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Canadian Disability Policy Alliance
Alliance Canadienne concernant
les politiques reliées au handicap

Disability policy in Canada: Then and now...

North-Eastern Political Science Association
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AIMS

1. To describe the trajectory of disability policy in Canada, including current state and recent developments;
2. To explore current disability policy as a reflection of Canadian culture and values;
3. To open a discussion reflecting on how we have ended up where we are in Canada and the US.

1. History of disability policy in Canada

- < 1980 Minimal explicit disability policy
- 1981 – 1995 International Pull
- 1996 – 2005 Provincial Push
- 2006 – 2014 Federal Monitoring
- > 2015 Federal Leadership

2. Disability policy as a reflection of Canadian culture

- 3 aims of disability policy
 - Access
 - Support
 - Equity (Bickenbach, 1996)
- 37 federal statutes explicitly addressing disability
 - 21 aimed at support
 - 10 aimed at access
 - 6 aimed at equity
- Canadian culture
 - 34% On-side; 28% Young bystanders; 22% Older detached; 15% Indifferent (Angus-Reid, 2015)
 - Is there a disability community? (Ville et al., 2003; Prince, 2006)

3. Where are we today?

- On the verge of new federal accessibility legislation
- Expressed intention to sign Optional Protocol of UNCRPD
- Robust HR legislation, but disappointing impact on equity
- Low spending / benefits / eligibility (OECD, 2010)
- People with disabilities still significantly disadvantaged in employment, income, education
- Intersectionality with poverty, gender, ethnicity, indigeneity

- Need for a disability policy lens (McColl, 2017; see attached; <http://www.disabilitypolicyalliance.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/dispollens-2017-New-Document.pdf>)
- Need for macro social indicator of social inclusion, barrier removal – e.g., *Time Use Dissimilarity Index*.

The *Time Use Dissimilarity Index* is calculated using data derived from the General Social Survey (GSS; Statistics Canada, 2011) and the American Time Use Survey (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). The *Index* provides a population-based indicator of differences in daily activities. It shows that disabled Americans are 16% dissimilar from non-disabled Americans in their time use, whereas disabled Canadians are only 10% dissimilar from their non-disabled counterparts. Disabled Americans spend significantly more time sleeping, using TVs/computers, and in unreported activity than their non-disabled counterparts, and less time in paid work and social leisure than disabled Canadians (Wilson & McColl, in press).

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About the CDPA:

The **Canadian Disability Policy Alliance** (CDPA) is a national collaboration of disability researchers, advocates, and policy-makers, aimed at creating and mobilizing knowledge to enhance disability policy in Canada. The Alliance has been funded by Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council since 2009. Through the co-creation and dissemination of new knowledge about disability policy, we seek to realize a vision of Canada as a place where people with disabilities enjoy full participation and citizenship, supported by a coherent framework of legislation, regulation and programs. (www.disabilitypolicyalliance.ca)

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