americas with Disabilities Act and the National Labor Relations Act to Accommodate People with Disabilities.” De Paul Business Law Journal 6 (2):387–416.

Denice, Patrick and Jake Rosenfeld. 2018. “Unions and Nonunion Pay in the United States, 1977–2015.” Sociological Science 5(23): 541–561.

Dickens, William T. and Kevin Lang. 1992. “Labor Market Segmentation Theory: Reconsidering the Evidence.” NBER Working Papers.

Doren, Bonnie and Miachel Benz. 2001. “Gender Equity Issues in the Vocational and Transition Services and Employment Outcomes Experienced by Young Women with Disabilities.” in Double Jeopardy: Addressing Gender Equity in Special Education, edited by. H. Rousoo and M.L. Wehmeyer (pp. 289–312). State University of New York Press.

Drew, Rivera, A. Julia, Sarah Flood, and John Robert Warren. 2014. “Making Full Use of the Longitudinal Design of the Current Population Survey: Methods for Linking Records across 16 Months.” Journal of Economic and Social Measurement 39 (3):121–44.

Elvira, Marta M. and Saporta Ishak. 2001. “How Does Collective Bargaining Affect the Gender Pay Gap?” Work and Occupations 28 (4):469–90.

Erickson, W., C. Lee, and S. von Schrader. 2014. 2012 Disability Status Report: United States. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Yang Tan Institute (YTI).

Farber, Henry S., Daniel Herbst, Ilyana Kuziemko, and Suresh Naidu. 2018. “Unions and Inequality over the Twentieth Century: New Evidence from Survey Data.” Working paper number 24587. National Bureau of Economic Research.

Finnigan, Ryan and Jo Mhairi Hale. 2018. “Working 9 to 5? Union Membership and Work Hours and Schedules.” Social Forces 96 (4):1541–68.

Freeman, Richard B. 1993. “Labor Markets and Institutions in Economic Development.” The American Economic Review 83 (2):403–08.

Freeman, Richard B. and James L. Medoff. 1984. What Do Unions Do? New York: Basic Books.

Freeman, Richard B. 1980. “Unionism and the Dispersion of Wages.” ILR Review 34(1):3–23.

Gautie, Jerome and John Schmitt. 2009. Low-Wage Work in the Wealthy World. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
Gomez, Rafael and Danielle Lamb. 2019. “Unions and Non-Standard Work: Union Representation and Wage Premiums across Non-Standard Work Arrangements in Canada, 1997–2014.” *ILR Review* 72 (4):1009–35.

Halpin, Brian. 2015. "Subject to Change Without Notice: Mock Schedules and Flexible Employment in the United States." *Social Problems* 62:419–38.

Henly, Julia R. and Susan J. Lambert. 2014. “Unpredictable Work Timing in Retail Jobs: Implications for Employee Work–Life Conflict.” *ILR Review* 67(3): 986–1016.

Houtenville, Andrew and Valentini Kalargyrou. 2015. "Employers’ Perspectives about Employing People with Disabilities: A Comparative Study across Industries." *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly* 56 (2):168–79.

Hudson, Kenneth. 2007. “The New Labor Market Segmentation: Labor Market Dualism in the New Economy.” *Social Science Research* 36 (1):286–312.

Jacobs, David and Lindsey Myers. 2014. "Union Strength, Neoliberalism, and Inequality: Contingent Political Analyses of US Income Differences since 1950.” *American Sociological Review* 79 (4):752–74.

Jeffrey, Pfeffer and Yinon Cohen. 1984. "Determinants of Internal Labor Markets in Organizations." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 29 (4):550–72.

Johnson, William G. and Jan Ondrich. 1990. "The Duration of Post-injury Absences from Work." *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 72 (4):578–86.

Jones, Melanie K. 2008. "Disability and the Labour Market: A Review of the Empirical Evidence." *Journal of Economic Studies* 35 (5):405–24.

Jones, Melanie K. 2011. "Disability, Employment and Earnings: An Examination of Heterogeneity." *Applied Economics* 43 (8):1001–17.

Kalleberg, Arne L., Barbara Reskin, and Kenneth Hudson. 2000. "Bad Jobs in America: Standard and Nonstandard Employment Relations and Job Quality in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 65 (2):256–78.

Kaye, Stephen H. 2009. "Stuck at the Bottom Rung: Occupational Characteristics of Workers with Disabilities." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 19 (2):115–28.

Kilbourne, Barbara S., Paula England, and Kurt Beron. 1994. "Effects of Individual, Occupational, and Industrial Characteristics on Earnings: Intersections of Race and Gender." *Social Forces* 72 (4):1149–76.

Knobe, David and Arne. L. Kalleberg. 1994. "Job Training in US Organizations." *American Sociological Review* 59 (4):537–46.

Knobe, David and Yoshito Ishio. 1994. "Occupational Training in Organizations: Job Ladders and Unions." *American Behavioral Scientist* 37 (7):992–1016.

Kollmeyer, Christopher and John Peters. 2019. "Financialization and the Decline of Organized Labor: A Study of 18 Advanced Capitalist Countries, 1970-2012." *Social Forces* 98 (1):1–30.

Lee, Barbara A. 2003. "A Decade of the Americans with Disabilities Act: Judicial Outcomes and Unresolved Problems." *Industrial Relations* 42 (1):11–30.

Leicht, Kevin T. 2008. "Broken down by Race and Gender? Sociological Explanations of New Sources of Earnings Inequality.” *Annual Review of Sociology* 38:237–55.

Leicht, Kevin T. 2016. "Getting Serious about Inequality.” *The Sociological Quarterly* 57 (2):211–31.

Lewis, H. Gregg. 1986. “Union Relative Wage Effects: A Survey.” Pp. 1139–81 in *Handbook of Labor Economics*, edited by Orley C. Ashenfelter and Richard Layard. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Livermore, Gina, Denise Whalen, Sarah Prenowitz, Raina Aggarwal, and Maura Bardos. 2011. *Disability Data in National Surveys*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation Office of Disability, Aging and Long-Term Care Policy, Washington, DC.

Lurie, Lilach. 2017. "Do Unions Promote Rights for People with Disabilities.” *Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality* 5(2): 477–497.

Maroto, Michelle L. and David Pettinicchio. 2014a. “The Limitations of Disability Antidiscrimination Legislation: Policymaking and the Economic Well-being of People with Disabilities.” *Law and Policy* 36 (4):370–407.
Maroto, Michelle L. and David Pettinicchio. 2015. “Twenty-five Years after the ADA: Situating Disability in America’s System of Stratification.” Disability Studies Quarterly 35 (3):1–34.

Maroto, Michelle and David Pettinicchio. 2014b. “Disability, Structural Inequality, and Work: The Influence of Occupational Segregation on Earnings for People with Different Disabilities.” Research in Social Stratification and Mobility 38:76–92.

Maroto, Michelle, David Pettinicchio, and Andrew C. Patterson. 2019. “Hierarchies of Categorical Disadvantage: Incorporating Disability into Intersectional Analyses of Economic Insecurity.” Gender & Society 33 (1):64–93.

Marsden, Peter V., Ed. 2012. Social Trends in American Life: Findings from the General Social Survey since 1972. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

McCall, Leslie. 2001. Complex Inequality: Gender, Class, and Race in the New Economy. New York: Routledge.

McMahon Brian, T., Steven L. West, M. Mehd Mansouri, and Lisa Belongia. 2005. “Workplace Discrimination and Diabetes: The EEOC Americans with Disabilities Act Research Project 9.” Work 25 (1):9–18.

McMenamin, Terence M. and Steven F. Hipple. 2014. “The Development of Questions on Disability for the Current Population Survey.” Monthly Labor Review. doi:10.21916/mlr.2014.15.

Milkman, R. 2007. “Two worlds of unionism: Women and the new labor movement.” In The sex of class: Women transforming American labor, ed. D. S. Cobble, 63–80. Ithaca, NY: ILR Press

Mishel, Larry. 2012. Unions, Inequality, and Faltering Middle-Class Wages. Issue Brief 342, Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute.

Morris, Martina and Bruce Western. 1999. “Inequality in Earnings at the Close of the Twentieth Century.” Annual Review of Sociology 25:623–57.

Neil, Browne, M. and Andrea M. Giampetro-Meyer. 1989. “Overriding Importance of Market Characteristics for the Selection of Pay Equity Strategies: The Relative Efficacy of Collective Bargaining and Litigation in the Nursing Industry.” Industrial Relations Law Journal 11 (3):414–46.

O’Hara, Brett. 2004. “Twice Penalized: Employment Discrimination against Women with Disabilities.” Journal of Disability Policy Studies 15 (1):27–34.

O’Melveny, Mary K. 1993. “The Americans with Disabilities Act and Collective Bargaining Agreements: Reasonable Accommodations or Irreconcilable Conflicts?” Kentucky Law Journal 82:219–48.

Pettinicchio, David. 2017. “Elites, Policy and Social Movements.” Pp. 155–90 in Research in Political Sociology, edited by Barbara Wejnert and Paolo Parigi. Bingley, U.K.: Emerald.

Pettinicchio, David and Michelle Maroto. 2017. “Employment Outcomes among Men and Women with Disabilities: How the Intersection of Gender and Disability Status Shapes Labor Market Inequality.” Pp. 3–33 in Factors in Studying Employment for Persons with Disabilities Vol 10, edited by Barbara Altman and Sharon Barnartt. Bingley, U.K.: Emerald.

Pettinicchio, David. 2019. Politics of Empowerment: Disability Rights and the Cycle of American Policy Reform. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Reid, Lori L. 1998. “Devaluing Women and Minorities: The Effects of Race/ethnic and Sex Composition of Occupations on Wage Levels.” Work and Occupations 25 (4):311–36.

Reskin, Barbara. 2003. “Including Mechanisms in Our Models of Ascriptive Inequality: 2002 Presidential Address.” American Sociological Review 68 (1):1–21.

Roberts, Karen and M. Catherine Lundy. 1995. “The ADA and the NRLA: Resolving Accommodation Disputes in Unionized Workplaces.” Negotiation Journal 11 (1):29–43.

Rosenfeld, Jake and Meredith Kleykamp. 2012. “Organized Labor and Racial Wage Inequality in the United States.” American Journal of Sociology 117 (5):1460–502.

Rosenfeld, Rachel A., L. Arne, and A. Kalleberg. 1990. “A Cross-national Comparison of the Gender Gap in Income.” American Journal of Sociology 96 (1):69–106.

Rottenberg, Erika. F. 1993. “The Americans with Disabilities Act: Erosion of Collective Rights,” Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law 14 (1):179–89.

Schmitt, John. 2008. Unions and Upward Mobility for Latino Workers. Washington, DC: Center for Economic and Policy Research.
Schoen, Estella J. 1997. "Does the ADA Make Exceptions in a Unionized Workplace—The Conflict between the Reassignment Provision of the ADA and Collectively Bargained Seniority Systems." *Minnesota Law Review* 82 (5):1391–424.

Schur, Lisa A. 2002. "Dead End Jobs or a Path to Economic Wellbeing? the Consequences of Non-Standard Work among People with Disabilities." *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 20 (6):601–20.

Schur, Lisa A. 2003. "Barriers or Opportunities? the Causes of Contingent and Part-time Work among People with Disabilities." *Industrial Relations* 42 (2):589–622.

Schur, Lisa, Douglas Kruse, Joseph Blasi, and Peter Blanck. 2005. "Corporate Culture and the Employment of Persons with Disabilities." *Behavioral Sciences and the Law* 23 (1):3–20.

Schur, Lisa, Douglas Kruse, Joseph Blasi, and Peter Blanck. 2009. "Is Disability Disabling in All Workplaces? Workplace Disparities and Corporate Culture." *Industrial Relations* 48 (3):381–410.

Shuey, Kim M. and Emily Jovic. 2013. "Disability Accommodation in Nonstandard and Precarious Employment Arrangements." *Work and Occupations* 40 (2):174–205.

Solovieva, Tatiana I., Denetta L. Dowler, and Richard T. Walls. 2011. "Employer Benefits from Making Workplace Accommodations." *Disability and Health Journal* 4 (1):39–45.

Stalhut, Eric H. J. 1993. "Playing the Trump Card: May an Employer Refuse to Reasonably Accommodate under the ADA by Claiming a Collective Bargaining Obligation?" *The Labor Lawyer* 9(1): 71–96.

Telles, Edward E. and Vilma Ortiz. 2008. *Generations of Exclusion: Mexican Americans, Assimilation, and Race*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

Tilly, Charles. 1998. *Durable Inequality*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Tolbert, Pamela S. 1996. "Occupations, Organizations, and Boundaryless Careers." *ILR Collection*. Cornell University.

Tomaskovic-Devey, Donald and Dustin Avent-Holt. 2019. *Relational Inequalities: An Organizational Approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2020. "Persons with a Disability: Labor Force Characteristics – 2019." U.S. Department of Labor News Release, USDL-20-0339. February 26, 2020. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf.

VanHeuvelen, Tom. 2018. "Moral Economies or Hidden Talents? A Longitudinal Analysis of Union Decline and Wage Inequality, 1973–2015," *Social Forces* 97 (2):495–530.

Voss, Kim and Rachel Sherman. 2000. "Breaking the Iron Law of Oligarchy: Union Revitalization in the American Labor Movement." *American Journal of Sociology* 106 (2):303–49.

Western, Bruce and Jake Rosenfeld. 2011. "Unions, Norms, and the Rise in U.S. Wage Inequality." *American Sociological Review* 76 (4):513–37.

Wright, Erik Olin. 2009. "Understanding Class: Towards an Integrated Analytical Approach." *New Left Review* 60 (Nov–Dec):101–16.

Wunnava, Phanindra V. and Noga O. Peled. 1999. "Union Wage Premiums by Gender and Race: Evidence from PSID 1980–1992." *Journal of Labor Research* 20 (3):415–23.

Zylan, Yvonne and Sarah A. Soule. 2000. "Ending Welfare As We Know It (Again): Welfare State Retrenchment, 1989–1995." *Social Forces* 79(2): 623–52.
On the Cross Road of Polity, Political Elites and Mobilization

Elites, Policy, and Social Movements
David Pettinicchio

Article information:
To cite this document: David Pettinicchio. "Elites, Policy, and Social Movements" In On the Cross Road of Polity, Political Elites and Mobilization. Published online: 14 Dec 2016: 155-190.
Permanent link to this document: http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/S0895-9935201600000024006

Downloaded on: 17 December 2016, At: 06:24 (PT)
References: this document contains references to 0 other documents.
To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:408616 []

For Authors
If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.
ELITES, POLICY, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

David Pettinicchio

ABSTRACT

Given the growing interest in social movements as policy agenda setters, this paper investigates the contexts within which movement groups and actors work with political elites to promote their common goals for policy change. In asking how and why so-called outsiders gain access to elites and to the policymaking process, I address several contemporary theoretical and empirical concerns associated with policy change as a social movement goal. I examine the claim that movements use a multi-pronged, long-term strategy by working with and targeting policymakers and political institutions on the one hand, while shaping public preferences — hearts and minds — on the other; that these efforts are not mutually exclusive. In addition, I look at how social movement organizations and actors are critical in expanding issue conflict outside narrow policy networks, often encouraged to do so by political elites with similar policy objectives. And, I discuss actors’ mobility in transitioning from institutional activists to movement and organizational leaders, and even to protesters, and vice versa. The interchangeability of roles among actors promoting social change in strategic action fields points to the
In a recent exchange with BlackLivesMatter activists, Democratic presidential frontrunner, Hillary Clinton, explained her beliefs about social and political change to activist Julius Jones:

I don’t believe you change hearts. I believe you change laws, you change allocation of resources, you change the way systems operate. You’re not going to change every heart. You’re not. But at the end of the day, we can do a whole lot to change some hearts, and change some systems, and create more opportunities for people who deserve to have them. (http://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/blacklivesmatter-activists-confront-clinton-incarceration-n411536)

In addition to reflecting a cautious response about social change and activism, as Haberman of the New York Times (August 19, 2015) writes, it also alludes to a particular view of social movements, “that movement politics gets you only so far, and that activists must pave the way for those in office to act.” Indeed, Clinton’s statement points to several key debates in political sociology including the extent to which social movements matter in shaping policy, the distinction between “insiders” and “outsiders” in promoting political change, whether real policy change occurs incrementally or in punctuated bursts, and whether efforts at changing “hearts and minds” and “changing laws” are distinct (if not opposing) projects.

Social movement scholars have become increasingly interested in the relationship between social movement mobilization and policymaking. Resource mobilization theory provided a framework for understanding social movements as an “extension of institutionalized action” (see Jenkins, 1983; see also McCarthy & Zald, 1977). Social movement scholars also emphasized the role of political process and political opportunity structures either as control variables (often using some measure of the presence of sympathetic elites, see Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; Tarrow, 1998) and/or as a mediating variable (e.g., Amenta, 2006; Amenta, Caren, & Olasky, 2006 on political mediation theory) between mobilization and policy outcomes.
But, with a growing focus on the direct role of movements in the policymaking process, scholars have had to refine their theoretical and empirical understandings of political institutions and policy elites vis-à-vis social movements in shaping policy. Asking whether social movements matter in shaping policy has led to important advances in situating the work of social movements in the agenda-setting phase of policymaking — that is, where issues are debated and framed (see Amenta, Carens, Chiarello, & Su, 2010). Social movements are thought to have the most influence in shaping issue discourse in this prepolicy phase and in doing so, indirectly shape policy outcomes.

A second important development involves rethinking the boundaries between state and nonstate, whereby political elites and social movement actors work inside a network or field that transcends institutional boundaries. The growing recognition of the role of institutional activism and political entrepreneurship in promoting movement causes has blurred the distinction between an insider and outsider particularly since actors can easily transition from roles as policymakers to movement activists and vice versa (Banaszak, 2005, 2010; Pettinicchio, 2012, 2013). Specifying the ways in which political elites, social movement organizations (SMOs), and activists routinely interact contributes to our understanding of the networks of incumbents and challengers who coordinate their efforts to shape policy.

Finally, scholars have drawn from the work of institutional and welfare state scholars pointing out that while movements do shape policy outcomes, movements are also shaped by policy (Meyer, 2005). Policies provide both resources and opportunities for SMOs, advocacy groups, and regular citizens to mobilize the law, often targeting (and sometimes solicited by) the very institutions and actors who enacted them (Pettinicchio, 2013).

This paper outlines these and other developments drawing from numerous examples including, among others, the black civil rights movement, the women’s movement, the environmental movement, and the disability rights movement. First, I outline a broad framework for situating social movements in the policymaking process. I discuss the conditions under which movements matter in shaping public preferences and/or the policy agenda, as well as how to make sense of short-term and long-term objectives given the protracted interaction between movement groups and policymakers. I then specifically discuss the ways in which so-called outsiders are able to shape the agenda-setting phase of policymaking, especially the kinds of opportunities institutional arrangements and political entrepreneurship create for social movements to have access to the policymaking process. Third, I expand on how policy-domain approaches in agenda setting help specify
the concept of political opportunities for movements to influence policy. This is followed by a discussion of how strategic action fields shed light on the ways in which social movement actors and political elites work together to affect change through the use of both institutional and extratational strategies. I point to how distinctions between an “insider” and an “outsider” have consequently become blurred and how movement actors and policymakers move quite fluidly in their roles within this strategic action field. I conclude the paper by addressing the so-called “chicken-and-egg” problem (see Meyer, 2005) regarding how movements are hypothesized to influence policy while policies can also create or undermine opportunities for social movements.

SITUATING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS WITHIN THE POLITICS OF POLICYMAKING

While social movement scholars on the one hand traditionally viewed challengers working too closely with policymakers and within political institutions as counterproductive to mobilization (Burstein, 1991; Piven & Cloward, 1977; Tarrow, 1998), policy scholars on the other hand ignored exogenous factors, like the role of social movements, in influencing policy (see Wilson, 2000 on policy regime models).

Social movements are about changing “hearts and minds” as well as policy (Tilly, 1984). Importantly, these should not be seen as two distinct or competing endeavors. In the case of the black civil rights movement, activists sought to raise awareness and shape public attitudes outside the U.S. South hoping that this would pressure political elites to take action, while simultaneously targeting economic and political institutions in the South (McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984). In the case of gender equality, feminists quickly realized that targeting policy would not necessarily undermine deeply rooted cultural and normative beliefs about gender and gender roles (Taylor & Whittier, 1995; Van Dyke, Soule, & Taylor, 2004). Activists therefore targeted political institutions as well as encouraged public questioning of gender norms and gendered structural inequalities. This means that movement targets and objectives range from proximate and short-term to distant and long-term. Thus, social movements have, to use Cockburn’s (2007) terminology, a short and long agenda.

Social movements may focus more of their time on shaping hearts and minds than they may on altering structural arrangements. Social movements can target public preferences rather than seeking to change the preferences
of political elites. This might be because issues are politically closed or simply not on the policy agenda. Other times, when public preferences evolve to coincide with those of a movement, movement activists and organizations may have more leverage in influencing policy change by channeling public preferences towards policymakers. Sometimes, movements may seek to change public opinion and target policy elites concurrently, whereby sympathetic policymakers and social movement activists join forces to mobilize public preferences hoping to affect policy outcomes in their favor.

When the public is divided, or a given issue is not especially salient among constituents, political elites may be more likely to pursue their own policy preferences and/or work with interest and social movement groups aligned with their preferences to shape policy outcomes (Burstein, 2003; Pettinicchio, 2010). In this case, both policymakers and movement representatives benefit. Political elites, interest groups, and SMOs may find it easier to “craft” or frame an issue in the absence of public debate (see Jacobs & Shapiro, 2000) which in turn, can both direct and intensify issue salience among the public (for instance, see Beckett, 1994 on claimsmaking activity in the “War on Drugs and Crime”).

When public issue salience is low, SMOs and interest groups have more control over the message. That is not to say that all groups necessarily have equal access to policymakers. Rather, as Brinton and Francisco (1983) argued in their work on subsystem politics and American policy corporatism, formal organizations are part of an expanding professional advocacy network that is more likely to coordinate with policy elites. They can amplify certain frames while diverting attention away from less favorable ones (Burstein, 2003; Cobb & Elder, 1983). Pettinicchio (2010) outlined the relationship between elite and public policy preferences in legalizing same-sex marriage in Canada. The fact that the Canadian public remained split but uninterested in gay marriage allowed more liberally minded political elites in the Liberal minority government to work with key LGBT and other sympathetic organizations in framing and pursuing marriage equality.

However, public and elite policy preferences may also present a challenge for social movements and interest organizations. Policymakers may be influenced by their own or their party’s ideology which may not align with activist and social movement ideology. In a similar vein, public interest and high issue salience can complicate rather than amplify a movement’s message especially if public preferences do not coincide with those of a movement or interest group (Burstein, 2003).

The effects of SMOs, interest groups, public preferences and political elites on policy change are therefore contingent on numerous institutional,
organizational and cultural factors. And, theories about the effects of political organizations on policy outcomes are abound yet, as Burstein and Linton (2002) noted, scholars have either treated the effects of SMO’s on policy as taken-for-granted and/or have not adequately outlined how social movements specifically influence policymakers and policies. In his recent volume on advocacy and the U.S. Congress, Burstein (2014) criticized studies that lumped all forms of movement activity into “protest” — especially since some of these activities include lobbying efforts — commonly regarded as an institutional tactic. Additionally, not all SMO tactics have the same effect in shaping elites’ policy preferences (see also Gamson, 1975 on organizational success and failure).

Earlier work by Burstein (1985, 1998, 1999) questioned the direct role of social movement protest in shaping policy outcomes, especially in that protests may have diminishing returns or outright negative effects on policymaking (see also Olzak & Soule, 2009). Additionally, scholars studying interest and lobby groups pointed out that certain kinds of information — information about the size of the constituency and technical policy information — are especially important in influencing policymaking. Yet, others like Agnone (2007) in his work on the environmental movement, showed that protests do matter in changing elite policy preferences. Agnone hypothesized that protests amplify the effects of public preferences on policy by making those preferences more salient to political elites. Importantly, Agnone concluded that specifying the role of social movements in the policymaking process requires situating social movements in the broader institutional and policy context which fluctuates over time.

Thus, the role of social movements in the policymaking process raises questions about short-term and long-term social change processes. Piven and Cloward’s (1971, 1977) analysis of the poor people’s movement and American welfare policy in the 1960s suggested that institutions are inherently stable over long periods of time but for certain points where change comes in bursts. It is here where movements are able to meaningfully affect change. As Costain’s (1981, p. 101) work on the women’s movement showcased, the ability of movements to shape policy is no small feat given that policymaking tends to proceed incrementally while movements tend to respond in a punctuated manner thus making it difficult for movements to be included in the political process. Tarrow (1993) also described so-called “extraordinary policymaking” pointing to a seemingly rare occurrence when changes in institutions arise as a result of collective action by “outside” challengers.

But, Tarrow went on to claim that sympathetic elites are necessary in translating protest into actual political outcomes — that protest is a
necessary but insufficient condition for extraordinary policymaking. Indeed, the rise of resource mobilization and political process theories provided the theoretical basis for understanding the routinization of movements. In the “movement society” (Meyer & Tarrow, 1998), social movements have become increasingly flexible, able to engage in both institutional and extratraditional activities. Life cycle perspectives suggest that movements engage in various activities and shift their targets over their life course often as the result of policy and other institutional change (Blumer, 1951; Shultziner, 2013; Tilly, 1978).

As scholars’ focus grew to include the ways in which movements influence politics over protracted periods of time, it became increasingly necessary to think about how movements are transformed by political victories and defeats (see for instance, Taylor’s, 1989 work on abeyance processes in the women’s movement and Haines’ (1984) work on radical flank in the civil rights movement). In addition to entering periods of abeyance where movements are more inward focused, movements also endure in large part because they become more “institutionalized.” SMOs become increasingly formal and professional (see Staggenborg, 1988). As incumbent groups (Gamson’s, 1975), they use more institutional forms of action like lobbying, legal mobilization, and testifying before government hearings.

Professionalization and formalization often occur following policy outcomes that encourage and facilitate the ability of movement actors to work with insiders. But, this does not necessarily mean that institutional tactics come at the expense of extratraditional ones. Haines found that in the 1960s, institutionalization of the black civil rights movement led to fractionalization whereby white groups (in the government, private business and philanthropic sectors) increased funding for moderate rights groups as a response to the efforts of radical black organizations — what Haines called a “radical flank effect.” Similarly, following Roe v. Wade, informal prochoice groups professionalized, increasingly working with federal policymakers and state legislatures (Staggenborg, 1994). Yet, these SMOs were also quite flexible engaging in both institutional and extratraditional activities (see Staggenborg, 1989). And, environmental organizations emerged alongside state institutions like environmental regulatory agencies and bureaus (Johnson, 2008). Nevertheless, the environmental movement’s success relied on the efforts of both professionalized and volunteer groups using both institutional and extratraditional tactics (Andrews & Edwards, 2005; see also Andrews & Edwards, 2004).

Therefore, movements may work with, and benefit from access to, sympathetic elites in an incremental fashion over long periods to shape policy outcomes. Working to affect (and subsequently implement and enforce)
policy requires continued organizational access to the political process as well as recurring interaction with sympathetic elites. For example, legal mobilization and lobbying efforts by the NAACP in the 1940s and 1950s shaped rights discourse and eventually allowed for activists to pressure the government to act on civil rights legislation (McAdam, 1982). In the case of disability rights, movement activists formed close ties with disability rights political entrepreneurs throughout the 1970s and 1980s especially given that key movement figures had at some point, occupied positions in the government where they learned about, and participated in, the creation of rights-based legislation (see Pettinicchio, 2013; Scotch, 2001).

Numerous other examples highlight the importance of movement interaction with elites over time in influencing policy, as well as how policy influences movement mobilization. Gupta’s (2009) analysis of the anti-death penalty movement pointed to incremental policy outcomes not only as ends, but also as important factors shaping future movement trajectories. Incremental changes in European sexual harassment policies allowed for political innovations as well as space for outsiders to participate in the policymaking process (Zippel, 2006). Peng and Wong’s (2008) discussion of the development of the welfare state in Asia highlighted the ways in which social movements played a critical role in the evolution of political institutions and policy over a sustained period of time.

In addressing how movements matter in the policymaking process, it is crucial to outline the ways in which movements gain access to political elites and the political process, as well as describe how prolonged interaction with political elites takes shape and the consequences this has on social change. There is growing consensus in the social movements and public policy literatures that SMOs and social movement activists have the most influence on policymaking when they participate in the hearings phase of the process — that is, where information about proposed policies and issues are presented, and where actors seek to frame problems and solutions in particular ways to advance a certain policy agenda.

“PRE-POLICY”: SETTING THE AGENDA

One need only turn to the recent Benghazi controversy as an especially salient example of how political elites — political entrepreneurs seeking to change the course of politics — use congressional committees and the hearing process in their claimsmaking activity. The Benghazi hearings
played an important role in shaping both elite and public perceptions about key political actors in the current administration as well as the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee, Hillary Clinton. As Democratic strategist, Donna Brazile, told Anderson Cooper on CNN (October 21, 2015), members of the committee are just “there to make a point.”

Thus, committees and hearings matter. Committees are the “nerve ends, and the workshops and laboratories of Congress” (Smith & Deering, 1990, p. 1), they are about “property rights over public policies” (King, 1997, p. 11). Congressional hearings are where political elites seek to stake claims on and influence policy outcomes. As Burstein and Hirsh (2007, p. 179) described, hearings are “an efficient way to gather information and exert influence” and that “simply holding a hearing on an issue communicates a committee’s belief that an issue is important.”

Movement scholars studying a range of causes have recently pointed out that social movements tend to matter most in the agenda setting or “pre-policy” phase of policymaking. At this early stage, frame contestation manifests itself in committee hearings where social problems, issues, and policy solutions are defined (Burstein & Hirsh, 2007; Costain, 1992; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Johnson, 2008; King, Bentele, & Soule, 2007). Depending on how one defines protest, social movement scholars see movements as indirectly shaping policy outcomes by creating or expanding policy areas, shaping the network of actors involved in a policy domain, and in turn, shaping political discourse around issues (Sawyers & Meyer, 1999, p. 190). Scholars claim that movements have a much more difficult time shaping policy at the final stages of the policymaking process (Johnson, Agnone, & McCarthy, 2010; Olzak & Soule, 2009) where institutional rules and norms make it largely impossible for outsiders to have a say in the content of legislation.

The hearings phase then provides an important opportunity for outsiders to have input on the framing of problems and policies. As Costain (1981, p. 112) claimed, “the ability of government to design policy responsive to new interests, as well as old, hinges critically on the ease with which new interests seeking change in existing policies gain an initial hearing from government decision-makers.” Hearings not only provide spaces for outsiders to have a place at the table given that they are often brought in by elites to testify about an aspect of a proposed policy or issue problem, but hearings also signal that political elites have prioritized and increasingly legitimized an issue, allocating institutional resources to that policy area. This means that an increasing number or intensity of hearings is associated with political opportunities for outsiders to interact with policymakers.
Based on this premise, Sheingate (2006) used the example of biotechnology issue attention to highlight what he called the “congressional opportunity structure.” Akin to the broad concept of political opportunity structure well-known to movement scholars, Sheingate posited that the ways in which actors can introduce new ideas, challenge the status quo, and pressure other actors to pursue a given policy course, is dependent on whether there are opportunities to do so. By opportunity, he meant the informal jurisdictions of government committees — that is, what congressional committees hold hearings on rather than what the congressional rules state is their actual jurisdiction. He found that committees with broad, less concentrated jurisdictions spanning many topics, offers “would-be entrepreneurs [with] greater resources and opportunities to introduce new issues that further stretch the boundaries of committee authority” (Sheingate, 2006, p. 856).

As jurisdictions broaden and issue attention increases, there is mounting conflict around issues driven in part by the fact that political entrepreneurs are engaged in jurisdictional claimsmaking. Scholars suggest that social movement groups and leaders are more likely to be brought into this broadening policy network to help bolster elite claims, or as Schattschneider (1960) argued, to help mobilize bias — to create an impression that community stakeholders have a say in a policy issue when in fact it is largely driven by elite policy preferences. Elites use outsiders to advance policies they prefer (McCarthy & Zald, 2002).

No doubt, movements can also benefit from this increasing access to the agenda-setting process. But, it is not always clear, given the specific issue or policy domain, whether movements have a role in expanding issue attention — whether hearings are held as a result of outside pressure — or whether political elites hold hearings intending to invite movement actors who they see as allies in helping convince other political elites to pursue certain policy directions (see Walker’s, 2014 recent discussion of elites and top-down participation). It may be the case that both occur, where initial access provides movements the ability to beget more attention through positive feedback processes. This seems to largely depend on both the institutional and movement contexts at a given time, and on existing policy in that issue area. For instance, drawing from Taylor’s (1989) work on abeyance structures in the women’s movement, Sawyers and Meyers (1999) argued that the failure of the women’s movement to shape two relevant policy domains — fetal protection and family leave — is in part explained by the movement’s exclusion from those policy areas. In other words, the movement failed to influence policy because movement groups and leaders
were left out of the agenda-setting process. However, Pettinicchio (2013) and Scotch (2001) showed that the evolution of disability rights-based discourse in Congress had little to do with outside social movement mobilization. Rather, many who worked closely on rights-based policy in the government would later create disability movement organizations and coordinate protest demonstrations — mobilization around those very laws that established disability rights as a policy area. In many ways, elites created opportunities for social movement groups to participate in subsequent policymaking. It is important to note that groups do not have equal access to elites, and elites will likely seek to coordinate with social movement and interest groups that are ideologically and tactically congruent.

These processes point to a dynamic interplay between elites and social movements in shaping the policy agenda — about why issues sometimes seem ignored, and at other times, seem highly salient. In their two seminal volumes on agenda setting in U.S. Congress, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) and Jones and Baumgartner (2005) claimed that cognitive and institutional limitations on the ability to process information and prioritize issues leads to issues “bursting” onto the policy agenda in a punctuated fashion. Punctuated equilibrium theory — the theory that issues experience periods of stability but occasionally are punctuated with bursts of creative ferment and dramatic expansion — is quite compatible with the notion of cycles of protest or contention whereby movement activity seems to peak at some points, and then declines and remains stable at other points (Tarrow, 1998). Not surprisingly, scholars including Baumgartner and Jones attributed issue attention to social movement activity and changes in public preferences — two so-called “exogenous” and demand-side forces acting on political institutions. Within this framework, social movements have a critical role in expanding conflict around issues. Movement organizations and activists can do so directly by disrupting existing relations within government around certain policy domains. They can also expand conflict indirectly by changing public preferences about issues which in turn signals to policymakers that their voters’ preferences about an issue or policy requires action on their part. Under these circumstances, political elites seeking policy change can more easily mobilize conflict and challenge the status quo, especially when structural opportunities, such as venues with broad jurisdictions and interests, present themselves. Sawyers and Meyer (1999) referred to this approach, which emphasizes how networks around particular policy domains change and issues evolve, as an “issue-specific model of political opportunity.”
Outside pressure exerted by social movements does not always play a role in reshaping political discourse or expanding conflict around issues. Take for instance the changing image of nuclear energy. In the 1940s and 1950s, a tight-knit policy network arose around nuclear energy. This meant that a limited number of venues such as the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy and the Atomic Energy Commission created a small, closed field—a policy monopoly—encompassing government officials, scientists, and public utilities (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Campbell, 1988; Duffy, 1997).

With low issue salience and holding few public hearings, this policy monopoly crafted and controlled the positive image of nuclear energy. But by the end of the 1960s, the nuclear image turned increasingly negative. Although often attributed to the rise of outside pressures from labor unions, antinuclear, environmental, and anti-war activists, Baumgartner and Jones pointed to pre-existing dissent from within the policy monopoly itself which ultimately signaled its demise. When scientists in the field began to oppose the nuclear industry, it ate away at the legitimacy of the “experts” controlling the nuclear policy monopoly. They sought to move the debate around nuclear energy outside the existing policy subsystem in order to create spaces and opportunities to reframe the issue. New pro-environmental policy initiatives at the end of the 1960s allowed for numerous congressional venues to emerge, as well as new spaces within the executive branch, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). These endogenous changes to the policy monopoly were eventually bolstered by exogenous changes as a growing focus on environmental regulation and increasing congressional oversight placed much more attention on the issue. Thus, the story of how nuclear energy went from having a tremendously positive image to one that is considerably negative, involved the interplay between both endogenous and exogenous institutional changes as well as challenges from state and local governments, and movement activists who became an increasingly relevant part of the nuclear strategic action field.

One of the shortcomings of theories overemphasizing the role of exogenous and demand-side explanations for how issues and policies evolve is that they ignore the routine access many SMOs enjoy and use to influence change when issues are not seemingly in periods of heightened attention (or “punctuated” to use Baumgartner and Jones’ terminology). This is in fact one of the major criticisms put forth by path-dependent scholars regarding models of policy change (Hogan, 2006; Howlett & Cashore, 2009;
Pierson, 2003; Streek & Thelen, 2005). These scholars argued that even though exogenous shocks may lead to bursts of attention, the content of that attention and subsequently, how that content is translated into policy change, reflects the incremental work that preceded punctuation (Deeg, 2001; Rixen & Viola, 2014). As Streek and Thelen (2005, p. 22) succinctly put it, “for external shocks to bring about fundamental transformations, it helps if endogenous change has prepared the ground.”

The movement towards disability rights highlights the importance of incremental changes to existing disability policy which later was able to expand more dramatically in the early-1970s. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, political elites incrementally proposed changes to an existing policy image of disability couched in service provision – namely, vocational rehabilitation. The evolution of disability policy from economic integration, to removing physical barriers, and guaranteeing equal access to public transit gave rise to a language of rights that was not able to fully materialize until the end of the 1960s. The 1960s reflected an institutional environment undergoing important change – like for instance, the rise of more liberally minded politicians to positions of power (Polsby, 2004). This had important consequences for the broader social welfare policy field that in the past had been blocked from policy innovation. Not surprisingly, the late-1960s and early-1970s saw new political opportunities for disability rights entrepreneurs like Rep. Charles Vanik and Sen. Hubert Humphrey who proposed an amendment to the 1964 Civil Rights Act to include disability as grounds for discrimination. And, although this failed, the language of rights and nondiscrimination survived and became enshrined in the 1973 Rehabilitation Act due to the efforts of disability rights entrepreneurs.

Situating social movements within the policymaking process requires assessing the extent to which changes come about endogenously, how conflict expands outside an existing policy network, how outsiders work to promote conflict and change, and how they do so by working with political elites. The evolution of disability policy came to include civil rights. This took shape inside an existing policy network and when external institutional changes eventually rippled through the disability policy area, it created new opportunities for conflict around the disability policy image to expand, allowing disability policymakers to pursue alternative policy trajectories (such as civil rights). In addition, it showcases the kinds of institutional environments under which state and nonstate actors work closely together to either maintain the status quo or challenge it.
Movement scholars have pointed to the political opportunity structure as one of, if not the, key institutional or set of institutional factors shaping mobilization— from timing, to targets, to tactics. Identifying political opportunities is seen as necessary for understanding the rise of contentious politics. Traditionally, the perspective emphasized conflict between resource-poor outsiders and influential elites (Costain, 1992; Piven & Cloward, 1977; Tilly, 1978) through the use of “non-institutionalized means” (McAdam, 1982).

Yet, given that the relationship between social movements and the political opportunity structure is inherently “process-oriented” (see Meyer, 2004; Olzak, 1989) — that is, that it takes shape over an extended period of a movement’s life course — political process models have in turn provided scholars with a framework for shedding light on routine interactions between challengers and elites, as well as the ways in which elites can facilitate the role of social movement actors in shaping policy outcomes (Carens, 2007; McAdam, McCarthy, & Zald, 1996; Meyer & Imig, 1993). Updated versions of the theory then, combined with the rise of resource mobilization theory, came to focus much more on the institutionalized relationship between movements and political elites (see Amenta et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2010) where cooperation between the two may be just as likely as conflict.

However, the theory has also been heavily critiqued as too broad and as poorly operationalized (Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; Opp, 2009) leaving many unanswered questions: how are political opportunities identified by activists? Who benefits from these opportunities? And importantly, how do activists benefit from political opportunities? Increasing efforts to link social movements to policymaking through specific mechanisms at both the micro and macro levels have drawn more attention to the shortcomings of political process models and the political opportunity structure. There is a renewed call for a more specific set of institutional and actor-centered factors that facilitate or constrain social movement efforts. The research on agenda setting — particularly policy-domains and policy network approaches (see Dowding, 1995; Knoke, 1993; Knoke & Laumann, 1982; Marsh & Rhodes, 1992; Moore, 1979) — offers a useful analytical framework for clarifying the nature of political opportunities for specific social movements, activists, organizations, as well as opportunities associated with specific outcomes, like policy change.
Although the agenda-setting literature has pointed to institutional arrangements that shape the policy agenda space in general ways, work has also shown that agenda-setting processes vary considerably by issue domain. Factors accounting for variation include: the extent to which policy monopolies or communities exist, the kinds of actors (institutional and movement) involved in the policy area, the extent to which a policy network is embedded in other policy networks, and whether there is elevated public and media issue salience. Baumgartner and Jones, who championed these broad agenda-setting processes, organized their volume around specific cases of agenda setting that fit different patterns of issue attention. For example, in the cases of nuclear power, tobacco, and pesticides, policy monopolies gave way to looser policy networks or policy communities as conflict around these issues emerged. This was not the case, however, for urban disorder, which had no policy monopoly around it. Urban disorder reflected a broad jurisdiction— from public transportation to racial urban unrest— making it difficult to establish distinct issue boundaries around this policy field. Each time this policy area experienced punctuation, citizens and the media were paying a great deal of attention to urban social problems.

In the case of disability, issue expansion was the result of political entrepreneurship. There were no discernable changes in public preferences and issue salience preceding issue expansion. Although disability was governed by a policy monopoly that focused on rehabilitation and other service provision, it had developed extensive ties to social welfare—a burgeoning policy area in the 1960s—that in part created important institutional opportunities to transform disability policy (Pettinicchio, 2013). Disability issue expansion points to the ways in which policy networks overlap and intersect with other related networks and how changes in the broader field can disorganize existing policy domains.

These cases also reveal that distinct policy networks offer different degrees of access depending on how tightly knit these networks are. Virtually all policy networks extend beyond the government to include nonstate actors from business and industry, the nonprofit sector, and interest and social movement groups. However, policy monopolies, often referred to as “iron triangles,” are usually quite closed making it difficult for outsiders and challengers to gain access (Cobb & Elder, 1983; Kriesi, 2004; Schattschneider, 1960). Policy communities, on the other hand, are a much looser network of actors reflecting a heterogeneous, if not conflicting, set of policy ideas (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Sometimes, newer issues, particularly issues that touch on a myriad of related topics (like urban
social problems), emerge with no policy subsystem governing them. Alternatively, and often as a result of institutional disruption, existing monopolies too can fall apart allowing for a looser network of actors to form new policy communities around issues. This is important for understanding social movements’ access to the policymaking process because the more disorganized an issue area, the more likely challengers can help shape its reorganization (DiMaggio, 1991; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001).

For instance, McCarthy’s (2005) study of antidrug issue coalitions demonstrated how coalitions mobilized both elite and public support to challenge existing public health policy. Unlike iron triangles, membership in the coalitions was loosely defined, allowing members including movement organizations, community groups, professionals, and political elites, to come in and out of mobilizing efforts. McCarthy referred to these coalitions as “Velcro triangles” precisely because actors and organizations entered and exited this advocacy coalition with relative ease.

**STRATEGIC ACTION FIELDS: HOW SMOs AND POLITICAL ENTREPRENEURS CHANGE POLICY TOGETHER**

Policy fields or networks form as a result of the coordination, cooperation (sometimes reluctantly), and coalition building by strategic actors seeking to shape the policy agenda (Henry, 2011; Knoke, 1993). Policy communities persist when incumbents institutionalize a field by creating norms and assign values to the efforts of its actors. This means that elites confer legitimacy to certain kinds of organizations, structures and policy frames, and delegitimize others. Outsiders also confer a policy network’s legitimacy as they acknowledge the expertise of elites (see Brym, 1980 on elite theory, experts and political change). Challenges to the policy community in turn become less likely.

Policy networks and communities are, in Fligstein and McAdam’s (2012) terms, strategic action fields where socially skilled actors seek to affect change. Their field theory provides a useful framework for shedding light on the relationship between social movements and policymakers given its emphasis on how policy networks transcend institutional or state boundaries to promote particular policies.

In the United States, policy networks within which political entrepreneurs shape the policy agenda are no doubt grounded in the congressional committees that have some legitimate claim over an issue
area (Baughman, 2006; King, 1997; Smith & Deering, 1990). However, scholars, including Fligstein and McAdam, conceived of a broader space within which entrepreneurs and activists work to promote change. These actors — from social movement activists to congressional committee chairs — are “policy actors pursuing a matter of public policy important to them for instrumental reasons” (see Miller & Demir, 2007, p. 137).

Consequently, this understanding helps specify why and how social movement actors and other nonstate actors form ties with political elites because they have similar policy objectives and goals. Policy communities therefore consist of intersecting networks of actors embedded in various organizations and institutions creating a strategic action field where social change takes place.

Members of policy communities influence how issues are defined and in turn, determine policy trajectories. However, as networks that transcend organizational and institutional boundaries (which include nonstate actors), power is not evenly distributed among actors in the community. Power arises from a combination of various sources — from material resources, to status (e.g., the “expert”), to personality and social skill. Additionally, positions within a network also matter. For instance, government actors may have more direct control over policy decisions than nonprofit or interest groups even though all are integral parts of a policy network. Yet, as Dowding (1995) notes, power imbalances within a network cannot be too great if a policy community is to endure given that large power imbalances lead to zero-sum gains. Thus, while power can emanate from sources outside a specific policy domain (Knoke & Laumann, 1982), power is also contextualized in terms of the norms and culture of a policy network of actors with different interests who come together seeking broadly similar objectives.

Political elites bring their expertise (real or perceived) to a specific policy area. To be sure, the influence of elites can be confined to their respective policy domains (see Dahl, 1961; Polsby, 1963). However, they are also embedded in a broader field of elites that transcend area boundaries (for instance, elected officials may sit on multiple related and unrelated congressional committees). Indeed, being situated within different policy networks increases access to information and in turn actors’ clout (Knoke, 1993; Moore, 1979; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1999). Field theory explicitly acknowledges that subfields draw from broader fields within which political elites are embedded. That is, civil rights, disability, education, national security, and agriculture do not, as subgovernments, exist in a vacuum. Policy communities therefore reflect aspects of the broader field including
norms and values, as well as long-standing social cleavages and conflicts. Nonetheless, individual policy communities also consist of their own emergent norms particular to their network and, as Knoke (1993) highlighted, extant political conflicts and divisions may be set aside by actors working to achieve similar goals in a policy area.

For instance, the field of racial politics in the South which transcended economic, cultural, and political lines, was left largely unchallenged by outside actors including the federal government. It enabled the institutionalization of segregation in the South even though relevant actors and groups were themselves embedded in a national American racial field outside the South. Eventually, as Fligstein and McAdam argued, this existing field of racial politics dominated by Jim Crow, Dixiecrats, and other white Southern elites, was disrupted by exogenous shocks; the depression, presidential support for civil rights (i.e., Truman in 1946), and the Supreme Court case, *Brown v. Board of Education*. These changes in the field of racial politics created an opportunity for contentious politics with the rise of the civil rights movement in the 1950s. As a result of important policy and legislative victories after 1964, as well as broader changes outside the civil rights field (including changes in Cold War era politics, the “revenge” of the Dixiecrats, and the rise of America’s rights revolution in the late-1960s and early-1970s, see Skrentny, 2002), the civil rights field recrystallized around the policy goal of ending overt and covert forms of segregation and discrimination with key incumbents in the executive branch and the courts interpreting and enforcing new legislative victories.

Both Fligstein and McAdam and Baumgartner and Jones agree that exogenous shocks reshape the network of actors – the field – involved in a policy issue. In periods of field disorganization, political entrepreneurs seek to reshape policy images by using their skill to convince others that their policy solutions are the most obvious and suitable. Entrepreneurs can use their positions of power, resources, personality, “expertise,” and scientific evidence and personal narratives to make an issue that was once seen as contentious as taken-for-granted (Birkland, 2007; Carmines & Stimson, 1989; Cobb & Elder, 1983; Riker, 1982; Roa, Morrill, & Zald, 2000; Schattschneider, 1935). This also means that individuals have varying levels of influence on policy given their backgrounds and status within policy networks.

In seeking to redefine issues and policies following disruptions to strategic action fields, hearings again become an important site of frame contestation that bring together political elites, social movement actors, and other relevant parties. Hearings act as important filters where policy initiatives are directly shaped. Hearings played a critical role in reshaping the
positive image around nuclear power into a negative one, and hearings helped set the environmental agenda when it came to the shift from conservationism to pollution, clean air, and the destruction of the ozone layer. Committees and hearings, as well as the interests of political entrepreneurs, provide social movement groups with opportunities for “input and review” and as a result, “grievances are channeled into institutionalized means of participation” (Rochon & Mazmanian, 1993, p. 78).

The evolution of disability as a policy issue provides a particularly cogent example of the ways in which the reconfiguration of policy networks created opportunities for issue expansion as well as new access points for SMOs and interest organizations. Disability always had a place on the policy agenda. Policymakers mostly drew from their experience in existing social policy (especially health and education) and expanding interests in veterans’ health and social issues to establish a new field of rehabilitation. This came to dominate and indeed, shape disability as a policy area in a path-dependent way by defining a set of policy solutions around integrating people with disabilities into the mainstream of life (i.e., this often meant achieving economic self-sufficiency among people with disabilities).

Throughout the 1940s until the early-1960s, government officials, leaders of incumbent disability groups like the Easter Seals and March of Dimes, and professional health and welfare groups like the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, formed a close-knit disability policy monopoly revolving around vocational rehabilitation. Not surprisingly, it was here that rehabilitation reached its pinnacle as a policy framework and as an industry, reflecting the professional, ideological, and personal backgrounds of those in this policy monopoly. Many of these policymakers had ties to the health and philanthropic sectors, and many drew from related policy areas adding disability to their policy portfolios.

By the mid-1960s, many working within this area had begun addressing architectural barriers and equal access to public transportation because these were framed as immediately related to vocational rehabilitation. What good is vocational rehabilitation when people with disabilities cannot access places of work? Using strong supporting ideas such as increasing employment opportunities so that people with disabilities can be “tax payers rather than tax burdens,” and unquestioned scientific evidence about rehabilitation and special education, policy “experts” (see Altman & Barnartt, 1993; see also Berkowitz, 1987) were largely uncontested and elites and the public outside this monopoly deferred to their expertise.

The basis for much of rights-based policy began to emerge through incremental changes in the 1960s by this policy network. However, it was
not allowed to flourish because disability rights entrepreneurs faced institutional barriers — chief among them, that conservative Southern Democrats blocked most of their efforts deemed too costly. But when Congress liberalized, new opportunities, like the creation of new venues in Congress (for instance, the Subcommittee on the Handicapped among others), became available for an expanding set of actors to pursue various policy areas, including disability rights. This reflected a broader change in the political opportunity structure where an activist government politicized a variety of social issues and existing vocational rehabilitation policies became subsumed in Johnson era Great Society initiatives. It was during this time, as Baumgartner and Jones illustrated with their extensive longitudinal hearings data, that social welfare issues burst onto the policy agenda. In the case of disability, the number of committees holding disability-related hearings expanded and as a result, so did the disability-related agenda space (Pettinicchio, 2013).

The erosion of the client-service policy monopoly created new spaces for political entrepreneurs in both Congress and the executive branch seeking to alter the course of disability policy. It was in this context that Sen. Bob Bartlett proposed the Architectural Barriers Act in 1967, Rep. Mario Biaggi in 1969 proposed an amendment to the Mass Transportation Act such that people with disabilities “have the same right as other persons to utilize mass transportation,” and Vanik and Humphrey in 1971 proposed amending the Civil Rights Act to include disability. At the time, the Health, Education and Welfare Department (HEW) had greatly expanded its portfolio dealing with an increasing number of constituencies that it, in turn, championed. HEW’s Office of Civil Rights played a particularly critical role in generously interpreting and expanding congressional intent on civil rights for people with disabilities, often to the chagrin of top members in the administration. Importantly, these structural changes helped to lift the cognitive barrier among policymakers that disability policy was, as a matter of fact, based exclusively on a client-service model.

Both the movement for black civil rights and disability rights were situated within a broader network of actors in intersecting fields who routinely interacted with each other to produce consensus about the ways in which issues were defined and how policies developed. Both cases also highlight the extent to which “outsiders,” including social movement actors, are included in policy networks, highly dependent on the environment within which policy networks themselves are embedded. When a policy monopoly controls a policy domain as was the case with rehabilitation in disability, only incumbent groups might have access to the network and venues in
government to shape policy. When a policy community emerges around a policy domain—a broader, looser field of actors working in a policy area (see Dowding, 1995; Heclo, 1978)—social movements are more likely to be involved in generating conflict and challenging the policy status quo especially when they side with sympathetic policymakers in those policy domains seeking to undermine it.

The evolution of disability rights showcases how slow and incremental, and faster and more punctuated change, shaped the expansion and the content of the disability policy agenda. It also points to the overlapping policy networks between disability and other social policy issue areas, and how disability policymakers pursued rights legislation in the absence of issue salience among the public or with the media. This alludes to key supply-side variables, like the availability of venues and the entrepreneurial efforts among political elites in shaping policy. But, it also points to the kinds of relationships political elites forge with nascent advocacy organizations and movement leaders forming a strategic action field whose members sought to expand conflict when institutional activism was not enough to overcome political hurdles.

INSIDERS, OUTSIDERS, AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTIVISM

The expansion of the agenda space and the broader and looser network of political actors who stake claims on issues, facilitates the ability of so-called outsiders, like SMOs, to influence policymaking. As Stearns and Almeida (2004) suggested, movements often form strong ties with political elites which helps the movement gain legitimacy while movements can help promote the interests of government actors and agencies from the outside. Indeed, policy entrepreneurs often rely on interest groups and SMOs to participate in agenda setting to help expand their claimsmaking activity. As Pettinicchio (2013, p. 83) claimed, strategic action on the part of entrepreneurs “involves the ability of actors to create consensus around an issue through frame alignment as well as the mobilization of inside and outside actors into a coalition that assists in that effort.” This means that entrepreneurial efforts inside institutions can generate opportunities for social movement actors to have a place at the policymaking table. Thus, both movement activists and political elites can be institutional activists when they have the ability to work within, and have access to, institutional resources.
An institutional activist in the broadest sense is an actor who can affect social change from within institutions—an elite with disproportionate access to political resources (see Khan, 2012 on the “Sociology of Elites”). However, the concept has been used to characterize a variety of different types of elites pursuing social change. Institutional activist has been used synonymously with concepts like sympathetic elites (Tarrow, 1998), political entrepreneur (Reichman & Canan, 2003; Roa et al., 2000; Skrentny, 2002), elite mobilization (McCarthy, 2005), and inside agitator (Eisenstein, 1996). Because social movements and issue areas reflect varying degrees of outsider status, it in part explains why the term institutional activist has been used so broadly: it reflects dimensions of exclusion vis-à-vis institutions. As Banaszak (2005) claimed, individuals can be legally excluded from the polity as was the case with African Americans in the United States. But, in the case of people with disabilities, they were normatively excluded because it was generally believed that people with disabilities could not advocate on their own behalf. Thus, the role institutional activists play is highly dependent on how much exclusion a movement or constituency experiences.

One important distinction that has emerged is in regards to the overlap between the issues institutional activists promote and social movement causes. Traditionally, institutional activists were thought of as working on pre-existing social movement causes (Pierson, 1994; Santoro & McGuire, 1997; Tilly, 1978). This might be a result of the legacy of theories like political process that tend to treat political elites as reactionary rather than as proactive. Elites are thought to either accommodate challengers’ demands or they increase repression which ultimately signals declining mobilization (Koopmans, 1993; McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1998, 1989). Santoro and McGuire (1997) argued that black and feminist policymakers took on the cause of affirmative action inside institutions following heightened periods of movement mobilization and policy change while Staggenborg (1991) pointed to the important role of prochoice policymakers working within legislatures to expand abortion rights.

However, institutional activists can be much more entrepreneurial in working on issues prior to movement mobilization than originally conceived (see Pettinicchio, 2012, 2013). For instance, rights and antidiscrimination legislation for people with disabilities was largely the result of a “movement in the government” (Scotch, 2001). In this case, institutional activists were disability rights entrepreneurs; their actions were not motivated by outside pressures from movements or constituents. At the same time, the actions of these policymakers had a profound impact not only in
politicizing people with disabilities — that is, in helping make people with disabilities citizens entitled to rights — but also provided policy tools to mobilize against the government when it began to back-stepping on implementing disability rights legislation. In fact, when the government stalled in writing and publishing disability rights regulations, many in the Office of Civil Rights, dismayed by the delay, encouraged disability activists to protest against Joseph Califano, the HEW secretary.

In addition, many disability rights movement leaders and key actors had important ties to the government. For example, Judy Heumann, who interned in Sen. Harrison Williams’ office, also created one of the first disability advocacy and protest groups, Disabled in Action. Jill Robinson, a Community Services Administration (CSA) staff member and intern in the National Center for Law and the Handicapped participated in the HEW protests. Other leaders would go on to become political elites themselves. Lex Frieden, who served as executive director of the National Committee on the Handicapped and who helped draft the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the late 1980s, was the secretary of the advocacy group American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities in the mid-1970s. Ed Roberts, considered the father of the Independent Living Movement in the early-1970s became Director of the California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation in 1976. And, Justin Dart, the leader of the Texas Independent Living Movement in the 1970s became member of the Texas Governor’s Committee for Persons with Disabilities in the early-80s and was later appointed by President Reagan to the National Committee on the Handicapped. As co-chair of the Congressional Task Force on the Rights and Empowerment of People with Disabilities, Dart also played a critical role in helping draft the ADA.

Political elites and social movement activists formed a strategic action field. Together, they pressured the government to act on disability rights. This showcases the kind of alliances formed between so-called insiders and outsiders in affecting change drawing from both institutional and extratraditional resources. Importantly, it also points to the ways in which activists inside and outside the government use both institutional and extratraditional tactics and strategies depending on the nature of their challenge, political opportunities, and threats. It is a salient example of the porous boundaries between state and nonstate actors and organizations and the interchangeable role of citizen activist and elite or institutional activist within the field.

Social movement scholars struggle to define the role of movement activists when they work closely with political elites. For instance, Jenkins and Eckert (1986) showed how professionalization and elite patronage in the black civil
The rights movement in part weakened movement challenge. In the women’s movement, formal organizations that engaged in lobbying activity were thought to not fit the feminist idea of nonhierarchical organizations; that using institutional tactics legitimizes existing institutional arrangements (Costain, 1981). And, Meyer’s (1993) work on the nuclear free movement suggested that institutionalization served to coopt or depoliticize the movement.

However, scholars have increasingly recognized the back-and-forth between the work of institutional activism and grassroots activism. Costain and Majstrovic’s (1994) work on the women’s movement showed that relationships between outside challenges and insider actions are reciprocating. Similarly, Coy and Hedeen’s (2005) work on the mediation movement identified the importance of oscillating between institutional work and work challenging institutions as a way to avoid potential cooptation. Ultimately, what these various cases point to is the important joint role of both insiders and outsiders in affecting policy.

HOW POLICIES MOBILIZE CONSTITUENCIES

The dominance of political process models in the study of social movements has focused mainly on the extrastitutional basis of state–movement interaction (Goldstone, 2003; Jenkins & Klandermans, 1995). However, as the discussion so far illustrates, movements often have prolonged, routinized and indeed, institutionalized interactions with policymakers. In addition to the important role of entrepreneurship and institutional activism in creating opportunities for social movements in policymaking, an often-overlooked process is how policies create social movements. Referring back to Meyer’s (2005) discussion of social movements and policy, there is a “chicken-and-egg” relationship between the work of policy insiders and the efforts of challengers. In earlier work, Sawyers and Meyer (1999) posited that policies are not always an outcome of social movements but rather, policies reflect a dimension of the political opportunity structure. That is, policies can generate mobilization.

Costain’s (1992) Inviting Women’s Rebellion explained how Congress acted as an initiator on women’s issues. The amount of attention Congress paid to women’s issues increased following President Kennedy’s creation of the President’s Commission on the Status of Women (Rupp & Taylor, 1987). As Costain (1992, pp. 20–21) noted, “The shift from a friendly but somewhat ambiguous relationship between government and women in the fifties to
unalloyed support at the federal level in the sixties seems promising as an explanation for the timing of the women’s movement.” The 1970s saw both a proliferation of women’s advocacy groups as well as an increase in both insider and outsider activity (Costain, 1992; Minkoff, 1995; Soule, McAdam, McCarthy, & Su, 1999) which coincided with increasing government attention to women’s rights (such as the Equal Rights Amendments, the right to choose, etc.). Congressional interest peaked in the early-to-mid-1970s surrounding the ERA amendments (Soule et al., 1999). Although interest eventually declined, women’s issues continued to have a place on the policy agenda.

Similarly, following the Clean Air Act Amendments and the establishment of the EPA, congressional issue attention on the environment increased. It also coincided with the rise of large professional environmental advocacy groups and a spike in protest activity (Olzak & Soule, 2009). As Johnson (2008, p. 3) noted, “The year 1970 marked the beginning of an environmental era in American public policy.”

Policies can mobilize activists to protest because they provide a framework, like new entitlements, on which constituencies can mobilize (Ingram & Smith, 1993; Reese & Newcombe, 2003). In the case of disability, few protests took place before the introduction of disability rights and antidiscrimination legislation in 1971. Not only did the early-1970s see the proliferation of disability advocacy organizations, it also saw the emergence of a sustained protest wave that mobilized around the rights enshrined in legislation which was largely the result of political entrepreneurship. By lunging forward on disability rights only to back step when costs of accommodation became a driving force behind growing opposition, the federal government through its policy innovations, “invited a disability rebellion.”

These cases reveal that social movements and grassroots activism become important forces in protecting and expanding existing policies. On November 2, 1972, young disability activists organized by the group Disabled in Action, tied up traffic in New York twice that day protesting against President Nixon’s vetoing of the Rehabilitation Act. Judy Heumann, Disabled in Action’s founder, told reporters that a main goal of the protest, which was a response to threats to an existing policy proposal, was to make “the public aware of the plight of the handicapped.” Policy breakthroughs indeed mobilize constituents (Campbell, 2005; Pierson & Skocpol, 2007; Pratt, 1976; Skocpol, 2007; Walker, 1991). They change the relationship between the government, citizens, and issues where the growth of advocacy organizations, lobbying, protests, and public awareness campaigns in turn reify policy and protect it from retrenchment efforts. Importantly, efforts by elites and movement activists alike target political
institutions while also seeking to affect public preferences and attitudes about those policies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Social movements seek to change existing understandings about how to address issues, social problems, and collective grievances. They do so by targeting political elites and institutions, as well as public attitudes. Movements “seek to realize their objectives not only by influencing public policy but also by changing private behaviors, challenging accepted cultural understandings, and transforming the lives of their adherents” (Schlozman, Page, Verba, & Fiorina, 2005, p. 65). To return to Clinton’s comments discussed in the paper’s introduction, when movements seek to shape politics and public preferences, they are not necessarily engaged in two countervailing efforts. Rather, as combined efforts in a multipronged and often long-term strategy, working with policy elites can aid in further entrenching policies, and can also work to shape public attitudes which in turn bolsters the legitimacy of movements and policies alike.

Two trends have raised questions about how we know whether social movements matter—in Giugni’s (1998) words, whether it was worth the effort. The first is the growing interest in social movements as policy agenda setters. The second is that social movements are increasingly thought of as part of “everyday politics” (Goldstone, 2003; Meyer & Minkoff, 2004; Pettinicchio, 2012). These shifts in how we view social movements in relation to political institutions, policymakers, and policy outcomes, have important empirical and theoretical consequences. They require thinking more about the ongoing relationship between activists and political elites specifying how so-called outsiders gain access to the policymaking process. Sometimes, movements can pressure elites to be included in the policy process but more often than not, opportunities become available to movements as a result of institutional changes, such as the expansion of venues for claimsmaking, and because political elites seek to form ties with activists to advance their position. Policy-domain approaches provide a useful framework for specifying political opportunities for social movements associated with short-term and long-term outcomes.

There are two main ways in which movements matter for policymaking. The first involves the role of movements in shaping how policies are framed in the prepolicy phase. But, politics often continue following the enactment of legislation. Therefore, the second way social movements matter for
policy involves protecting policy from potential threats and retrenchment efforts by opponents. This too involves a long-term strategy of policy monitoring to ensure that policies are properly and appropriately implemented and enforced. This in part is what scholars mean when they claim that policies create constituents; that movements mobilize these constituents following policy innovations that further their entrenchment.

If indeed, as Tarrow argued, political elites are necessary for translating protest into policy outcomes, the numerous examples provided in this paper of the kinds of routine access outsiders have to the political process suggest that the influence of movements on setting the agenda may not be as “rare” or “extraordinary” as is generally assumed.

Drawing from current theoretical debates in the study of institutional change and social movement mobilization, I outlined the ways in which consequential policy change can result from the interplay between incremental, endogenous efforts, and punctuated bursts brought on by exogenous shocks. I claimed that social movements are transformed by institutional changes including the collapse of policy monopolies and the rise of looser policy communities that provide movements with certain advantages, including access to the policy process. This sheds some light on how so-called outsiders challenge the status quo and achieve routine access to policymakers: they are often invited to participate in the agenda-setting phase of policymaking and sometimes, encouraged by political entrepreneurs to use extra-institutional tactics when institutional activism is not enough to overcome political hurdles. As part of a strategic action field, SMOs and actors are critical in expanding the debate outside narrow policy networks. They generate conflict by disrupting existing “cozy” relationships between policymakers, and by raising awareness among the public about alternative policy frames and policy solutions.

When it comes to policymaking, political elites and social movement activists — socially skilled actors — enter into a symbiotic relationship. Political elites rely on challengers to expand the conflict outside of political institutions. At the same time, if the goal of a movement is to influence the policy agenda and policy itself, then there are certain benefits when policymakers confer legitimacy upon movement efforts.

I also pointed to the porous boundaries between state and nonstate actors and organizations. Combined with strategic action fields, the concept of institutional activism highlights actors’ mobility in transitioning from a position inside institutions to positions as movement leaders and even protesters, and vice versa. Relatedly, these concepts and theories shed light on the flexibility among social change actors who can use both
institutional and extrainstitutional resources and strategies together to shape policy outcomes. What the various examples discussed in this paper suggest is that having ties to political elites does not preclude movements from protesting against political institutions.

As social movement scholars and political sociologists increasingly look to synthesizing existing theories to provide a framework for understanding how social movements influence policymaking, we must overcome certain conceptual hurdles and assumptions about insiders and outsiders. The first challenge involves endogeneity. That is, social movements cannot be both part of political institutions and also be affected by these very same political institutions because this would mean that the variables expected to affect an outcome are also a part of that outcome (Pettinicchio, 2012). Blurring the lines between insider and outsider makes these distinctions messy. However, part of the solution to this problem involves clarifying and specifying concepts like political opportunity structure as well as the goals and objectives of social movements. Second, in examining the prolonged interaction between elites and activists, it becomes important to confront the possibility of cooptation— a process whereby authorities manage outsider threats by superficially institutionalizing challengers so that they can maintain the status quo (see Michels, [1911] 1962; Selznick, 1949). Although this can occur, as theories of agenda setting, strategic action fields, and political entrepreneurship suggest, elites can also challenge the status quo, and in doing so, often rely on the efforts of outsiders, like social movements. Finally, we must overcome the negative connotation that has surrounded “institutions” and “institutionalization” including the contrast that is often made between so-called elite theories of democratic policymaking (often associated with terms like “overhead democracy” or “juridical democracy”) and pluralism. In seeking to specify the role of social movements in shaping the policy agenda, we must reconcile the idea that elite and movement preferences often coincide, with the more sinister view that when outsiders work too closely with institutions and insiders, they become “imbued with their logic and values” (Tarrow, 1989, 1998).

The paper’s broader contribution lies in its goal of helping to “put social movements in their place”; the title of McAdam and Boudet’s (2012) recent volume. They referred to two trends that have narrowed the field of social movement inquiry. The first is that the focus of scholars on movement actors and organizations has ignored how other actors, including policymakers and other political elites, also shape social change. Second, the study of social movements has tended to focus on mobilizing efforts or episodes of contention associated with immediate outcomes (usually deemed
successful in some way). This has led to an overall neglect of the more protracted back-and-forth between movements and elites where outcomes are not immediate. Thus, to borrow from McAdam and Boudet, thinking more about the link between social movements, elites, and policymaking supports a more “Copernican” view of social change efforts, where social movements are not always at the center of the political universe.

NOTES

1. This is the definition of political entrepreneur provided by Schneider and Teske (1992, p. 737).
2. Edwards, Barrett, and Peake (1997, p. 547) and Smith (2000, p. 80) referred to agenda setting as “pre-policy.”
3. Some think of it as strictly disruptive, others count lobbying activities as a form of protest (see Meyer & Tarrow, 1998; Norris, 2002; Rucht, 2007).

REFERENCES

Agnone, J. (2007). Amplifying public opinion: The policy impact of the US environmental movement. Social Forces, 85, 1593–1620.
Altman, B., & Barnartt, S. N. (1993). Moral entrepreneurship and the passage of the ADA. Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 4, 21–40.
Amenta, E. (2006). When movements matter: The Townsend plan and the rise of social security. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Amenta, E., Caren, N., Chiarello, E., & Su, Y. (2010). The political consequences of social movements. Annual Review of Sociology, 36, 287–307.
Amenta, E., Caren, N., & Olasky, S. (2006). Age for leisure? Political mediation and the impact of the pension movement on U.S. old-age policy. American Sociological Review, 70, 516–538.
Andrews, K. T., & Edwards, B. (2004). Advocacy organizations in the U.S. political process. Annual Review of Sociology, 30, 479–506.
Andrews, K. T., & Edwards, B. (2005). The organizational structure of local environmentalism. Mobilization, 10, 213–234.
Banaszak, L. A. (2005). Inside and outside the state: Movement insider status, tactics, and public policy achievements. In D. S. Meyer, V. Jenness, & H. Ingram (Eds.), Routing the opposition: Social movements, public policy and democracy. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
Banaszak, L. A. (2010). The women’s movement inside and outside the state. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
Baughman, J. (2006). Common ground. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
Baumgartner, F. R., & Jones, B. D. (1993). Agenda and instability in American politics. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
Beckett, K. (1994). Setting the public agenda: ‘Street Crime’ and drug use in American politics. *Social Problems, 41*, 425–447.

Berkowitz, E. D. (1987). *Disabled policy: America’s programs for the handicapped*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Blumer, H. (1951). Collective behavior. In A. M. Lee (Ed.), *Principles of sociology* (pp. 67–121). New York, NY: Barnes & Noble.

Birkland, T. A. (2007). Agenda setting in public policy. In F. Fischer, G. J. Miller, & M. S. Sidney (Eds.), *Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory, politics and methods* (pp. 63–78). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.

Brinton, M. H., & Francisco, R. A. (1983). Subsystem politics and corporatism in the United States. *Policy and Politics, 11*, 273–293.

Brym, R. (1980). *Intellectuals and politics*. London: George Allen & Unwin.

Burstein, P. (1985). Discrimination, jobs, and politics: The struggle for equal employment opportunity in the United States since the new deal. Chicago, IL: Univ. Chicago Press.

Burstein, P. (1991). Policy domains. *Annual Review of Sociology, 17*, 327–350.

Burstein, P. (1998). Bringing the public back in: Should sociologists consider the impact of public opinion on public policy? *Social Forces, 77*, 27–62.

Burstein, P. (1999). Social movements and public policy. In M. Giugni, D. McAdam, & C. Tilly (Eds.), *How social movements matter* (pp. 3–21). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Burstein, P. (2003). The impact of public opinion on public policy: A review and an agenda. *Political Research Quarterly, 56*, 29–40.

Burstein, P. (2014). *American public opinion, advocacy and policy in congress: What the public wants and what it gets*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Burstein, P., & Hirsh, C. E. (2007). Interest organizations, information, and policy innovation in the U.S. congress. *Sociological Forum, 22*, 174–199.

Burstein, P., & Linton, A. (2002). The impact of political parties, interest groups, and social movement organizations on public policy: Some recent evidence and theoretical concerns. *Social Forces, 81*, 381–408.

Campbell, A. L. (2005). *How policies make citizens: Senior political activism and the American welfare state*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Campbell, J. L. (1988). *Collapse of an industry: Nuclear power and the contradictions of U.S. policy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Carens, N. (2007). Political process theory. In G. Ritzer (Ed.), *Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*. New York, NY: Blackwell.

Carmine, E. G., & Stimson, J. A. (1989). *Issue evolution: Race and the transformation of American politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cobb, R. W., & Elder, C. D. (1983). *Participation in American politics: The dynamics of agenda building* (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Cockburn, C. (2007). *From where we stand: War, women’s activism and feminist analysis*. London: Zed Books.

Costain, A. (1981). Representing women: The transition from social movement to interest group. *Western Political Quarterly, 34*, 100–115.

Costain, A. N. (1992). *Inviting women’s rebellion*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Costain, A. N., & Majstrovic, S. (1994). Congress, social movements and public opinion: Multiple origins of women’s rights legislation. *Political Research Quarterly, 47*, 111–135.
Coy, P. G., & Hedeen, T. (2005). A stage model of social movement co-optation: Community mediation in the United States. *Sociological Quarterly, 46*, 405–435.

Dahl, R. A. (1961). *Who governs? Democracy and power in an American city*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Deeg, R. (2001). *Institutional change and the uses and limits of path dependency: The case of German finance*. MPIfG Discussion Paper 01/6 Max Plank Institute for the Study of Societies.

DiMaggio, P. (1991). Constructing an organizational field as a professional project: U.S. art museums, 1920–1940. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis* (pp. 267–292). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Dowding, K. (1995). Model or metaphor? A critical review of the policy networks approach. *Political Studies, 43*, 136–158.

Duffy, R. (1997). *Nuclear politics in America: A history and theory of government regulation*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Edwards, G. C., III, Barrett, A., & Peake, J. (1997). The legislative impact of divided government. *American Journal of Political Science, 41*, 545–563.

Eisenstein, H. (1996). *Inside agitators*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Fligstein, N., & McAdam, D. (2012). *A theory of fields*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gamson, W. (1975). *The strategy of social protest*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.

Gamson, W., & Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology, 95*, 1–37.

Giugni, M. (1998). Was it worth the effort? The outcomes and consequences of social movements. *Annual Review of Sociology, 98*, 371–393.

Goldstone, J. (2003). *States, parties and social movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gupta, D. (2009). The power of incremental outcomes: How small victories and defeats affect social movement organizations. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly, 14*, 417–432.

Haines, H. (1984). Black radicalization and the funding of civil rights: 1957–1970. *Social Problems, 22*, 51–43.

Heelo, H. (1978). Issue networks and the executive establishment: Government growth in an age of improvement. In A. King (Ed.), *The new American political system*. Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute.

Henry, A. D. (2011). Ideology, power, and the structure of policy networks. *Policy Studies Journal, 39*, 361–383.

Hogan, J. (2006). Remoulding the critical junctures approach. *Canadian Journal of Political Science, 39*, 657–679.

Howlett, M., & Cashore, B. (2009). The dependent variable problem in the study of policy change: Understanding policy change as a methodological problem. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis, 11*(1), 33–46.

Ingram, H., & Smith, S. R. (1993). *Public policy for democracy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Jacobs, L. R., & Shapiro, R. Y. (2000). *Politicians don’t pandering: Political manipulation and the loss of democratic responsiveness*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Jenkins, C. (1983). Resource mobilization theory and the study of social movements. *Annual Review of Sociology, 9*, 527–533.
Jenkins, C., & Klandermans, B. (1995). The politics of social protest. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Jenkins, J. C., & Eckert, C. M. (1986). Channeling black insurgency: Elite patronage and professional social movement organizations in the development of black movement. *American Sociological Review*, 51, 812–829.

Johnson, E. (2008). Social movement size, organizational density and the making of federal law. *Social Forces*, 86, 1–28.

Johnson, E., Agnone, J., & McCarthy, J. D. (2010). Movement organizations, synergistic tactics, and environmental public policy. *Social Forces*, 88, 2267–2292.

Jones, B. D., & Baumgartner, F. R. (2005). The politics of attention. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Khan, S. R. (2012). The sociology of elites. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 38, 361–377.

King, B. G., Bentele, K. G., & Soule, S. (2007). Protest and policymaking: Explaining fluctuation in congressional attention to rights issues, 1960–1986. *Social Forces*, 86, 137–163.

King, D. (1997). *Turf wars*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Knoke, D. (1993). Networks of elite structure and decision making. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 22, 23–45.

Knoke, D., & Laumann, E. O. (1982). The social organization of national policy domains: An exploration of some structural hypotheses. In P. Marsden & N. Lin (Eds.), *Social structure and network analysis* (pp. 255–270). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Koopmans, R. (2004). The dynamics of protest waves: West Germany, 1965–1989. *American Sociological Review*, 58(5), 637–658.

Kriesi, H. (2004). Strategic political communication: mobilizing public opinion in, audience democracies. In F. Esser & B. Pfletsch (Eds.), *Comparing political communication. Theories, cases, and challenges* (pp. 184–212). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Marsh, D., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (Eds.) (1992). *Policy networks in British government*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

McAdam, D. (1982). *Political process and the development of black insurgency, 1930–1970*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

McAdam, D., & Boudet, H. (2012). Putting social movements in their place: Explaining opposition to energy projects in the United States, 2000–2005. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1996). Introduction: Opportunities, mobilizing structures, and framing processes toward a synthetic, comparative perspective on social movements. In D. McAdam, J. D. McCarthy, & M. N. Zald (Eds.), *Comparative perspectives on social movements: Political opportunities, mobilizing structures, and cultural framings* (pp. 1–20). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C. (2001). *Dynamics of contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McCarthy, J., & Zald, M. N. (2002). The enduring vitality of the resource mobilization theory of social movements. In J. H. Turner (Ed.), *Handbook of sociological theory* (pp. 533–565). New York, NY: Kluwer Academic/Plenum.

McCarthy, J. D. (2005). Velcro triangles: Elite mobilization of local antidrug issue coalitions. In E. Meyer, V. Jessner, & H. Ingrum (Eds.), *Routing the opposition: Social movements, public policy, and democracy* (pp. 87–115). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
McCarthy, J. D., & Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. *American Journal of Sociology, 82*, 1212–1241.

Meyer, D., & Minkoff, D. (2004). Conceptualizing political opportunities. *Social Forces, 82*, 1457–1492.

Meyer, D. S. (1993). Institutionalizing dissent: The United States structure of political opportunity and the end of the nuclear freeze movement. *Sociological Forum, 8*, 157–179.

Meyer, D. S. (2004). Protest and political opportunities. *Annual Review of Sociology, 30*, 125–145.

Meyer, D. S. (2005). Social movements and public policy: Eggs, chicken and theory. In D. S. Meyer, V. Jenness, & H. Ingram (Eds.), *Routing the opposition*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Meyer, D. S., & Imig, D. R. (1993). Political opportunity and the rise and decline of interest group sectors. *Social Science Journal, 30*, 253–270.

Meyer, D. S., & Tarrow, S. (Eds.) (1998). *The social movement society: Contentious politics for a new century*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Michels, R. ([1911] 1962). *Political parties: A sociological study of the oligarchical tendencies of modern democracy*. New York, NY: Collier Books.

Miller, H. T., & Demir, T. (2007). Policy communities. In F. Fischer, G. J. Miller, & M. S. Sidney (Eds.), *Handbook of public policy analysis: Theory, politics and methods* (pp. 137–147). New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.

Minkoff, D. (1995). *Organizing for equality*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Moore, G. (1979). The structure of a national elite network. *American Sociological Review, 44*, 673–692.

Morris, A. (1984). *The origins of the civil rights movement*. New York, NY: Free Press.

Norris, P. (2002). *Democratic phoenix: Reinventing political activism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Olzak, S. (1989). Analysis of events in the study of collective action. *Annual Review of Sociology, 15*, 119–141.

Olzak, S., & Soule, S. A. (2009). Cross-cutting influences of environmental protest and legislation. *Social Forces, 88*, 201–225.

Opp, K.-D. (2009). *Theories of political protest and social movements*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Peng, I., & Wong, J. (2008). Institutions and institutional purpose: Continuity and change in East Asian social policy. *Politics and Society, 36*, 61–88.

Pettiniochio, D. (2010). Public and elite policy preferences: Gay marriage in Canada. *International Journal of Canadian Studies, 42*, 125–153.

Pettiniochio, D. (2012). Institutional activism: Reconsidering the insider/outsider dichotomy. *Sociology Compass, 6*, 499–510.

Pettiniochio, D. (2013). Strategic action fields and the context of political entrepreneurship: How disability rights became part of the policy agenda. *Research in Social Movements, Conflict and Change, 36*, 79–106.

Pierson, P. (1994). *Dismantling the welfare state? Reagan, Thatcher, and the politics of retrenchment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pierson, P. (2003). *Politics in time: History, institutions, and social analysis*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
Pierson, P., & Skocpol, T. (2007). The rise and reconfiguration of activist government. In P. Pierson & T. Skocpol (Eds.), *The transformation of American politics* (pp. 19–38). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. (1977). *Poor people's movement*. New York, NY: Pantheon.

Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. A. (1971). *Regulating the poor: The functions of public welfare*. New York, NY: Vintage, Random House.

Polsby, N. W. (1963). *Community power and political theory*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Polsby, N. W. (2004). *How congress evolves: Social bases of institutional change*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Pratt, H. J. (1976). *The gray lobby*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Reese, E., & Newcombe, G. (2003). Income rights, mothers' rights, or workers' rights? Collective action frames, organizational ideologies, and the American welfare movement. *Social Problems, 50*, 294–318.

Reichman, N., & Canan, P. (2003). Ozone entrepreneurs and the building of global coalitions. In C. Humphrey (Ed.), *Environment, energy, and society: Exemplary works*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Riker, W. H. (1982). *Liberalism against populism: A confrontation between the theory of democracy and the theory of social choice*. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Rixen, T., & Viola, L. A. (2014). Putting path dependence in its place: Toward a taxonomy of institutional change. *Journal of Theoretical Politics, 27*, 301–323.

Roa, H., Morrill, C., & Zald, M. N. (2000). Power plays: How social movements and collective action create new organizational forms. *Research in Organizational Behavior, 22*, 239–282.

Rucht, D. (2007). The spread of protest politics. In R. J. Dalton & H.-D. Klingemann (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of political behavior* (pp. 708–723). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rupp, L. J., & Taylor, V. (1987). *Survival in the doldrums*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Sabatier, P. A., & Jenkins-Smith, H. C. (1999). The advocacy coalition framework: An assessment. In P. A. Sabatier (Ed.), *Theories of the policy process* (pp. 117–168). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Santoro, W. A., & McGuire, G. M. (1997). Social movement insiders: The impact of institutional activists on affirmative action and comparable worth policies. *Social Problems, 44*, 503–519.

Sawyers, T. M., & Meyer, D. S. (1999). Missed opportunities: Social movement abeyance and public policy. *Social Problems, 46*, 187–206.

Schattschneider, E. E. (1935). *Politics, pressures and the tariff: A study of free private enterprise in pressure politics, as shown in the 1929–1930 revision of the tariff*. New York, NY: Prentice-Hall.

Schattschneider, E. E. (1960). *The semisovereign people: A realist's view of democracy in America*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.

Schlozman, K. L., Page, B. I., Verba, S., & Fiorina, M. P. (2005). Inequalities of political voice. In T. Skocpol & L. R. Jacobs (Eds.), *Inequality and American democracy: What...
we know and what we need to learn (pp. 19–87). New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Schneider, M., & Teske, P. (1992). Toward a theory of the political entrepreneur: Evidence from local government. *American Political Science Review, 86*, 737–747.

Scotch, R. (2001). *From good will to civil rights*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Selznick, P. (1949). *TVA and the grassroots*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Sheingate, A. D. (2006). Structure and opportunity: Committee jurisdiction and issue attention (pp. 844–859). *American Journal of Political Science, 50*.

Shultziner, D. (2013). The socio-psychological origins of the Montgomery bus boycott: Social interaction and humiliation in the emergence of social movements. *Mobilization, 18*, 117–142.

Skocpol, T. (2007). Government activism and the reorganization of American civic democracy. In P. Pierson & T. Skocpol (Eds.), *The transformation of American politics* (pp. 39–67). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Skrentny, J. (2002). *The minority rights revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Smith, M. A. (2000). *American business and political power*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Smith, S., & C. Deering. (1990). *Committees in Congress*. Congressional Quarterly.

Soule, S. A., McAdam, D., McCarthy, J. D., & Su, Y. (1999). Protest events: Cause or consequence of state action? The U.S. women’s movement and federal congressional activities, 1956–1979. *Mobilization, 4*, 239–255.

Staggenborg, S. (1988). Consequences of professionalism and formalization in the pro-choice movement. *American Sociological Review, 53*, 585–606.

Staggenborg, S. (1989). Stability and innovation in the women’s movement. *Social Problems, 36*, 75–92.

Staggenborg, S. (1991). *The pro-choice movement*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Stearns, L. B., & Almeida, P. D. (2004). The formation of state actor-social movement coalitions and favorable policy outcomes. *Social Problems, 51*, 478–504.

Streek, W., & Thelen, K. (Eds.) (2005). *Beyond continuity: Institutional change in advanced political economies*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Tarrow, S. (1989). *Democracy and disorder: Protest and politics in Italy 1965–1975*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Tarrow, S. (1993). Social protest and policy reform may 1968 and the Loi d’orientation in France. *Comparative Political Studies, 25*, 579–607.

Tarrow, S. (1998). *Power in movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, V. (1989). Social movement continuity: The women’s movement in abeyance. *American Sociological Review, 54*, 761–775.

Taylor, V., & Whittier, N. (1995). Analytical approaches to social movement culture: The culture of the women’s movement. In H. Johnston & B. Klandermans (Eds.), *Social movements and culture*. London: UCL Press.

Tilly, C. (1978). *From mobilization to revolution*. New York, NY: Random House.

Tilly, C. (1984). *Big structures, large processes, huge comparisons*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Van Dyke, N., Soule, S. A., & Taylor, V. A. (2004). The targets of social movements: Beyond a focus on the state. In D. J. Myers & D. M. Cress (Eds.), *Authority in contention* (Vol. 25, pp. 27–51). Research in Social Movements, Conflicts and Change. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
Walker, J. L., Jr. (1991). *Mobilizing interest groups in America: Patrons, professions and social movements*. Ann Arbor, MI: Michigan University Press.

Walker, E. T. (2014). *Grassroots for hire: Public affairs consultants in American democracy*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Wilson, C. A. (2000). Policy regimes and policy change. *Journal of Public Policy*, 20, 247–274.

Zippel, K. (2006). *The politics of sexual harassment: A comparative study of the United States, the European Union and Germany*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#BlackLivesMatter Activists Confront Hillary Clinton on Incarceration. NBC News. Retrieved from http://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/blacklivesmatter-activists-confront-clinton-incarceration-n411536. Accessed on August 18, 2015.
La présente étude porte sur la façon dont les personnes atteintes de handicap ou de maladie chronique — appartenant à un vaste groupe diversifié, souvent ignoré des politiques publiques canadiennes — interprètent la réaction du gouvernement fédéral canadien à la COVID-19. À l’aide de données nationales exclusives tirées d’un sondage en ligne effectué en juin 2020 ($N = 1 027$), nous analysons le point de vue des membres de ce groupe quant à la réaction globale du gouvernement. Bien que les résultats du sondage témoignent d’un large appui à la réaction du gouvernement fédéral à la pandémie, nos observations révèlent également des failles selon la nature du handicap et les particularités liées à l’état de santé, l’allégeance politique, la région et les expériences en ce qui a trait à la COVID-19. Entre autres éléments, l’allégeance au Parti libéral et le statut de bénéficiaire de la PCU se signalent comme étant associés à des points de vue plus positifs. Un examen plus approfondi des réactions qualitatives montre que ces points de vue sont également liés à des perspectives divergentes entourant les prestations et les dépenses gouvernementales, les divisions partisanes et autres clivages sociaux et culturels.

**Mots clés :** COVID-19, handicap, santé, allégeance politique, gouvernement fédéral

This study examines how people with disabilities and chronic health conditions—members of a large and diverse group often overlooked by Canadian public policy—are making sense of the Canadian federal government’s response to COVID-19. Using original national online survey data collected in June 2020 ($N = 1,027$), we investigate how members of this group view the government’s overall response. Although survey results show broad support for the federal government’s pandemic response, findings also indicate fractures based on disability type and specific health condition, political partisanship, region, and experiences with COVID-19. Among these, identification with the Liberal party and receipt of CERB stand out as associated with more positive views. Further examination of qualitative responses shows that these views are also linked to differing perspectives surrounding government benefits and spending, partisan divisions, and other social and cultural cleavages.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, disability, health, political partisanship, federal government
Introduction

Canadian policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are generally thought to have been swifter, more consistent, more widely implemented, better informed by health experts, and more cautious towards recovery than many other countries. Success has been attributed to a centralized rapid response facilitated by cross-partisan cooperation among federal and provincial leaders (Migone 2020; see also Howlett and Migone 2019).

Despite Canada’s early reputation as having successfully responded to the pandemic (Miller 2020; Roser et al. 2020; Wilson et al. 2020), the public’s views of the federal policy response vary across the country. Along with regional differences, individual experiences with COVID-19 and political preferences shape perceptions of the pandemic and the government’s response to it. These responses include social distancing policies undertaken to address COVID-19’s spread that ranged from closures and lockdowns to mask-wearing mandates and public handwashing campaigns. They also include early and swift income support policies, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (a.k.a. CERB), meant to address the economic impacts of COVID-19 on the public at large. With these policies in place, not to mention variation in provincial discourse about the pandemic response, there was considerable variation in Canadians’ confidence in the federal government’s handling of the pandemic—from believing the government had not done enough to believing it had gone too far.

Although regional and partisan differences in support for the government’s response to COVID-19 are expected, members of different marginalized groups may also experience and respond to policy differently. This study focuses on the views of people with disabilities and chronic health conditions—a large marginalized group that already experiences significant employment and financial barriers, as well as obstacles to accessing social and health services. As the pandemic unfolded, the disproportionate impacts of the virus and the corresponding social distancing measures on already vulnerable and economically marginalized groups across Canada became increasingly apparent. This was especially true for people with disabilities and chronic health conditions. The effects of social, political, and economic factors on people with disabilities and chronic health conditions are ever more acute in times of crisis, given that health and disability status are key determinants of individuals’ experiences and life chances. It is also likely that policy perceptions vary within and among people with different disabilities and chronic health conditions.

Based on original data from a national online survey of 1,027 people with disabilities and chronic health conditions conducted in June 2020, we address several key questions. How do people with disabilities and chronic health conditions view the federal government’s response to COVID-19? Does support vary by specific disability and condition? Is it connected to experiences with COVID-19? What other factors does support vary by including partisan preferences and regionality?

Our results contribute to the evolving understanding of the ways in which public policy responses to global health pandemics impact already vulnerable populations. We find that people with disabilities and chronic health conditions have been generally supportive of the federal government’s response to COVID-19, with 45 percent of respondents reporting positive ratings. However, respondents’ perceptions of the virus and of public policy responses also largely varied by disability type and health status, partisan political preferences, and region, illustrating that people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, often treated as a single homogenous group, are diverse in their public policy preferences. Although we expected respondents to view the pandemic through a lens heavily informed by their experiences with disability and health, and potentially membership in other status groups, we found that support was much more connected to larger political views and individual experiences with the virus itself.

We begin with a general discussion of the ways in which preexisting structural disadvantage is tied to disability and health status and the potential ways COVID-19 policy responses have exacerbated extant inequalities. We specifically outline how people with disabilities and chronic health conditions have been affected by COVID-19 and measures taken to combat its deleterious effects. We then discuss how extant disadvantage, experiences with COVID, regionality and partisan political preferences shape public perceptions of federal government pandemic responses.

Extant Inequality and Pandemic Policy Responses

Pandemics are shocks to the social system. Although they may generate new forms of disadvantage and inequality, they often amplify existing structural inequalities. Policy contexts play an important role in determining whether preexisting levels of inequality will increase during and following pandemics, shaping how different segments of society experience these crises and postcrisis recoveries. In that vein, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted policy shortcomings (Arcaya, Raker, and Waters 2020) and revealed the kinds of cumulative vulnerabilities that place certain groups such as disabled people and people with preexisting chronic health issues in greater social, health, and economic jeopardy (Olsson et al. 2015; Fothergill and Peek 2015; Hoffman, Shandas, and Pendleton 2020). Social scientists studying health have long pointed out that preexisting inequalities based on group status characteristics directly and indirectly determine health and other outcomes (Link and Phelan 1995, 2005; Morey 2018). This situation is no different.
Disability-Based Economic Inequality

As axes of inequality, disabilities and chronic health conditions are associated with low employment rates and earnings (Blanck et al. 2007; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014b, 2015; Maroto, Pettinicchio, and Patterson 2019). Importantly, existing research shows considerable variation in employment outcomes depending on the nature of the disability. Individuals with cognitive disabilities are far more likely to experience negative labour market outcomes than individuals with respiratory and heart problems and physical disabilities (Jones 2011; Zwerling et al. 2002).

A major reason for poor labour market outcomes among people with disabilities is that they are disproportionately clustered in low-paying, precarious, nonstandard work, often in the food preparation and service industries (Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014a; Morris et al. 2018; Shuey and Jovic 2013). Workers with cognitive and multiple disabilities are most likely to be employed in these kinds of jobs, while those with sensory limitations are least likely to be (Maroto and Pettinicchio 2014a; Pettinicchio and Maroto 2020; Wall 2017). The pandemic has most severely affected sectors that people with disabilities tend to work in and, as a result, particularly harmed workers who were already struggling with low earnings and financial insecurity (Mather and Jarosz 2020).

Canadian households that have a member with a disability have less wealth and hold far fewer nonhome assets than those without a disability (Maroto 2016; Maroto and Pettinicchio 2020). Many of these individuals live on the poverty line and cannot rely on savings in times of crisis. This likely varies with the type and severity of disability, as these shape access to appropriate care and social support that facilitate maintaining steady income and covering higher costs of living. Over one million Canadians are registered with the Disability Tax Credit (DTC), which covers only a subset of disabled Canadians and is often required to access products such as the Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP), meant to mitigate financial insecurity. About 40 percent of individuals registered with DTC list mental functional limitations, and many on DTC for an indeterminate time are experiencing difficulties in daily independent living activities (Canada Revenue Agency 2019). Although RDSPs are meant to encourage savings, program rules have been criticized for having the opposite effect and for assuming individuals with few financial resources have any money to save.

COVID-19 Policy Responses

As British Columbia, Alberta, Québec, and Ontario saw a rapidly increasing number of COVID-19 cases in March 2020 (Canadian Press 2020a), the federal government sought to address threats to healthcare system capacity (Canadian Press 2020c), embarked on massive national information dissemination campaigns about the virus and ways to reduce risk, including new protective and social distancing measures, and promised direct financial aid to Canadians, namely via the taxable wage subsidy known as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

CERB, which was extended twice through the spring and summer of 2020, was limited to employed Canadians who had lost all or some income as a direct result of COVID-19. This means that individuals, including many people with disabilities and others with chronic health conditions, already struggling to find work before the pandemic, could not benefit from CERB (Leoppky 2020). In the fall, CERB was rolled into Employment Insurance, offering Canadians a credit of insured hours, but this again remained problematic for the many disabled Canadians who did not previously qualify for CERB. Instead, federal economic policies meant to aid Canadians with disabilities during the pandemic have been relying on enhanced Goods and Services Tax (GST) payments to cover rising costs. More recently, those with a valid DTC certificate were automatically issued a one-time nontaxable $600 payment. In July, the government expanded this program to include an additional 1.7 million Canadians with disabilities who already receive either a CPP disability benefit or disability support through Veterans Affairs Canada (Canada 2020a).

The continuously unfolding pandemic raises the issue of how changing policy responses and programmatic rules are understood among already vulnerable groups who not only face a higher risk of getting the virus, but also face uncertain economic futures. Disadvantaged groups including people with disabilities and chronic health conditions do not have equal access to health resources, social programs, and financial information (Chen et al. 2018; Pennycook et al. 2020; Van Rooij, Lusardi, and Alessie 2011) which influences how they perceive policy responses.

Varying Attitudes towards Policy Responses

Although most Canadians support most measures taken to combat the coronavirus (Maru/Blue Public Opinion 2021), policy responses to the pandemic in Canada have fundamentally restricted everyday life activities, posing greater limitations for certain groups that no doubt affect how individuals view government. Views regarding any government’s response to COVID-19 will likely vary across factors that include people’s specific situation and demographics, their existing partisan beliefs, and their experiences with the pandemic. Although together they compose one of the groups most vulnerable to the virus, people with disabilities and chronic health conditions include a broad range of individuals with different disabilities, health conditions, demographics, and political perspectives. We examine variability in attitudes towards COVID-19 policy responses based on specific disabilities and health conditions, experiences with COVID-19, and broader partisan views and regional differences.

https://www.utpjournals.press/doi/pdf/10.3138/cpp.2021-012 - Sunday, August 29, 2021 10:31:08 AM - IP Address:70.55.137.42
**Disability and Health Status during the Pandemic**

Varying disability and health statuses shape experiences with and attitudes towards government institutions and policy. In addition to being left out of income support programs (Shakeri 2020), individuals with respiratory issues, those who experience debilitating panic attacks, people on the autism spectrum, and people who rely on lip-reading to effectively communicate experienced significant problems adhering to protective guidelines and were provided with few resources and guidelines by public officials (Aslam, Hall, and the Canadian Press 2020; Canadian Press 2020b). Against a backdrop of the crisis still unfolding in long-term care facilities, many people with more severe disabilities who require in-home visits from care workers were not receiving this support (see Choi 2020) and social distancing and isolation measures have increasingly been shown to have deleterious effects on individuals already struggling with health and mental health issues (Emerson et al. 2020; Vigo et al. 2020). Thus, attitudes towards COVID-19 policy responses reflect extant experiences under new and continuously unfolding health and socioeconomic scenarios.

Perceptions of policy fairness, whether about disparate impacts of social distancing measures or economic impacts and burdens unduly placed on those already financially strained, have a direct bearing on public attitudes to government responses and subsequent public action (Han et al. 2020). Individuals struggling economically because of their health and disability status tend to have more negative perceptions of policy because they see themselves as victims of unjust inequalities (Mattila 2020; see also Corcoran, Pettinicchio, and Young 2011, 2015). Social distancing and protective and lockdown measures, as well as being left out of income support programs, could be seen as imposing unequal burdens and as ignoring already economically vulnerable groups. This may shape short and long-term policy perceptions and attitudes towards government (Mattila 2020).

**Political Partisanship and Regional Variation**

Public perceptions are also shaped by how Canadian policymakers collectively frame and define rapidly unfolding issues (Migone 2020; Howlett and Migone 2019; Pettinicchio 2017; 2019) and the ways in which these are communicated. They may signal consensus on providing income supports (which in the case of CERB led to a swift government response), but disagreement on how to approach lockdowns. The extent to which officials appear to be transparent, clear, and consistent with their messaging shapes public attitudes (Driedger, Maier, and Jardine 2018; Quinn et al. 2013; Sheluchin, Johnston, and van der Linden 2020; Taha, Matheson, and Anisman 2013). Merkley et al. (2020) described a “cross-partisan consensus” among Canadian political elites that explains a lack of partisanship in public attitudes and behaviours. In this vein, COVID-19 is thought to be largely apolitical in Canada, where no one party challenged policies but, rather, parties rallied around the role of experts from the start.

Nonetheless, Pennycook and colleagues (2020) show that partisan attitudes significantly shaped how Canadians responded to the pandemic and to policies meant to address it. And even Merkley et al. (2020) found a relationship between party affiliation and perceptions of severity in Canada, where Conservatives viewed the pandemic as less severe. However, Bol et al. (2021) found that pandemic-related lockdowns increased support for those in power and confidence in government, perhaps because the public saw the government taking necessary measures to keep citizens safe.

Recent studies have focused on consensus among political elites (Merkley et al. 2020; Pennycook et al. 2020), but this cross-partisanship may not overlap neatly with partisan differences in how the Canadian public assesses federal government responses to the pandemic. This potential disconnect between elite and public policy preferences may reflect growing political polarization among the Canadian public more generally (Cochrane 2015; Pettinicchio 2010). Kevins and Soroka (2018) show that partisan sorting on attitudes to redistribution in Canada has increased substantially over the past two decades. In addition, deep historical regional divisions are clearly embodied within the newly formed “Wexit” or “Maverick” party pushing for Western Canadian sovereignty (Dryden 2020). Regional divides are especially evident in Quebec and in the Prairie Provinces, which further complicates the link between public preferences and government responses to the pandemic (Baer, Grabb, and Johnston 1993; Wiseman 2007).

Thus, while health pandemics can act as critical moments in shifting public perceptions of policies and policy translating these attitudes into actions and behaviour (Liu and Mehta 2020; Merkley et al. 2020), individuals still draw from personal experiences and long-held partisan preferences in understanding pandemic policy responses. With that, we examine support for overall federal government responses to COVID-19 among people with disabilities and chronic health conditions, a diverse but marginalized group that tends to be underrepresented in public policy research. We focus on differences by disability and condition type, political affiliation, region, and experiences with COVID-19 to better understand how each of these factors can drive public perceptions of government policy and policy-makers in times of crisis.

**Data**

Data come from a quota-based online survey administered from 11 to 22 June 2020, just as many cities and provinces across Canada were beginning to end their lockdowns and open up their economies. We relied on Qualtrics,
an Internet-based survey research company that uses paid panels of respondents, to help obtain a sample of people with disabilities and health conditions across the country. In addition to payment received from the survey company, we provided respondents with $10 Amazon gift cards.

The survey includes 1,027 respondents age 18 and older who reported having one or more disabilities or health conditions. Disabilities include physical, cognitive, vision, hearing, and emotional limitations based on a set of six questions. We also included a category related to “other” conditions lasting six months or longer. To gauge the severity of different disabilities, respondents were given options of answering, “never,” “sometimes,” “often,” or “always” to each of these questions. Health conditions included asthma, cancer, chronic kidney disease, chronic respiratory disease, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, and being immunocompromised. Questions asking about disability were based on the Canadian Survey on Disability and the Washington Group on Disability Statistics. Health conditions were chosen based on those indicated by the Government of Canada as increasing vulnerability to COVID-19.

Data were collected via quota-based sampling to ensure that we obtained a representative sample across provinces, with 38 percent of responses from Ontario, 23 percent from Québec, 13 percent from British Columbia, 18 percent from the Prairie Provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan), and 7 percent from the Atlantic Provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island), based on 2016 Census population estimates. We choose not to include any other characteristics within our quotas or weight our data after collection. In particular, we did not use poststratification, a weighting method commonly used when analyzing data from web-based surveys to adjust for undercoverage, nonresponse, and self-selection in the sample.

This method uses auxiliary information on true population values, from census data or probability-based surveys, to generate weights that can be applied to each respondent in a web-based survey so that the sample as a whole better represents the population. However, this procedure requires the distribution of characteristics in a population to be known. In our case, it was unclear on which population characteristics we should base any weights, since there have been no other random surveys of individuals with disabilities and chronic health conditions. However, many of the characteristics of this group (e.g., age, gender, and education) mirror those for individuals sampled in the Canadian Survey on Disability and the Canadian Community Health Survey. We note such comparisons in the discussion of our descriptive statistics. Please see Appendix A for a descriptive overview of our sample and online Appendix B for a comparison with the 2017–18 CCHS data.

**Measures and Methods**

We analyze respondents’ views of the federal government’s response to COVID-19 as our key outcome variable. Specifically, respondents were asked, “In general, how would you rate the federal government’s response to COVID-19?” We asked respondents to provide a rating on a scale of 0–10 (0 being the lowest, 10 being the highest) and then further elaborate on that rating in an open-ended question. We combined results into the three following categories: negative assessment (score of 0–4), neutral assessment (score of 5–7), and positive assessment (score of 8–10).

We then analyzed this outcome using a set of multinomial logistic regression models. Multinomial models expand on basic logistic regression models to allow for the inclusion of outcome variables with multiple categories. Within these models, the probability of membership in each category is compared with the probability of membership in a designated reference category. Additionally, by interpreting our results as average marginal effects and predicted probabilities, we are able to show the estimated difference in the probability of reporting the specified level of support for government responses when all other options are considered. Standard errors account for clustering by province. All models include demographic and economic control variables.

Our first set of predictor variables focuses on variation by disability and chronic health condition type. We include variables for six disabilities. The first four measure whether the respondent reported having any difficulty seeing (even when wearing glasses or contact lenses); hearing (even when using a hearing aid); walking, using stairs, using the hands or fingers, or doing other physical activities; and learning, remembering, or concentrating. Two other variables measure whether the respondent reported any emotional, psychological, or mental health conditions and any other health problems or long-term conditions that had lasted or were expected to last for six months or more. Disability-related questions also allowed respondents to indicate the severity of their disability by responding “never,” “sometimes,” “often,” or “always.” We focus on more severe disabilities and code respondents who indicated they often or always experienced the outcomes as reporting that disability.

We classified chronic health conditions based on whether the respondent indicated the presence of the nine following conditions: asthma; cancer; chronic kidney disease; chronic respiratory or lung disease; diabetes; hypertension; heart disease; immunocompromised; or obesity. Answers were obtained from a single question, worded as follows: “Do you presently have any of the following health conditions? Please mark all that apply.”

** doi:10.3138/cpp.2021-012 © Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de politiques, June / juin 2021 **
Our second set of predictor variables focus on political partisanship and region. Political party includes four categories for the major political parties: Liberal Party (referent), Conservative Party, New Democratic Party, and Other or No Party. Province/region includes categories of Ontario (referent), Québec, British Columbia, Prairie Provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan), and Atlantic provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia).

To assess experiences with COVID-19 in a third set of predictor variables, we include a series of composite variables measuring COVID-19 expenses, informed about COVID-19, and concerned about COVID-19. Composite variables combine the results of multiple variables measured on the same or similar scales, facilitating comparison. We use a process of meaningful grouping and averaging. We also include dichotomous variables measuring whether the respondent applied for CERB and whether a respondent’s financial situation has worsened during the pandemic.

COVID-19 expenses is a composite variable assessing the economic effects of COVID-19 on the respondent’s finances. It comprises responses to the following five questions: “Since COVID-19 restrictions have been put in place, have you had to (a) spend from savings to make ends meet, (b) use credit cards for essential expenses, (c) take out loans to pay for essential expenses, (d) contact a financial institution to request mortgage or loan payment deferrals, and (d) rely on government programs like, but not exclusively, CERB to make ends meet.” Values for the composite variable are the respondent’s average across these questions, which we measured as binary (0 = no, 1 = yes) responses with $\alpha = 0.664$.

The COVID-19 information composite variable assesses how informed the respondent is about COVID-19. It includes responses to the following four questions: “How informed do you believe you are about (a) access to COVID-19 testing, (b) how to get treatment for COVID-19, (c) COVID-19 symptoms, and (d) what to do if you suspect you have COVID-19.” Original variable values were uninformed (0), somewhat informed (1), and very informed (2). Composite variable scores are the respondents’ averages with $\alpha = 0.797$.

The COVID-19 concerned variable includes responses for the following seven questions: “How concerned are you with (a) contracting COVID-19 yourself, (b) a friend or family member contracting COVID-19, (c) paying your bills, (d) keeping your job, (e) finishing your degree, (f) accessing healthcare, and (g) shopping for essential goods. Original variable values were not concerned (0), somewhat concerned (1), and very concerned (2). Composite variable scores are the respondent’s averages with $\alpha = 0.799$.

In addition to our quantitative ratings of federal government responses to COVID-19, we analyzed qualitative responses to an open-ended survey question asking respondents to explain why they provided the ratings they did. Specifically, respondents were asked, “Why did you select that score?” after choosing a rating. We inductively coded responses to these open-ended questions and identified emergent themes associated with reasons respondents gave for their quantitative assessments of policy responses. We also linked the codes associated with respondents’ qualitative responses to their demographic and attitudinal characteristics to help contextualize their reasoning.

Findings

We found broad support for the federal government’s response to COVID-19. Most respondents thought that the federal government was doing a good job addressing the pandemic. As shown in Table 1, the average score for the federal government was 6.84 with 13.24 percent of respondents rating their response negatively, 42.06 percent giving it a neutral rating, and 44.69 percent giving it a positive rating. Examining differences across key variables shows a potential relationship with some disabilities and chronic health conditions. Scores also tended to be lower among respondents affiliated with the Conservative Party, those living in the Prairie Provinces, and those who reported worsening financial situations.

When asked why they provided a certain rating, most individuals did not elaborate upon their quantitative assessments of government responses to COVID-19. Many qualitative responses involved restating a numerical assessment in words without any further elaboration, as in the case of statements like “The government is doing [a] very good job,” “Sickening Response,” and “I think the job they did was fine but it should have been a lot better.” Other respondents framed their assessments in terms of preconceived expectations of how the government would handle a pandemic although not necessarily referring to any specific government policy or action. Their responses encompassed a range from “seems like they could be doing more” to “surprisingly great.”

Importantly, some respondents indicated that they were unable to provide further justification because they admittedly lacked knowledge about government responses. Statements such as “I do not [know] enough about what the government is doing in this case to make a comment” and “I don’t follow the news” point to attitudes and beliefs that cannot be readily articulated. This suggests not only that respondents lacked specific information about government actions related to COVID-19 even in the most general sense but also that, relatedly, their assessments may be based on other kinds of information including pre-existing beliefs about government, partisan preferences, and their own experiences throughout the pandemic.

Table 2 presents the results from multinomial logit models predicting respondents’ views of the federal
Table 1: Descriptive Results for Support for Government Response (N = 1,027 Adults)

| Variable                      | Mean | Negative (Score 0–4) | Neutral (Score 5–7) | Positive (Score 8–10) |
|-------------------------------|------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Overall                       | 6.84 | 13.24                | 42.06               | 44.69                 |
| Disability type               |      |                      |                     |                       |
| Physical disability           | 7.15 | 9.16                 | 41.22               | 49.62                 |
| Cognitive disability          | 6.53 | 17.19                | 38.28               | 44.53                 |
| Emotional disability          | 6.63 | 14.13                | 44.24               | 41.64                 |
| Vision disability             | 6.98 | 14.17                | 37.50               | 48.33                 |
| Hearing disability            | 6.70 | 18.52                | 33.33               | 48.15                 |
| Other disability              | 6.72 | 15.26                | 39.91               | 44.84                 |
| Chronic health condition      |      |                      |                     |                       |
| Asthma                        | 6.85 | 12.05                | 44.18               | 43.78                 |
| Cancer                        | 7.05 | 11.90                | 33.33               | 54.76                 |
| Chronic kidney disease        | 7.19 | 6.25                 | 43.75               | 50.00                 |
| Chronic respiratory or lung disease | 6.78 | 12.96                | 48.15               | 38.89                 |
| Diabetes                      | 7.10 | 11.07                | 38.17               | 50.76                 |
| Hypertension                  | 7.07 | 12.22                | 38.91               | 48.87                 |
| Obesity                       | 6.95 | 12.88                | 37.42               | 49.69                 |
| Immunocompromised             | 6.61 | 17.65                | 45.10               | 37.25                 |
| Heart disease                 | 7.04 | 12.50                | 39.29               | 48.21                 |
| Political party affiliation   |      |                      |                     |                       |
| Liberal Party                 | 7.86 | 3.16                 | 34.74               | 62.11                 |
| Conservative Party            | 5.56 | 29.73                | 44.59               | 25.68                 |
| New Democratic Party          | 7.03 | 10.00                | 42.78               | 47.22                 |
| Other                         | 6.27 | 16.33                | 50.61               | 33.06                 |
| Region                        |      |                      |                     |                       |
| Ontario                       | 6.79 | 12.78                | 42.86               | 44.36                 |
| Quebec                        | 6.97 | 11.30                | 44.78               | 43.91                 |
| British Columbia              | 7.12 | 8.96                 | 45.52               | 45.52                 |
| Prairie Provinces             | 6.45 | 20.60                | 36.18               | 43.22                 |
| Atlantic Provinces            | 7.28 | 9.23                 | 38.46               | 52.31                 |
| Applied for CERB              |      |                      |                     |                       |
| No                            | 6.80 | 13.90                | 41.94               | 44.17                 |
| Yes                           | 6.96 | 10.86                | 42.53               | 46.61                 |
| Worsening financial situation |      |                      |                     |                       |
| No                            | 7.06 | 10.84                | 41.16               | 48.00                 |
| Yes                           | 6.17 | 20.63                | 44.84               | 34.52                 |

Notes: Answers to questions: In general, how would you rate the federal government’s response to COVID-19? Source: 2020 COVID-19 Response Survey of People with Disabilities and Health Conditions.

government’s response to COVID-19. We report model coefficients as average marginal effects for each of the three categories of negative, neutral, or positive. Coefficients can be interpreted as a percentage point change in the probability of falling into the specified category associated with a change in the specified predictor variable. Original model coefficients are available in online Appendix C.

Results in Table 2 show that respondents’ support for the federal government’s response to COVID-19 was largely driven by partisanship, region, and COVID-19 experiences, with a few differences by disability and chronic health condition type. We therefore focus our interpretation on these variables and further illustrate these results in Figures 1, 2, and 3. These figures plot the predicted probabilities of reporting a negative, neutral, or positive response associated with different levels of these key predictor variables. Figure 1 includes disability and health condition, Figure 2 includes partisan preferences and region, and Figure 3 includes COVID-19 experiences. Categories are listed for categorical variables. Three levels of low, mean, and high are listed for the continuous variables. These refer to values at the mean and one standard deviation above and below the mean. Results come from models with all control variables.
Table 2: Results from Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Three Categories of Federal Response Views (N = 1,027 Adults)

| Variable                                      | Negative AME | Negative SE  | Neutral AME | Neutral SE  | Positive AME | Positive SE  |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|
| Physical disability                           | -0.069***    | (0.014)      | 0.042       | (0.048)     | 0.028        | (0.043)      |
| Cognitive disability                          | 0.041***     | (0.008)      | -0.085      | (0.047)     | 0.043        | (0.047)      |
| Emotional disability                          | -0.036       | (0.027)      | -0.016      | (0.050)     | 0.052        | (0.027)      |
| Vision disability                             | 0.028        | (0.024)      | -0.065      | (0.034)     | 0.038        | (0.042)      |
| Hearing disability                            | 0.087        | (0.056)      | -0.046      | (0.047)     | -0.041       | (0.030)      |
| Other disability                              | 0.061***     | (0.011)      | -0.009      | (0.016)     | -0.053***    | (0.015)      |
| Asthma                                         | -0.015       | (0.010)      | 0.002       | (0.021)     | 0.013        | (0.030)      |
| Cancer                                         | -0.037       | (0.038)      | -0.037      | (0.030)     | 0.074        | (0.049)      |
| Chronic kidney disease                        | -0.088*      | (0.044)      | 0.068       | (0.037)     | 0.020        | (0.053)      |
| Chronic respiratory or lung disease           | -0.027       | (0.034)      | 0.109       | (0.120)     | -0.081       | (0.139)      |
| Diabetes                                      | -0.049**     | (0.016)      | -0.007      | (0.040)     | 0.057        | (0.051)      |
| Hypertension                                  | -0.008       | (0.057)      | 0.025       | (0.032)     | -0.017       | (0.031)      |
| Obesity                                       | 0.011        | (0.050)      | -0.064      | (0.041)     | 0.053        | (0.044)      |
| Immuno compromised                            | 0.055        | (0.041)      | -0.004      | (0.055)     | -0.051       | (0.039)      |
| Heart disease                                 | -0.011       | (0.046)      | 0.028       | (0.045)     | -0.017       | (0.021)      |
| Age                                           | -0.001       | (0.001)      | -0.005*     | (0.003)     | 0.006*       | (0.002)      |
| Gender (Ref: Male)                            | -0.061***    | (0.015)      | 0.061       | (0.052)     | 0.000        | (0.038)      |
| Other                                         | -0.029       | (0.134)      | -0.059      | (0.128)     | 0.087        | (0.094)      |
| Marital status (Ref: Never married)           |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| Cohabitant                                    | 0.005        | (0.011)      | 0.062       | (0.052)     | -0.068       | (0.052)      |
| Married                                       | -0.018       | (0.028)      | 0.068       | (0.037)     | -0.050       | (0.034)      |
| Formerly married                              | 0.000        | (0.033)      | 0.016       | (0.031)     | -0.015       | (0.060)      |
| Any children                                  | -0.012       | (0.011)      | 0.001       | (0.062)     | 0.011        | (0.054)      |
| Non-white                                     | -0.057**     | (0.021)      | 0.071*      | (0.036)     | -0.014       | (0.021)      |
| > Bachelor’s degree                           | 0.013        | (0.010)      | -0.085***   | (0.021)     | 0.07**       | (0.022)      |
| Employment status (Ref: Employed, full-time)  |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| Employed, part-time                           | 0.025        | (0.014)      | -0.016      | (0.061)     | -0.009       | (0.063)      |
| Unemployed                                    | 0.105        | (0.056)      | -0.010      | (0.060)     | -0.094       | (0.071)      |
| Not in labour force                           | 0.000        | (0.016)      | 0.061       | (0.036)     | -0.061       | (0.034)      |
| Own home                                      | -0.003       | (0.019)      | -0.010      | (0.017)     | 0.013        | (0.013)      |
| Financial situation worse than previous year  | 0.038**      | (0.014)      | 0.038       | (0.020)     | -0.076***    | (0.017)      |
| Political party (Ref: Liberal Party)          |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| Conservative Party                            | 0.260***     | (0.037)      | 0.106       | (0.059)     | -0.366***    | (0.041)      |
| New Democratic Party                          | 0.059***     | (0.013)      | 0.048       | (0.051)     | -0.106       | (0.061)      |
| Other                                         | 0.123***     | (0.024)      | 0.118       | (0.069)     | -0.242***    | (0.075)      |
| Province/Region (Ref: Ontario)                |              |              |             |             |              |              |
| Quebec                                        | 0.011        | (0.010)      | 0.001       | (0.016)     | -0.012       | (0.013)      |
| British Columbia                              | -0.030***    | (0.007)      | 0.012       | (0.008)     | 0.018**      | (0.006)      |
| Prairie Provinces                             | 0.032***     | (0.008)      | -0.087***   | (0.010)     | 0.055***     | (0.005)      |
| Atlantic Provinces                            | -0.038***    | (0.007)      | -0.012      | (0.012)     | 0.05***      | (0.017)      |
| COVID-19 expenses                             | 0.019        | (0.042)      | -0.056      | (0.096)     | 0.037        | (0.069)      |
| Informed about COVID-19                       | -0.040**     | (0.012)      | -0.121***   | (0.033)     | 0.16***      | (0.037)      |
| Concerned about COVID-19                      | 0.007        | (0.022)      | -0.036      | (0.067)     | 0.029        | (0.048)      |
| Applied for CERB                               | -0.054*      | (0.021)      | -0.027      | (0.047)     | 0.08**       | (0.031)      |
| Pseudo R²                                     | 0.141        |              | 0.141       |              | 0.141        |              |

Notes: Multinomial logistic regression models predicting probability of negative, neutral, or positive perceptions of government COVID-19 response. Continuous variables are mean centred. AME refers to average marginal effects, which can be interpreted as percentage point changes in the probability of the outcome category associated with a unit change in the predictor variable. Standard errors are in parentheses. ***p < 0.001; **p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

Source: 2020 COVID-19 Response Survey of People with Disabilities and Health Conditions.
Figure 1: Predicted Probabilities from Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Three Categories of Federal Response Views by Type of Disability and Chronic Health Condition (N = 1,027 Adults)
Note: Predicted probabilities based on models in Table 2.
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Response Survey of People with Disabilities and Health Conditions.

Figure 2: Predicted Probabilities from Multinomial Logistic Regression Models Predicting Three Categories of Federal Response Views by Political Ideology and Region (N = 1,027 Adults)
Note: Predicted probabilities based on models in Table 2.
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Response Survey of People with Disabilities and Health Conditions.
Comparing results by specific disabilities and chronic health conditions, Table 2 and Figure 1 show that there is not much variation in support for the federal government’s response to COVID-19 across these variables. However, a few groups do stand out. People with physical disabilities tended to view the government response more positively than people with other types of disabilities. For instance, only 7.4 percent reported a negative response, compared with 10–22 percent of people reporting other disabilities. Percentages with a positive response, however, were more similar across disabilities. In terms of health conditions, people with chronic kidney conditions, diabetes, or cancer were the least likely to report a negative response.

Qualitative responses provide limited insight into the reasons behind observed differences in support between these disability groups. Respondents generally did not explain their assessments with reference to their disability or health status, suggesting that these were not key considerations when evaluating government responses. Occasionally, however, justifications referenced vulnerable groups seen as having received insufficient attention and support. In these comments, respondents discussed how the government had not done enough to help vulnerable Canadians, including those with disabilities. Numerous respondents mentioned that existing supports were not helping everyone in need, “insufficient,” and constituted a poorly thought out “patchwork” of programs.

Political Partisanship and Region
Specific partisan differences were most evident when negative responses in Table 2 were considered. Compared with respondents who identified with or supported the Liberal Party, Conservative Party supporters were 26.0 percentage points more likely to have a negative assessment of the federal government’s response, NDP members were 5.9 percentage points more likely, and members of other parties were 12.3 percentage points more likely. Conservative Party supporters were also 36.6 percentage points less likely to have positive responses.

Comparing political parties in Figure 2, Liberals were the most likely group to provide a positive assessment of the federal government’s response, perhaps not surprisingly with a Liberal minority government led by Justin Trudeau. Conservatives stood out with the greatest proportion having a negative response; 19.4 percent rated the federal government negatively compared with 3–9 percent of Liberals and NDP members. Conservatives were also
much less likely to have a positive response, with 23.8 percent rating the government positively.

Across regions, the Prairie Provinces stood out as having lower ratings of the federal government’s response to COVID-19. Respondents in the Prairie Provinces were 3.2 percentage points more likely to provide a negative response and 8.7 percentage points less likely to give a neutral response, but they were also 5.5 percentage points more likely to provide a positive response than those in Ontario (Table 2). Overall, 16.1 percent of prairie residents rated the response as negative. However, the significant difference here was with those reporting neutral responses; 35.0 percent of respondents in the prairies provided a neutral response compared with 42–45 percent in the other provinces, suggesting more polarized views of the federal government in that region.

Open-ended responses provided further insight into how partisanship shapes attitudes about the federal response to COVID-19, with fewer patterns present across regions. Although some respondents, mostly those identifying with the Conservative Party, expressed concerns about policies limiting basic freedoms and that the pandemic is being blown out of proportion, these were a very small minority.

Rather, quite common among negative assessments was the belief that federal economic responses to COVID-19 constituted an irresponsible, wasteful use of taxpayer money that would add too much to the federal budget deficit. A familiar “small-c” conservative critique of “small-l” liberal fiscal policies, this kind of response was especially common among respondents who identified with the Conservative Party. Criticisms from Conservative respondents regularly implicated Prime Minister Justin Trudeau directly: “the PM keeps giving away money that the country does not have,” “I haven’t been impressed with the way Justin has been throwing money around with no real oversight,” and “Trudeau has gone crazy giving away so much money.” Concerns about spending, the deficit, and the fear of higher taxes in the future were expressed by members of other parties as well.

More specifically, Conservative respondents also expressed concern that federal funds were being used to pay benefits to those who did not qualify or were otherwise undeserving. For example, even though CERB is taxable income, one respondent explained, “They’ve been doing a decent job however they have mismanaged the CERB in giving the same amount to everyone and not taxing it. People who should be receiving the base amount of EI are making twice as much and those who should be receiving the max aren’t getting that much. And there are many who are getting it that shouldn’t be.” Concerns about CERB were not limited to Conservative respondents. Some worried about lack of accountability and that CERB serves as a disincentive to work.

However, negative assessments among non-Conservatives also emphasized gaps in existing benefit programs when it came to seniors and people with disabilities. For example, a Liberal respondent noted that the federal government has “made strides to support people that have been economically affected by COVID-19, though the benefits seem to be a little bit scattershot at times.” Expressing overall support for federal government responses, a respondent identifying with none of the main federal parties wished “they’d done more for the elderly and disabled. A one-time payment simply isn’t enough. Everything is becoming more and more expensive.”

Much more critical, an NDP supporter wrote that “The government failed in supporting vulnerable people. The pandemic shows that the system is rigged in favour of the wealthy.”

Negative assessments among respondents identifying as Conservative reflect long-standing conflicts with Liberals, and in some cases, Trudeau himself. Conservative respondents, in particular, frequently emphasized the theme of government overreach. For example, respondents often expressed concern that the Liberal government used the existing state of emergency granting government temporary emergency powers as a means to encroach on civil liberties and further their own political aims. As one respondent declared, “they also seem to be circumventing our political system to do as they please with no opposition.”

Conservative respondents were also more likely to tie current social and cultural issues, such as gun rights, police funding, and Black Lives Matter, into their negative assessments. A few respondents specifically cited Trudeau’s appearance at an anti-racism demonstration on Parliament Hill coinciding with large-scale protests in cities in the United States in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd. As one respondent phrased it, “Over the top and double standards. People protest losing their jobs [and] government says they’re irresponsible but [at] BLM protest some even broke windows in Canada and our PM takes a knee in a crowd.” Another respondent specifically describing Trudeau’s appearance at the demonstration wrote that it “is a disgrace to all my brothers in blue.”

Playing on the broader belief that the Liberals have used the crisis to “seize total control,” a respondent identifying with the far-right populist People’s Party in their assessment referred to “a totally unjust and nonsensical gun ban by order in council.”

When it comes to partisan preferences, our findings indicate that for the most part, Conservatives, who were by far the most critical of the federal Liberal government’s response to the pandemic, drew upon pre-existing political conflicts, but also on salient cultural and social cleavages, in justifying their criticism. Liberals and especially NDP supporters also expressed negative assessments, but these were more often framed in terms of socioeconomic inequalities in the pandemic response and critiques of benefits going to landlords and large corporations.

doi:10.3138/cpp.2021-012

© Canadian Public Policy / Analyse de politiques, June / juin 2021
COVID-19 Experiences

Respondents’ perceptions of the federal government’s response were also shaped by their understandings of, and experiences with, COVID-19. Differences across these variables, however, were most apparent in considering how informed respondents felt about COVID-19, as shown in Table 2. A one-unit increase in how informed respondents were about COVID-19 was associated with a 4.0-percentage-point decrease in rating the government’s response negatively, a 12.1-percentage-point decrease in giving a neutral rating, and a 16.1-percentage-point increase in rating the government’s response positively.

Figure 3 shows that feeling informed about COVID-19 was also associated with attitudes about the federal government’s response in different ways. The proportion of respondents rating the government negatively decreased from 15.1 to 11.1 percent when moving from low to high levels of feeling informed. Differences were even more apparent when other categories were compared. For instance, 36.6 percent of people reporting low levels of information about COVID-19 rated the federal government’s response positively, compared with 52.6 percent of those with high levels of information. Thus, those who felt more informed about COVID-19 also thought that the government was doing a better job of addressing it.

Although reporting specific-COVID-19-related expense increases was not associated with views, reporting worsening financial situations was. Respondents who experienced financial hardship in the previous year were also more likely to rate the government’s response negatively by 3.8 percentage points and less likely to rate it positively by 7.6 percentage points (Table 2). These differences translated into 15.4 percent of respondents with worsening finances reporting negative views, 44.4 percent reporting neutral views, and 40.1 percent reporting positive views (Figure 3).

In addition, benefits receipt was positively associated with support for the federal government’s response. Respondents who applied for CERB were more likely to rate the government’s response positively by 8.1 percentage points and less likely to provide a negative rating by 5.4 percentage points than those who had not applied for CERB (Table 2). According to Figure 3, 50.1 percent of respondents who applied for CERB rated the government’s response as positive, 39.8 percent rated it as neutral, and 9.2 percent rated it as negative.

In their qualitative responses, individuals regularly discussed their perceptions of the federal government with reference to their own experiences, especially in receiving government supports, most notably CERB. One respondent expressed overall approval of government benefit programs while being unhappy about their own experience with receiving benefits: “The federal government did what was required in the immediate wake of the crisis, and despite the fact that I do not qualify for CERB, its rollout was quick and effective for most of Canada . . . yeah, I’m still grumpy about the CERB thing.” Indeed, those who rated the federal response positively also regularly referenced their experiences with benefit receipt as a justification, as in the case in this response: “the CERB program was excellent and made me able to cope throughout these tough times. I am very pleased [with] my government services.”

Others, who gave neutral ratings, also discussed their own and others’ experiences with CERB, pointing out issues they saw in its implementation. One respondent indicated that “CERB is good but it should be based on income and expenses, not just a general number everyone gets. Some people live rent-free while others (like me) have to use almost the whole benefit for living expenses, so I think it could be a little more equitable.” Respondents who held more negative perceptions of federal government responses linked these to their inability to make ends meet despite government benefits as a rationale. For example, one senior wrote that “when you have high drug expenses and rent to pay the money they’ve promised doesn’t go very far. And the money they promised which should have been paid out at the beginning of June has now been pushed back to sometime in July.” Others similarly noted insufficient support provided by benefits: “my husband’s income dropped by more than 25% and there was no help for him . . . and CERB paid me less than EI.”

The variation in perceptions about federal government responses suggests that individuals who are benefiting from CERB are likely having more of their needs met, feel more financially secure, and thus have more favourable attitudes about government. On the flip side, our findings suggest that these policy responses are not meeting the needs of all Canadians — especially people with disabilities and chronic health conditions who are not benefiting from CERB and are facing a host of different social, economic, and health-related challenges during the pandemic.

Discussion

This study examined relationships between respondents’ reported disabilities and chronic health conditions, partisanship, regionality, and experiences with COVID-19 and their views of the federal government’s response to COVID-19. We focused on an already disadvantaged group in Canadian society — people with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Despite these vulnerabilities, this group was largely ignored by policy-makers until about three months into the pandemic. Even so, when it comes to federal financial support, the vast majority of people with disabilities and chronic health conditions who are not benefiting from CERB continue to be excluded from aid programs. As we find, experiences with COVID-19 among these individuals mattered a great deal in shaping perceptions of government responses. However, our findings also point to broader factors, as
political preferences tended to be a stronger predictor of support for federal government responses to the crisis. Indeed, our findings show that respondents’ support for government responses was highly partisan. Our findings are corroborated by more recent public opinion polls, such as ones conducted in Alberta, where satisfaction with federal government responses showed significant splintering along party lines (Fletcher 2020).

Some of the largest differences were seen between respondents affiliated with the Liberal and Conservative parties, with Liberals voicing the most support and Conservatives voicing the least. As the qualitative responses demonstrate, part of this was driven by broader political views surrounding government spending, likely to be the case in the general population as well. Our findings reveal that while political elites by and large demonstrated consensus on how to respond to COVID-19, thus transcending party lines, the public displayed stronger views, a lot of which reflect traditional left–right divides over government spending and who is most “deserving” of government benefits. Although it is among those who believe governments have gone too far that we saw the most partisan responses, Liberal and NDP supporters also noted that too many vulnerable people were being excluded from government programs.

Future work should investigate these claims at the provincial level, linking partisan preferences with perceptions of provincial government responses, where many more governments are led by Conservatives. Our findings indicate more nuanced relationships between party affiliation and support for provincial government responses to the pandemic, where Conservatives in provinces with Conservative governments are still more critical of their governments than Liberals. Some of this may be attributable to concerns over spending even by Conservative-led governments as well as significant social distancing measures enacted by Conservatives in provinces such as Ontario.

We presented findings from one of the few national Canadian surveys that focuses on people with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Due to many of the larger limitations regarding survey research today, including underrepresentation of marginalized communities, quota sampling is extremely useful in studying the immediate effects of health crises on people with disabilities and chronic health conditions. Although quota sampling is not truly reflective of a random sample of the population, our sample does mirror the demographic characteristics of members of the target population of interest, which in this case is Canadians with disabilities and chronic health conditions, as discussed in online Appendix B. However, this online survey likely missed many people without access to computers or the Internet. Results still provide us with considerable understanding of individuals’ experiences and views regarding government responses to COVID-19, giving voice to a group that is often overlooked in politics and policy-making.

Conclusion
Policy preferences among people with disabilities and chronic health conditions reflect broader partisan divides, as well as health and economic situations specific to this group. Our article alludes to how this plays out in relation to support for federal government responses to the COVID-19 crisis. Although respondents mentioned feeling left out and overlooked—“we are the forgotten,” as one respondent put it—perceptions of government responses were less directly driven by respondents’ status as people with disabilities or as having chronic health conditions and more by partisan divisions and broader social, economic, and cultural cleavages (Harell 2020). However, disability and health status may be having indirect effects on attitudes to government via personal experiences with COVID-19, which include financial concerns, barriers in accessing health and social services, and worries about what the so-called “new normal” will look like for them.

Our article speaks to current considerations, but it also alludes to long-term implications both for health and financial wellbeing and for perceptions of government policy and policy-makers. The pandemic is ever-evolving. What many respondents have voiced is that effective policy pandemic countermeasures should include targeted efforts to help disadvantaged groups, in addition to broader efforts to address social conditions shaping experiences during and post-crisis. Policy-makers have long recognized that the needs of persons with disabilities are often overlooked during disasters and emergencies and ensuing recovery efforts. Canada and others have affirmed their commitment to take disability-related needs into account in all disaster-related policies and practices through international agreements including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2020. In this regard, policy experts are calling for permanent income supports targeting disability and health groups (Prince 2020), paralleling similar calls to institutionalize CERB into a universal basic income for all (Snell 2020; Willms and Montgomery 2020). Whatever the case, when it comes to recovery, exclusion should not be the “new normal.”

Acknowledgements
Data collection for this project was funded in part by a Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada Insight Grant, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada (#498400), as well as an Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation Early Researcher Award Grant, Toronto, Ontario, Canada (#502347). The plan for this study was reviewed and approved by research ethics boards at the University of Alberta (REB Ethics ID Pro00101049) and at the University of Toronto (protocol reference number 39352).
Notes
1 As of 22 June 2020, there were 101,019 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Canada and 8,410 deaths with both cases and deaths trending downward across the country (World Health Organization 2021).
2 Washington Group on Disability Statistics (2021); see also Pettinicchio and Maroto (2021) on measuring disability.
3 We tested other combinations of categories, as well as a series of logit and linear models, and found similar relationships across variables. Results are available in online Appendix C.
4 Ordered logistic regression models present another alternative for analyzing ordered categorical data. However, these models assume that the relationship between each pair of outcomes is the same (proportional odds assumption), and initial model tests showed that our data violated this assumption. We therefore chose the more flexible multinomial logistic regression model for our analyses. Ordinal logistic regression results are available in online Appendix C.
5 Demographic controls include age, gender, race, parental and marital status, and education. We also controlled for employment status and homeownership.
6 Descriptive statistics for these variables appear in Appendix A.
7 The “Other or No Party” category includes respondents who listed parties with smaller membership, such as the Green Party, the People’s Party, and the Bloc Québécois, as well as respondents who indicated “Other party” or no preference.
8 We grouped smaller provinces together due to sample size limitations.
9 During a moment of silence at the demonstration, Trudeau, wearing a mask, was seen bowing his head and dropping to one knee in an expression of solidarity with the protest movement.

References
Arcaya, M., E.J. Raker, and M.C. Waters. 2020. “The Social Consequences of Disasters: Individual and Community Change.” Annual Review of Sociology 46(1):11.1–11.21. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-121919-054827.
Aslam, S., M. Hall, and the Canadian Press. 2020. “Canada’s Top Doctor Hearing Reports of Mask-Shaming.” CityNews, 29 May. At https://edmonton.citynews.ca/2020/05/28/canadas-top-doctor-hearing-reports-of-mask-shaming/.
Baer, D., E. Grabb, and W.A. Johnston. 1993. “National Character, Regional Culture, and the Values of Canadians and Americans.” Canadian Review of Sociology 30(1):13–36. https://doi.org/10.10111/j.1755-618x.1993.tb00933.x.
Bethlehem, J. 2010. “Selection Bias in Web Surveys.” International Statistical Review 78(2):161–88. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-5823.2010.00112.x.
Blanck, P., M. Adya, W.N. Myhill, D. Samant, and P. Chen. 2007. “Employment of People with Disabilities: Twenty-Five Years Back and Ahead.” Law and Inequality 25(2):323–54. At https://lawandinequality.org/article/employment-of-people-with-disabilities-twenty-five-years-back-and-ahead/.
Bol, D., M. Giani, A. Blais, and P. Loewen. 2021. “The Effect of COVID-19 Lockdowns on Political Support: Some Good News for Democracy?” European Journal of Political Research 60(2): 497–505. https://doi.org/10.1111/1475-6765.12401.
Canada. 2020a. “Minister Qualtrough Announces New Details on Proposed Financial Support for Persons with Disabilities during COVID-19.” Employment and Social Development Canada News Release, 17 July. At https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/07/x.html.
Canada. 2020b. “Vulnerable Populations and COVID-19.” Public Health Agency of Canada. At https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/publications/diseases-conditions/vulnerable-populations-covid-19.html.
Canada Revenue Agency. 2019. Table 8: Number of Individuals with a DTC Certificate by Duration and Restriction, 2018. At https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/cra-arc/prog-policy/stats/dtc-stats/DTC-2018-tbl8-2018_e.pdf.
Canadian Press. 2020a. “Coronavirus: Here’s a Timeline of COVID-19 Cases in Canada.” Global News, 3 March. At https://globalnews.ca/news/6627505/coronavirus-covid-canada-timeline/.
Canadian Press. 2020b. “COVID-19 Highlights Existing Barriers for Canadians with Communication Disabilities.” CTV News, 7 May. At https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/covid-19-highlights-existing-barriers-for-canadians-with-communication-disabilities-1.4929736.
Canadian Press. 2020c. “What’s Happened in Canada since WHO Declared COVID-19 a Pandemic.” CBC News, 11 April. At https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/covid-19-timeline-canada-who-pandemic-1.5529920.
Chen, X., J.L. Hay, E.A. Waters, M.T. Kiviniemi, C. Biddle, E. Schofield, Y. Li, K. Kaphingst, and H. Orom. 2018. “Health Literacy and Use and Trust in Health Information.” Journal of Health Communication 23(8):724–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2018.1511658.
Choi, S. 2020. “Why COVID-19 Has Personal Support Workers Feeling Uneasy during Home-Care Visits.” CBC News, 4 April. At https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/why-covid-19-has-personal-support-workers-feeling-uneasy-during-home-care-visits-1.5520722.
Cloutier, E., C. Grondin, and A. Lévesque. 2018. “Perceptions of Structural Injustice and Efficiency: The Context of Control: A Cross-National Investigation.” British Journal of Social Psychology 57(3):429–61. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjso.12082.
Corcoran, K.E., D. Pettinicchio, and J.T.N. Young. 2011. “The Context of Control: A Cross-National Investigation of the Link between Political Institutions, Efficacy, and Collective Action.” British Journal of Social Psychology 50(4):575–605. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8309.2011.02076.x.
Corcoran, K.E., D. Pettinicchio, and J.T.N. Young. 2015. “Perceptions of Structural Injustice and Efficacy: Participation in Low/Moderate/High-Cost Forms of Collective Action.” Sociological Inquiry 85(3):429–61. https://doi.org/10.1111/soci.12082.
Driedger, S.M., R. Maier, and C. Jardine. 2018. “‘Damned If You Do, and Damned If You Don’t’: Communicating about Uncertainty and Evolving Science during the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic.” Journal of Risk Research 17(7):1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/13669877.2018.1459793.
Perceptions of Canadian Federal Policy Responses to COVID-19 among People with Disabilities and Chronic Health Conditions

Dryden, J. 2020. “Wexit Political Party Can Now Run Candidates in Canadian Federal Elections.” CBC News, 11 January. At https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/wexit-peter-downing-western-separatism-elections-canada-1.5423793.

Emerson, E., N. Fortune, G. Llewellyn, and R. Stancilffe. 2020. “Loneliness, Social Support, Social Isolation and Wellbeing among Working Age Adults with and without Disability: Cross Sectional Study.” Disability and Health Journal 14(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dhjo.2020.100965.

Fletcher, R. 2020. “Most Albertans Approve of Government Responses to COVID-19, but ‘Political Lens’ Skews Our Views.” CBC News, 15 June. Accessed 10 September at https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/calgary/alberta-poll-covid-government-handling-pandemic-approval-1.5608611.

Fothergill, A., and L. Peek. 2015. Children of Katrina. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Fredriksen-Goldsen, K.L., H.J. Kim, and S.E. Barkan. 2012. “Disability among Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Adults: Disparities in Prevalence and Risk.” American Journal of Public Health 102(1): e16-21. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2011.300379.

Han, Q., B. Zheng, M. Cristea, M. Agostini, J. Belanger, B. Gutzkow, J. Kreienkamp, PsyCorona Team, and P. Leander. 2020. “Trust in Government and Its Associations with Health Behaviour and Prosocial Behaviour during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” PsyArXiv, 29 June. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/p5gs.

Harell, A. 2020. “How Canada’s Pandemic Is Shifting Political Views.” Report for the Institute for Research on Public Policy. At https://policyoptions.irpp.org/fr/magazines/avril-2020/how-canadas-pandemic-response-is-shifting-political-views/.

Hoffman, J.S., V. Sandas, and N. Pendleton. 2020. “The Effects of Historical Housing Policies on Resident Exposure to Intraburban Heat: A Study of 108 US Urban Areas.” Climate 8(1):12. https://doi.org/10.3390/cli8010012.

Howlett, M., and A. Migone. 2019. “Over-Promising and Under-Delivering: The Canadian Policy Style.” In Policy Styles and Policy Making: Exploring the Linkages, ed. M. Howlett and J. Tosun, 137–56. London: Routledge.

Jones, M.K. 2011. “Disability, Employment and Earnings: An Examination of Heterogeneity.” Applied Economics 43(8): 1001–17. https://doi.org/10.1080/00036840802600053.

Kevins, A., and S.N. Soroka. 2018. “Growing Apart? Partisan Sorting in Canada, 1992–2015.” Canadian Journal of Political Science 51(1):103–33. https://doi.org/10.1017/s0008423917007013.

Leoppy, J. 2020. “When Collecting CERB Means Losing Disability Benefits.” Briarpatch Magazine, 2 July. At https://briarpatchmagazine.com/saskdispatch/view/when-collecting-cerb-means-losing-disability-benefits.

Liao, T.F. 1994. Interpreting Probability Models: Logit, Probit, and Other Generalized Linear Models. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Link, B.G., and J.C. Phelan. 1995. “Social Conditions and Fundamental Causes of Disease.” Journal of Health and Social Behavior 35:80–94. https://doi.org/10.2307/2626958.

Link, B.G., and J.C. Phelan. 2005. “Fundamental Sources of Health Inequalities.” In Policy Challenges in Modern Health Care, ed. D. Mechanic, L.B. Rogut, D.C. Colby, and J.R. Knickman, 71–84. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Liu, B.F., and A.M. Mehta. 2020. “From the Periphery and toward a Centralized Model for Trust in Government Risk and Disaster Communication.” Journal of Risk Research. https://doi.org/10.1080/13698420.2020.1773516.

Maroto, M., and D. Pettinicchio. 2014a. “Disability, Structural Inequality, and Work: The Influence of Occupational Segregation on Earnings for People with Different Disabilities.” Research in Social Stratification and Mobility 38:76–92. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rssm.2014.08.002.

Maroto, M., and D. Pettinicchio. 2014b. “The Limitations of Disability Antidiscrimination Legislation: Policymaking and the Economic Well-Being of People with Disabilities.” Law and Policy 36(4):370–407. https://doi.org/10.1111/lapo.12024.

Maroto, M., and D. Pettinicchio. 2015. “Twenty-Five Years after the ADA: Situating Disability in America’s System of Stratification.” Disability Studies Quarterly 35(3):1–34. https://doi.org/10.18061/dsq.v35n3.4927.

Maroto, M., and D. Pettinicchio. 2020. “Barriers to Economic Security: Disability, Employment, and Asset Disparities in Canada.” Canadian Review of Sociology 57(1):53–79. https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12268.

Maroto, M., D. Pettinicchio, and A. Patterson. 2019. “Hierarchies of Categorical Disadvantage: Incorporating Disability Into Intersectional Analyses of Economic Insecurity.” Gender and Society 33(1):64–93. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243218794648.

Maru/Blue Public Opinion. 2021. “Support for Pandemic Lockdown Rules.” 9 January. At https://www.marugroup.net/public-opinion-polls/canada/support-for-pandemic-lockdown-rules.

Mather, M., and B. Jarosz. 2020. “Workers at Risk during the Coronavirus Pandemic: Four in 10 Food Preparers and Servers Are Low-Income.” Population Reference Bureau. At https://www.prb.org/workers-at-risk-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-four-in-10-food-preparers-and-servers-are-low-income/.

Mattila, M. 2020. “Does Poor Health Mobilize People Into Action? Health, Political Trust, and Participation?” European Political Science Review 12(1):49–65. https://doi.org/10.1017/esp.2019.0033x.

Menard, S. 2002. Applied Logistic Regression Analysis, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Merkley, E., A. Bridgeman, P.J. Loewen, T. Owen, D. Ruths, and O. Zhillin. 2020. “A Rare Moment of Cross-Partisan Consensus: Elite and Public Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Canada.” Canadian Journal of Political Science. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423920000311.

Migone, A.R. 2020. “Trust, but Customize: Federalism’s Impact on the Canadian COVID-19 Response.” Policy and Society 39(3):382–402. https://doi.org/10.1080/14494035.2020.1783788.

Miller, A. 2020. “Comparing the Coronavirus Curve.” CBC News, 2 April. At https://newsinteractives.cbc.ca/coronaviruscurve.
Morey, B.N. 2018. “Mechanisms by Which Anti-immigrant Stigma Exacerbates Racial/Ethnic Health Disparities.” *American Journal of Public Health* 108(4):460–3. https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2017.304266.

Morris, S., G. Fawcett, L. Brisebois, and J. Hughes. 2018. “A Demographic, Employment and Income Profile of Canadians with Disabilities Aged 15 Years and over, 2017.” Statistics Canada. Catalogue no. 89-654-X201800.

Olsson, L., A. Jerneck, H. Thoren, J. Persson, and D. O’Byrne. 2013. “Who Counts? Measuring Disability Cross-Nationally in Census Data.” *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology* 9(2):257–84. https://doi.org/10.1093/jssma/smaa046.

Prince, M. 2020. “COVID-19, Canadians with Disabilities, and the Need for Major Reforms.” *Broadent Institute*, 23 June. At https://www.broadentinstitute.ca/covid_19_canadians_with_disabilities_and_the_need_for_major_reforms.

Quinn, S.C., J. Parmer, V.S. Freimuth, K.M. Hilyard, D. Musa, and K.H. Kim. 2013. “Exploring Communication, Trust in Government, and Vaccination Intention later in the 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic: Results of a National Survey.” *Biosecurity and Bioterrorism: Biodefense Strategy, Practice, and Science* 11(2):1–27. https://doi.org/10.1089/bsp.2012.0048.

Roser, M., H. Ritchie, E. Ortiz-Ospina, and J. Hasell. 2020. “Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19).” Published Online at *OurWorldInData*. At https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus.

Schonlau, M., A. van Soest, A. Kaptyn, and M. Couper. 2009. “Selection Bias in Web Surveys and the Use of Propensity Scores.” *Sociological Methods and Research* 37(3):291–318. https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124108327128.

Shakern, S. 2020. “Canadians with Disabilities Left Out of Federal Coronavirus Pandemic Funding.” *Huffington Post*, 24 May. At https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/disabilities-coronavirus-funding_ca_5ecaca68e5b680ec5006511c.

Sheluchin, A., R.M. Johnston, and C. van der Linden. 2020. “Public Responses to Policy Reversals: The Case of Mask Usage in Canada during COVID-19.” *Canadian Public Policy/Analyse de politiques* 46(2):S119–26. https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.2020-089.

Shuey, K., and E. Jovic. 2013. “Disability Accommodation in Nonstandard and Precarious Employment Arrangements.” *Work and Occupations* 40(2):174–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/073088413481030.

Snell, J. 2020. “Winnipeg MP Pushes to Convert CERB to Basic Income for Canadians.” *Winnipeg Sun*, 12 August. At https://winnipegsun.com/news/news-news/winnipeg-mp-pushes-to-convert-cerb-to-basic-income-for-canadians.

Statistics Canada. 2017. “Population and Dwelling Counts, for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2016 and 2011 Censuses—100% Data.” Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables, 2016 Census. Cat. No. 98-402-X2016001. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. Accessed 8 February 2017 at https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/pd-pl/Table.cfm?Lang=Eng&T=101&S=50&O=A.

Statistics Canada. 2020a. “Census Profile, 2016 Census.” Cat. No. 98-316-X2016001. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. At https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E.

Statistics Canada. 2020b. “Education Highlight Tables, 2016 Census.” Cat. No. 98-402-X2016010. Ottawa: Statistics Canada. At http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/hlt-fst/edu-sco/index-eng.cfm.

Taha, S.A., K. Matheson, and H. Anisman. 2013. “The 2009 H1N1 Influenza Pandemic: The Role of Threat, Coping, and Media Trust on Vaccination Intentions in Canada.” *Journal of Health Communication* 18(3):278–90. https://doi.org/10.1080/10810730.2012.727960.

Van Rooij, M., A. Lusardi, and R. Alessie. 2011. “Financial Literacy and Stock Market Participation.” *Journal of Financial Economics* 101(2):449–72. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jfineco.2011.03.006.

Vigo, D., S. Patton, K. Paier, M. Krausz, S. Taylor, B. Rush, G. Raviola, S. Saxena, G. Thornicroft, and L.N. Yatham. 2020. “Mental Health of Communities during the COVID-19 Pandemic.” *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 65(10):681–7. https://doi.org/10.1177/0706743720926676.

Waite, S., and N. Denier. 2019. “A Research Note on Canada’s LGBT Data Landscape: Where We Are and What the Future Holds.” *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie* 56(1):93–117. https://doi.org/10.1111/cars.12232.

Wall, K. 2017. “Low Income among Persons with a Disability in Canada.” *Insights on Canadian Society, Statistics Canada*. Cat. No. 75-006-X. Ottawa: Ministry of Industry.

Washington Group on Disability Statistics. 2021. “About the Washington Group.” At http://www.washingtongroup-disability.com.

Willms, J., and H. Montgomery. 2020. “Coronavirus Update: Senators Tell Ottawa to Consider a Universal Basic Income for Economic Recovery.” *The Globe and Mail*, 14 July. At https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-coronavirus-update-senators-tell-ottawa-to-consider-a-universal-basic/.
Wilson, N., T. Chambers, A. Kvalsvig, A. Mizdrak, N. Nghiem, J. Summers, and M. Baker. 2020. “NZ’s ‘Team of 5 Million’ Has Achieved the Lowest COVID-19 Death Rate in the OECD: But There Are still Gaps in Our Pandemic Response.” Public Health Expert, 22 July. At https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/pubhealthexpert/nzs-team-of-5-million-has-achieved-the-lowest-covid-19-death-rate-in-the-oecd-but-there-are-still-gaps-in-our-pandemic-response/.

Wiseman, N. 2007. In Search of Canadian Political Culture. Vancouver: UBC Press.

World Health Organization. 2021. “Canada Situation.” At https://covid19.who.int/region/amro/country/ca.

Zwerling, C., P.S. Whitten, N.L. Sprince, C.S. Davis, R.B. Wallace, P.D. Blanck, and S.G. Heeringa. 2002. “Workforce Participation by Persons with Disabilities: The National Health Interview Survey Disability Supplement, 1994 to 1995.” Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine 44(4):358–64.
Appendix A: Survey Data Information and Descriptive Overview

The 2020 COVID-19 Response Survey of People with Disabilities and Health Conditions is a quota-based online survey administered from 11 to 22 June 2020 with the help of Qualtrics (Qualtrics 2021), an Internet-based survey company, to obtain a sample of people with disabilities and health conditions across provinces. Qualtrics recruits participants from a range of online research panels with which the company partners. These panels consist of pools of people who have been recruited to take regular surveys for academic and corporate researchers. Panelists provide detailed and updated personal information to panel maintainers, including demographic information. Qualtrics, as a panel aggregator, matches respondents to surveys based on their profiles and randomly selects them to take surveys that they are likely to quality for, based on a given survey’s eligibility criteria.

In the case of our online survey, we provided Qualtrics with eligibility criteria based on age, region, and health and disability status, which it used to recruit participants from appropriate online panels to our survey. Qualtrics takes steps to ensure that a respondent does not take the same survey multiple times or self-select into particular surveys based on the survey topic and incentives. Our survey instrument also included additional screening questions and attention checks to mitigate potential data quality issues. We included location-based sampling quotas to ensure that the proportion of respondents from each province within our final sample matched the proportion of the Canadian population located in each province.

Online samples of the type used in this survey are common in the social sciences and are frequently used as an alternative to much costlier traditional survey and sampling methods, such as those based on telephone interviews and random digit dialing.

We began with 1,392 respondents. Twenty-nine cases were initially dropped due to poor quality (including gibberish) in their qualitative responses. An additional 51 cases were removed because respondents did not complete the survey. In order to ensure that respondents were reading and answering the survey questions carefully, we included two quality control screening questions that required respondents to provide a specific answer. Those who did not answer both quality control questions correctly were screened out of the survey. A final 285 cases were removed because respondents either did not meet the inclusion criteria or failed quality control and attention checks. This resulted in our final sample of 1,027 respondents with no missing data across variables.

The median survey response time was 20 minutes and the mean was 29 minutes. Survey response times ranged from 6 minutes to 15 hours. Longer response times likely reflected instances where respondents began the survey, left it open on their devices, and then went back to complete it later on. Ninety-five percent of respondents completed the survey in under 1 hour and 80 percent of respondents completed the survey in less than 30 minutes.

Descriptive Information

Table A.1 presents descriptive statistics for our survey sample. The mean age for respondents in our sample was 49 years, which is older than the mean age of 41 years for the population in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2020a). This was expected, however, because disabilities and chronic health conditions tend to be more prevalent among the older population (Canadian Chronic Disease Surveillance System 2019; Morris et al. 2018).

The gender make-up of our sample was 53 percent female, 46 percent male, and 1 percent nonbinary or other. According to the 2017 CSD, disabilities are more prevalent among women; 56 percent of people with disabilities were female (Morris et al. 2018, 8). Ninety percent of respondents self-identified as heterosexual, 3.5 percent identified as homosexual (gay or lesbian), 5.0 percent as bisexual, and 1.3 percent reported other identities, such as asexual, transgender, and two-spirit. Data on sexual orientation are limited, but across several U.S. and Canadian studies 1–2.3 percent of the population identified as gay or lesbian, 0.7–2.9 percent as bisexual, and 0.6 percent as transgender (Waite and Denier 2019). A greater proportion of respondents identified as a sexual minority in our data than estimated for the larger population. However, additional research shows that rates of disability tend to be higher among lesbian, gay, and bisexual adults (Fredriksen-Goldsen, Kim, and Barkan 2012).

In terms of education, 22.8 percent of respondents had a high school diploma or less education; 11.1 percent had some postsecondary education but no diploma; 31.1 percent completed an apprenticeship, trades, or college certificate; 24.7 percent had a bachelor’s degree; and 10.3 percent obtained a degree beyond a bachelor’s, such as a doctorate, master’s, or professional degree. Respondents obtained somewhat more education than the population across Canada. Among adults aged 25–64 in Canada, 35.3 percent had a high school diploma or less (this includes people with some postsecondary education but no degree); 36.3 percent had an apprenticeship, trades, college certificate, or university certificate below a bachelor’s degree; and 28.5 percent obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2020b).

Approximately 35.2 percent of respondents were employed full-time and another 12.6 percent were employed part-time; 4.4 percent were unemployed, and 47.9 percent were not in the labour force, which included homemakers, students, retired persons, and people unable to work due to COVID-19. In this sample, 8.8 percent of respondents reported that they were unable to work due to COVID-19. According to the 2017 CSD, the employment rate among people with disabilities was 59.4 percent (Morris et al. 2018, 8).
Table A.1: Descriptive Overview of Data (N = 1,027 Adults)

| Variable                                           | Sample Frequency | Proportion or Mean | Estimate     | 95% CI            |
|----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| Age (mean, y)                                      | —                | 48.999            | (47.923–50.075) |
| Gender                                             |                  |                   |              |                   |
| Male                                               | 472              | 0.460             | (0.429–0.490) |
| Female                                             | 544              | 0.530             | (0.499–0.560) |
| Non-binary or other                                | 11               | 0.011             | (0.004–0.017) |
| Sexual identity                                    |                  |                   |              |                   |
| Heterosexual                                       | 927              | 0.903             | (0.884–0.921) |
| Homosexual                                         | 36               | 0.035             | (0.024–0.046) |
| Bisexual                                           | 51               | 0.050             | (0.036–0.063) |
| Other                                              | 13               | 0.013             | (0.006–0.020) |
| Member of a racialized minority group              | 184              | 0.179             | (0.156–0.203) |
| Immigrant                                          | 148              | 0.144             | (0.123–0.166) |
| Indigenous                                         | 24               | 0.023             | (0.014–0.033) |
| First language other than English or French         | 50               | 0.049             | (0.036–0.062) |
| Employment status (reduced variable)               |                  |                   |              |                   |
| Employed                                           | 490              | 0.477             | (0.447–0.508) |
| Unemployed                                         | 45               | 0.044             | (0.031–0.056) |
| NILF (homemaker, retired, in school)               | 402              | 0.391             | (0.362–0.421) |
| Unable to work due to COVID-19                      | 90               | 0.088             | (0.070–0.105) |
| Education                                          |                  |                   |              |                   |
| HS or less                                         | 234              | 0.228             | (0.202–0.254) |
| Some PSE, no degree                                | 114              | 0.111             | (0.092–0.130) |
| Apprenticeship, trades, or college certificate     | 319              | 0.311             | (0.282–0.339) |
| Bachelor’s degree                                  | 254              | 0.247             | (0.221–0.274) |
| Advanced degree                                    | 106              | 0.103             | (0.085–0.122) |
| Marital status                                     |                  |                   |              |                   |
| Never married                                      | 324              | 0.315             | (0.287–0.344) |
| Cohabiting                                         | 138              | 0.134             | (0.114–0.155) |
| Married                                            | 406              | 0.395             | (0.365–0.425) |
| Formerly married                                   | 159              | 0.155             | (0.133–0.177) |
| Any children                                       | 246              | 0.240             | (0.213–0.266) |
| No. of adults in household                         |                  |                   |              |                   |
| 1 (self)                                           | 329              | 0.320             | (0.292–0.349) |
| 2                                                  | 484              | 0.471             | (0.441–0.502) |
| 3                                                  | 124              | 0.121             | (0.101–0.141) |
| 4                                                  | 65               | 0.063             | (0.048–0.078) |
| ≥ 5                                                | 25               | 0.024             | (0.015–0.034) |
| Province (reduced)                                 |                  |                   |              |                   |
| Ontario                                            | 399              | 0.389             | (0.359–0.418) |
| Quebec                                             | 230              | 0.224             | (0.198–0.249) |
| British Columbia                                   | 134              | 0.130             | (0.110–0.151) |
| Prairie Provinces                                  | 199              | 0.194             | (0.170–0.218) |
| Atlantic Provinces                                 | 65               | 0.063             | (0.048–0.078) |

Notes: Estimates refer to sample data. Estimates provided as proportions unless otherwise specified.
Source: 2020 COVID-19 Response Survey of People with Disabilities and Health Conditions.
2018), which indicates a lower employment rate in our sample (47.8%). However, percentages are much closer when respondents unable to work due to COVID-19 are considered.

Racialized groups are likely underrepresented in this sample. The percentage who identify as Indigenous within our sample (2.3%) was approximately half that in the larger population (4.9%) in 2016 (Statistics Canada 2020a). The percentage who identify as nonwhite in our sample (17.8%) was also lower than the percentage of people who identify as visible minorities in Canada (22.3%). Immigrants and noncitizens were also underrepresented in this sample, with 14.4 percent of respondents indicating that they immigrated to Canada, compared with 21.9 percent of the population, and 5.5 percent of respondents indicating that they were not Canadian citizens, compared with 7.0 percent of the population. However, again, it is not clear whether these groups are over- or underrepresented within groups of people with disabilities and CHCs.

When sample respondents are compared with individuals aged 15 and older in Canada, the sample closely mirrored the population in terms of marital status and household size. Within the sample, 53.0 percent of respondents were married or cohabiting, 31.5 percent were never married, and 15.5 percent were formerly married. Across Canada in 2016, 57.4 percent of individuals age 15 and older were married or in common law relationships, 28.2 percent were never married, and 14.2 percent were formerly married (Statistics Canada 2020a).

Finally, data were collected via quota-based sampling to ensure that we obtained a representative sample across provinces. We obtained a sample with 38 percent of responses from Ontario, 23 percent from Quebec, 13 percent from British Columbia, 18 percent from the Prairie Provinces (Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan), and 7 percent from the Atlantic Provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island), based on 2016 Census population estimates.

**Disability and Chronic Health Conditions**

Table A.2 provides further information regarding the prevalence of different disabilities and chronic health conditions among sample participants. Overall, 10.6 percent of respondents reported a single disability or condition, 35.0 percent reported 2-3 disabilities or conditions, 32.4 percent reported 4-5 disabilities or conditions, and 22.0 percent reported six or more disabilities or conditions.

Disability-related questions allowed respondents to indicate the severity of their disability by reporting whether they sometimes, often, or always experienced any vision, hearing, physical, cognitive, emotional, or other difficulties. Table A.2 includes rates of any disability for whether the respondent indicated sometimes, often, or always and rates of more severe disabilities for whether the respondent indicated often or always. In both cases, emotional or other disabilities were the most commonly reported.

Regarding chronic health conditions, diabetes, asthma, hypertension, and obesity were the most common chronic health conditions reported by participants. Fewer participants (<6%) reported conditions such as cancer, kidney disease, respiratory disease, heart disease, and being immunocompromised.
### Table A.2: Descriptive Statistics for Disability and Chronic Health Condition Variables (N = 1,027 Adults)

| Variable                                      | Sample Frequency | Estimate | 95% CI        |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------|----------|---------------|
| No. of disabilities or chronic health conditions |                  |          |               |
| 1                                             | 109              | 0.106    | (0.087–0.125) |
| 2–3                                           | 359              | 0.350    | (0.320–0.379) |
| 4–5                                           | 333              | 0.324    | (0.296–0.353) |
| ≥ 6                                           | 226              | 0.220    | (0.195–0.245) |
| Disability type (any)                         |                  |          |               |
| Vision                                        | 558              | 0.543    | (0.513–0.574) |
| Hearing                                       | 270              | 0.263    | (0.236–0.290) |
| Physical                                      | 433              | 0.422    | (0.391–0.452) |
| Cognitive                                     | 502              | 0.489    | (0.458–0.519) |
| Emotional                                     | 565              | 0.550    | (0.520–0.581) |
| Other                                         | 591              | 0.575    | (0.545–0.606) |
| Disability type (always or often)             |                  |          |               |
| Vision                                        | 120              | 0.117    | (0.097–0.136) |
| Hearing                                       | 54               | 0.053    | (0.039–0.066) |
| Physical                                      | 131              | 0.128    | (0.107–0.148) |
| Cognitive                                     | 128              | 0.125    | (0.104–0.145) |
| Emotional                                     | 269              | 0.262    | (0.235–0.289) |
| Other                                         | 426              | 0.415    | (0.385–0.445) |
| Chronic health condition                      |                  |          |               |
| Asthma                                        | 249              | 0.242    | (0.216–0.269) |
| Cancer                                        | 42               | 0.041    | (0.029–0.053) |
| Chronic kidney disease                        | 16               | 0.016    | (0.008–0.023) |
| Chronic respiratory or lung disease           | 54               | 0.053    | (0.039–0.066) |
| Diabetes                                      | 262              | 0.255    | (0.228–0.282) |
| Hypertension                                  | 221              | 0.215    | (0.190–0.240) |
| Obesity                                       | 163              | 0.159    | (0.136–0.181) |
| Immunocompromised                             | 51               | 0.050    | (0.036–0.063) |
| Heart disease                                 | 56               | 0.055    | (0.041–0.068) |

Notes: Estimates refer to sample data. Estimates provided as proportions unless otherwise specified.

Source: 2020 COVID-19 Response Survey of People with Disabilities and Health Conditions.