

Pipelining: Problematizing the Social Constructionism of Disability in Supported Employment

Jack Michael Viere

Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts In
Political Science

Jason P. Kelly
Luke P. Plotica
Ashley Shew

Monday, April 30, 2018
Blacksburg, Virginia

Keywords: disability, supported employment, Disability Employment Conundrum, social
constructionism

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ABSTRACT

People who are disabled encounter income inequity and employment discrimination. The intersection of disability-based inequity and employment discrimination has increasingly been called the Disability and Employment Conundrum (DEC). Within the last 20 years, the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model attempts to resolve the DEC. Through a policy-based method called Supported Employment (SE), the IPS model aims to gain employment for people who are disabled and seeking employment. Much of the research that supports the IPS model neglects to look at external factors that impact the DEC. The IPS model's scope focuses on internal factors, or the individuals who are seeking employment, and is thereby narrowed. The IPS model's narrowed scope disproportionately impacts people with cognitive disabilities who are seeking employment. From a social constructionist perspective, this thesis examines how the IPS model became focused on internal factors at the expense of people who are disabled and seeking employment.

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GENERAL ABSTRACT

People who are disabled encounter income inequity and employment discrimination. Disability-based employment problems are increasingly fall under what is called the Disability and Employment Conundrum (DEC). Within the last 20 years, several models to reintegrate disabled people back into the workforce have been used to attempt to resolve the DEC. Through a policy-based method called Supported Employment (SE), the Individual Placement Support model aims to gain employment for people who are disabled and seeking employment. Much of the research that supports the IPS model does not look at external factors that impact the DEC. Instead, the IPS model primarily focuses on the individuals who are seeking employment. This narrowed scope disproportionately impacts people with cognitive disabilities who are seeking employment. From a social constructionist perspective, this thesis examines how the IPS model became focused on internal factors at the expense of people who are disabled and seeking employment.

Acknowledgements

I want to offer a few remarks of gratitude to several individuals who helped me on this thesis project.

Simon Pistor—Your willingness to provide fresh eyes to a subject area outside of your own research really gave me the extra push I needed in the final stages of the writing process. Having another graduate student take an interest in your writing and then offering insights, criticisms, and edits was unexpectedly useful. All the best as you continue to pursue your own research!

Ashley Shew—Your consistent patience with my navigation through disability language paired with relevant research recommendations makes me miss the times we shared in your graduate seminars. Your passion for advocacy, teaching style, and research set a high standard for what faculty ought to strive for in academics. I hope that this thesis project meets that standard of “whole-assing” rather than “half-assing” a topic!

Luke Plotica—Your ability to find appropriate language and situate my research interests within broader discourses exemplifies why I started referring to you as the Political Science Department’s “diamond in the rough.” I wish that we had met earlier and that I had the chance to share a semester with you in a graduate seminar setting. Both your interest and insight on my thesis made for easier writing and editing experiences. I know that you will continue to positively influence others in your future endeavors.

Jason Kelly—As I reflect on my time in this master’s program, I think back to Research Methods II and how you took a genuine interest in all the students’ research topics. While I was trying to find a faculty member who would be willing to work on my committee, your openness in that graduate seminar was one of the first times I experienced a faculty member who did not shy away from my research. Throughout the outlining, writing, and editing stages of this project, you consistently offered clear guidance that made for a very smooth time in the master’s program. I hope you continue to influence future mentees as you have positively impacted me as a graduate student.

Mauro Caraccioli—Thank you for regularly (and nonchalantly) embodying what it means to “do academics.” Since we began our time together at Virginia Tech, you have played several, significant roles in my life: graduate professor I took seminars with, undergraduate professor I TAed under, teacher who improved my writing and research habits, and perhaps most importantly, lifelong mentor. These roles (and more) have in one way or another impacted this thesis project. Writing, editing, and methodology aside, your ability to articulate your own research to various audiences set an ideal that I wish to achieve at some point in my life. I will miss your energy and passion for working with students. Although working with undergraduate students might lead professors and TAs to think that “you can’t save them all,” there is no question that those students who you incite to actively engage in their education will become better students, better citizens, and better people because of your influence. I hope that the pressures faced by academics never drags you down or causes you to have an “off” day since you will undoubtedly continue to positively shape students!

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List of Abbreviations

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
AFPH	American Federation of the Physically Handicapped
CE	Competitive Employment
DEC	Disability Employment Conundrum
IPS	Individual Placement and Support (model)
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SE	Supported Employment
SMI	Severe Mental Illness
SSDI	Social Security Disability Insurance
SSI	Supplemental Security Income
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis focuses on the impact of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of employment on people diagnosed with severe mental illnesses (SMI) within the context of the United States. The IPS model falls within the broader categorization of supported employment (SE). SE employment falls within an even broader categorization of vocational rehabilitation (VR). The relevant origins of VR begin with the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Act's goal was to extend and revise the authorization of grants to states for vocational rehabilitation services, with special emphasis on services to individuals with the most severe disabilities.¹ The Act initiated rehabilitation programs that aimed to gradually reintegrate disabled people back into the workforce. One example is sheltered workshops in which disabled employees produce consumable goods for less than minimum wage. VR, SE, and the IPS model each have their own subsequent fields of study that quantify their successes and shortcomings in implementing possible solutions to the Disability Employment Conundrum (DEC).

This thesis briefly situates each of these fields, arguing that a political view that incorporates the intersection of economics and government policy, as opposed to a psychiatric or economic view, is more effective at recognizing some of the problems that are not directly addressed by models expressed through VR, SE, and IPS. A political perspective has the potential to incorporate a relevant consideration of economic factors, like income, that a strictly psychiatric perspective does not. Likewise, a psychiatric perspective does not effectively consider the economic hardships faced by people with SMI; this much is expressed in the IPS model. Therefore, a political perspective functions as a hybrid of both economic and psychiatric views on disability

¹ The U.S. Department of Education, *The Rehabilitation Act of 1973*.
<https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/reg/narrative.html>

and employment by uniquely theorizing the problematization of disability. Additionally, a political view includes a historical understanding of disability through a social constructionist lens. The problematization of disability as a politically-defined category, explored in this thesis, can lead to pragmatic applications that economic or psychiatric views may not.

The primary political problem that this thesis addresses is pipelining. Pipelining is the causal relationship between disability type and employment type. Pipelining is the phenomenon whereby individuals are consistently placed in certain kinds of jobs based upon their disability classification. Thus, the classification commonly restricts possible types of employment according to types of disability. Pipelining is observable when certain diagnoses of disabilities are more likely to be found in certain job sectors or positions. Two consequences of pipelining are disabled job applicants gain employment in entry-level positions that are difficult to retain and these positions have lower starting wages. One of the typical examples² of pipelining is an employee at big box store who has Down Syndrome. His job position is a cart attendant; he collects carts from the parking lot and returns them to cart garage nearby the store entrance.

Pipelining focuses on how spaces for some disabilities are shaped through the institutional functioning of the IPS model. In the instance of the cart attendant example, are hiring managers, employers, and the broader public more willing to accept someone with Down Syndrome in a cart attendant position than a desk job? If so, this shapes normative behaviors and expectations pertaining to the intersection of disability and employment. As I will show, other fields—in

² This example is based off of my experience as a career counselor in a supported employment agency. Used in my example, Down Syndrome functions as a *visible* disability. I further explore the impact of visible disabilities in my chapter on social constructionism's influence on disability.

addition to the aforementioned categorizations—like disability studies,³ psychiatry, and economics may have similar concerns, but none that adequately address pipelining with a political lens. This normative concern is not unique to political theory, but I argue that these other fields inadvertently support the implementation of pipelining.⁴ Without addressing pipelining, the IPS model continues to undermine some of the ideals codified by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and thus ultimately renders VR as less effective.

One of the underlying causes of this political problem stems from how competitive employment (CE) is defined. I argue that CE is a political problem insofar that government policies implemented through the IPS model reflect a psychiatric application of economics. I problematize how the variety of fields that are concerned with CE differ in their definitions. Consequently, depending on how CE is defined, the IPS model is an effective mode of vocational rehabilitation. Through my interpretation of the literature supporting the IPS model, psychiatrists want to see the success rate of the individual.⁵ If psychiatry measures success of the IPS model based on an individualistic approach to CE, then this approach neglects to implement a historical understanding of the social construction of disability. In order to achieve this type of success, CE can be defined as a job that offers minimum wage and 20 hours of work. For the IPS model's predecessors (e.g. sheltered workshops), this standard may even be considered *high*. In actuality, as of 2017, the US Federal minimum wage was \$7.25. At 20 hours per week (which is not always guaranteed by employers), this definition of CE employment is categorized as “low” since these thresholds are

³ Crane, S. E. R. 2015. Foucault, disability studies, and mental health diagnoses in children: An analysis of discourse and the social construction of disability: Lewis and Clark College.

⁴ Disability studies is concerned with the relationship between norms and pipelining. I use “political” to focus on the institutional shaping of norms rather than the impact on an individual level.

⁵ I discuss this more fully when addressing Robert Drake's and Gary Bond's influence on supported employment.

easily achievable. If the threshold of competitive employment is set low, then success, which is measured by the model's employment rate, is high. If the threshold is set high,⁶ meaning that hourly wages are above \$7.25 and/or 20 hours per week are met or surpassed, job applicants with one (or multiple) SMI are sometimes excluded from calculating effectiveness in securing supportive employment. That is to say, job applicants with SMI would not be measured because the threshold is above their general level of pay and would thus render the IPS model ineffective. In order to more adequately address how the IPS model impacts job applicants with SMI, reevaluating how competitive employment is defined is a necessary, political project.

Lastly, I introduce the term *bodymind* that I use throughout this thesis. Disability Studies professor Margaret Price defines what a bodymind is and how the term is more than a mere combination of "body" and "mind." To be clear, my use of SMI emphasizes the severity of a mental disability, an umbrella term that Price views as including: "cognitive, intellectual, and psychiatric disabilities, mental illness, m/Madness and a/Autism, as well as brain injury or psychiatric survivorship. Mental disability is not intended to replace any of these more specific terms or to erase differences, but rather to enable coalition."⁷ For Price, bodymind is "a sociopolitically constituted and material entity that emerges through both structural (power- and violence-laden) contexts and also individual(specific) experience."⁸ In Chapters 3 and 4, I discuss Price's focus on structural context and individual experiences. This dichotomy between context

⁶ Contrasted against the definition of low, high thresholds would indicate an actual living wage. This thesis assumes that one person with a SMI who works ~20 hours per week at minimum wage would not be self-sufficient and independent from Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Income (SSDI). This assumption and problematization will be addressed more fully in the Literature Review.

⁷ Price, M. 2015. "The Bodymind Problem and the Possibilities of Pain." *Hypatia* 30 (1):280 citing Price, M. 2011. *Mad at school: Rhetorics of mental disability and academic life*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

⁸ Price, 2015; 271.

and experience is present in two, prevalent models of how to define disability: the medical model and biopsychosocial model. Within this dichotomy of how to define disability, a misinterpretation of bodymind would view “body” as a heuristic of a contextualized, physical experience that is combined with “mind,” which represents individual experiences. However, Price clarifies that bodymind is more than “inserting mind in a tokenistic way and failing to consider fully its implications. As Sandra Harding points out in *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?*, we cannot simply “add” a category of difference to an existing conceptual scheme if those categories have been defined against each other in the first place.”⁹ For my use, bodymind is a socially constructed conceptualization of disability that remains grounded in a sociopolitical reality.

⁹ Ibid, 271; citing (Harding 1991, 20).

Chapter 2: Problematizing the IPS Model

The VR discourse is primarily shaped by authors with psychiatric backgrounds who are not directly concerned with CE. The SE discourse focuses on different points of efficiency of the IPS model's implementation instead of directly addressing CE's definition. For example, job retention,¹⁰ cost-benefit analysis,¹¹ as well as the IPS model's fidelity¹² are primary topics of current research. The discourse's focus is diverted to more forward-looking, practical concerns instead of reconsidering the impact of normative assumptions in the social construction of disability. These normative assumptions are expressed in the IPS model. That is to say, problematizing CE's definition undermines a constant that has been taken for granted by some researchers. This chapter frames a critical view of the current SE discourse. Consequently, I apply a political economy approach to problematize the definition of CE.

My thesis contributes to a growing minority in the literature on SE that has been lacking until recently. My framework here serves as a basis for constructing a political approach to disability and employment. By focusing on the influences of a socially constructed disability on the shaping of VR policy, I argue that reconsidering how CE is defined is a necessary project. I examine scholarly works to frame my perspective of the discourse, then in subsequent chapters, I engage in several theories that drive my critique.

Bond, Drake, and Becker

¹⁰ West, M., P. Targett, P. Wehman, G. Cifu, and J. Davis. 2015. "Separation from supported employment: a retrospective chart review study." *Disability and Rehabilitation* 37 (12):1055-9.

¹¹ Hoffmann, H., D. Jäckel, S. Glauser, K. T. Mueser, and Z. Kupper. 2014. "Long-Term Effectiveness of Supported Employment: 5-Year Follow-Up of a Randomized Controlled Trial." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 171 (11):1183-90.

¹² Latimer, E. A., P. W. Bush, D. R. Becker, R. E. Drake, and G. R. Bond. 2004. "The cost of high-fidelity supported employment programs for people with severe mental illness." *Psychiatric Services* 55 (4):401-6.

One of the most cited articles on supported employment was authored by psychiatrist Gary Bond and published in *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*.¹³ Bond is considered one of several pioneers in initiating the discourse on supported employment. The author, the journal, and the language subsequently used in other, relevant articles are all unilaterally shaped by psychiatry. Bond posits three claims that serve as my starting point. First, he observes that consumers overwhelmingly want to be employed.¹⁴ Second, he correlates CE with positive benefits for consumer mental health. Third, he justifies the continuation of supported employment by means of evidence. His article establishes the foundational arguments for the discourse on supported employment that I analyze more fully in this chapter.

Bond has coauthored numerous publications on supported employment with psychiatrist Robert Drake. Their 2014 article *Making the Case for IPS Supported Employment*¹⁵ develops my starting point for my own arguments. Their case is based on several evidence-based facts: (i) most people with SMI want to work, (ii) we know how to help people with SMI work competitively, (iii) work improves well-being, and (iv) IPS is a cost-effective model for gaining employment for disabled job applicants. These findings reiterate arguments from Bond's 2004 publication and are supported with copious articles and studies, thus depicting an increase in research on the IPS model in a ten-year period. Yet their "case" is based on arguments that are predominantly concerned with economics, particularly CE and cost-effectiveness. This economically-oriented classification is a

¹³ Bond, Gary R. 2004. "Supported Employment: Evidence for an Evidence-Based Practice." *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 27 (4):345-59.

¹⁴ In VR, SE, and the IPS model, I find that "consumer" is interchangeable with psychiatry's "client." I do not discuss the difference in this thesis, but the choice is based on an attempt to distinguish the difference in power dynamics embedded in each term. While I discuss the importance of definitions in my chapter on social construction, I do not think that this superficial distinction is effective. Alternatively, I refer to "consumers" as disabled job applicants.

¹⁵ Bond, G. R., & Drake, R. E. (2014). Making the Case for IPS Supported Employment. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health Policy* 41(1), 69–73.

result of the evolution of how disability and disabled people were historically defined and treated. To be clear, I do agree with points (i) and (iii). That is, I will not disagree that people with SMI want to work and that employment can help well-being. However, I primarily focus on point (ii) because the IPS model does not effectively gain positions that meet the standard of CE I adopt. I also indirectly touch on point (iv). I think that while a discussion on cost effectiveness of the IPS model is necessary, this discussion should not impact how CE is defined. In a broad sense, each of these points could be problematized with Kim Nielsen's and Ian Hacking's theories that I apply, but I focus on CE.

My standard of CE evolves from historical materialism. "Historical materialism serves as a critical foundation where disability and economy are concerned. It has been argued that industrialization shaped disability as the rise of capitalism was a powerful catalyst that changed the ways work, social relations, social attitudes, and family relationships were understood and experienced."¹⁶ I explore the impact of industrialization more fully when I discuss Kim Nielsen's work in Chapter 3. I argue that the IPS model deals with the aftermath of industrialization rather than problematizing the impact of historical materialism of disabilities and employment.

Bond and Drake (2014) list the problems they see as impeding the IPS model: working-age adults with SMI rarely have access to SE opportunities, misaligned funding, and social security regulations. They go on to argue what must be done: first, develop a clear system for financing IPS services; second, reform health insurance; third, reform the social security disability system; and fourth, provide infrastructure to support implementation and maintenance of the IPS model.

¹⁶ Malhotra, R., and M. Russell. 2017. *Disability Politics in a Global Economy: Essays in Honor of Marta Russell*: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group; 136. Chapter 8: Economy, exploitation, and intellectual disability; written by Jihan Abbas, citing (Oliver, 1990).

These problems and their solutions give the IPS model discourse an economic slant. Namely, they focus on monetary issues: funding, social security, and insurance. I focus on CE because Bond's and Drake's case for the IPS model is based on the assumption that they can regularly gain CE for disabled job applicants through the IPS model. They support their assumption by citing journals that uncritically support the IPS model. By uncritically, I mean that the primary bodies of literature that support the IPS model do not incorporate a critical approach to historical materialism's impact on disability and employment. Moreover, I argue that the definition of CE sets a low standard for disabled job applicants to meet. The discourse is problematic because it too narrowly focuses on these economic issues. Since the 2014 publication, I think that now is as good of a time as ever to finally to shift some part of the discourse to reconsider how CE is defined. My thesis is not an argument to completely shift the discourse from economics. Rather, I contend that CE's current definition embodies a theory of political economy that when considered, may have a positive impact on the economic discourse surrounding SE.

Additional support for the IPS model's success comes from Bond and Drake, along with Deborah Becker, who supply evidence-based findings for the IPS model to support their case (c.f. points i-iv above).¹⁷ They implement a fidelity scale to determine the overall effectiveness of the IPS model. This suggests that they are not operating under any cyclical arguments; evidence-based is a buzzword in the SE discourse, suggesting that a case or justification for SE has to be defended. While I am not arguing that the IPS model's supporters are using cyclical reasoning, their application of the self-imposed fidelity scale does portray several shortcomings of SE. Bond et al. see the fidelity scale as justifying the funding of the IPS model: "The absence of clear, objective

¹⁷ Bond, G. R., D. R. Becker, and R. E. Drake. 2011. "Measurement of Fidelity of Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices: Case Example of the IPS Fidelity Scale." *Clinical Psychology-Science and Practice* 18 (2):126-41.

program standards—criteria for implementing a practice—interfered with many well-intentioned efforts to disseminate these practices and severely attenuated the accumulation of scientific evidence in support of these program models.”¹⁸ The fidelity scale measures the success of implementing the IPS model, but it also shows how the IPS model and its supporters defines CE. Primarily, Bond et al. refer back to Bond’s aforementioned 2004 publication. Since then, there have not been any developments or considerations of how CE ought to be defined. Thus, the fidelity scale does not adequately address the politics of how CE is defined, presumably because Bond et al. are operating under the assumption that CE is appropriately defined.

I argue that SE should be addressed explicitly in the broader discourse of political economy and wage labor. However, Bond et al. focus on certain points of analysis *within* the IPS model rather than recognizing the influences from broader discourses such as political economy. “Here economy must be seen as central to the disability and employment debate, and as such, the kinds of individual interventions and advocacy that have historically failed to advance the disability and employment agenda are seen as unsuccessful because they rely on individual frameworks and tend to ignore structural barriers and the larger political and economic context that fuel marginalization.”¹⁹ SE effectively becomes a category of its own rather instead of a subcategory of political economy and thereby limits the discourse. Specifically, Bond et al.’s (2011) concerns for CE do not address starting wage and employment type:

Interviews with supported employment supervisors and practitioners were used in a qualitative study identifying features differentiating five “highest-performing” and four “lowest-performing” employment programs. Performance was defined on the basis of competitive employment rates among 27 community mental health centers within the state. The authors found that high-performing and low-performing sites differed on several factors reflecting IPS Fidelity Scale items: de-emphasis on prevocational programming, rapid job

¹⁸ Ibid, 126.

¹⁹ Malhotra, 2017; Jihan Abbas, 136; citing (Russell, 2002).

search, and individualized support. They also identified several other distinguishing factors not found on the IPS Fidelity Scale, such as intensive job development, strong relationships with the state vocational rehabilitation agency, and systematic attention to disclosure to employers.²⁰

The IPS Fidelity Scale items listed here depict what the discourse is primarily concerned with; I am interested in what is not listed. What is not listed are assumptions, like the definition of CE, made by supporters of the IPS model. I argue that the supporters of the IPS model, as shown by the fidelity scale, are more concerned with the functioning of the model than they are adopting a reflexive approach that would examine the model's effectiveness in the labor market. Admittedly, this concern extends beyond the immediate, self-containing SE discourse. Hence, more concern should be given to the broader political economy of employment. Kim Nielsen, whose work informs the substance of my discussion in Chapter 3, focuses on the historical narrative of disability and employment contextualized within a disability history, thus giving a precedence of broadening the scope of the SE discourse. But her work is not directly reflected in the IPS model's functioning. The consequence, then, is an inability to reflect on how the low standard set by CE allows for the IPS model to shape normative behaviors and expectations pertaining to employment and disability. The IPS model's inability for reflexivity shapes the basis of my definition of pipelining.

Bruyère et al. and the Disability Employment Conundrum

Bruyère et al.²¹ provide a trans-disciplinary approach to SE that more adequately addresses SE's multifaceted problems. These problems make up as the Disability Employment Conundrum

²⁰ Bond et al., 2011; 129.

²¹ Bruyère, S. M., S. VanLooy, S. von Schrader, and L. Barrington. 2016. "Disability and Employment: Framing the Problem, and Our Transdisciplinary Approach." In *Disability and Employer Practices*: Cornell University Press.

(DEC): “People with disabilities make up at least 10 percent of the U.S. working-age population, yet national workforce participation statistics reveal that people with disabilities are not accessing employment at anywhere near the rates of their peers without disabilities.”²² My political approach answers their invocation for multiple backgrounds in solving the DEC. The DEC is primarily focused on the multiple factors that impact disability employment inequity. “Such complex problems necessitate solutions that are informed by perspectives from multiple backgrounds that individual disciplinary perspectives might otherwise be unable to provide.”²³ This type of income inequity comes from one of the rudimentary issues Bruyère et al. problematize: finding a universally accepted definition of disability.²⁴ Consequently, this leads to “two prominent conceptualizations of disability [that] dominate discussions. One defines certain conditions as disabling and counts people with those conditions as disabled. The other conceptualization views disability as an impairment that limits a person’s capacity to function at work, in society, or in daily life.”²⁵ The process of defining disability is a political project because the language used to categorize people embodies power relations. These power relations reflect normative behaviors, attitudes, and expectations expressed towards disabled job applicants in SE. These power relations also shape my definition of pipelining.

VR is focused on the latter definition given by Bruyère et al.: disability is an impairment that limits a person’s capacity to function at work. Explicit in the term “rehabilitation,” VR has historically attempted to rectify the employment inequity by “rehabbing” unemployable job applicants back into the workforce. Subsequently, much of the IPS model’s support comes from

²² Bruyère et al., 2016; 3.

²³ Ibid, 1.

²⁴ Bruyère et al., 2016; 2 citing (She and Livermore, 2007).

²⁵ Ibid, 2.

the increase in the treatment and dignity shown to the disabled community, which was not always evident in VR's project. For example, sheltered workshops essentially segregated disabled workers from the workforce and exploited their labor of producing non-commodified goods (e.g. artwork or perishable goods). Moreover, the process of rehabilitation itself reflects a broader type of reintegration of one population back into another. An alternative example of reintegration is prisoner reentry. "In the US, socioeconomic class and race are interconnected and are linked with higher rates of imprisonment; and disability is linked with class/poverty."²⁶ Former inmates face similar difficulties that disabled job applicants face when being reintegrated into the workforce. These difficulties are based on socially constructed assumptions made about both groups such as racism or ableism. Both groups of people are characterized by these socially constructed identities. Similar to the problem faced by prisoner reentry initiatives, VR's attempt to rehabilitate disabled employees back into the workforce, but places the onus on the disabled individual rather than employers. With the onus of gaining employment placed on the disabled job applicant, the power relation between employees and employers can lead to the exploitation of the disabled employee.

This polarization of sides, such as employer and employee, is discussed in Bruyère et al.'s DEC. Bruyère et al. formulate that there are supply-side and demand-side factors that make up the DEC. They state that thus far, the discourse has focused on the "supply-side" of the DEC. "This approach...ignores the fact that labor market outcomes such as employment are determined when the supply of individuals' labor aligns with demand for labor on the part of employers."²⁷ This leads to a number of disability employment disparities, but I focus on their concern for "pipeline

²⁶ Malhotra, R., and M. Russell. 2017. *Disability Politics in a Global Economy: Essays in Honor of Marta Russell*: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group; 87. Chapter 5: Disablement, prison and historical segregation: 15 years later; written by Liat Ben-Moshe and Jean Stewart.

²⁷ Bruyère et al., 2016; 5.

problems.” Pipeline problems focus on the job applicant’s qualifications. Multiple authors define pipeline problems as “barriers to employing more people with disabilities; that is, they point to a lack of qualified applicants, or a lack of experience or necessary skills and training in the applicants with disabilities they attract.”²⁸ I argue that pipeline problems are the primary shortcomings of SE. My use of pipelining emphasizes the discrimination of disabled job applicants who do not qualify for higher paying positions. In the best-case scenario of gaining employment, pipelining exists when this discrimination translates into an “accepted” and eventually “expected” workspace for disabled job applicants. Thus, Bruyère et al.’s definition of pipeline problems establishes a foundation that my thesis attempts to expand on with a focus on political economy.

The entirety of the IPS model exists within the supply-side of Bruyère et al.’s DEC. Instead of balancing supply-side and demand-side factors that make up the DEC, the IPS model fails to operate in the larger context of employment inequity. Bond et al. (2012)²⁹ argue for the generalizability of the IPS model and depict how the model wholly exists within the supply-side of the DEC. Generalizability in this context means that the IPS model is generalized so that it can be adopted into other political infrastructures. “With the development of a strong evidence base for IPS in the US, mental health leaders in other countries have interest in the transportability of IPS to their countries.”³⁰ Generalizability of the IPS model poses two major problems to the DEC. First, generalizability leads to the exportation of the IPS model to other countries. Exporting the model displays an outright, misplaced confidence in the IPS model without recognizing the

²⁸ Bruyère et al., 2016; 9; citing (Broussard 2006; Bruyère 2000; Bruyère, Erickson, and Horne 2002a; Lengnick-Hall, Gaunt, and Kulkarni 2008; Linkow et al. 2013; Rivera 2012).

²⁹ Bond, G. R., R. E. Drake, and D. R. Becker. 2012. "Generalizability of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment outside the US." *World Psychiatry* 11 (1):32-9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

demand-side factors raised in Bruyère et al.'s work. Second, generalizability disallows for any potential demand-side factors to be added into the IPS model, thus rendering the IPS model permanently irreconcilable with future improvements. Specifically, "The competitive employment rate was significantly higher for the IPS condition than for controls in every one of the studies..."³¹ This outcome returns to my initial problematization of how CE is defined.

Simply put, generalizability focuses on the supply-side of the DEC at the expense of the demand-side and thus ignores external factors that may impact the standardization of CE. An example of a demand-side factor; "Our society imposes extremely significant barriers to work and economic empowerment that operate well before any employer has an opportunity to discriminate against a disabled applicant."³² On the other hand, Bond et al.'s (2012) standard of CE exemplifies supply-side factors: "Competitive employment indicators include measures of job acquisition (e.g. percentage of clients obtaining competitive employment and time from study entry to first job start), duration (e.g. cumulative number of weeks worked in all jobs), intensity (e.g. percentage working at least 20 hours a week), and productivity (e.g. total hours worked/wages)."³³ While the rate of achieving these standards of CE was higher for the IPS model (60%) against competing models (25%), this outcome should not lead to the model's generalizability. Exporting the IPS model leads to an increase in more participants (e.g. nonprofits, employment agencies, and HR departments) on the supply-side of the DEC. Consequently, without any considerations given to demand-side factors, exportation of the IPS model continually places the onus on disabled job applicants rather than adequately addressing the DEC from a more trans-disciplinary approach.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Malhotra, 2017; ix.

³³ Bond et al., 2012.

The demand-side has not shaped the DEC discourse as much as the supply-side. The variables that IPS model supporters choose to focus on indicate just a few of the multiple variables that can be added to the supply-side of the DEC. The variables that make up the demand-side are not as readily accessible and perhaps fall outside of the IPS model's traditional scope. For example, a variable like employer perspectives³⁴ are more difficult to acquire rather than job applicant perspectives. Shifting the IPS model's focus from a job applicant to an employer may extend beyond the power relations that are available to career counselors in the IPS model. This extension beyond the IPS model's control could be argued by its supporters as unnecessary or overly optimistic, especially within the bureaucratic environment that SE exists in already. On the other hand, the supply-side is currently fixated on three variables: demographics,³⁵ longer term studies,³⁶ and predictions of efficacy.³⁷ While these variables are not mutually exclusive from being

³⁴ Chan, F., D. Strauser, P. Maher, E. Lee, R. Jones, and E. T. Johnson. 2010. "Demand-Side Factors Related to Employment of People with Disabilities: A Survey of Employers in the Midwest Region of the United States." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 20 (4):412-9.

³⁵O'Neill, J., W. Kaczetow, J. Pfaller, and J. Verkuilen. 2017. "Impairment, demographics and competitive employment in vocational rehabilitation." *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* 46 (2):149-58.

³⁶ Campbell, K., G. R. Bond, R. E. Drake, G. J. McHugo, and H. Xie. 2010. "Client predictors of employment outcomes in high-fidelity supported employment: a regression analysis." *Journal Nervous and Mental Disease* 198 (8):556-63.

³⁶ Cook, J. A., J. K. Burke-Miller, and E. Roessel. 2016. "Long-Term Effects of Evidence-Based Supported Employment on Earnings and on SSI and SSDI Participation Among Individuals With Psychiatric Disabilities." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 173 (10):1007-14.

³⁶ McGurk, S. R., K. T. Mueser, and A. Pascaris. 2005. "Cognitive training and supported employment for persons with severe mental illness: one-year results from a randomized controlled trial." *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 31 (4):898-909.

³⁷ Becker, D. R., H. Xie, G. J. McHugo, J. Halliday, and R. A. Martinez. 2006. "What Predicts Supported Employment Program Outcomes?" *Community Mental Health Journal* 42 (3):303-13.

³⁷ Becker, D., R. E. Drake, R. Whitley, and E. L. Bailey. 2007. "Long-Term Employment Trajectories Among Participants With Severe Mental Illness in Supported Employment." *Psychiatric Services* 58 (7):922-8.

³⁷ Drake, R. E., G. R. Bond, and C. Rapp. 2006. "Explaining the Variance Within Supported Employment Programs: Comment on "What Predicts Supported Employment Outcomes?"" *Community Mental Health Journal* 42 (3):315-8.

categorized as demand-side variables, these variables are more ontologically dependent on the supply-side of the DEC. Furthermore, these variables understandably serve as means of measuring the efficacy of the IPS model. They do not provide any *external* considerations that may prove to be more beneficial in addressing the DEC. In other words, these variables are contained within the IPS model's limited scope. Without demand-side variables that consider external factors, supply-side variables drastically narrow the scope of generalizability. Consequently, the model can be exported and imported if certain criteria are met. That is to say, if all the interchangeable parts, such as CE, are working well, it is appropriate to export the model. Since the IPS model's discourse is dominated by evidence-based support for their standard of CE, the model has indeed been exported. This implies that all the IPS model's standard of CE is working well enough for its supporters to argue for its exportation. To be clear, I acknowledge that the IPS model is more effective than competing models of VR. However, the argument to export the model should not be made because generalizability ignores external factors. Demand-side factors may more positively impact the DEC than the IPS model currently allows for in its current state.

Supply-side and demand-side variables denote visible power relations that are evident more broadly in SE. Here I mean 'power relations' in the Foucauldian sense.³⁸ These power relations categorize who is autonomous and who is not. Career counselors in the IPS model are empowered through their role of gaining employment for the disabled job applicant. Career counselors act as gatekeepers to employment. This power relation is based on subjectivity that is constituted in part through the normalization of a bodymind in an employment setting. Furthermore, power relations as embodied in social structures create a distinction between inclusion and exclusion from social

³⁸ Foucault, M., and R. J. Hurley. 1990. *The history of sexuality*. Volume 1, Volume 1. New York: Vintage.

positions. In the case of the IPS model, this exclusion is based on the right to meaningful work. In other words, in the context of employment, what bodymind is acceptable (e.g. useful) in what type of space? My use of autonomy is based on a more generic understanding of Isaiah Berlin's positive liberty; an emphasis on self-determination and agency understood as critical in defining the well-being that the IPS model hopes to achieve through employment.³⁹ In the context of the IPS model, ideally, a disabled job applicant is encouraged to pursue career options that they choose. However, I argue that this ideal is not realized in practice. My interpretation of power relations and autonomy drive the need for reconsiderations of how to approach the DEC. Specifically, disability status legally renders an individual eligible for financial benefits, but simultaneously places one in a power structure that will continuously undermine one's autonomy. As civic law professor Samuel Bagenstos reflects on the impact of disability rights activist Marta Russell, "The ADA has, as Russell predicted, proved a limited tool in achieving the goals of the disability rights movement."⁴⁰ While this may be evident to those who experience the limitations of this specific power relation in the IPS model (or those who study these dynamics), this "contract" is based on an empty promise for a more autonomous life.

Pipelining

Pipelining is focused on the causal relation between disability type and job type. But I also want to correlate that the job types many disabled job applicants gain employment in are lower quality

³⁹Berlin, I. 1969. "Two Concepts of Liberty." *Four Essays on Liberty*, 1st ed. [online] Oxford: Oxford University Press. I understand that a Foucauldian understanding of power relations and liberal, Berlinian definition of autonomy may lead to some inconsistencies in a strictly theoretical sense. But my project here is to pose new solutions to a problem found in SE that is not contingent on a clear, strict tracing of political theory. In other words, I observed a problem in SE and now use a combination of theories to pose possible solutions rather than trace theory and problematize SE.

⁴⁰ Malhotra, 2017; xii.

work environments. CE attempts to improve this baseline by setting certain standards, but these do not prevent career counselors from looking at entry-level positions. The larger injustice is a lack of work history, as a result of being disabled, only qualifies disabled job applicants for lower quality work. These lower quality environments have lower starting pay rates, lower job retention rates, and lower chances of further career opportunities—traits that are unsurprisingly common for non-skilled labor, entry-level positions. Since the job turnover rate is sometimes so high in these positions, there is an unspoken, mutual agreement (i.e., pipelining) between career counselors and employers.⁴¹ The IPS model may in fact feed into this agreement since it functions similarly to laissez-faire: the employers are willing to hire any job applicant since they know the supply of applicants for that position will be constant. Hiring an applicant with a SMI will fill the immediate demand that the position requires. The disabled job applicant is expendable, no different than his abled counterpart. If the position becomes intolerable due to low quality work environment, they are easily replaceable. But through the “contract” of the IPS model, the disabled job applicant receives additional job coaching that her abled counterpart does not.

Job applicants without a SMI may find these work environments difficult to maintain employment in, so why would career counselors in the IPS model look to these employment opportunities for job applicants with a SMI? There should not be any that a SMI is a universal experience which leads to a standardization of expectations in the IPS model. Yet pipelining to these lower quality work environments exists, perhaps as a product of not successfully mitigating the lack of work history in so many disabled job applicants’ resumes. This returns to the question, then, of whether or not the onus of mitigating of work history is placed on the individual job

⁴¹ This was something I regularly experienced as a career counselor when speaking with hiring managers.

applicant. The onus is wrongly placed on the disabled job applicant and that IPS model reifies this through its continued research on supply-side factors.

Supporters of the IPS model may admit that there are problems with the model and these are solvable. If this was the case, are these solutions exportable as well? Can demand-side factors be exported? There are interchangeable parts, so to speak, for the IPS model. But does this mean that if once implemented, the IPS model could insert interchangeable parts, such as solutions to the problems expressed in Bruyère et al.? Perhaps this is too optimistic. By problematizing generalizability, I argue that exportation comes too soon and is perhaps never appropriate. A one-size fits all solution—even if there are malleable, interchangeable factors that can alter based on a state or country’s preference or needs—enters into a top-down power dynamic. Consequently, such a top-down power dynamic leads to exploitation of the disabled workforce, particularly job applicants with SMI. This is already visible through pipelining. Nevertheless, while neither side is optimal in *solving* the DEC, the demand-side addresses some of the social factors and institutions that are rudimentary to this thesis.

The American Dream, Individualism, and Autonomy

This promise of a more autonomous life is more colloquially known as the American Dream.⁴² Within the context of the United States, the application process to become legally disabled leads to an increase of a variety of services and financial supplements. However, I contend that the IPS model generally creates a paradox. On the one hand, anyone can pursue the American Dream by pulling oneself up by one’s own bootstraps to a higher social or financial standard. This arguably reflects the extent of one’s autonomy. If someone has climbed the social ladder, one’s autonomy

⁴² I use the American Dream as a heuristic for the ambition or motivation for pursuing financial gain. Autonomy is a primary means to the end of a financially-focused American Dream.

must have increased.⁴³ On the other hand, people who knowingly or unknowingly subscribe to the ideals embodied in the American Dream, like self-improvement, start from different classes that are embedded in our social hierarchy. In the case of disabilities, “[Marta] Russell put her finger on a fundamental limitation of antidiscrimination laws: they take as a given the lion’s share of the inequality and injustice that is baked into our political and economic system.”⁴⁴ The IPS model, as a product of antidiscrimination laws, functions as means for disabled job applicants to partake in the American Dream and improve their social ranking.

However, while class mobility ought to be pursuable by disabled job applicants, I argue that the American Dream was not conceived with disabled people in mind. I do admit that there are in fact disabled job applicants who enter into the power relations of the IPS model, maintain their autonomy, and pursue job positions that reflect their authentic employment interests. This idealistic example is more unlikely for disabled job applicants with a SMI. This is reflected in the language SE uses. For example, ubiquitous terminology used in SE, such as “benefits” and “rehabilitation,” functions as a type of historical othering that is only now being reconciled through the IPS model. That is to say, connotations of paternalism are still remnant in the power relations between disabled job applicant and career counselor. Although the American Dream is conceived as accessible by anyone, additional support like VR and financial supplements do not even the playing field for disabled job applicants.

The services and financial supplements offered by the IPS model can be loosely categorized as facets of increased autonomy. If a financially-focused American Dream is an idealized standard

⁴³ While I am using the American Dream as a heuristic to show that IPS model adopts well-being to mean an upward social trajectory, I do not think that the American Dream is solely defined in this way.

⁴⁴ Malhotra, 2017; viii

for well-being, then SE and financial supplements try to monetarily add to the disabled job applicant's financial well-being. However, if the goal of VR is to rectify past injustices to the disabled community, then VR fails at this. VR's reintegration goals mirror race-based reparation efforts insofar that the project of rehabilitation tries to correct institutionalized discrimination. If the goal of VR is to allow the same employment opportunities for disabled job applicants as their abled counterparts, then VR fails at this as well. These goals are worthwhile because they potentially increase the autonomy of disabled job applicants. If one agrees to take on the "contract"⁴⁵ of the IPS model, then the hope is that the job applicant achieves the goal of gaining employment and thereby increases her autonomy. In some instances of SMI, this "contract" becomes more difficult to not only sell, but also to keep. In other words, job applicants with lower cognitive abilities may see some of the benefits of taking on the IPS model's contract, especially with the help of additional support systems (e.g. caretakers, legal guardians, or social workers). But they may be unable to detect the potential harms of the existing power relation they enter into hoping to reach the idealized goal of more autonomy. If the higher goal is to gain a complete sense of autonomy through employment, this is difficult to achieve.

However, this is not necessarily the goal of the IPS model or those with SMI. In the modern American economy, striving for the American Dream necessarily means economic competition between individuals. A disabled job applicant does not have to mirror her abled counterpart; that should not be the standard of autonomy. But if this is the case, then the contract of the IPS model needs to set different standard for different people. Otherwise, the IPS model functions as a

⁴⁵ In my experience as a career counselor, there was quite literally a contract that job applicants would have to sign and adhere to throughout the job search process. Any violation of this contract could lead to the dissolution of the funding contract between the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and my supported employment agency.

homogenous standardization of autonomy for disabled job applicants. I think that this homogenization takes place through pipelining. Yet one of the unique characteristics of the IPS model is its individualized. Still, I argue that setting different goals for different people potentially leads to pipelining. The career counselors in the IPS model are in fact working with a homogenized population in the sense that job applicants are categorized as disabled. At what point do patterns evolve from job searching similar disability types? More importantly, what is the metric for standardization of autonomy? Does individualization mean to each according to their ability?

I suspect that a counterargument would start with my assumptions about what the goal of the IPS model actually is. Supporters of the IPS model might state that the goal is simply to ensure the reentry of disabled job applicants back into the workforce. But that approach ignores the more nuanced power relations that are reflected in SE language and expressed through financial supplementation. In the instance of financial supplementation, Supplemental Security Income and/or Social Security Disability Income (SSI/SSDI) function as a calculated amount of money that is given to a disabled individual. With the legal status of “disabled,” a disabled person could potentially become equally “abled” as one’s nondisabled counterpart through the IPS model, including financial supplements. While SSI/SSDI does not make a disabled individual “whole” like her abled counterpart who is employed, the IPS model offers disabled job applicants the opportunity to become financially independent. However, the legal status of being disabled in the SE context functions as a double jeopardy of sorts. That is to say, despite the IPS model’s earnest intentions to increase autonomy through employment (and supplementation), the categorization of “disabled” leads to an overall loss of autonomy. Even by gaining employment, the job applicant’s autonomy is at risk of being violated. Pipelining violates autonomy because being employed in a job field that reflects a space that is more accepting to a job applicant’s disability is a form of

institutionalized discrimination. While the disabled job applicant's abled job applicant counterpart is not always the appropriate measurement of success, in this instance, her abled counterpart does not encounter a limitation of her autonomy based on pipelining. The possibility of increasing autonomy through promotions and raises are limited to disabled job applicants not directly because of their disability, but because their disability statuses resulted in pipelining to spaces and roles that are more accepting to their perceived abilities. This discrimination is based on perceived ability and does not allow for the same increases of autonomy that abled job applicants are offered.

Job applicants face pressures, either imposed abstractly through normative social ideals, like the American Dream, or directly through the practices of pipelining carried out by career counselors. Referring back to my caveat, some disabled job applicants might prefer the career counselor's pipelined position, but determining whether or not they do raises questions of authenticity. Autonomy decreases for disabled job applicants if their positions are more acceptable to the employer based on the applicant's disability type. Additionally, financial supplementation, which supposedly increases financial autonomy while job applicants seek employment opportunities, could lead to more financial dependency.

In addition to the general caveat that the IPS model can be used appropriately, I want to reiterate that I agree with Bond and Drake (2014) that the IPS model does what it sets out to do. Pointing out the model's successes can show where some potential weaknesses might be. Lehman et al. exemplifies the greater success rate of the IPS model against one of SE's competing models.⁴⁶ If the baseline goal is to gain employment, then the IPS model does this better than alternatives such as the psychosocial rehabilitation program. Yet as the IPS model became more widely used,

⁴⁶ Lehman, A. F., R. Goldberg, L. B. Dixon, S. McNary, L. Postrado, A. Hackman, and K. McDonnell. 2002. "Improving employment outcomes for persons with severe mental illnesses." *Archives of General Psychiatry* 59 (2):165-72.

researchers (within the broad categorization of supply-based) began to focus on micro and macro level factors that impact employment. For example, West et al. focus on separation.⁴⁷ In this context, separation could be categorized as a micro level factor since this study measures variables that impact job retention. Likewise, Milfort et al. conclude that there are three barriers to employment: poorly controlled symptoms of mental illness, nonengagement in supported employment, and poorly controlled general medical problems.⁴⁸ On the other hand, Noel et al. focus on macro level factors by broadening the scope of the DEC to include other social factors such as age and transportation accessibility.⁴⁹ Similarly, Mueser et al. focus on disabled ethnic/racial groups seeking employment who they argue to be under-researched.⁵⁰

While the micro versus macro distinction may seem arbitrary, I argue that the latter grouping resembles Bruyère et al.'s demand-side to the DEC. In particular, a macro focus on transportation problematizes an institution rather than the individual. What demand-side allows for, then, is a more effective reflexivity that the micro focus of research does not. The best example of the evolution of SE's research to incorporate this much-needed reflexivity is Metcalfe et al.'s recent publication.⁵¹ In this study, both micro and macro variables are analyzed in order to measure

⁴⁷ West, M., P. Targett, P. Wehman, G. Cifu, and J. Davis. 2015. "Separation from supported employment: a retrospective chart review study." *Disability and Rehabilitation* 37 (12):1055-9.

⁴⁸ Milfort, R., G. R. Bond, S. R. McGurk, and R. E. Drake. 2015. "Barriers to Employment Among Social Security Disability Insurance Beneficiaries in the Mental Health Treatment Study." *Psychiatric Services* 66 (12):1350-2.

⁴⁹ Noel, V. A., E. Oulvey, R. E. Drake, and G. R. Bond. 2017. "Barriers to Employment for Transition-age Youth with Developmental and Psychiatric Disabilities." *Administration and Policy in Mental Health* 44 (3):354-8.

⁵⁰ Mueser, K. T., G. R. Bond, S. M. Essock, R. E. Clark, E. Carpenter-Song, R. E. Drake, and R. Wolfe. 2014. "The effects of supported employment in Latino consumers with severe mental illness." *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal* 37 (2):113-22.

⁵¹ Metcalfe, J. D., R. E. Drake, and G. R. Bond. 2017. "Predicting Employment in the Mental Health Treatment Study: Do Client Factors Matter?" *Administration and Policy in Mental Health* 44 (3):345-53.

whether or not the IPS model successfully mitigates negative effects (i.e., unfavorable traits for a job candidate). Mitigation directly deals with the now-ubiquitous discrimination that the IPS model faces. Earlier research did not immediately identify negative effects. This study attempts to measure if the IPS model actually *improves* job applicants by considering what a job applicant might look like from the employer's perspective. The study finds that work history is a strong predictor of employment. Metcalfe et al. recognize that this characteristic is lacking in the disabled population and conclude that SE benefits job applicants more than previous employment.

Metcalfe et al.'s findings trace how mitigation impacts the IPS model. If work history is a strong predictor of employment, and the disabled job applicant population has a lower likelihood of having a work history, then how does the IPS mitigate this supply-side factor? I think the current solution that the IPS model adopts is pipelining. If disabled job applicants have less work history, then they are more likely to gain jobs in entry-level positions. This is not unique to disabled job applicants. However, the onus of recognizing how work history is a larger social factor that is negatively impacted by disability needs to fall on employers, not on the individual job applicant. While the IPS model's supporters may try to mitigate the onus of past injustices and discrimination, the model itself continues to place disabled job applicants in job positions that are more accepting to disabled people. These entry-level positions typically lead to the study of supply-side factors, like job retention and cost-benefit analysis, rather than focusing on how such positions may already have low retention rates because of the low quality of the work environment.

Chapter 3: Social Construction and Disability

Ian Hacking's *The Social Construction of What?* provides a framework for my critical approach to defining disability.⁵² In this chapter, I explore what is at stake in how we define disability. The ethical problem in defining disability that I focus on is the direct consequence of being categorized disabled in an employment setting. With the current, generic understanding of disability, disabled job seekers face higher rates of discrimination in the employment process. Ableism is bias against disabled people and against disability. Ableism broadly refers to any type of discrimination that one faces based on physical, mental, or cognitive impairments that are viewed as disabling and debilitating.⁵³ As two examples of attitudes that are based on perceived physical, mental, and cognitive characteristics, I find a similarity between ableism and racism. In the discourse on how to define race, there was a shift from understanding race as biologically real to race as socially constructed. I think that the dichotomy in defining race parallels the divide in defining disability.

The divide in defining disability is split between the biomedical model and the biopsychosocial model. Loosely defined, the predominant biomedical model applies a biological realist approach to disability while various biopsychosocial models adopt a social constructionist approach. Philosopher and linguist Robin Andreasen writes, "Races were assumed to be biologically objective categories that exist independently of human classifying activities, and scientists worked towards substantiating this belief."⁵⁴ In this thesis chapter, Andreasen's conceptualization of the biological realist definition of race serves as a foundation for my

⁵² Hacking, I. 1999. *The Social Construction of What?*: Harvard University Press.

⁵³ Friedman, C., and A. L. Owen. 2017. "Defining Disability: Understandings of and Attitudes Towards Ableism and Disability." *Disability Studies Quarterly* 37(1).

⁵⁴ Andreasen, R. 2000. "Race: Biological Reality or Social Construct?" *Philosophy of Science* 67(3): S654.

understanding of the biomedical model of disability. In the instances of both race and disability, biological realism shaped the paradigm that preceded social constructionism.

Andreasen observes that “Humans are supposedly too genetically similar to each other to justify dividing them into races.”⁵⁵ While genetic similarity is not what drives the shift in defining disability through a constructionist lens, disability has increasingly become defined by biopsychosocial models of disability. The shift in disability’s definition resembles the shift in race’s definition because both terms evolve from a realization of science’s abuse in reifying racist and ableist attitudes. I explore more fully what the motivations are for the shift in defining disability from the biomedical model to the biopsychosocial model. But simply put, I argue that the biopsychosocial model of disability enables an institutional discrimination through the preferred hiring methods of the IPS model. The shift from biological realism to social constructionism still remains prevalent in the discourse on defining disability. With the various types of social constructionism that Andreasen observes in the instance of race, Hacking’s account of social constructionism provides a clear framework that I apply to the discourse on defining disability.

My primary reason for using Hacking is that his account of social constructionism recognizes the difficulties in overcoming biological realism. While Nielsen’s historical account of disability analyzes this process of overcoming biological realism, Hacking’s account provides a framework of how to understand disability’s functionality as a socially constructed concept. In analyzing the uses and abuses of the term “social construct,” Hacking posits three components that are fundamental to my critique of the IPS model. First, he lists *six grades of constructionism*. Second, he distinguishes a conceptual classification that he calls the *interactive kind*. Third, he

⁵⁵ Ibid.

explains a phenomenon he observes in social interactions called the *looping effect*. With these three components, Hacking directly engages in the social construction of disability. I apply these three components to the IPS model and thereby apply his social constructionist definition of disability. Specifically, I apply his *six grades of constructionism* to frame my problematization of the IPS model's effectiveness in addressing the Disability Employment Conundrum (DEC). I then analyze the *interactive kind* to define my use of disability. Hacking's account of social constructionism engages in a broader discourse of defining disability in which the biomedical model of disability is juxtaposed with the biopsychosocial model.

While social constructionism has become increasingly used in both disability and race discourses, Hacking clarifies and distinguishes when the term is abused or misused. Hacking's account of social constructionism emphasizes that the use of the term "social constructionism" should reflect changes in attitudes toward those who are categorized, like disabled people. Through his account, I find that Hacking's work can serve as a decisive tool in determining the uses and abuses of the IPS model. In particular, Hacking's *six grades of social constructionism* depict the varying degrees of what it means to be a social constructionist. To address the abuses of carelessly misusing the term "socially constructed," Hacking provides a more nuanced definition that effectively ranks different levels of commitment to the social change that inevitably comes with being labelled as a social constructionist. These rankings are very useful in critiquing the IPS model. I argue that SE abuses the recent shift to a socially constructed definition of disability. While the IPS model may adopt the spirit of a socially constructed disability, SE's commitment to broader social change is lacking. This lack of commitment is best seen through Hacking's *interactive kind* and *looping effect*. These terms address awareness and behavior, respectively. *Interactive kind* is a phenomenon that "interacts with things of that kind, namely people...who can

become aware of how they are classified and modify their behavior accordingly.”⁵⁶ Moreover, *looping effect* pertains to the behaviors that result from this awareness of being classified as disabled. I argue that the primary abuse of the IPS model’s use of a socially constructed disability is the failure to adequately adjust the model’s aims based on the awareness and behavior of disabled job seekers.

The Biopsychosocial Model

My perspective upon the definition of disability discourse is primarily shaped by Wade and Halligan’s 2017 article: *The Biopsychosocial Model Of Illness: A Model Whose Time Has Come*.⁵⁷ Hacking’s *interactive kind* transcends the divide in disability’s definition between the biomedical model and the biopsychosocial model and thereby invokes a series of questions that are uniquely relevant for job seekers with a SMI. Due to this divide, Hacking’s *looping effect* may better explain the irony I see in the IPS model’s own definition of disability. That is, through pipelining, the IPS model shapes normative expectations of which disabled bodies can occupy employment spaces based on their disability type. Despite trying to solve the DEC, the IPS model actually functions similarly to Hacking’s *looping effect* and undermines SE’s broader project of gaining employment.

To frame my problematization of the IPS model’s definition of disability, I apply Hacking’s *six grades of constructionism* to SE. I focus on how VR, SE, and the IPS model fail to address the DEC. In framing my problematization of the IPS model, Hacking presents a more holistic approach to the DEC that is currently absent in SE literature. The prominence of social constructionism’s discourse coincides with the rise in SE literature that reflects the increasing

⁵⁶ Hacking, 32.

⁵⁷ Wade, D. T., and P. W. Halligan. 2017. “The Biopsychosocial Model of Illness: A Model Whose Time Has Come.” *Clinical Rehabilitation* 31(8): 995–1004.

focus on the IPS model. Although Hacking does not directly address the IPS model, he defines disability through a social constructionist perspective that is then improperly applied in SE. I explore this impact of SE abuse of social constructionism's influence on disability in relationship to job seekers with SM. But for now, I view Hacking's *six grades* as responses to four requisites that must be met in conceptualizing discriminatory phenomena like sexism, racism, or ableism. "Social construction work is critical of the status quo."⁵⁸ In the context of ableism, the status quo is the DEC. The IPS model is not critical enough of the DEC. Hacking's four requisites for social constructionism:

“(0) In the present state of affairs, *X* is taken for granted; *X* appears to be inevitable...Social constructionists about *X* tend to hold that: (1) *X* need not have existed, or need not be at all as it is. *X*, or *X* as it is at present, is not determined by the nature of things; it is not inevitable... (2) *X* is quite bad as it is. (3) We would be much better off if *X* were done away with, or at least radically transformed.⁵⁹

For the purpose of my argument, *X* stands for disability. Disability is taken for granted in the context of SE. Disability does not need to exist without social constructionism. Ableist attitudes that typically accompany disability are negative. We would be much better off if a socially constructed disability is radically transformed. I think that the IPS model supporters view their impact on SE as radical. However, with the IPS model's current use of a socially constructed disability, ableism still remains influential in hiring practices. In the context of the DEC, the practices that ableism justifies is the cause of economic inequity for disabled people.

Hacking's Six Grades of Social Constructionism

Hacking's *six grades of social constructionism* are varying degrees of how these three requisites are applied. From the least demanding commitment to the greatest, they are historical, ironic,

⁵⁸ Hacking, 6.

⁵⁹ Hacking, 12; 6.

reformist, unmasking, rebellious, and revolutionary. I focus on the defining traits of each of these grades in order to connect Hacking's social constructionism to the influences that shape the SE discourse. The lowest grade serves as a basis for ableist attitudes that can be institutionalized. The highest grade functions as an alternative conceptualization to the DEC.

The first grade of social constructionism Hacking identifies is what he calls historical constructionism. That requisite functions as an awareness or consciousness; "*X* is the contingent upshot of historical events."⁶⁰ One must be aware of the history of disability to be a historical constructionist. Based on my experiences as a career counselor, people who do not regularly and knowingly interact with bodyminds that are perceived as disabled may have a vague understanding of social constructionism's influence on disability. As Hacking describes this view, "A historical constructionist could be quite noncommittal about whether *X* is good or bad."⁶¹ Without encountering "disability" as a lived experience, or through a friend, family member, or coworker, the primary actors in employment settings typically lack this awareness.

However, there are people who are aware of ADA's influence on hiring practices. These individuals fall under Hacking's second grade called the ironic constructionism; "Irony about *X* is the recognition that *X* is highly contingent, the product of social history and forces, and yet something we cannot, in our present lives, avoid treating as part of the universe in which we interact with other people, the material world, and ourselves."⁶² People who realize that historical constructionism negatively impacts hiring practices may also recognize how the IPS model inadvertently works against disabled job seekers. Specifically, hiring managers who are complicit with IPS model career counselors in pipelining disabled job seekers may detect the ineffectiveness

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Hacking, 19.

⁶² Hacking, 20.

of offering positions with high turnover rates to individuals who may have preexisting difficulties as effective at solving the DEC. But the possibility that hiring managers are any type of social constructionists may be too generous. The irony here is that career counselors seek out these high turnover rate positions under the guise of solving the DEC. High turnover rate positions are typically entry-level positions that require little skill and lots of resilience and perseverance. While I will not unilaterally say whether these qualities are present or not in job seekers with SMI, I think that these positions are difficult for anyone to hold, disabled or not.

Moreover, hiring managers who could be ironic constructionists would view disabled job seekers as unavoidable byproducts of the historically constructed interconnection of labor and disability. Hiring managers who are ironic constructionists engage with career counselors frequently in employment settings in a unique power dynamic that fluctuates throughout various intervals during the hiring process. Hiring managers are generally responsible for filling positions that have high turnover rates and as an intermediary, career counselors offer an exploitable option that most nondisabled job seekers do not. That is to say, for the sake of acting out the evidence-based techniques embodied in the IPS model, job retention rates could be higher for disabled job seekers who have career counselors trying to retain the job. Additionally, from the perspective of hiring managers, being complicit in pipelining and employing a disabled job seeker fills company-based hiring quotas per the ADA. While a written quota may not be expressed, diversity rates increase when bodies perceived as disabled fill these non-preferable positions.

Hiring managers potentially act as ironic constructionists if they recognize the benefits of hiring disabled job seekers with a career counselor. In employment settings that face high turnover rates, the additional support that a career counselor provides for both the disabled job applicant and hiring manager acts as mutual assurance for both parties. However, despite the good intentions

of both the hiring manager and career counselor, the concept of retaining a disabled job applicant for a longer duration leads to pipelining. Hiring managers in low retention rate employment settings might be interested in disabled job applicants because of the additional support of a career counselor rather than based the applicant's intrinsic qualities.

The third and fourth grades are responses to ironical constructionism. "Reformist constructionism about *X*, like every kind of constructionism, starts from (0)...takes (2) seriously...[modifies] some aspects of *X*, in order to make *X* less of a bad thing."⁶³ Simply put, the social construction of disability on this view is inevitable and is bad. My interpretation of the reformist constructionist's goal is to effectively mitigate social norms that reify a causal relationship between disability and discrimination. Depending on the reformist's interpretation of this relationship, they can remain a reformist constructionist or adopt an unmasking constructionist perspective. The unmasking constructionist looks to expose the function of socially constructed ideas; "We unmask an idea not so much to 'disintegrate' it as to strip it of a false appeal or authority."⁶⁴ Hacking clarifies that a reformist may or may not be an unmasker and an unmasker may or may not be a reformist. I assert that this distinction between reformists and unmaskers is where the SE discourse resides. In other words, supporters of the IPS model think that this evidence-based practice functions as a facet of unmasking constructionism. However, in actuality, the IPS model should remain in the reformist constructionist grade.

The evolution of SE and the IPS model exemplifies how VR has increasingly become reformist. That is, the IPS model's emphasis on the individual attempts to shift VR's aims to be more human-centric. But I think that the primary issue with the IPS model is that structurally, the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

model's founders and supporters do not look to unmask the social construction of disability. Rather, the IPS model mitigates the social norms surrounding the DEC. The IPS model mitigates social norms by attempting to address the social embeddedness that interconnects stereotypes between disability and unemployment. By offering employment opportunities to disabled job applicants, the IPS model aims to disconnect the stigmatization that come with disability and unemployment. Generously, I think that this aim is a type of reformist constructionism. However, pipelining impedes any hopes that supporters of the IPS model might have of SE becoming a facet of unmasking constructionism. Pipelining reifies the socially embedded relationship between disability and employment because disabled job applicants ultimately end up occupying spaces that are more socially acceptable to their disability type. While trying to undo the embeddedness of disabled people occupying unemployed spaces, such as mental health institutions, group homes, or homelessness, the IPS model actually creates socially acceptable spaces for disabled people. Those spaces that pipelining lead to are the result of a reformist constructionism. Contrarily, if an unmasking constructionist approach was employed in trying to solve the DEC, the recreation of reified spaces for disabled people might have been more adequately addressed.

I think that as a physical representation of ironic constructionism, the career counselor who embodies reformist constructionism effectively engages with hiring managers. If we are generous in considering hiring managers as historical constructionists, these constructionists are susceptible to the aims of career counselors. But I am operating under the assumption that most hiring managers are not historical constructionists. Historical constructionists are familiarized with social constructionist language so that understanding the aims of reformist constructionists is not difficult. On a broader level, VR's transformation from rehabilitation to integration is a macro level shift that is mirrored by hiring managers and career counselors on a micro level. Thus, the

evolution of VR remains confined to the scope of reformist constructionism and does not engage in unmasking the wider influences of social constructionism on the DEC. I argue that unmasking constructionism falls under Bruyère et al.'s aforementioned demand-side factors of the DEC.

The fifth and sixth grades are rebellious and revolutionary constructionism. According to Hacking, these grades are extensions of unmasking constructionism. "A constructionist who actively maintains (1), (2), and (3) about *X* will be called *rebellious* about *X*. An activist who moves beyond the world of ideas and tries to change the world in respect of *X* is *revolutionary*."⁶⁵ Since I grade the IPS model as reformist, I do not think that either rebellious or revolutionary constructionism apply to SE. Pipelining is the primary problem that restricts the IPS model to the reformist constructionism grade. Even if pipelining was theoretically resolved, I still do not think that SE effectively unmasks the embeddedness of social construction's influence on disability. I do think that revolutionary constructionists are needed in order to solve the DEC. For example, Bruyère et al. explore structural influences on the DEC and offer more extensive critiques of SE. At best, their criticisms of how SE tries to solve the DEC could be graded as rebellious. But I do not offer any concrete speculation as to what a revolutionary constructionist project would look like. Instead, through Hacking's reformist constructionism, I connect the IPS model's systemic pipelining to the institutional evolution of VR to SE. The influences of reformist constructionism remain embedded in the IPS model and this limits SE's impact on solving the DEC.

Despite social constructionism's impact on SE's discourse on the definition of disability, Hacking's *six grades* of social constructionism have not been adopted in the DEC. Since his *six grades* are almost 20 years old, I think that their influence on social constructionism ought to be more relevant in the discourse on defining disability. I argue that this is the result of the IPS

⁶⁵ Ibid.

model's abuse of widely using "social constructionism" in defining disability without specifying what the model actually means. Broadly speaking, disability literature focuses on the omnipresent dichotomy between the biopsychosocial and biomedical models of disability. This dichotomy serves as a distraction so that the DEC remains unresolved. The IPS model literature has not published any relevant articles depicting a much-needed reflexivity on Hacking's social constructionism. Reflexivity would naturally occur from an unmasking constructionist position and would recognize the impact of pipelining. Instead, the divide on how to define disability continues to dominate criticisms of SE. Although Hacking provides a definition of social constructionism that is useful in understanding the historical construction of disability, the discourse remains distracted by definitions of disability.

Unfortunately, those who critique SE essentially default to an argument that critiques the biomedical model of disability and then assert some variation of the biopsychosocial model as part of an ineffective solution. Kim Nielsen, whose work I trace more carefully in the next chapter, addresses how the discourse on defining disability becomes gridlocked. While she discusses the dichotomy between the two models of defining disability in her introductory chapter, she *somehow* manages to present a thorough historical analysis of social constructionism's influence on disability. Therefore, I argue that without attempting to unmask ironic constructionism's influence on disability, the IPS model effectively benefits from the exploitation of disabled job seekers. This exploitation takes place on a structural level and reflects the discourse's inability to move beyond defining disability.

Hacking's Interactive Kind

Hacking's *interactive kind* serves as a basis for my working definition of disability. By refocusing social constructionism's attention back on to the human who is categorized by social constructed

characteristics, Hacking's account effectively transcends the definition dichotomy between the biomedical or biopsychosocial models. Additionally, *interactive kind* depicts the unique connection I observe between the IPS model and job seekers with a SMI. Hacking's *interactive kind* is defined as phenomenon that "interacts with things of that kind, namely people...who can become aware of how they are classified and modify their behavior accordingly."⁶⁶ The relationship between the awareness and behavior is my primary use of *interactive kind* for defining disability. I define disability to include anyone who modifies their behavior as a result of experiences with people who perceive them as disabled.

In the context of Hacking's *six grades of social constructionism*, I think that ableism is a social construct that varies in severity based on how aware people are of social constructionism's influence on disability. Those who do not meet the baseline grade of historical constructionism are most likely to adhere to ableist ideologies and categorize bodyminds as disabled. Those who rank anywhere on Hacking's *six grades* are still susceptible to espouse ableist ideologies. Their actions and words are still capable of reifying a socially constructed type of disability. Although socially constructed phenomena can sometimes connote an unseen or not readily apparent type of discrimination, the lived experiences of those broadly categorized as disabled are real and tangible. The existence of a socially constructed ideology like ableism is wholly dependent on those who reify the ideology without recognizing its social construction. Therefore, the onus to transcend ableism—if that is a worthwhile project—should be placed on those who are not aware of social constructionism's influence on ableism.

Through my application of Hacking's *interactive kind*, I see my working definition of disability widening the scope of what has been conventionally conceived of as disability. In

⁶⁶ Hacking, 32.

particular, both the biomedical and biopsychosocial models provide clear standards that a person either does or does not meet. Advocates for the biopsychosocial model may see the biomedical model as defined by medical professionals and thereby establishes a whole set of problems that disability advocates address. For example, Wade and Halligan write, “The biomedical model is characterized by a reductionist approach that attributes illness to a single cause located within the body and that considers disturbances of mental processes as a separate and unrelated set of problems.”⁶⁷ Thus, the biopsychosocial model functions as an unmasking constructionist project in lieu of the biomedical model by allowing for a more humanizing approach to defining disability. Wade and Halligan clarify that there are other alternatives to the biomedical model, “[h]owever, the biopsychosocial model is now the best established alternative model, and publications relating to it have grown steadily.”⁶⁸ Due to their findings of a recent increase in use of the biopsychosocial model, I argue that this preferred, alternative model remains problematic. Primarily, the biopsychosocial model still has requisites for people to meet in order to be categorized as disabled. While the “social” of biopsychosocial model connotes an ironic constructionist perspective, I think that as a “model,” the biopsychosocial model still works as an inductive tool to define disability.

There are a wide variety of consequences of categorizing people. Even with dignifying and humanizing motivations in mind, this process essentially divides and categorizes people. Disability is sometimes a preferable categorization in both legal and social contexts. Therefore, establishing a definition that appropriately categorizes people is a difficult project so that the identity, culture, and legal status associated with the disability category should not be erased. These three values, among others, are what is at stake in defining disability. The problem I see with the

⁶⁷ Wade and Halligan, 2017; 996.

⁶⁸ Wade and Halligan, 2017; 997.

biopsychosocial model of disability is that it functions as an inductive tool to categorize people. By inductive, I mean that the model establishes several standards that people have to meet in order to be categorized as disabled. While this does lead to the possibility that “disability” would have no established criteria, there is a relevant precedence within the autism community that I think can be applied here: “If you have met one person with autism, you have met one person with autism.” While this quip might have become ubiquitous within the autism community, I do think that the quote re-humanizes disabled people. Seeing a person with a unique identity that transcends predetermined categorizations is a worthwhile process.

This might be what a revolutionary constructionist looks like, but this transcendence of identity remains contrary to the legal ramifications that the categorization of disabled holds. The term “biopsychosocial” portrays a crude attempt to incorporate multiple conceptualizations of disability. While bio, psycho, and social may seem more inclusive than just biomedical, I think that adding prefixes still functions as a means to widen the scope of what standards must be met to be categorized as disabled. Supporters of the biopsychosocial model may view the “social” as a flexible requisite that incorporates a social constructionist perspective in defining disability. Wade and Halligan write, “The concept concerns the most complex, highest level within the model, a person’s social role or social status. It refers to the meaning attributed by the person and by others to the behaviour of the person in a particular social context (their role), and more generally over time (their status).”⁶⁹ This connects to my working definition of disability that focuses on the relationship between awareness and behavior.

However, I see Hacking’s interpretation of his social constructionist framework with disability as different from the biopsychosocial model. Hacking recognizes the influences of social

⁶⁹ Wade and Halligan, 2017; 999.

constructionism on disability. He distinguishes what a process and a product of social constructionism looks like; “The ‘socially structured’ is ambiguous. It could mean that the product is socially structured, in the sense that it has a structure that exists in a social setting (a structure reminiscent of the synchronic structure of Parisian structuralism). Or it could mean that the product is organized by a historical process named social structuring.”⁷⁰ The ambiguity of a socially structured definition of disability is what allows for the biopsychosocial model to be flexible. I think that this is why advocates for this model may think it is preferable to the biomedical model. But Hacking goes beyond this simplified interpretation of social constructionism.

“There is yet another sense of construction, in addition to product and process. It has the same etymological roots as, and is similar in meaning to, ‘construal.’ ‘Construal’ originally meant seeing how a sentence is to be understood on the basis of its component parts. But the word quickly acquired the sense of interpretation... Construal, construction-as-process, and construction-as-product are inevitably intertwined, but to fail to distinguish them is to fall victim to forgotten etymologies.”⁷¹

The biopsychosocial model does not distinguish these two etymologies. Rather, the model benefits from its ambiguous application of social constructionism. This ambiguity allows for the biopsychosocial model to be flexible in its inductive function of including more people who recognize themselves are disabled via construction-as-product. Flexibility means that the scope of what standards need to be met in order to be categorized as disabled can increase as to include newer, unprecedented definitions of construction-as-product disability. The biopsychosocial model effectively widens its scope to be more inclusive in its definition and thus appears as preferable in comparison to the rigid biomedical model.

⁷⁰ Hacking, 38.

⁷¹ Hacking, 39.

The flexibility of the biopsychosocial model's definition of disability is dependent on the ambiguity and lack of distinction in Hacking's application of construal in the context of disability. What is at stake for disability—identity, culture, and legal status—is threatened when this definition of a socially constructed disability is applied in institutions like SE. While the IPS model may adopt the biopsychosocial model in its philosophy, SE still uses the biomedical model in order to categorize disabled job seekers. I think that the primary reason for this is a broader institutional concern for allocating government funding for SE. With what is at stake as the primary concern of my argument, I am not directly concerned with government funding. Rather, my interpretation of Hacking leads to a deductive approach to defining disability.

I acknowledge that broadening the scope of disability's definition is at odds with the government funding pressures faced by SE. But a deductive approach makes sense of the reality of a socially constructed definition of disability by elevating the lived experiences of disabled people. Wade and Halligan conclude by citing Havi Carel: "Carel, a philosopher with a chronic illness, wrote in the context of understanding illness, 'The human being is by definition embodied and enworlded, so trying to provide an account of a human being that lacks these elements will result in a deficient account'. The biopsychosocial model might help to provide that account."⁷² While I agree with Carel's understanding of illness, I disagree with Wade and Halligan's conclusion that the biopsychosocial model will help provide the deficient account. I think that Wade and Halligan are hesitant to acknowledge the broader implication of the various shortcomings of the biopsychosocial model they examined in their article. That is, the biopsychosocial model is rendered ineffective and essentially useless. But I concede that their article adequately frames my problematization of how disability is still defined.

⁷² Wade and Halligan, 2017; 1001.

Frustratingly, Wade and Halligan end their article with a naively optimistic hope for the model despite their accurate framing of the discourse of defining disability; “Although a biopsychosocial model may not be compatible with the current market-oriented competitive service model with payment for each item, by increasing attention upon the patient as a person and requiring greater collaboration and sharing of care and resources, it will provide a more holistic approach that has the potential to contribute to a more successful and sustainable health system.”⁷³ I think that the IPS model is the epitome of what Wade and Halligan view as market-oriented competitive service model. SE’s attempt to make the biopsychosocial model align with the market-oriented demands through the IPS model mirrors the issues that disability advocates originally saw with the biomedical model. SE’s failed attempt to adopt the biopsychosocial model, due to the market-oriented influences, depicts why SE is not a rebellious constructionist project. Therefore, to achieve Hacking’s revolutionary constructionism, I think that the discourse of defining disability should evolve from looking at inclusive/exclusive models. A deductive approach to definition would start with identifying one, socially constructed attribute that interconnects people with shared experiences.

To reiterate, I define disability to include anyone who modifies their behavior as a result of experiences with people who perceive them as disabled. I think that this functions as a deductive means of defining disability because there is only one, open-ended standard for people to meet. Understandably, any standard will divide and categorize people. But I do not see my project as trying to undo the socially constructed divisions of people. Rather, I see my argument as reconsidering the standards that systematically categorized people so that they were institutionally disenfranchised. Widening the scope in defining disability is interrelated to the widening of the

⁷³ Wade and Halligan, 2017; 1002.

scope in employment opportunities for disabled job seekers. Widening the scope of employment opportunities is the process of undoing pipelining practices in the IPS model. Since the IPS model still applies the biomedical model, I think that career counselors who adopt reformist constructionist attitudes do not recognize the impact of construction-as-process at the expense of construction-as-product. The disconnect between the IPS model's use of the biomedical model while simultaneously wanting to incorporate the biopsychosocial model is a superficial issue.

The more rudimentary problem that supports pipelining is SE's inability to distinguish Hacking's two interpretations of construal. Regardless of what model the IPS model uses, SE's reformist constructionist attitudes depict construction-as-product instead of construction-as-process. The latter attitude may lead to rebellious or even revolutionary grades of social constructionism. But so long as the IPS model is unable to recognize how its regular use of the conventional use of disability impacts social worth of disabled job seekers, SE remains ineffective at solving the DEC.

Aside from the broader political project of addressing the social construction of disability, the DEC is composed of a variety of factors like income inequity, hiring practices, and employee rights. Instead of considering how social constructionism impacts demand-side factors in the DEC, SE places the onus on disabled job seekers. Pipelining functions as de facto in "solving" the DEC. But people with SMI are more susceptible to being pipelined than job seekers with physical or mental disabilities. With my working definition of disability, the relationship between awareness and behavior is different for people with SMI. My use of awareness is synonymous with Laurie Ann Paul's use of self-realization: "A modern conception of self-realization involves the notion that one achieves a kind of maximal self-fulfillment through making reflective, rational choices

about the sort of person one wants to be.”⁷⁴ While there are exceptions to this generalization, having a job seeker with a SMI articulate her reflections on how to maximize her self-fulfillment is a difficult task. In the instance when a job seeker is not able to articulate herself, who speaks on her behalf? Typically, in the context of SE, caretakers and guardians have legal authority. But I argue that SE actually threatens what is at stake here for a job seeker with a SMI, particularly her identity. In the attempt to gain employment, questions of how to determine a job seeker’s autonomy and authenticity in choosing to be employed must be seriously considered. As a career counselor, I observed these discussions to be completely avoided.

Presumably, caretakers and career counselors ignore these conversations because employment is assumed to be a positive goal in the broader political project of reintegrating disabled people. Hacking writes, “Constructionists tend to maintain that classifications are not determined by how the world is but are convenient ways in which to represent it.”⁷⁵ I think that career counselors who adopt reformist constructionist attitudes exploit this predicament. Rather than attempting to unmask how the convenience of pipelining reifies the success of the IPS model, career counselors abuse the misinterpreted reformist constructionist project as the ultimate solution in the DEC. Job seekers with SMI are the most susceptible to pipelining because of their higher potential of being coerced into undesirable positions.

Hacking’s Looping Effect

Due to this challenge that SMI pose to SE’s efforts to solve the DEC, *Hacking’s looping effect* may better explain the aforementioned irony I see in the IPS model’s own definition of disability.

⁷⁴ Paul, Laurie Ann. 2014. *Transformative Experience*: Oxford University Press; 84.

⁷⁵ Hacking, 33.

Hacking defines the *looping effect* of human kinds to depict a phenomenon related to the *interactive kind* with an emphasis on awareness:

“[People] can make tacit or even explicit choices, adapt or adopt ways of living so as to fit or get away from the very classification that may be applied to them. These very choices, adaptations or adoptions have consequences for the very group, for the kind of people that is invoked. The result may be particularly strong interactions. What was known about people of a kind may become false because people of that kind have changed in virtue of what they believe about themselves.”⁷⁶

Looping effects can apply to any type of categorization of people. In the instance of a generic sense of disability, *looping effects* trace the variations in the biopsychosocial models that Wade and Halligan examine. That is, groups of disabled people may fluctuate because of how they identify themselves and consequently adopt ways of living based on a shared identity. *Looping effects* are means by which categorized people are capable of redefining and rewriting their shared identities and narratives. I think that the biopsychosocial model of disability attempts to be accommodating to *looping effects* on disability. That is, this model tries to evolve based on the ever-changing social construction of disability. But in the unique instance of SMI, a *looping effect's* requisite to be self-aware in this redefining and rewriting process may be difficult to meet.

I think that a SMI can be defined one of two ways. Both definitions deal with a threshold that is based on cognitive abilities. More conventionally, an intelligence quotient (IQ) test sets this threshold.⁷⁷ IQ tests essentially function as an extension of the biomedical model of disability. For my use here, IQ tests serve as a heuristic for a socially constructed threshold of cognitive ability. Alternatively, while IQ scores give a quantifiable number for determining that cognitive threshold, I think that the biopsychosocial model still categorizes some people as more cognitively able than

⁷⁶ Hacking, 34.

⁷⁷ Siegel, L. S. 1989. "IQ Is Irrelevant to the Definition of Learning Disabilities." *Journal of Learning Disabilities* 22 (8):469-78.

others. Thus, the first definition of a SMI includes those who are near that socially constructed threshold or on either side of it. The immediate consequence of this definition is that those individuals who are on the more cognitively abled side of the threshold are capable of becoming self-aware. If the socially constructed threshold (or IQ test score) is not set for cognitive ability, a separate socially constructed threshold is set for being cognitively abled to be self-aware. Effectively, there is a sliding scale of self-awareness based on cognitive ability. Contrarily, the second definition of a SMI only includes those who are not cognitively able to be self-aware. In this definition, there is no sliding scale or blurred threshold for categorizing cognitive ability. This second definition is adopted by the biomedical model of disability and is subsequently used by the IPS model.

A problem that my second, more exclusive definition of SMI poses to SE is that self-awareness is not achievable. Job seekers with SMI are not capable of engaging in *looping effects*. The IPS model exploits these particular job seekers. Since employment is one of many ways in which people can be self-aware and make explicit decisions that reflect their values, SE operates in a vulnerable, but ubiquitous, part of peoples' lives. In the instance of disabled job seekers who do not have SMI, the IPS model offers opportunities to engage in *looping effects* within the larger political project of reintegrating bodies perceived as disabled back into the workforce. In other words, the increases in autonomy through employment allow for *looping effects*. However, that decision to partake in *looping effects* is presumed by the caretakers of job seekers with SMI. Because employment has becoming normalized as an individual means to redefine and rewrite one's own narratives, the question of whether or not seeking employment for those who are not able to be self-aware and authentically speak for oneself is foregone in the instance of SE.

The IPS model's exploitation of job seekers with SMI directly leads to pipelining. Hacking writes, "Here I use [kind] to draw attention to the principle of classifications, the kind itself, which interacts with those classified. And vice versa, of course, it is people who interact with classifications."⁷⁸ Based on my second definition of a SMI that the IPS model uses, that is individuals lack the ability to be self-aware, people with SMI are not able to interact with classifications. The aim of SE to gain employment for disabled job seekers benefits from the lack of self-awareness and leads to the pipelining of these vulnerable job seekers. Hacking continues, "Kinds that are the subject of intense scientific scrutiny are of special interest. There is a constant drive in the social and psychological sciences to emulate the natural sciences, and to produce true natural kinds of people. This is evidently true for basic research on pathologies such as schizophrenia and autism..."⁷⁹ By adopting the biomedical model of disability, SE's foregone conclusion that employment is a worthwhile goal for people with SMI leads to pipelining. Pipelining functions as the most efficient means of gaining employment for unwilling or nonparticipating job seekers.

Therefore, the IPS model undermines SE's project of employing disabled job seekers by presupposing that any means of gaining employment is worthwhile. The IPS model's application of pipelining depicts how the broader project of reintegrating bodies perceived as disabled continues to embody weak solutions to a socially constructed DEC. Without a historical analysis of the social construction of disability, the IPS model remains within Hacking's reformist constructionist grade. Within this grade, the IPS model continues to reify and embed the corresponding ableism that comes with this type of socially constructed disability.

⁷⁸ Hacking, 104.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 4: The Impact of Repositioning A Disability History

Disability as defined in Kim Nielsen's *A Disability History of the United States*⁸⁰ emphasizes a historical construction of social worth for disabled people. First, she interrelates social constructionism with labor. Her work on vocational rehabilitation (VR) depict how acts of employment-based discrimination should not be accepted a priori. The historical relationship between labor and the social construction of disability function as a precedence for the current treatment of disabled job applicants in the IPS model. Second, Nielsen critiques how the categorizations of “good” disabled people and “bad” disabled people are a byproduct of discourses of disability throughout history. This dichotomy underlies my concern for the IPS model's motivations. How competitive employment (CE) is defined and measured may be a reaction to undo the “bad” stigmatization that categorizations such as unemployed and disabled continue to receive.⁸¹

Through her historical tracings of disability's etymology and practical import, Nielsen connects disability and labor in an American context with a focus on the interrelation between industrialization and institutionalization. This connection between disability and labor serves as VR's basis for social worth. “As historian Linda Kerber wrote, critiquing the gendered nature of the American ideal of individualism, ‘The myth of the lone individual is a trope, a rhetorical device. In real life no one is self-made; few are truly alone.’ Dependency is not bad—indeed, it is at the heart of both the human and the American experience.”⁸² Similarly, the American Dream is a trope that functions as a scale for measuring social worth. Presumably, in pursuit of the American Dream, individuals are to climb the social ladder as a sign of being self-made. The higher one

⁸⁰ Nielsen, Kim E. 2012. *A Disability History of the United States*: Beacon Press.

⁸¹ This will be tied back to Hacking's six grades of commitment to constructionism.

⁸² Nielsen, xiii; citing (Kerber, 1989).

climbs, so the logic goes, the more self-made they become. For disabled people, SE functions as a means to that end. For VR, that end is labelled as integration. The connotation of integration—which goes along with the field’s jargon that includes “rehabilitation,” “support,” and “consumer”—depicts how “disability” consists not only in a matrix⁸³ of deficiency, but one of dependency. “Disability is not just a bodily category, but instead and also a social category shaped by changing social factors—just as is able-bodiedness.”⁸⁴ Consequently, the shaping of disability as a social category is particularly vulnerable in an employment setting. Inversely, employment is one social factor that can determine whether or not one is socially categorized as abled or disabled. Nielsen traces how social worth for the disabled social category historically fluctuates due to the changes in social institutions such as education, transportation, and medical treatment.

For example, “Disability was defined as the inability to ‘maintain’ oneself economically, and those unable to do so were discouraged from ever boarding ship for North America.”⁸⁵ The image of a ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the New World serves as an early example of pipelining. The access to space on the ship, which embodied economic opportunity, was limited to able-bodied people who were assumedly going to monetarily contribute to the New World order. Space was used as a justification for a type of discrimination that was solely based on financial potential. Consequently, this early instance of discrimination maintained social order by unilaterally categorizing non-self-sufficient people as disabled. I think that the imagery of the ship serves as a metaphor of more current forms of pipelining. SE treats access to employment opportunities as if access is symbolized by treacherous waters that require the IPS model to expertly navigate a ship through narrow passages while ferrying small amounts of people.

⁸³ For Hacking, this term has a particular meaning that will be explored more fully.

⁸⁴ Nielsen, xv.

⁸⁵ Nielsen, 27.

In constructing an underrepresented disability narrative, Nielsen reflects on the relationship between ableism and other historical forms of discrimination. I discuss her definition of disability and its relation to an institutionalized form of discrimination: segregation. I also examine how the treatment of physically disabled people was repeatedly conflated with the treatment of veterans. Next, I make my case for the historical origins of pipelining. During the institutionalization, deinstitutionalization, and forced rehabilitation of disabled people, the social acceptance of what space can be occupied by disabled bodies fluctuates. This results from a repeated process of defining space, categorizing bodies, and then segregating bodies. The difficulty in recognizing this repeated process is based on the embeddedness of ableism in social institutions.

While there are individuals who actively shape these institutions, the attitudes expressed in the process of discriminating against disabled people are historically embedded in American ideals of individualism and self-reliance. This cyclical process forms my historical and conceptual background account of pipelining. Although Nielsen's narrative includes all types of disabilities, I focus on an implicit dichotomy within her work between apparent and non-apparent disabilities. Contrasted with the visibility of apparent disabilities that veterans returned home with, mental and cognitive disabilities were not always visibly apparent. Non-apparent disabilities became more prevalent and socially visible throughout the concurrent rises of industrialization and institutionalization. I argue that although SE functions differently than historical forms of discrimination, the spirit of the relationship between industrialization and institutionalization continues to exist in the IPS model.

Relational Definition, Segregation, and Veterans

I start with Nielsen's definition of disability by focusing on her construction of a disability narrative in the United States. Through a historical lens, she presents social worth as dependent on

economic output. In her Introduction, Nielsen compares and contrasts several disability narratives to other forms of institutionalized discrimination. Her book “places the experiences of people with disabilities at the center of the American story. In many ways, this is a familiar telling. In other ways, however, it is a radical repositioning of US history.”⁸⁶ American segregation epitomizes one, familiar story of institutionalized discrimination. While Nielsen repositions disabled people to the center of a national story, she questions what stories can contribute to a singular, American experience. “The use of disability as an analytic tool matters in our national story because it forces consideration of the strengths, weaknesses, and contradictions of American ideals.”⁸⁷ Institutionally, segregation contradicts the American ideals of individualism and autonomy. Through Nielsen’s repositioning of disabled people in the American context, I find similarities between the institution of segregation and the institution of VR.

Nielsen uses a relational definition of disability that focuses on reciprocity as the primary means of connecting labor and social worth: “As long as an individual could sustain meaningful relationships that involved emotional or labor reciprocity—regardless of cognitive, physical, or emotional capacities—and lived out balance, they were not considered disabled. Reciprocity and its consequential ties mattered foremost in defining someone’s competency.”⁸⁸ I think that this particular historical imagery of reciprocity-based equality serves as a prelapsarian era that is idealized by VR. In other words, the aim of VR is to return to this lost-Eden in which labor reciprocity exists without discrimination. However, this prelapsarian area predated the influences of colonialism. “There was no singular experience of disability, just as there was no singular

⁸⁶ Nielsen, xi.

⁸⁷ Nielsen, xiii.

⁸⁸ Nielsen, 3; citing (Joe and Miller, 1993).

definition of disability, among indigenous nations.”⁸⁹ Shortly after the spread of colonialism and ruination of indigenous peoples, American history habitually reified social norms against disabled people through institutionalized forms of discrimination.

In the context of American individualism however, reciprocity continues to function as a means to effectively become independent and self-made. Nielsen’s historical analysis asserts a “new” disability narrative that suggests that people with any type of disability were not barred from pursuing relationships that involved labor reciprocity. Nielsen asserts an unfamiliar disability narrative into the broader American narrative. The unfamiliarity of the American disability narrative derives from the shaping of social norms that Nielsen emphasizes in the 17th century. Yet the idealized access to opportunity that existed in the distant American past evolved when economic norms began to shift.

One of the major catalysts that initiated an early economic shift was capitalism’s evolution in the mode of colonialism. Nielsen writes, “Within the early capitalist systems beginning to dominate Europe during the seventeenth century, the primary definition of disability was an inability to perform labor.”⁹⁰ Nielsen gives an earlier example of an idealized type of disabled employment that preceded capitalism. Indigenous North Americans existed in an unadulterated “New World” where a singular, cultural experience was not actually shared.⁹¹ But the familiar narrative of indigenous people being dominated by Europeans comparably shapes the narrative of the treatment of disabled people in the colonial era. Capitalism’s competitive nature focuses on disabled people’s economic output. Instead of coexisting in what I am calling a prelapsarian state, disabled people had to face the consequences of not meeting the demands of a capitalist-driven

⁸⁹ Nielsen, 5.

⁹⁰ Nielsen, 20.

⁹¹ Nielsen, 6.

society. This historical shift leads to the question of whether or not the Disability Employment Conundrum (DEC) can ever truly be reconciled with capitalism.

Capitalism's earlier influence on the DEC can be traced through the paradigmatic shift from colonialism to industrialization. This shift inevitably led to the institutionalization of disabled people. Although institutionalization effectively removed disabled bodies from the general public, one would think their economic role was also removed. But a connection between social worth and economic output actually remained. Nielsen writes, "Some institutions for people with disabilities sought to address issues of economic production—not by confronting ableism directly, but finding employment, home industry, or trade opportunities. The regulation and standardization of industrialization, though it increased in uneven stops and starts, had made it more difficult for people with impairments to earn a living."⁹² Nielsen's historical analysis serves as a point of origin for VR's goal. In particular, VR aims to rehabilitate disabled people back into society despite the omnipresent, antagonistic influences of industrialization. In other words, during its heyday, industrialization was seen as irreconcilable with the issue of disabled job applicants: those who could not work in the manner prescribed by industrialized work were considered disabled. Discrimination against disabled job applicants effectively led to their segregation from the workforce; institutionalization was the social response. In trying to solve the DEC in light of the impact of industrialization, VR replaced the failures of institutionalization with rehabilitation.

Despite VR's refocusing of the DEC, capitalism continues to be antagonistic to disabled people. Nielsen states, "Industrialization was supposed to usher in both wealth and leisure, but it was disabling American workers in incredibly large numbers."⁹³ Industrialization impacted

⁹² Nielsen, 74.

⁹³ Nielsen, 125.

disabled people in several ways. The more familiar narrative was industrialization physically disabling people in dangerous employment settings; industrialization actively disabled American workers. But Nielsen also emphasize how the disability narrative draws attention to the alienation and exploitation of people newly constructed as disabled. Those who benefited from industrialization did not provide any substantial solutions to the competitive labor's involvement in both disabling bodies and discriminating against previously disabled bodies and newly disabled bodies. Neither Nielsen nor I think that the alienation of workers is unique to disabled people. But the narrative of disabled people is often ignored in the context of industrialization because the lenses of other phenotypic traits dominate the narratives of alienation and discrimination that were prevalent at the time. Domination narratives focused on alienation still predominantly exclude disabled voices. Moreover, access to employment was socially constructed as "unavailable" to disabled job applicants because they were either institutionalized and/or being rehabilitated. Employment opportunities were not socially feasible because access to spaces that led to opportunities were barred from the institutionalized. Those who were rehabilitated were restricted through pipelining to limited opportunities through sheltered workshops. Hence, both institutionalization and rehabilitation failed to solve the DEC. Consequently, both failures led to the development of SE and eventually the IPS model. Broadly speaking, I see that the underlying issue capitalism has historically posed to disabled people continues to be unresolved in the IPS model. Namely, the IPS mode does not make sense of a socially constructed body that is unable to participate in reciprocal labor relations. Instead, the IPS model tries to solve the problem as it had been previously constructed rather than questioning the validity of asking it in the first place.

To explain how the IPS model continually fails at solving the DEC, I think it is necessary to focus on other forms of alienation and discrimination. My aim here is not to solely emphasize

the intersectionality⁹⁴ of disability, although intersecting identity and work categories play a role in understanding the historical construction of the DEC is important. Rather, pipelining originates from earlier forms of institutionalized discrimination, particularly in the context of labor. The intersection of ableism and other forms of discrimination share a common history. Nielsen writes, “Early European colonists defined disability in such a way that emphasized economic productivity in a manner appropriate to one’s race, class, gender, and religion.”⁹⁵ A narrative of ableism, then, is not completely unfamiliar to those versed in the narratives of racism, classism, and sexism. “Like racism, sexism, or homophobia, ableism is directed at individuals and built into social structures; it is lived out purposefully, accidentally, and unknowingly.”⁹⁶ Ableism uniquely underlies these other forms of discrimination and is consequently more embedded in social structures. This is why the ADA, specifically in the context of the IPS model, struggles with employment discrimination more so than discrimination based on sex, gender, and/or race.

The treatment of American veterans serves as another example of the disparities that resulted from institutionalized discrimination. One of the more familiar narratives of disabilities and warfare is the influx of consequential technological innovations. “As nearly always, the return of heroic but disabled war veterans prompted technological change, improvements in prosthetics and other adaptive technologies, increased employment possibilities, and additional public

⁹⁴ I am borrowing this term from Cho, S., K. W. Crenshaw, and L. McCall. 2013. "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis." *Signs* 38 (4): 785-810. They write, “[S]cholars and activists illustrate how practice necessarily informs theory, and how theory ideally should inform best practices and community organizing. These concerns reflect the normative and political dimensions of intersectionality and thus embody a motivation to go beyond mere comprehension of intersectional dynamics to transform them” (786). I agree with their aims expressed here. However, to remain within the scope of this thesis, I do not directly engage with intersectionality’s project.

⁹⁵ Nielsen, 26-7.

⁹⁶ Nielsen, xvi.

attention.”⁹⁷ Presumably, the disparity between veteran and nonveteran status determined who was socially worthy of receiving these increased benefits. “The [Civil War] and its consequences generated new adaptive devices and medical advances—from the first wheelchair patent in 1869 to improved prostheses—that improved the lives of many, not just disabled veterans.”⁹⁸ The disparity in treatment resulted from the visibility of veterans’ physical disabilities, such as the wheelchair and improved prostheses. Even if veterans were undiagnosed with invisible disabilities, these disabilities are harder to recognize and thus often go under-recognized and treated as in the case of shellshock (which became re-categorized as PTSD). Therefore, if veteran status was visible and led to certain social worth, veterans with invisible disabilities were capable of achieving better social status than their physically disabled counterparts.

But Nielsen’s analysis is more nuanced than merely differentiating physical and mental disabilities. Visibly disabled veterans influenced innovative technologies and initiated funding policies. “Under the Revolutionary War Pension Act of 1818, disability was the inability to perform economically productive labor.”⁹⁹ The connection between productive labor and disability status was historically clear in this particular legislation. The clarity afforded to the Pension Act is lost when the productive labor and disability status fall outside of the category of veterans. For example, “While Revolutionary War pension policy did not assume that impairments resulted in an inability to labor, early immigration policy made such assumptions.”¹⁰⁰ I think that this disparity of the treatment of different disability statuses was the result of capitalism. For physically disabled veterans, their social worth was no longer dependent on their economic output. In the context of

⁹⁷ Nielsen, 127.

⁹⁸ Nielsen, 80.

⁹⁹ Nielsen, 54.

¹⁰⁰ Nielsen, 76.

the American Dream, the physically disabled veteran's military service was unquestionably deserving of government assistance. The soldier's worth was earned through service and pensions functioned as a way of rewarding veterans for their service. He was undoubtedly self-made. However, pensions did not unilaterally reward veterans. "Veterans with nonapparent disabilities that resulted from the war—disabilities not easily discerned by those gazing on their bodies—were not only less likely to apply for a pension but, like African Americans, had a decreased chance of their pension being approved."¹⁰¹ Contrarily, mental or cognitive disabilities, e.g. post-traumatic stress disorder, caused by warfare were by default not justified to deserve pensions.

The evolution of how pensions impacted the institutional treatment of disabled veterans is a precedent for government assistance for disabled citizens. "Referred to as disability pensions, and increasingly reliant on medical determinations, the pension system once again defined disability as incapacity to perform manual labor...[This] meant that the definition of disability, as it became increasingly regulated by law and the medical profession, became more gendered, raced, and class-based."¹⁰² The increase in medical expertise that was required to justify federal pensions exemplifies a parallel increase in validating the social worth of disabled people. In my view, this indicates an institutional skepticism of whether or not disabled veterans had actually earned the social worth of receiving financial support. The current disability-based financial supplementation system is based on the veteran pension system. Thus, the skepticism that is continually displayed in determining which veterans receive pensions is also reflected in determining which disabled job applicants are worthy of not only financial supplementation, but jobs.

¹⁰¹ Nielsen, 83.

¹⁰² Nielsen, 86.

In describing this evolution of the treatment of disabled people, Nielsen writes, “Rehabilitation industries, vocational programs, and civil rights talk for people with disabilities expanded prolifically but were not always extended to nonveterans. People increasingly distinguished between good disabled people and bad disabled people, good citizens and bad citizens; the largest distinguishing factor being whether or not one earned a living.”¹⁰³ Hence, the institutionalized discrimination of disabled job applicants continues to be embedded in different social structures. Through my analysis of Nielsen’s tracing of ableism’s origins, I argue that through pipelining, the IPS model continues to edify hierarchies of social worth through the institution of SE.

Space, Categorization, and Segregation

The narrative of disability we get from Nielsen sends us through periods of mass institutionalization, deinstitutionalization, and then reintegration. The disability narrative might be more familiarly thought of as periods of mass institutionalization, deinstitutionalization, and then reintegration. In this narrative, the IPS model’s discourse celebrates the success of going beyond mass reintegration by offering individualized career support plans. But Nielsen’s analysis of the disability narrative is more nuanced, particularly with the when, where, and who she traces. While she herself does not address the IPS model, I apply her nuanced historical analysis to argue that pipelining, as both an ideal and a practice, also has a history. Without recognizing the greater impact for this historical conceptualization of pipelining, the IPS model’s supporters view their approach to the DEC as innovative and unprecedented. I am not arguing that SE does not recognize the significance of its own history. But I do think that without a more nuanced approach to the

¹⁰³ Nielsen, 128.

American narratives of disability that Nielsen offers, the dominating disability narrative suffers in two major ways.

First, the narrative becomes generic in the sense that one story explains the history of all disabled people. The narrative is also generic in the sense that the themes of suffering social injustices can be interchangeable with other communities that face discrimination. Intersectionality may yet have a role to play in the DEC, but without adequately seeking out, listening to, and reflecting on the unheard narratives of disabled people, intersectionality potentially leads to conflating disability with other discriminated traits.¹⁰⁴ Inevitably, conflation negatively impacts both disability narratives and the narratives of other discriminated groups by potentially ignoring how each group's particularities may lead to useful approaches to multifaceted problems like the DEC. The second issue of SE not recognizing the implications of Nielsen's more nuanced historical analysis is that the disability narrative becomes dominated by nondisabled voices. While I do not explore more fully what the influence of people with SMI on SE might look like, this imagery is difficult to conceive due to bureaucratic environment in which the DEC currently exists.

I explore three nuances of Nielsen's narratives that provide background for pipelining: space, categorization, and segregation. In her reshaping of when and where the disability narrative begins, Nielsen traces several centuries before mass institutionalization became common and focuses on colonialism. The image of a ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the New World serves as an early example of bodies becoming commodified. To reiterate, space was used as a

¹⁰⁴ Luticha Doucette writes about segregation as a black woman and wheelchair user. Doucette, L. 2017. "If You're In A Wheelchair, Segregation Lives". [nytimes.com. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/opinion/if-youre-in-a-wheelchair-segregation-lives.html?_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/17/opinion/if-youre-in-a-wheelchair-segregation-lives.html?_r=0).

justification for a type of discrimination that was solely based on financial potential. That discrimination was visible in the institution of segregation. The two consequences of this commodification of bodies and minds were either enslavement or immediate death. The latter generally resulted when commodified bodies and minds lost their value. “Following the perverse logic of slavery and ableist belief that blind people could not labor—and that ‘even those blind of one eye would sell for a mere trifle’—the crew simply threw overboard persons who were more to them dead than alive.”¹⁰⁵ While the severity of the Atlantic Slave Trade is considerably high compared to the SE’s treatment of job applicants with SMI, the IPS model inevitably deals with the aftermath of slavery’s commodification of bodies and minds.

The idea that employment for disabled people is a finite amount of space that must be filled by those who optimize that space comes from how SE conceives of itself. That is, SE is complicit in the ferrying of disabled job applicants rather than considering the historical treatment of disabled people. SE is focused on Bruyère et al.’s supply-side factors of the DEC. *This presupposition that employment opportunities are limited is reified by the familiarized, inaccurate narrative of disability.* This has led to the IPS model’s current role in shaping the DEC. Specifically, disabled people are viewed as incapable of labor because they were repeatedly denied access to spaces in which work was available. Historical solutions that addressed this denial of space led to forms of proto-institutionalization. For example, “Almshouses, which began to be in regular use by the end of the colonial period, met many community needs and were a general dumping ground for all those unable to support themselves financially.”¹⁰⁶ The communal problem of what to *do* with disabled people was the result of limited or no access to space.

¹⁰⁵ Nielsen, 45-6.

¹⁰⁶ Nielsen, 37.

A shift from allowing the disabled population the opportunity to engage in labor-based reciprocity to no opportunities had two negative results. First, the denial of economic opportunities contributed to the cyclical problem of being categorized as disabled if you were unable to work. The cyclical nature of this problem reifies social power structures that aimed to discriminate against deviant bodies. Second, people with disabilities were beginning to be identified and grouped by their inability to economically contribute to society—sometimes being cast as lazy in the process. “Virginia opened the doors of the first asylum exclusively for those with mental and cognitive disabilities—‘ideots, lunatics, and other persons of unsound minds’—in 1773.”¹⁰⁷ Within the broad categorization of inability to economically produce, there became more distinguished hierarchies.

By the 20th century, “Some [activists] began to claim that creating hierarchies among disabilities may have benefited a few, those who could claim that they were not the truly disabled and thus should not be discriminated against or ostracized, but justified and reinforced ableist ideology generally.”¹⁰⁸ Mental and cognitive disabilities were historically categorized separate from those with physical disabilities, a practice that many people with physical disabilities were in favor of at the time and participated in. Presumably, the category “disabled” was determined by whether or not a physical disability kept someone from working. With the example of Virginia’s first asylum, the opportunity to engage in labor-based reciprocity was no longer offered. In the context of employment, space for disabled people was limited during periods of mass institutionalization. Nielsen traces how this segregation shifted during World War II when the demand for abled-bodied soldiers increased; “The nation needed its disabled citizens.”¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁷ Nielsen, 37

¹⁰⁸ Nielsen, 155.

¹⁰⁹ Nielsen, 148.

fluctuation of wartime demands of abled bodies depicts how disabled bodies were considered solutions to other problems that did not directly address the systemic issue of access to employment. Although wars led to the increase of employment rates for disabled people, the overarching problem of access to employment was never effectively resolved.

I think that the underlying reason for not resolving the problem of access to space is a result of a reified categorization of disability. The debate over which definition of disability is preferable reifies this categorization.¹¹⁰ In summary, the biopsychosocial model is typically preferred by social scientists while the biomedical model functions as the dominant, legal definition of disability. Both Nielsen and I adhere to the biopsychosocial model. My purpose of distinguishing these two models is not to directly engage in this debate, but to consider how the biomedical model has historically dominated the shaping of the disability narrative. But also, I want to consider how the biopsychosocial model continues to shape the same narrative. The most damaging effect the biomedical model has in shaping the disability narrative is the success of problematizing bodies with the intent of *solving* those bodies.

As an emerging field, medicine's own successful reification was at the expense of exploiting disabled bodies. "The number of institutions that defined normative and deviant bodies and minds grew dramatically, both public and private, with recipients willing and coerced."¹¹¹ Coercion was possible through the historically concurrent increases in medicine's standardization and the institutionalization of disabled people. "Family members of those with cognitive disabilities, once admired for their devotion and care, now experienced shame. With increased

¹¹⁰ Wade, D. T., and P. W. Halligan. 2017. "The Biopsychosocial Model of Illness: A Model Whose Time Has Come." *Clinical Rehabilitation* 31(8): 995–1004.

¹¹¹ Nielsen, 67.

shamed came increased institutionalization.”¹¹² In problematizing and defining bodies as deviant, the biomedical model hoped to provide a solution. “Advances and attempted advances in medicine and technology presumed that order could be found, solutions achieved, and increased enlightenment would result.”¹¹³ This opportunistic attitude directly impacts the way in which disability and employment policies are shaped. VR’s project as a whole adopts this attitude. I think that supporters of the IPS model consider an individualized approach to SE as differentiating itself from this attitude. This is reflected in SE literature’s use of innovation and references to the biopsychosocial model.

But supporters of the IPS model trying to distance their work from VR’s previous uses of the biomedical model is not enough. The IPS model still functions as a cure, or solution, to the problematization of disabled bodies. Despite attempts to distance itself from the biomedical model’s rhetoric with the term “individualized” in the model’s title, I argue that the IPS model functions as a means to reintegrate disabled job applicants en masse back into the workforce. Always focusing on the individual also forces us to ignore concerns of the inclusion of all disabled community members: the problem, as in the biomedical model, still exists within the individual, not society and its configuration of work, under the IPS model.

The IPS model should not be blamed for the current environment in which SE finds itself. But the IPS model is complicit in edifying the historical categorizations of disabled bodies. The IPS model embodies the opportunities for labor-based reciprocity but does not address the broader impacts of defining bodies as deviant bodies. The IPS model wants to return to the prelapsarian, historical narrative of an idealized relationship between a body and employment. In the context of

¹¹² Nielsen, 72; citing (Richards, 2004).

¹¹³ Nielsen, 39.

SMI, Nielsen observes: “The 1830 census had recorded, for the first time, the numbers of deaf, blind, and ‘dumb’ residents. The 1840 census added a query about ‘insane and idiot’ residents (one category).”¹¹⁴ Compared to Virginia’s first asylum almost a century earlier, the status of being included in the census historically exemplifies the disconnect between the idealized relationship between bodies and employment and its narrative. In other words, disabled bodies existed, but they were not categorized in the census until they became a social problem.

Nielsen uses the example of physician and abolitionist Samuel Gridley Howe; “All, even idiots, he argued, could be taught economic productivity and some could become self-sufficient.”¹¹⁵ Howe’s joint roles of both physician and abolitionist reflect a post-bellum shift in the attitudes towards deviant bodies. Ostensibly, deviant bodies included former slaves. But Howe’s abolitionist views interconnect both race and disability to deviance. Therefore, a shift in social expectations for disabled people parallels the shift in expectations for other historically deviant bodies.

Undermining Autonomy

The phenomenon of shifting social expectations for disabled people continues today. In the context of the DEC, I think that the prominent shift is reflected in the changes from VR to the IPS model. Historically, VR attempted to connect institutionalized, deviant bodies to non-traditional forms of labor. Sheltered workshops epitomize this; they effectively segregated disabled workers from mainstream employment opportunities. SE directly addresses segregation with the goal of reintegrating disabled workers back into the general workforce. In SE, disabled people are seen as potentially capable to be economically productive and self-sufficient. The IPS model’s focus on

¹¹⁴ Nielsen, 64.

¹¹⁵ Nielsen, 68.

self-sufficiency mirrors a shift from economic output to civic participation. In this new paradigm, social worth is still dependent on economic output. But historically, discrimination against disabled people evolved as that population began to succeed in gaining economic opportunities. “States increasingly developed disability-based voting exclusions, alongside and often as a part of those of race and gender.”¹¹⁶ I am not arguing that the economic success of disabled people led to civic exclusion. Rather, as economic productivity increasingly became defined as self-sufficiency, the weight of the discrimination against deviant bodies and minds shifted to civic and legal areas. “Perceived intellect, bodily capacity, race, class, gender, ethnicity, and circumstance all intersected to determine one’s civic competency.”¹¹⁷ This shift from economics to citizenry remains unacknowledged in the IPS model’s response to the DEC.

Instead, the IPS model exacerbates the tension in the relationship between economic output and citizenship. Nielsen claims, “Disability became one ideological means by which to adjudicate worthy citizenship.”¹¹⁸ Historically, during this shift, self-sufficiency became the standardization of worthy citizenship. If someone did not fully contribute to society through employment to the point where they were self-made, the consequential inequalities they faced were expected. Instead of addressing the relationship between self-sufficiency and citizenship, the IPS model tries to maximize the economic potential that disabled people have in this socially constructed predicament. Without addressing these historically constructed problems, the IPS model reifies the motivations for intrinsic discrimination against disabled people. Namely, “Civic undesirability was slippery and broad; and the definitions of disability, degeneracy, and immorality vague and

¹¹⁶ Nielsen, 50.

¹¹⁷ Nielsen, 52.

¹¹⁸ Nielsen, 75.

permeable.”¹¹⁹ While supporters of the IPS model are presumably aware of the historical construction of civic undesirability, SE does not adequately address this despite trying to reintegrate undesirable, deviant bodies into the mainstream workforce.

In comparison, reintegration may seem like a low-stakes, political project. The disabled job applicants who are re-entering the workforce are only up against potential, institutional discrimination. In this perspective, the IPS model acts as an intermediary that tries to alleviate the historically constructed tension between deviant bodies and employment. But there is more at stake here, particularly in assessing the weight of discrimination against disabled people. The relationship between self-sufficiency and civic duty makes up another American ideal. To reify and reproduce American idealism, the normalization to sterilize “defectiveness” was a solution “...for the greater good of society.”¹²⁰ The IPS model might be able to mitigate the mass reintegration of “defectiveness” back into the workforce. But the DEC is more than a mere employment problem that is dealing with space. “The warehousing of those considered deviant in one way or another, combined with the threat of sterilization, policed behaviors and literally controlled the reproduction of social norms.”¹²¹ Reintegration of disabled bodies into spaces where they were historically segregated from does not address how solidified social norms against disabilities are embedded in current institutions. The IPS model does not effectively engage in the discourse that recognizes the harms of the current reification of social norms. Furthermore, pipelining is a form of policing behaviors, attitudes, and expectations for those deviant bodies who are seeking employment. Without addressing the embeddedness of social norms, the IPS model reifies the segregation of disabled people through pipelining.

¹¹⁹ Nielsen, 115.

¹²⁰ Nielsen, 113; citing (Laughlin, 1922; 294).

¹²¹ Nielsen, 119.

Normativity and Income

Throughout these historical shifts in the definition of disability and the treatment of disabled people, I find a common theme in the relationship between space and social mobility. Bodies and minds that were defined as deviant were segregated from opportunities that would lead to social mobility. The institutionalization of disabled bodies and minds unilaterally disenfranchised individuals from becoming self-sufficient. During the civil rights era, groups of discriminated people started to gain small voices in this broader discourse regarding disenfranchisement. “Mobility became the method by which emancipated peoples lived and acted out their freedom. As historian Jim Downs has noted, however, ‘freedom depended upon one’s ability and potential to work.’”¹²² Downs’s description of freedom is a standard for my definition of autonomy. Other discriminated groups, especially those made up of deviant bodies—for example, non-white bodies—were able to gain some form of employment and attain a degree of autonomy. Even though income inequity is still a current problem faced by these discriminated groups, the problem of access to employment solely based on ability has slowly become a non-issue.

What sets ableism apart from other forms of employment-based discrimination is that “...disability is a social condition of discrimination and unmerited stigma, which needlessly harms and restricts the lives of those with disabilities and results in economic disparities, social isolation, and oppression.”¹²³ While other forms of discrimination fit these criteria, the legal and social responses to these injustices have been more effective. “The reality of the ADA...is that like nearly all civil rights legislation, it has been consistently tested and eroded in the courts, and sometimes

¹²² Nielsen, 93.

¹²³ Nielsen, 162.

ignored in practice.”¹²⁴ As an extension of the ADA, the IPS model does not effectively resolve economic disparities for people with SMI. Pipelining undermines the ADA’s aim by functioning as a workaround for hiring managers. Instead of addressing the historically constructed and institutionally embedded discrimination against disabled people in their hiring practices, hiring managers are capable of satisfying the ADA requirements through pipelining.

Hiring a disabled job applicant with SMI for a cart attendant position is easier than hiring the same applicant for a deli clerk position. While the latter position may require more skilled training that a non-disabled, entry-level applicant possesses, the prospect of hiring an applicant who has an onsite job coach can be more overwhelming for more skilled positions than unskilled positions. To employ an applicant who figuratively has the entire IPS model behind her (whether that is in the form of an onsite job coach or some other form of behind the scenes counseling) creates a scenario in which something more than job performance is at stake. Bruyère et al. categorize these stakes as demand-side factors. To reiterate what I argued in Chapter 1, these factors are not addressed in the IPS model.

While there may be multiple factors that contribute to the IPS model’s inability to address institutionally embedded discrimination, the relationship between VR and the preferred biomedical model of disability is fundamental to how programs have taken shape. One of the organizations that was formed before the rise of the VR model was the American Federation of the Physically Handicapped (AFPH). The AFPH was “a cross-disability activist organization, [that] pushed the argument that people with disabilities had civil rights that included access to employment, education, and all of society.”¹²⁵ The AFPH’s shortcomings are connected to the shift

¹²⁴ Nielsen, 181.

¹²⁵ Nielsen, 150.

in the relationship between economic productivity and civic worth. “Despite the continued efforts of the AFPH and organized labor, a medical-based approach to disability continued to dominate federal policies and programs.”¹²⁶ This approach, as opposed to social science’s preferred biopsychosocial model, allows for a measurable standardization of economic productivity. Consequently, a correlation between disability status and medical diagnosis leads to a correlation between health and economic productivity.

My interpretation of the biomedical model of disability’s impact on economic productivity is that if someone is less healthy, her economic productivity is lower. On a micro scale, we can think of managers sending home employees when they catch a common cold. In this example, the employee does not perform as well when she is under the weather and she also provides a broader risk for other employees. With a medical-based approach to disability, the relationship between health and job performance is not too far off from accurately describing the more current forms of ableism-based employment discrimination. All the supports offered through the IPS model function as a medicine; within a medical-based approach to disability, there is a presumable “cure” to better the disabled condition.

Despite the supports, SMI functions as a chronic condition that, even with medication, still appears to affect the diagnosed individual. This predicament of working half-as-healthy as a nondisabled worker leads to pipelining. Instead of pursuing employment settings that may be too much for someone who is disabled, a chronically ill person may succeed in a less demanding setting. If a cure for a medical-based approach to disability is not viable, a working solution is the second-best option. I think that the IPS model functions this way through pipelining. That is, pipelining is determining a job applicant’s economic productivity based on her disability type.

¹²⁶ Nielsen, 153.

Meeting a certain standard of economic productivity originates from the reification of the American ideal of self-sufficiency. The IPS model functions as a means for those who are socially constructed as dependent to become self-sufficient.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

This thesis has argued that people who are disabled encounter income inequity and employment discrimination. The IPS model is one of the recent developments that tries to alleviate some of the problems faced by the DEC. Through a policy-based method called Supported Employment (SE), the IPS model aims to gain employment for people who are disabled and seeking employment. Much of the research that supports the IPS model neglects to look at external factors that impact the DEC. The IPS model's scope focuses on internal factors, or the individuals who are seeking employment, and is thereby narrowed. This is the result of the wide use of a socially constructed definition of disability. Additionally, the IPS model's narrowed scope disproportionately impacts people with cognitive disabilities who are seeking employment. By exploring social constructionism's influence on disability, this thesis examined how the IPS model became focused on internal factors at the expense of people who are disabled and seeking employment.

This historical shift leads to the question of whether or not the Disability Employment Conundrum (DEC) can ever truly be reconciled with capitalism. While the IPS model offers an effective means for disabled job applicants to be reintegrated into the workforce, SE needs to continually evolve. On a pragmatic level, shifting future research away from supply-side factors and focusing on demand-side factors would enable the IPS model to more directly address the overarching problems within the DEC. But I do not think that the IPS model is capable of solving the DEC. At its best, SE is a short-term solution for *some* of the problems within the DEC. At its worst, SE is a rebranded form of institutionalized segregation. Pipelining effectively segregates bodyminds constructed as disabled from certain forms of employment while allowing for *some* opportunities in positions that are more "accepting" to bodyminds perceived as disabled. On a theoretical level, capitalism's intrinsic competitiveness seemingly remains unavoidable in hiring

practices. A competitive job market that both commodifies bodyminds and then seeks out more preferable bodyminds seems irreconcilable with bodyminds that are both legally disabled and socially categorized as “un-abled.” While pipelining individuals into certain job sectors may benefit individuals on a case-by-case instance, the broader context in which SE is situated does not solve the ethical dilemmas within the DEC.

The Current Statuses of the IPS Model and the ADA

Nielsen’s conclusion on the ADA’s impact on the daily lives of people with disabilities shapes my criticism of the IPS model. “What power the ADA has retained is only due to the constant vigilance and activism of disabled people and their allies—activism that the disability rights movement has made possible.”¹²⁷ As an extension of the ADA, the IPS model should be continually criticized. Bond, Drake, and Metcalfe continue to publish various problems that they see with the IPS model. However, their research still focuses on supply-side factors. For example, their forthcoming article examines the impact of standardizing discharge rules in the IPS model.¹²⁸ Their abstract concludes “Although the likelihood of obtaining a first job declined over time, IPS recipients were more likely than participants in a control group to find first jobs for at least 18 months.

Use of standardized discharge rules in IPS, based on initial periods of unemployment, may be cost-effective but would penalize recipients who respond more slowly. Natural attrition may be a more sensitive and ethical way to create capacity.”¹²⁹ In other words, the added pressure of

¹²⁷ Nielsen, 181.

¹²⁸ Metcalfe, J. D., R. E. Drake, and G. R. Bond. Ahead of Print. “The Use of Standardized Discharge in IPS Supported Employment Programs.” *Psychiatric Services* 0 0:0.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

potentially being discharged from SE services without gaining employment was measured. Regardless of their concern for more sensitive and ethical ways to create capacity, their fixation on researching cost-effectiveness contrasts the spirit of Nielsen's call to activism. Frustratingly, research on standardized discharge rules portrays how the IPS model does not appear to be changing the discourse that makes up the DEC.

As recently as February 2018, H.R.620 - ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017 passed in the House of Representatives and awaits to pass in the Senate. The H.R. 620 Bill includes three primary amendments that address the promotion of public accommodations for persons with disabilities. The most relevant amendment for the IPS model states:

“(Sec. 5) The Judicial Conference of the United States must develop a model program to promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to resolve such claims. The model program should include an expedited method for determining relevant facts related to such barriers and steps to resolve accessibility issues before litigation.”¹³⁰

While various civil rights groups are anticipating the impact of this bill for a variety of reasons, I speculate that such a model program may serve as a precedent for further reconsiderations of preexisting models. SE could benefit from the success of “an expedited method” that deals with “relevant facts” due to Bond's and Drake's fixation on providing evidence-based support for the IPS model. However, I have concerns for what an expedited method might look like in the context of the IPS model. Perhaps this expedited method adopts an approach that uses standardized discharge rules to optimize effectiveness in gaining employment. If this was the case, the IPS model would continue to function as a means of creating socially acceptable spaces for disabled people. I anticipate that pipelining would be more visibly apparent to the broader public and would result in more disabled people employed in menial positions.

¹³⁰ ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017, H.R.620, 115th Congress (2017-2018).

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