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Counting inclusion with Chantal Mouffe: a radical democratic approach to intellectual disability research

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As mandates for social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities remain unfulfilled, many scholars question whether the concept of inclusion is to blame. Critics worry that quantitative measurements of inclusion miss what should count: a meaningful life gained from a sense of belonging. We argue that both concepts – inclusion and belonging – embody a communitarian ethos in which citizens mirror the values of their community. In contrast, Chantal Mouffe’s radical democratic approach to inclusion emphasizes the importance of difference and the inevitability of exclusion. Mouffe thus offers a way to broaden our approach to social inclusion in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: belonging; social inclusion; intellectual disability; community; radical democracy; identity

Points of interest

- People disagree over what kinds of people and activities should count for social inclusion.
- In some definitions, having a sense of belonging is counted as the most important part of inclusion.
- We argue that there are lots of reasons, not just belonging, to join groups and participate in activities.
- For instance, radical democratic theorists argue that inclusion entails conflict, power, and passion – all of which can disrupt a sense of belonging.
- Chantal Mouffe is a democratic theorist who argues that inclusion always generates exclusion, and we use her theory to rethink social inclusion for the field of intellectual disability.

Introduction

Social inclusion has been a central concept within the field of intellectual disability for the last 30 years, but an upsurge of published literature suggests that scholars are reassessing the concept’s value in the twenty-first century (Amado et al. 2013; Bigby 2012; Cobigo et al. 2012; Duggan and Linehan 2013; Hall 2009; Overmars-Marx

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et al. 2014; Clifford Simplican et al. 2015). For example, Clifford Simplican et al. (2015) argue that definitional disputes around social inclusion lead to methodological disagreements over how to measure inclusion, reveal philosophical differences in the purposes behind inclusion, and prompt some scholars to search for clearer concepts. Hence, scholars like Ed Hall (2010) and Andrew Power (2013a) suggest shifting attention to a sense of belonging because this encapsulates the benefits of community membership. Rather than discard either concept, we draw on radical democratic theory to broaden the range of purposes behind social inclusion.

Indeed, whether our focus is social inclusion or belonging, a narrow understanding of community and identity prevails. In the field of intellectual disability, the concepts of inclusion and belonging tend to evoke a communitarian ethos, in which people embody the same values as their community. Sharon Gomez's presidential address to the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities provides an illustrative example. She describes a future in which 'all people are recognized and celebrated for their strength, beauty, courage, and inherent gifts. In inclusive communities, *people belong*' (Gomez 2011, 361; emphasis added). Gomez's inclusive ideal is a communitarian vision of societal relations. For communitarians, individuals share the values of their community, and this harmony promotes the well-being of citizens. Missing in Gomez's account – and communitarianism more broadly – are inclusive spaces that are uncomfortable, discordant, sensuous, fun, provocative, risky, and riven by conflict. Replacing social inclusion with a sense of belonging may have little effect if the same communitarian values persist (Cobigo et al. 2012).

Consequently, we need a theory of social inclusion decoupled from communitarianism, which we find in radical democratic theory. Radical democrats prioritize individual freedom over community sameness, and they argue that democratic participation reveals deep conflicts between communities. In promoting individual freedom, radical democrats welcome difference – both individually and culturally. In foregrounding participation, radical democrats envision citizens clashing over these differences as the very essence of politics. As such, they emphasize the centrality of difference, power, and conflict as enduring features of social life.

Our analysis focuses specifically on the work of French feminist Chantal Mouffe. Mouffe is a sharp critic of the communitarian vision of inclusion precisely because it stifles difference and depoliticizes communities. For Mouffe (2000), inclusion is always conditioned by a 'constitutive outside' in which every invocation of 'us' implies a 'them'. By understanding Mouffe's radical democratic theory, we see how debates between social inclusion and belonging too narrowly depict the relationship between individuals and communities. A radical democratic theory of social inclusion can welcome a diversity of communities for people with intellectual disabilities.

Counting inclusion through communitarianism

Inclusion is a deeply embedded norm not only in the field of intellectual disability, but also in democracy more broadly. Because there are many theories of democracy – including liberal, communitarian, participatory, pluralist, deliberative, and radical – it makes sense that definitions of inclusion proliferate and contradict one another (Gabardi 2001). The centrality of inclusion as a democratic principle has made it a successful rallying cry for marginalized groups in the twentieth century

(Young 2000). Indeed, the disability rights motto of ‘nothing about us without us’ captures the radical democratic ethos of inclusion. Within the field of intellectual disability, however, a communitarian attitude dulls the radical edge of inclusion.

When social inclusion began to emerge in the field of intellectual disability, the political landscape had little alignment with radical democracy, which influenced the field’s concept of community and identity. In the 1950s, parents and professionals aimed intentionally to create an image of children with intellectual disabilities as non-threatening and similar to peers as a way to combat stigma (Carey 2009; Wehmeyer, Bersani, and Gagne 2000). In the 1970s, many of the first self-advocacy groups were started collaboratively with non-disabled staff or parents (Fleischer and Zames 2001, 113). At the same time, neither parental advocates or self-advocates fitted fully into the larger disability rights movement, which was gaining momentum in the 1970s and 1980s (Carey 2009, 177). Some parents avoided aligning themselves with the disability rights movement, in part because they felt that the movement was too radical (Carey 2009, 177). Meanwhile, some disability rights activists worried that including people with intellectual disabilities in the movement would undermine their claim for autonomy (Goble 2004, 35).

Hence, while the broader disability rights movement welcomed confrontation as a part of radical politics, the field of intellectual disability aimed at conciliatory measures – perhaps driven by the sense that there was more to lose. The self-advocacy’s motto of ‘we are people first’ speaks to this divide between radical and conciliatory approaches to political change. While other twentieth-century movements fought to be included as equal citizens, people with intellectual disabilities and allies were fighting to be seen as equally human. Thus, it may have been more salient to foster a sense of commonality across difference, rather than use difference to drive demands for inclusion. We see this emphasis on joining mainstream society in the concept of normalization – a concept that preceded and informs current conceptions of social inclusion (Culham and Nind 2003; Race, Boxall, and Carson 2005).

Undergirding concepts such as social inclusion and normalization is a communitarian ethos in which individuals embody the same values as their community, and these shared values enable community members to accept and value one another. In fact, at the same time as the self-advocacy movement was taking shape in the United States, the communitarian model of democracy was gaining prominence in American scholarship. Communitarian democrats criticized the dominance of liberal democratic theory with its overemphasis on individualism, autonomy, and moral universalism. Liberal democratic theorists detached questions of the good life from political theory: they argued that liberal individualism and democratic freedom should enable individuals to determine their own values – regardless of community norms. Communitarians, however, argued that individuals cannot detach themselves from their communities so easily. Societal norms shape our sense of self, and it is through our belonging to a community that we achieve the good life.

Precisely because they see the good life bound to our membership in communities, communitarians argue that we should ‘strengthen the institutions of civil society – the family, schools, churches, and neighborhoods’ (Gabardi 2001, 549). For communitarians, individuals share a set of values and norms, and this commonality strengthens the bonds of communities.

Communitarian values thus infuse social inclusion literature. What counts, who counts, and how to count feature prominently in recent scholarship, but how communitarian values inform why we count is overlooked.

What counts?

What counts for social inclusion depends on the definition (Clifford Simplican et al. 2015). Bates and Davis define social inclusion as ‘full and fair access to activities, social roles and relationships directly alongside non-disabled citizens’ (2004, 196). As Clifford Simplican et al. (2015) point out, most definitions share these two domains – community activities and interpersonal relationships – but these definitions still range widely.

In narrow definitions, scholars restrict who and what counts. For instance, scholars may avoid counting family members, staff, or other people with intellectual disabilities as members of a person’s social network. They may also reject counting activities that are not ‘mainstream’ (Clement and Bigby 2009). These narrow definitions suggest that what counts for social inclusion is integration in mainstream settings among non-disabled community members. Hence, when Bigby et al. (2014) describe the successful inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities into knitting groups, bowling leagues, and singing groups ‘in the community,’ they convey the fact that pre-existing members do not have an intellectual disability.

Broad definitions of social inclusion similarly draw upon Bates and Davis’s domains of community activities and interpersonal relationships, but they emphasize more the quality of relationships and interaction. For instance, in broad definitions, social inclusion entails being accepted as an individual beyond disability, having a sense of belonging, experiencing a valued social role, being trusted within one’s community, and having significant and reciprocal relationships (Cobigo et al. 2012; Hall 2009; Power 2013a). For instance, Power offers the example of a young woman with an intellectual disability who is employed, has hobbies, and engages in several weekly activities, but nevertheless lacks ‘affective bonds with people in the community’ (2013a, 72). Broad definitions make a sense of belonging a constitutive component of social inclusion.

Hence, in both narrow and broad definitions of social inclusion, scholars privilege membership in dominant communities. This makes sense given the long history of exclusion, but also because an underlying communitarian ethos guides our value system. The affective dimension of a sense of belonging is a communitarian ideal, because it presumes that individuals gain the most benefit from community membership when their inclusion promotes harmony, not conflict.

Who counts?

Underlying these approaches to social inclusion is a communitarian conception of the self. Central in the debate between liberals and communitarians was the question of how to understand the self. Communitarians privileged a ‘thick’ conception of the self as opposed to a ‘thin’ self. The thin liberal self stands apart from her community: her capacity to choose her own set of values defines her identity. In contrast, the ‘thick’ self cannot detach herself from her community: the values and norms of her community pervade her sense of self. For Michael Sandel, a prominent communitarian theorist, we ‘cannot conceive our personhood without reference to our role as citizens, and as participants in a common life’ (1984, 5). Sandel’s conception of the self thus fits well with broad definitions of social inclusion because both emphasize the importance of a sense of belonging arising from a shared set of values.

This thick conception of the self – in which a person articulates the shared values of his community – has consequences for who is included in social inclusion research. When we ask whose social inclusion counts, we see that researchers tend to focus on people with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities (Copeland, Luckasson, and Shauger 2014). People with mild and moderate intellectual disabilities are probably more able to articulate their subjective perceptions of the quality of their relationships and activities to researchers. This leaves questions unanswered about the social inclusion of people with severe to profound intellectual disability.

Not only does the thick conception of the self lead to a set of methods that privileges people with mild and moderate disabilities over people with severe to profound intellectual disabilities, it also determines in advance how to conceptualize identity and the good life. Communitarian conceptions of the self may implicitly devalue people with severe and profound intellectual disability (Arneil 2009). The thick communitarian self thus places high demands on the kind of self-identity and self-consciousness that a person should possess.

How to count?

How we count social inclusion is also shaped by thin and thick conceptions of the self. Common social inclusion indicators include the number of friends outside the home, the number of neighbors known by name, the frequency of contact with family members, and the number of weekly visitors. Roy McConkey (2007), for example, relies on the Index of Community Involvement to count the number of times a person frequents community amenities. These are ‘thin’ indicators because they tell us about the quantity of interactions, but fail to tell us how individuals interpret their significance. Bigby (2012) argues that these indicators offer little meaningful information about inclusion. Scholars thus suggest more qualitative approaches that measure not only the frequency of contact, but also the quality (Cobigo et al. 2012).

Less explicit in this criticism is the normative regulation of what inclusion should entail. But because broad definitions of inclusion emphasize a sense of belonging, we can surmise that the quality of inclusion is determined on how well it supplies a person with a sense of value and belonging. If thin indicators fail to tell us enough about inclusion, thick indicators may overly prescribe how researchers judge the quality of inclusion.

Why count?

Social inclusion is a widely shared value in national and international policies (Cobigo et al. 2012; Duggan and Linehan 2013; Mahar, Cobigo, and Stuart 2013; Overmars-Marx et al. 2014; Power 2013a), but underlying this consensus are disparate aims (Clifford Simplican et al. 2015). Purposes behind social inclusion can be individual or collective. Individual aims include increasing confidence, happiness, and well-being (Forrester-Jones et al. 2006; Johnson et al. 2012), whereas collective purposes include combating societal patterns of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, stigma, and abuse (Mahar, Cobigo, and Stuart 2013; McConkey and Collins 2010; Power 2013a). Thinking of these two kinds of aims together, we can imagine situations in which individual and collective aims conflict.

For example, an advocacy campaign that combats prejudice by raising political awareness about social injustice may decrease a person's sense of well-being as it draws attention to the injustices he or she experiences (Beart, Hardy, and Buchan 2004). In this way, communitarian ideals of inclusion – such as increasing happiness through facilitating a sense of belonging – may stall broader political goals. As such, individual purposes such as feeling included threaten to eclipse collective aims. Fyson and Fox (2014), for example, argue that disability groups need to continue fighting for increased funding for disability supports and services. Making demands for more funding in the public sphere, however, may disrupt harmonious relationships. In championing inclusion as an unquestioned ideal for individuals with intellectual disability, we may lose sight of more collective purposes (Cobigo et al., 2012).

We cannot remedy these problems with social inclusion by turning toward a sense of belonging because the latter concept more explicitly embodies a communitarian model of democracy. In advocating for a sense of belonging to replace inclusion, Power argues that belonging 'does not solely involve being placed within an environment, but *fitting in* within a specified place or environment' (2013a, 69; original emphasis). Power thus calls upon a thick conception of the self whose identity and community share the same values. As this section has shown, many proponents of social inclusion share Power's communitarian ethos as they often define true inclusion through a sense of belonging. Surely, belonging is important – indeed, it is fundamental to our lives. But for radical democratic theorists, belonging has a dark side.

Mouffe and the democratic paradox

Mouffe argues that full inclusion is never possible within a democracy, but she insists that this inevitable failure actually helps fuel democratic participation. Mouffe explains that an irresolvable tension plagues our conception of equality due to the conflicting commitments of liberalism and democracy. Liberal equality is an abstract and universal concept. For liberal theorists, 'every person is, as a person, automatically equal to every other person' (Mouffe 2000, 39). In contrast, democratic equality is substantive because it constructs 'the people' as a bounded community. For Mouffe, democratic equality 'requires the possibility of distinguishing who belongs to the demos and who is exterior to it; for that reason, it cannot exist without the necessary correlate of inequality' (2000, 39). Central to Mouffe's argument is how the creation of an 'us' always implies a 'them.' This democratic paradox – between abstract universal equality and an exclusionary democratic community – is inescapable, and yet productive: the commitment to universal liberal equality enables citizens to challenge exclusion.

Disability politics exemplifies Mouffe's democratic paradox. Take, for example, the debate on how to define disability during the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Disability activists worried that defining disability would exclude some people with disabilities and would deny how disability is a dynamic concept (Kanter 2006). By making a Convention for people with disabilities, the CRPD effectively draws the boundaries between an 'us' (people with disabilities) and a 'them' (people without disabilities). But in refusing to define disability, the CRPD enables people to contest the meaning of disability and any

resulting exclusion. This endless contestation is exactly the kind of civic participation that Mouffe's democratic paradox compels.

By valuing political participation within a society riven by inequality, Mouffe gives us a vision of the community as a site of permanent antagonism. According to Mouffe, modern pluralist democracy does not 'reside in the absence of domination and of violence but in the establishment of a set of institutions through which they can be limited and contested' (2000, 22). Because power is never eclipsed in communities, citizens must continually mobilize against exclusion (2002, 100). Hence, Mouffe welcomes communitarians' revival of political participation. Disability helps us see this aspect of Mouffe's work, too. The CRPD 'requires states to involve disabled people's organizations fully in the monitoring process' (Harpur 2012, 8). The CRPD's emphasis on monitoring presumes that ableist exclusions will continue to take place even after states ratify the CRPD, and thus builds in procedural mechanisms to contest inequality.

Although Mouffe welcomes communitarians' emphasis on participation, she worries that by insisting on a 'return to a type of community organized around shared moral values,' communitarians sacrifice individual liberty (1993, 64). By idealizing harmony – in which all individuals share the same values – communitarians take a 'dangerous conservative turn' (Mouffe 1991, 72). Communitarians downplay human plurality when they envision an ideal society as 'a perfect harmony in social relations' (Mouffe 2000, 22). For instance, requiring all disability advocacy groups to conform to the same political platform would inevitably silence difference and marginalize people within the disability community.

How do these elements of Mouffe's radical democracy apply to social inclusion? First, Mouffe's understanding of the democratic paradox should make us skeptical of any appeal to universal inclusion. Constructions like 'people with disabilities' and the 'disability rights movement' always define communities through exclusion. We should expect dissent about the boundaries of these communities, as well as dissent within communities. Rather than static identities, Mouffe (1991, 79) conceptualizes individuals composed by 'competing forms of identification linked to different' communities. This vision contrasts with the way the community is depicted in social inclusion literature, in which the 'community' represents a holistic and mainstream body from which people with intellectual disabilities are either excluded or only minimally engaged. Instead, Mouffe makes us think about the multiple communities that people enter and exit.

Hence, inclusion is never achieved and then static, but always a dynamic process. Importantly, for the radical democratic citizen, 'relations of domination can be challenged everywhere' (Mouffe 1991, 81). For Mouffe, inclusive counting will always reveal conflict. As all communities are imbricated in power, we should look for the ways in which domination takes place not just as an outcome of exclusion, but also as a component of inclusion.

Finally, Mouffe's emphasis on contestation leads to a renewed emphasis on passion. For Mouffe, 'Too much emphasis on consensus and the refusal of confrontation lead to apathy and disaffection with political participation' (2000, 104). Although conflict signals inequality, it also infuses communities with passion and guards against apathy. Moreover, a theory of social inclusion that captures a broader array of human passions – not just feelings of well-being, mutuality, and acceptance – can also leverage feelings of anger, disappointment, and rage about persistent patterns of exclusion.

These different elements of Mouffe's radical democracy – multiplicity, exclusion, power, and passion – are intertwined, as she offers us a vision of 'the political' in which people have conflicting allegiances that spark constant contestation. The next section uses Mouffe's theory of radical democracy to describe alternative relationships between individuals and communities that can broaden how the field of intellectual disability counts social inclusion.

Counterpublics

When social inclusion proponents prioritize joining mainstream settings, they deny the importance of counterpublics – a concept originating out of queer theory that recognizes the political significance of minority communities that actively resist oppressive norms. For Michael Warner, a counterpublic maintains 'an awareness of its subordinate status' (2002, 86). Yet counterpublics are not inferior substitutes for mainstream society, but flourishing communities that embrace alternative identities. Warner gives the example of a queer counterpublic in which no one has to be in the closet. Counterpublics thus fit within Mouffe's conception of us versus them group dynamics. Rather than position disability-based organizations as inferior to mainstream settings, counterpublics embrace how a sense of belonging emerges against a backdrop of exclusion.

Within the field of social inclusion, Hall's analysis of artistic spaces and theatre groups occupied mainly by people with intellectual disabilities and paid staff illustrate disability counterpublics. Like Mouffe, Hall envisions group belonging as a dynamic process of people entering new spaces and negotiating new identities. He also understands the political stakes of artistic spaces, arguing that it 'captures the desire and energy of *marginalized people* to seek out ways to be attached, feel secure, and be recognized' (Hall 2013, 246; original emphasis). Here, societal exclusion helps channel a sense of belonging. At the same time, sharing art with a broader (non-disabled) audience potentially challenges stigma toward people with intellectual disabilities. In these ways, the border between counterpublics and dominant culture can be fluid.

By conceptualizing these spaces as counterpublics, we can draw connections between disability-based groups and other identity-based organizations that unite and empower marginalized groups. Identity-based organizations need to draw alliances with one another to strengthen their political influence – a process Mouffe terms 'chains of equivalences' (2013, 133). Rather than dream of a harmonious and homogeneous future, Mouffe envisions the political as comprised of robust coalitions, in which identity-based groups contest patterns of domination while retaining their own differences. For example, Hall and Wilton argue for political opportunities between disabled workers and the labor movement – as both groups contest workplace inequality (Hall and Wilton 2011). In forging this coalition, group members' can identify how mainstream workplaces construct norms that disempower disabled and non-disabled people.

As such, counterpublics are not stepping-stones to mainstream communities, but are important spaces in their own right. At the same time, social inclusion efforts should maintain attentiveness to patterns of domination within counterpublics. In this, Hall's description of artistic spaces as 'safe havens' tends to privilege communitarian values of sameness. Just as Mouffe worries about communitarians'

tendency to marginalize difference between groups, we also need to worry about silencing inequality within groups.

Mouffe's conception of heterogeneous group identity may seem threatening if the goal is consensus. For example, Ineland and Sauer problematize how artistic groups for people with intellectual disabilities negotiate multiple identities. They describe how these groups claim both artistic and medical identities, the latter of which emphasize artistic group's delivery of therapeutic support as a way to maintain scarce state funding (Ineland and Sauer 2007). In their criticism of this tension, Ineland and Sauer suggest that, ideally, artistic groups should have a cohesive identity. Drawing on Mouffe, however, researchers can count conflicting group identities without censoring difference. Because the identity and borders of counterpublics are fluid, group members can craft multiple messages, which may differ depending on whether they are addressed to insiders (us) or outsiders (them). Although embracing multiplicity may feel risky in a political climate marked by fiscal scarcity, Mouffe forces us to acknowledge that no community escapes risk.

Risky spaces

When proponents of inclusion and belonging privilege spaces that foster safety and consensus, they overlook how conflict is inherent to social life and, in some cases, even gratifying. By embracing conflict as a key element of social relationships, Mouffe recognizes the value of inclusive spaces that are risky. An emphasis on risk means exploring the conflicts that emerge between people with and without disabilities, as well as conversations about sexuality as a key component of inclusion. While we need to be aware of the risks that accompany both exclusion and belonging, we also should guard against a protectionist approach to people with intellectual disabilities that threatens to limit inclusion.

When Mouffe argues that 'relations of domination can be challenged everywhere' (1991, 81), we see that inclusive spaces are not exempt from inequality. In a study of a self-advocacy group, Chapman (2014) notes that non-disabled supporters dominated group activities – even when they expressed their commitment to empower members. Chapman calls on supporters to become more self-reflexive about their roles, but being reflexive may be insufficient to overcome patterns of domination. Rather than read these struggles as a failure of self-advocacy groups, however, Mouffe makes us acknowledge that contesting entrenched power arrangements is an essential component of political life.

Domination can also attend relationships that furnish people with intellectual disabilities with a sense of belonging. In an analysis of women with intellectual disabilities, Pestka and Wendt (2014) found that women's deep desire for a sense of belonging contributed to their resignation to violence from domestic partners. The women interviewed yearned for belonging, in part due to the ways in which they had experienced feelings of exclusion and low self-esteem in their childhoods. Specifically, the women expressed a strong desire to be recognized as women by acquiring traditionally female gendered roles, namely as mothers and romantic partners. This deep yearning made them vulnerable to abusive men. Especially in societies marked by inequalities across gender, sexuality, race, class, and disability, an uncritical demand for belonging is risky.

In contrast to social inclusion literature that aims to keep ‘vulnerable people safe’ (Amado et al. 2013, 367), Mouffe insists that inclusion always entails risk as all social relationships are invested in power. As Power argues, ‘concerns about safety and risk have been found to override the desire to empower service users’ (2013b, 207). Power and others thus suggest that inclusion efforts need to embrace positive risk-taking as a key component of interpersonal relationships (Seale 2014). Risk attends inclusion and exclusion, as research finds that people with intellectual disabilities who are socially excluded face high rates of abuse (Beadle-Brown et al. 2010). Following Mouffe, we should expect risk to attend any situation with entrenched inequality.

Moreover, for some people with intellectual disabilities, social inclusion activities that promote risk can provide increased enjoyment (King et al. 2014). Mouffe reminds us that consensus can breed apathy, whereas conflict can ignite the passions. Although communitarians downplay conflict, engaging with risk is an important element of social inclusion.

Passionate encounters

When proponents of social inclusion idealize harmony, they inadvertently restrict the range of emotional experiences and intimate relationships that people find valuable. Mouffe’s attention to conflict and difference, as well as the multiplicity of identity, reminds us that people find diverse pleasures and benefits from social life. A radical democratic theory of social inclusion counts how communities elicit sensuality, shame, and hostility.

Passionate encounters encompass communities that make us feel ashamed, full of rage, and discontent with injustice. Beart, Hardy, and Buchan (2004) found that a self-advocacy group’s development of a political consciousness heightened self-advocates’ negative perceptions of their past. The history of marginalization of people with intellectual disabilities as an oppressed social class is central to the self-advocacy movement (Clifford 2013). For self-advocates, this meant that they began to reappraise their own history through a new filter of injustice that intensified feelings of humiliation and anger. Following Mouffe, coming to understand the ‘us’ of self-advocacy necessitates a negative valence towards ‘them.’ This mix of passions – such as finding satisfaction through belonging and feeling anger toward histories of humiliation – binds groups together. Counting the success of inclusion by individual levels of happiness thus may miss how anger is a vital political catalyst that compels people to combat injustice.

Recent work within social inclusion by Bigby and Ilan Wiesel embraces the ambivalent components of community life that citizens in contemporary society experience. They conceptualize encounter as a form of social inclusion occurring between strangers (Bigby and Wiesel 2011; Wiesel, Bigby, and Carling-Jenkins 2013). These brief interactions experienced in consumerist society may seem trivial, but, in fact, they help facilitate a sense of belonging (Wiesel, Bigby, and Carling-Jenkins 2013). These are not ‘passionate encounters,’ but they contrast with the communitarian ethos of belonging that implies that rewarding relationships are those marked by deep attentiveness and lasting ties. Encounter thus gives us an alternate way of counting ambivalent community ties that fits within Mouffe’s poststructuralist concept of identity.

Not only is the relationship between citizens and communities ambivalent, but citizen's relationship to their own identity and disability can also be fraught with ambivalence. Olin and Janssen (2009) find that, for young people with mild intellectual and psychosocial disabilities, gaining a sense of social inclusion may involve renouncing or hiding their disabled identity. Following Mouffe, people relate to their disability in multiple ways, which can fluctuate depending on the context.

This desire to de-identify as disabled affects how we think about counterpublics and, in particular, how we think about politicizing social inclusion efforts. If individuals do not perceive themselves as disabled, as the young people in Olin and Janssen's study, then they will have little reason to join self-advocacy organizations. Or, as Beart and colleagues point out, many people who may have identified as disabled still felt little reason to join self-advocacy groups because they failed to interpret their life experiences within a political framework. To belong, self-advocates needed to acquire animosity toward an unjust 'them.' Mouffe makes us realize that this mix of difference, inequality, and passion is essential if citizens are going to count themselves and their disability within 'the political.'

Conclusion

Developing a non-normative understanding of social inclusion allows researchers to count inclusion in new ways and to think more broadly about the relationship between people with intellectual disabilities and their communities. Mouffe makes central to our efforts conflict, power, exclusion, and passion. These elements are crucial if we expect to challenge the entrenched ableism that people with intellectual disabilities continue to confront. A non-normative theory of inclusion also parts ways with a sense of belonging. Decoupling these concepts ensures that researchers can count both concepts separately, as each concept has distinct theoretical purchase. While belonging enriches us, it cannot determine the horizon for inclusion.

Mouffe's radical democratic approach also invites us to take a different perspective on the debate between 'sheltered workshops' and mainstream employment. The language of 'sheltered' workshops and 'enclaves' brings up unwanted paternalistic approaches that we surely want to contest. But we should also make sure that an inclusive disability rights agenda has the teeth to contest neoliberal conceptions of employment as the pinnacle of 'freedom' and 'choice.' As disability activist Paul Hunt penned five decades ago:

we cannot help posing questions about values, about what a person is, what he is for, about whether work in the everyday sense of the word is the most important or the only contribution anyone can make to society. ([1966] 1998, 10)

A radical democratic approach to inclusion counts diverse communities – even when these communities embody values that conflict with our own political vision.

A non-normative theory of inclusion – informed by radical democratic theory – can also respond to the pressing challenges facing people with intellectual disabilities in the twenty-first century as neoliberal policies continue to eviscerate social welfare programs. We need to maintain a critical perspective on neoliberal frameworks and be careful that neoliberal norms such as choice and control are not used to win the support of disabled people's movements but then disregard the actual lives of people with disabilities. We need to be careful that our emphasis on the community does not displace the role that politics and discontent should play in

facilitating social inclusion. In emphasizing community supports, we may inadvertently enable governments to continue defunding supports and services for people with intellectual disabilities (Barnes 2011). In prioritizing harmony as the bedrock of inclusive spaces, we may silence the rage, disappointment, and shame that attend persistent exclusion. If social inclusion is going to count in the twenty-first century, we need to stay passionate and in ‘the political.’

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