Human Development

Neurodiversity as Politics

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The debate around neurodiversity is itself diverse. As Dwyer (this issue) puts it in his own contribution to this special issue of *Human Development*, there are multiple "neurodiversity approaches" deployed differently by different actors to different ends, even within the movement. This diversity presents some opportunities, allowing different groups to adapt the idea for their own purposes. Nonetheless, it can also lead to confusion, co-optation, acrimony and other unintended consequences.

As such, in our commentary, we seek to situate the papers within the broader debate around neurodiversity, with the aim of highlighting key areas in which different voices within the neurodiversity movement hold divergent viewpoints. We also offer our own views as to how to resolve these conflicts, although our intent is to encourage debate and deliberate decision-making between these different "neurodiversity approaches" (the recognition of which represents a major contribution by Dwyer), not to insist that the movement's future can only have one path. In highlighting these fissures, we hope to set the stage for a more robust dialogue on the future of neurodiversity in activism, academia and beyond.

Origins

The neurodiversity movement first emerged in the 1990s as a response to the excesses of traditional autism advocacy. Though the term would come later, the movement's origins date back to Jim Sinclair's seminal 1993 essay "Don't Mourn For Us," encouraging parents to shift their approach to their child's autism away from cure and towards acceptance. Sinclair contended that parent-led autism groups encouraged "mourning for what never was" rather than "exploration of what is." In so doing, Sinclair set the stage for a radical challenge to conventional autism discourse. "Don't Mourn For Us" did not just represent a break from the dominant parent-centric autism narratives—it also broke from the limited role available to autistic persons in public discussion.

As Pripas-Kapit (2020) notes in one of the few academic explorations of neurodiversity's founding text, Sinclair's immediate predecessors took a very different approach, typically limiting themselves to first-person narrative rather than ethical or political critique. Autistic authors and public speakers like Temple Grandin spoke predominantly to non-autistic audiences, parents and professionals. Though Sinclair engaged in some similar public speaking, "Don't Mourn For Us" also represented something new: a rebuke of parent autism spaces from an autistic adult, speaking on behalf of a broader community. When Sinclair wrote that xe invited parents "to look at our autism, and look at your grief, from our perspective," it was the articulation of a larger critique, emerging out of an incipient autistic adult community distinct from the more established and powerful autism parent one. As other autistic persons responded to the essay and flocked to autistic cultural spaces, this community grew and evolved.

Early autistic community came together very informally. Gatherings took place predominantly on the sidelines of parent conferences and in online listservs, both places where autistic adults had begun to seek out others like them (Dekker, 1999; Sinclair, 2005; Sinclair, 2010). Autism was still perceived as a condition that impacted children—little thought went into the possibility that autistic persons eventually grew up. Autism and agency were seen as so incompatible with each other that, in the introduction to Grandin's 1986 biography *Emergence: Labeled Autistic*, prominent autism researcher Bernie Rimland described Grandin as "a recovered autistic individual" (Grandin & Scariano, 1986).

The founding of Autism Network International (ANI), the first autistic-run organization, offered an infrastructure for autistic culture. Under Sinclair's leadership, ANI would organize Autreat, an annual conference run by and for autistic adults, for many years (see also its later UK counterpart, Autscape; Buckle, 2020). For autistic attendees, Autreat was often the first exposure to "autistic space"—an environment in which autistic persons were the norm. Not only did Autreat spawn many innovations in accessibility for autistic people, including its Color Communications Badge system, it also encouraged autistic persons who attended to feel comfortable behaving and interacting in the manner most natural to them. As one autistic attendee put it, "I feel as if I'm home, among my own people, for the first time. I never knew what this was until now" (Sinclair, 2005). The sudden (and temporary) experience of connection prompted many autistic attendees to compare life in the predominantly non-autistic world to that of a diaspora community (Sinclair, 2005; Sinclair, 2010). Non-autistic attendees often found their brief experience in majority-autistic space impactful too. As Sinclair (2005) put it,

One NT [neurotypical] attendee described feeling unsure of how to behave and how to relate to people, confused about how to interpret other people's behavior, and anxious that he might offend people without realizing it… In other words, he was able to experience at Autreat some of the same social confusion and discomfort that autistic people frequently experience in NT society. (Freedom from pressures section)

Such experiences prompted empathy, encouraging non-autistic persons to look at autistic culture and ways of interaction as more legitimate than they might otherwise have considered them.

Though the conference never had more than one hundred attendees in any given year, many who came to it would go on to play leading roles as the movement grew. One of us (Ari Ne'eman) was inspired to co-found the Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN), now the United States' leading autistic-run advocacy group, from such experiences. Many other longstanding autistic community leaders had Autreat's immersive communal autistic experience as their starting point. Over time, ANI and Autreat would serve as a seed for a growing and powerful social movement, as autistic people expressed growing frustration with the cure- and tragedy-oriented narratives promoted by groups like Autism Speaks and others (Heilker & Yergeau, 2011; Kras, 2010). What began on the fringe would soon be pushed into the mainstream, led by a growing cohort of autistic-run advocacy groups working to advance neurodiversity at the local, national and international level.

This history is important to bear in mind as neurodiversity attracts growing interest. Today, the term neurodiversity yields thousands of results on Google Scholar. A growing number of universities boast neurodiversity initiatives, typically focused on some combination of research into neurological disability and supporting greater access to higher education. Major international corporations like Ernst & Young and Microsoft boast "neurodiversity hiring programs" that recruit autistic jobseekers as well as others with neurological disabilities (Ernst & Young, n.d., Microsoft, n.d.). In December 2020, the United States federal government welcomed the first participants in the Neurodiverse Federal Workforce pilot program (Thomas, 2021). Neurodiversity is still far from dominant, even in the context of autism (Leadbitter et al., 2021; Pellicano & den Houting, 2021) but it has firmly entered the cultural mainstream, with the concept referred to frequently by parents and professionals alongside the autistic persons who first initiated it. What's more, autistic people themselves have built infrastructure in the form of advocacy groups, cultural convenings and even businesses oriented around the movement's ideas and larger philosophy.

This growth is in many ways beneficial, but it also presents challenges. Neurodiversity emerged in a relatively tight-knit community without an extensive written record or much engagement with academia. As we see it, over time, as the specific terminology of the original community has been incorporated into the work of those with more social, cultural and economic capital (both inside and outside the autistic community), the movement's terminology has been deployed to new purposes.

Often, terms that meant one thing to the activists that spawned them have been used very differently by academics and business leaders. Ambiguity about the "true" meaning of neurodiversity has at times meant that different voices within the movement have sought to confidently present their own views as the only authentic representation. This ambiguity can also prompt newcomers to adopt and even insist upon positions that would have been alien to or extreme to those who cultivated neurodiversity's roots (e.g., rejection of autism as a disability or an espousal of unspecified autistic superpowers; see den Houting, 2019). Uncertainty over what the movement stands for has at times prompted observers to attack neurodiversity proponents for views they by and large do not hold. Much of the present-day debate over neurodiversity is akin to a game of telephone, with many attacking or praising ideas or usages that are very different from what their interlocuters intend.

Inevitable as this may be, discussions of neurodiversity would benefit from awareness of these tensions and the challenges they present.

Neurodiversity as Descriptive Term or Ideology?

One of the more basic questions that emerges in considering neurodiversity is one of terminology: is neurodiversity the name of a social movement, a simple biological reality (reflecting the existence of multiple kinds of brains), or both? As Chapman (2020) notes, some have defined the movement exclusively in political terms while others have sought to frame neurodiversity as a descriptive fact. Walker (2014) argues that neurodiversity refers to "the diversity of human minds, the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species… Neurodiversity is a biological fact. It's not a perspective, an approach, a belief, a political position, or

a paradigm." Walker goes on to argue that the political implications of neurodiversity should be referred to as the "neurodiversity paradigm", distinguishing the normative implications from the biological fact.

Though framed as the authoritative pronouncement of the movement, this perspective is far from the only point of view in autistic activist circles. Many autistic activists have framed neurodiversity as an explicitly political position in both communications to the broader community and the academic literature, referring to neurodiversity as "acceptance for neurological differences and disabilities" (Durbin-Westby, 2012) or explicitly framing it as an "alternative perspective…in contrast to the deficit model" (Robertson, 2010) rather than a simple biological reality. This tension is present even within this issue—for example, contrast Zajic and Brown (this issue)'s reference to "neurodiversity proponents" and "neurodiversity advocates" (consistent with the use of the term to describe an ideology) with Radulski (this issue)'s reference to neurodiversity as a "field" (consistent with the descriptive tradition of the term). In contrast to Walker, we believe that the use of the word neurodiversity, without further qualifiers, has a long history of being used in autistic activist communities to describe biology and ideology, with some believing the term refers only to one of these options and others applying it to both. Recognizing that others may adopt different conventions, in this article we use the term exclusively to describe the ideology for reasons we now articulate.

In principle, the distinction is mere semantics. But in practice, the existence of neurodiversity as a purely descriptive concept removes from the term its most important implications. For better or worse, if neurodiversity refers simply to the fact of neurological variation, there is no inherent reason for the term not to be used in association with efforts to cure or prevent autism or other similar neurological disabilities. Similarly, this descriptive neurodiversity is perfectly consistent with advertising analogizing autism or other similar conditions as akin to death or kidnapping, precisely the type of messaging the movement sought to combat in its early years (Heilker & Yergeau, 2011; Kras, 2010; Rottier & Gernsbacher, 2020). If the term neurodiversity has no normative implications, there is no basis to object to the way it is deployed in such contexts.

Efforts to draw a finely grained distinction between "neurodiversity" and the "neurodiversity paradigm" are also likely too subtle for most activist and advocacy contexts, particularly given the imperative for autistic and other disabled activists to keep their language accessible to a broad audience, including persons with cognitive impairments and without access to higher education. If the "center of gravity" for the neurodiversity movement is to stay in the realm of activism rather than in academia, these issues must be considered.

These questions also raise another important concern: the appropriateness of the increasingly common use of terms like "neurodivergent" or "neurodiverse," both of which are often used to describe those for whom the concept of neurodiversity applies, though proponents of the former argue the latter is grammatically nonsensical. These terms emerged in large part out of a desire to clarify that the term neurodiversity in either its descriptive or ideological terms applies outside of autism (Asasumasu, 2016; Chapman, 2021). But their usage presents a new problem: neurodiversity activists have long emphasized the connection between their movement and the broader disability community, explicitly rejecting claims that the movement "views autism as a difference but not a disability" (Bailin, 2019; den Houting, 2019; Ne'eman & Bascom, 2020). We agree with this interpretation of the movement's political commitments.

But the usage of neurodiversity as a descriptive term seems to imply a fear of the term disability. Why not simply refer to this population as the neurologically or (where appropriate) developmentally disabled? What purpose does the additional descriptive term have, if autistic people and other "neurodivergent" persons are definitionally disabled as well? Returning to the idea that a movement that centers activists (rather than solely academics) and that seeks to include persons with cognitive disabilities must be attentive to the most likely possible interpretation of its terminology, we wonder if the growing usage of terms like "neurodivergent" has confused matters.

After all, the commonsense interpretation of the creation of a special word to refer to neurological disability is that those who engage in such an act of creation find the latter term unacceptable in some way. While the accusation that neurodiversity proponents do not see autism as a disability is often made in bad faith, the increasing prominence of the descriptive use of the term neurodiversity makes this a more understandable error. It may even represent an accurate description of what motivates some persons to adopt the language of neurodiversity, even if this view is not prominent among movement leaders or organizations.

Sinclair and other early autistic activists were heavily influenced by other parts of the disability community. Autistic culture borrowed significantly from Deaf culture—for example, attendees at Autreat substituted traditional applause for "flapplause", the rapid flapping of one's hands instead of clapping them together. This has much in common with "deaf applause," which typically involves hand waving (Solvang & Haualand, 2014). Similarly, much of the ideology and terminology of the neurodiversity movement borrows from the independent living movement and the developmental disability self-advocacy movement, both of which emphasize the same themes of self-help and willingness to push back against professional and family member domination in the political sphere.

This disconnect from the larger disability context in which neurodiversity was born is a grave error. Neurodiversity proponents would do well to avoid "reinventing the wheel" in a way that might imply a rejection of the broader disability rights movement. As we shall shortly discuss, there are areas in which neurodiversity ideals add concepts that build upon and are (at the moment) distinct from broader disability rights ideologies. However, when describing concepts for which terminology exists in the larger disability realm, it may make more sense to rely on them.

For example, Radulski's (this issue) contribution offers an important exploration of neurodiversity activism against the demand that autistic people mask autistic traits, synthesizing the literature on the harmful impacts of "camouflaging" in autism with important concepts from literary, feminist and disability theory. In so doing, Radulski makes use of terms like "neuroarchy" and "neurominority" to describe the experiences autistic people face living as social minorities in a majority-neurotypical world. While we agree that Radulski's invoking of the concept of "neurotypical privilege" represents an important application of the idea of privilege to the world of autism, we wonder about the wisdom of terms like "neurominority," which introduce new and somewhat exceptionalist language to describe concepts with long histories in broader disability activism. Where an idea is unique to the neurodiversity context, it may require new terminology. But where it does not, neurodiversity activists may benefit from looking for more accessible language that connects to the movements' roots in the larger world of disability.

Defining the Boundaries of the Movement

Alongside the question of what the word neurodiversity means is the even more crucial question of who it applies to. Though neurodiversity has its origins in the world of autism, it has important implications outside of it as well (Bertilsdotter et al., 2020; Gillespie-Lynch et al., 2020). As Botha and Gillespie-Lynch (this issue) note, in various contexts, conditions like ADHD, dyslexia, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, intellectual disability and many others have been asserted to fall under the neurodiversity umbrella. At times these claims have been made by persons with those conditions, at times by other neurodiversity activists seeking to frame the movement as maximally inclusive.

Insofar as neurodiversity has exclusively descriptive implications, scope is not a difficult question. But if the word neurodiversity has any ideological implications whatsoever, this becomes a very challenging area for debate, dependent entirely on what the scope of the neurodiversity ideology may be.

Some have framed neurodiversity's ideological commitments as simply the application of the disability rights movement in the realm of mental disability. Under this definition, neurodiversity's normative implications are the same as those of the broader disability rights movement and thus relate in large part to questions of accessibility and equality of opportunity. From this standpoint, taking the broadest possible definition of neurodiversity's "scope" is not only appropriate—it is a moral necessity. After all, all persons with disabilities deserve the protections of non-discrimination and reasonable accommodation, among others, guaranteed by many national disability rights laws and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

However, others have framed the neurodiversity movement as referring specifically to the rejection of the demand for typical appearance, cognition or behavior—that is, the movement's rejection of the goals of prevention and cure. While still rooted in disability rights, this definition of neurodiversity layers on top of it, representing a supplementary ideology with a new additional contribution. Under this definition, defining the boundaries of the neurodiversity movement becomes much trickier. While there are many diagnoses in which persons with the relevant disabilities reject the goal of suppression of symptoms, this is not universally the case. For example, while autistic repetitive behaviors are generally a source of pleasure or self-regulation, in the

context of obsessive-compulsive disorder they are more frequently a source of distress (Jiujias et al., 2017; King, 2019; Ne'eman et al., 2020). Insofar as inclusion within the scope of neurodiversity activism implies a rejection of efforts to target, for intervention, traits associated with a given disability, some degree of selectivity is more appropriate.

While both ways of defining neurodiversity as an ideology are defensible, the latter is the more compelling. By making neurodiversity simply the application of disability rights in the realm of mental disability, activists gain a pithy slogan but lose the ability to refer specifically to the movement's most important innovation: rejection of the idea that research and service-provision should target prevention, cure or recovery towards normalcy. While this idea has some traction in other disability contexts, it is generally not as broadly applied—for example, while many physical disability activists argue against selective abortion and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis to remove persons with their disabilities from the gene pool (e.g., Asch & Barlevy, 2012), this critique usually does not extend to interventions aimed at already existing persons. It may be that a common "theory of everything" may be developed that allows the neurodiversity's rejection of cure to be integrated seamlessly into all mental and non-mental disabilities (we discuss one possibility below), but until such an idea is articulated and accepted, we believe it important to retain language to explain neurodiversity's unique contribution. Thus, defining neurodiversity through this second, more narrow approach is more appealing (for now).

Implicitly adopting this definition, Dwyer (this issue) discusses several important considerations for how to define "the scope of neurodiversity approaches." He notes and rejects arguments for defining neurodiversity to include those conditions that emerge "naturally," that are associated with contributions to society, that are congenital (as opposed to acquired) and that prompt self-identification with the movement's rejection of cure. This last comes closest to an acceptable criterion, but Dwyer justifiably rejects it for failing to account for circumstances like anorexia, where persons with a diagnosis may dangerously seek to reject efforts to ameliorate symptoms. We agree with this and add a further critique of relying solely on individual self-identification: the need for policymakers and researchers to have guidance from a community at large. While service-delivery may be approached on a largely individualized basis, the allocation of research funding and many other areas of public policy often require engaging with groups as broader communities, despite their considerable heterogeneity.

Another more radical critique of the broadest possible application of neurodiversity may be found in the existence of other challenges to traditional psychiatric practice. For example, the mental health consumer/psychiatric survivor movement has long emphasized the value of "recovery" from mental illness diagnoses as a form of resistance to psychiatrists who reject the possibility of it. Far from representing a simple clinical goal, recovery in this context has radical implications, often used as the basis to push back against involuntary treatment, institutionalization and the long-term denial of legal capacity (Morrison, 2013). In contrast, in the autism context "recovery" is a term used by parents and providers seeking to force autistic persons into looking and acting normal (see Fein et al., 2013). Associated with the behaviorist approach to autism, neurodiversity activists have long seen the desire to "recover" autistic persons as a tool of abusive forms of intervention (Autistic Self Advocacy Network, 2013; Ne'eman, 2021; Padawer, 2014). In fact, autistic activists actively lobbied against the inclusion of "recovery criteria" in the DSM-5 definition of autism (Kapp & Ne'eman, 2020).

In seeking maximum inclusion, there is a risk that neurodiversity activists may inadvertently practice a sort of ideological imperialism: insisting on importing a specific critique and worldview into communities with their own, pre-existing and incompatible ideological commitments. Of course, there are many persons with mental illness who do seek to apply neurodiversity to their own conditions (Graby, 2015; Hart, 2020). Such differences of opinion exist in every community—insofar as they can be resolved, they are best done so through internal debate and disputation within the boundaries of that community itself, rather than the imposition of an outside ideology by well-meaning allies. As such, we suggest a consideration of politics in addition to those ethical factors articulated in Dwyer's discussion of the boundaries of neurodiversity: the neurodiversity movement should seek to make itself relevant in those disability communities where a sufficient internal constituency exists for the application of the ideas of neurodiversity to their condition. Such an approach would not require uniform opinion (which never exists) or even as much of a consensus as is found in autistic community contexts. But it should insist on some critical mass of internal support prior to demanding from the outside the application of neurodiversity ideals.

This too may be a further argument against the descriptive use of the term neurodiversity—as the use of it descriptively to apply to a community that rejects the term's ideological implications may both prompt confusion and justifiable objection that the broadest possible application of the term interferes with the self-determination of other disability communities.

Operationalizing Neurodiversity: What Are the Practical Stakes?

Whatever its definition and scope, the most important practical question regarding neurodiversity is what it means on the ground. This special issue includes a number of important explorations of this concept. In documenting the #TakeTheMaskOff social media campaign, Radulski (this issue) highlights the tremendous day-to-day stakes autistic people face as a minority living in a world that is often hostile to autistic ways of being, forcing onto autistic persons passing demands akin to those experienced by racial and ethnic minorities and other oppressed peoples. Zajic and Brown (this issue) provide an interesting exploration of the implications of neurodiversity ideas on the teaching of writing, exploring what neurodiversity might mean for the teaching of writing and research on the development of autistic writing skills. Botha and Gillespie-Lynch (this issue) explore the intersection of autism and other disability communities to which the ideas of neurodiversity have been applied with other forms of marginalized identity. In doing so, they draw on a rich literature on the intersectional impacts of marginalization to better understand autistic identity development and community-building, key building blocks for neurodiversity movement activism.

Dwyer (this issue) provides a useful theoretical discussion of various approaches neurodiversity could take in operationalizing its ideology for practical service-provision purposes. Ultimately, he argues for an interactionist approach to neurodiversity, which recognizes that challenges emerge from the combination of impairment and environment. (Though he contrasts this with the British "strong" social model of disability, we note that this approach is consistent with the colloquial use of the social model in the United States and how it was understood by many early autistic activists who contributed to the development of neurodiversity ideas.) In the interactionist approach advocated by Dwyer, interventions could target either modifying society or modifying individual traits (or both), but should do so based on which ultimately enhances quality of life rather than based on what is deemed to "cause" an underlying challenge. There is much merit to this approach, which seems to have as a necessary implication an abandonment of the tendency—still so common in traditional autism service-provision— to assume that all autistic traits that diverge from the norm should automatically be suppressed (see Pellicano & den Houting, 2021, for discussion).

Many debates over the implications of neurodiversity focus on which populations it should be applied to. Particularly in the context of autism, this has often focused on the appropriateness of applying neurodiversity ideas (in particular, the rejection of cure and prevention) to autistic persons with severe impairments in communication and cognition. For example, Baron-Cohen (2019) argues for "taking a fine-grained look at the heterogeneity within autism" with the goal of splitting the autism spectrum into those components to which a neurodiversity approach should be applied and those for which the traditional medical model may be more appropriate. Similarly, some critics of the neurodiversity movement have recently called for the creation of a separate "profound" or "severe autism" diagnostic category in which to place those with the most severe impairments, a position endorsed often out of a desire to separate such individuals from the service-provision changes argued for by neurodiversity and disability rights activists (NCSA, 2021). Others, including both autistic people and parents of autistic persons with severe impairments, have criticized such an approach, arguing that doing so creates an artificial division and segregates higher-support need autistic people from innovations and rights that they too should have access to (Autistic Self Advocacy Network, 2021; Rosa, 2021).

We agree with this latter perspective. There is no scientific basis for segmenting the autism spectrum in the way that proponents of a separate "severe" autism label suggest. Doing so poses grave risks, potentially segregating those subject to such a severe label from the rights and efforts at community integration won in the broader disability context. Nonetheless, we do believe that it is important for neurodiversity proponents to make the case explicitly that their ideas have relevance to those with the most severe impairment. Contrary to the movement's critics, many, if not all, neurodiversity advocacy organizations are actively concerned with severe disability, investing considerable resources into advocating for more resources for long-term services and supports, augmentative and alternative communication and other needs that are most acute among autistic people with the most severe impairments (Ne'eman & Bascom, 2020). Research on the views of those who support

neurodiversity documents that most do not object to measures designed to improve adaptive skills as opposed to suppressing autistic traits (Kapp et al., 2013).

We suggest a further contribution to help make the case for neurodiversity's broad applicability, accomplished via a simple and long overdue paradigm shift. Rather than debate which populations neurodiversity should be applied to, we argue that neurodiversity is best understood as applying to individual *traits*—what in the medical context might be referred to as symptoms—rather than to whole *people or populations*. Efforts to suppress hand flapping and other forms of "stimming" or to demand eye contact are unacceptable regardless of how severely impaired a person may be in cognition or communication. This is because they are not intrinsically harmful. In contrast, self-injury, violence or lack of a functional communication system are appropriate targets of service-provider intervention because they represent intrinsic harms to the person who experiences them or others. In such instances, the harms are not the result of stigma but would emerge regardless of the prevailing social norms. Such actions can be appropriate targets of intervention.

Such an approach recognizes that, rather than splitting autistic people and other disability communities into groups subject to the neurodiversity model and groups subject to the traditional medical model, both models might conceivably have application in the same person. By taking a trait-oriented approach to operationalizing neurodiversity, it is possible to address intrinsically harmful disability-related traits, such as self-injury, lack of communication or anorexia, while also rejecting and fighting against the clinical passing demands embedded within so much of autism service-provision and research practice (Ne'eman, 2021). Such an approach is consistent with Dwyer's interactionist approach and the vast majority of high-level neurodiversity activism in practice. It also represents a useful approach through which to combat the harms created by demands from clinicians, family members and the broader society that autistic people attempt to pass as non-autistic. As Botha and Gillespie-Lynch (this issue) discuss in their exploration of the applicability of the minority stress model to autism and neurological disability, there is a longstanding literature showing the harms such passing demands cause in the context of other forms of marginalized identity that has considerable relevance.

This innovation also has the potential to open up doors for expanding neurodiversity's critique of service-provision practices beyond the realm of mental disability, as many other disability categories experience harm from clinical passing demands imposed by providers. Though much work is needed to further articulate and operationalize these ideas, we have hope that in doing so neurodiversity activists can develop a set of conceptual and practical tools that will yield benefit across the disability community. The possibility exists that the neurodiversity critique—though now distinct—may eventually serve its purpose and be simply reabsorbed into the larger disability rights movement it is now layered on top of. Such a long-term outcome for neurodiversity would set the stage for a common front to transform research and service-provision in all areas of disability, not just those relating to the brain.

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