

Measuring Employment of People with Disabilities

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The Employment and Work Aspirations of People with
Disabilities

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Key Questions

- **What do we currently know about the employment of people with disabilities?**
 - **“Measuring Trends in the Employment Rate of People with Disabilities”**
(Weathers and Wittenburg, forthcoming)
- **What future improvements are being made to track employment?**

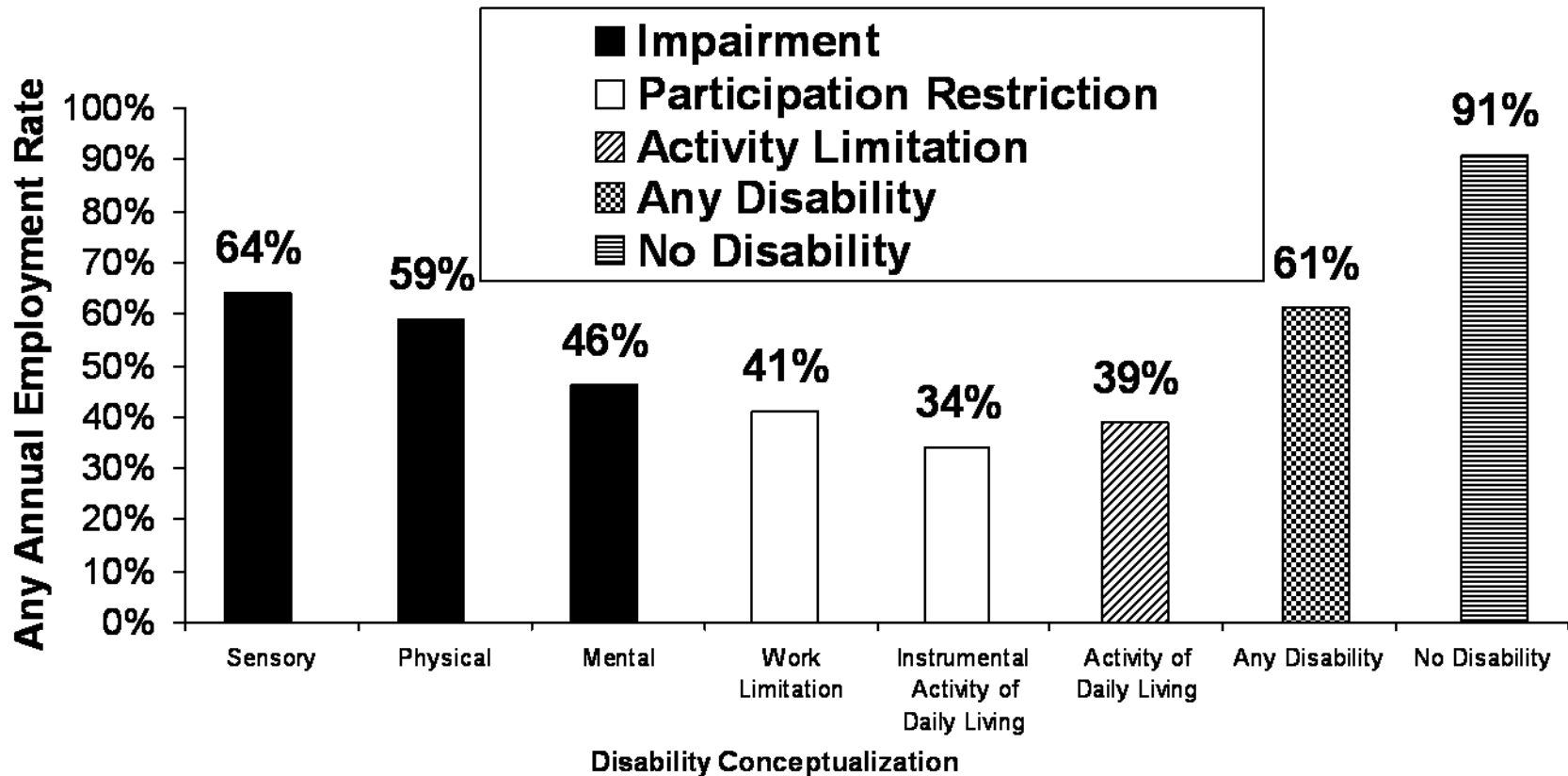
Challenges in Measuring Employment Rates

- **Multiple disability definitions**
 - **Americans with Disabilities Act vs. Social Security Administration (SSA) disability programs**
- **Employment attachment varies**
 - **Weekly vs. any annual**
- **Data sources vary**
 - **Types of disability questions**
 - **Frequency of interviews**
(cross-section vs. longitudinal)

Approach to Developing Employment Statistics

- **Define disability**
 - **Develop disability model**
- **Identify key employment outcomes**
 - **Employment rates**
 - **Relative employment rates**
 - ◆ **Comparison to people without disabilities**
- **Apply framework to data**
 - **American Community Survey (ACS)**
 - **National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)**
 - **Current Population Survey (CPS)**
 - **Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)**

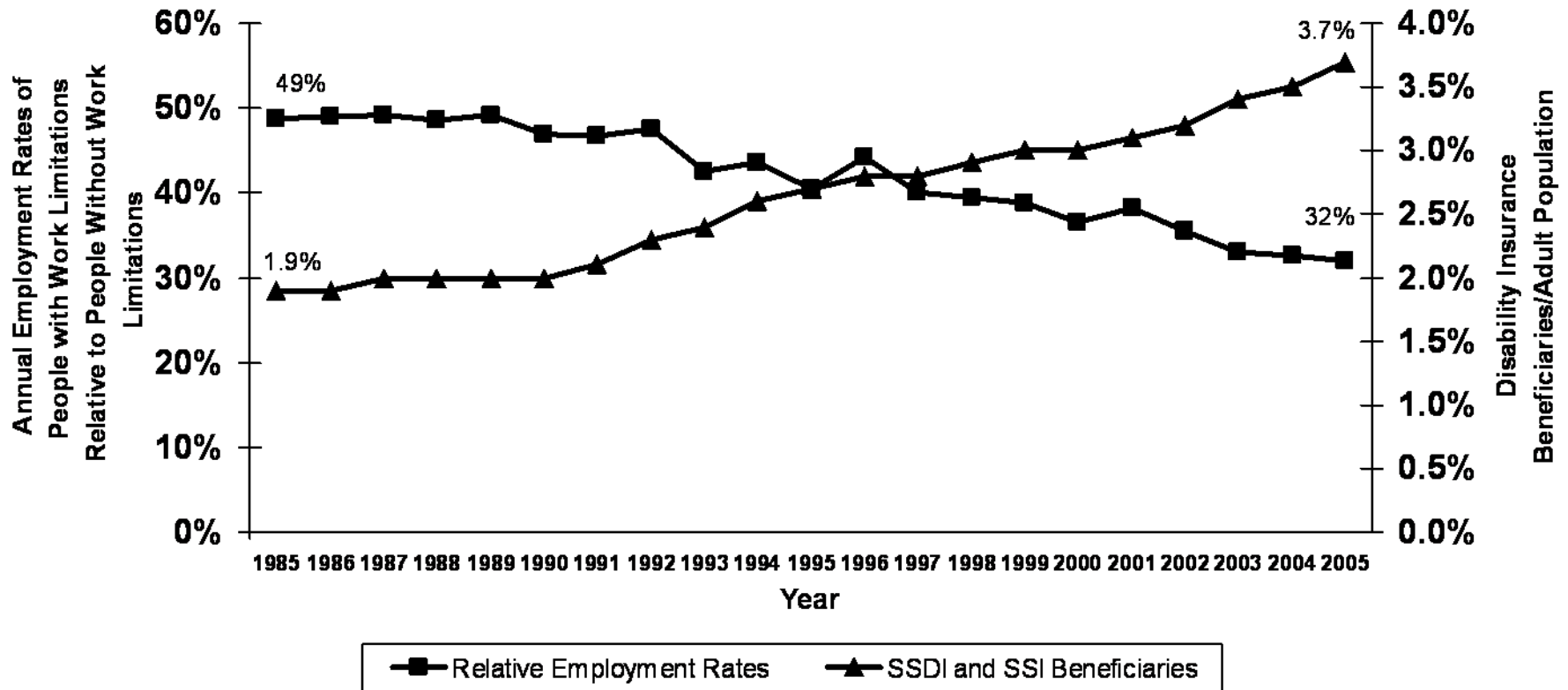
Employment Rates Vary by Disability Subgroup



NOTE: Authors' calculation using the 2001 SIPP. Employment rates for adults (age 25 to 61). Any annual employment includes at least 52 hours or more between June 2001 and May 2002. For a more detailed summary of the questions used to generate these estimates from the SIPP, see Weathers and Wittenburg (forthcoming).

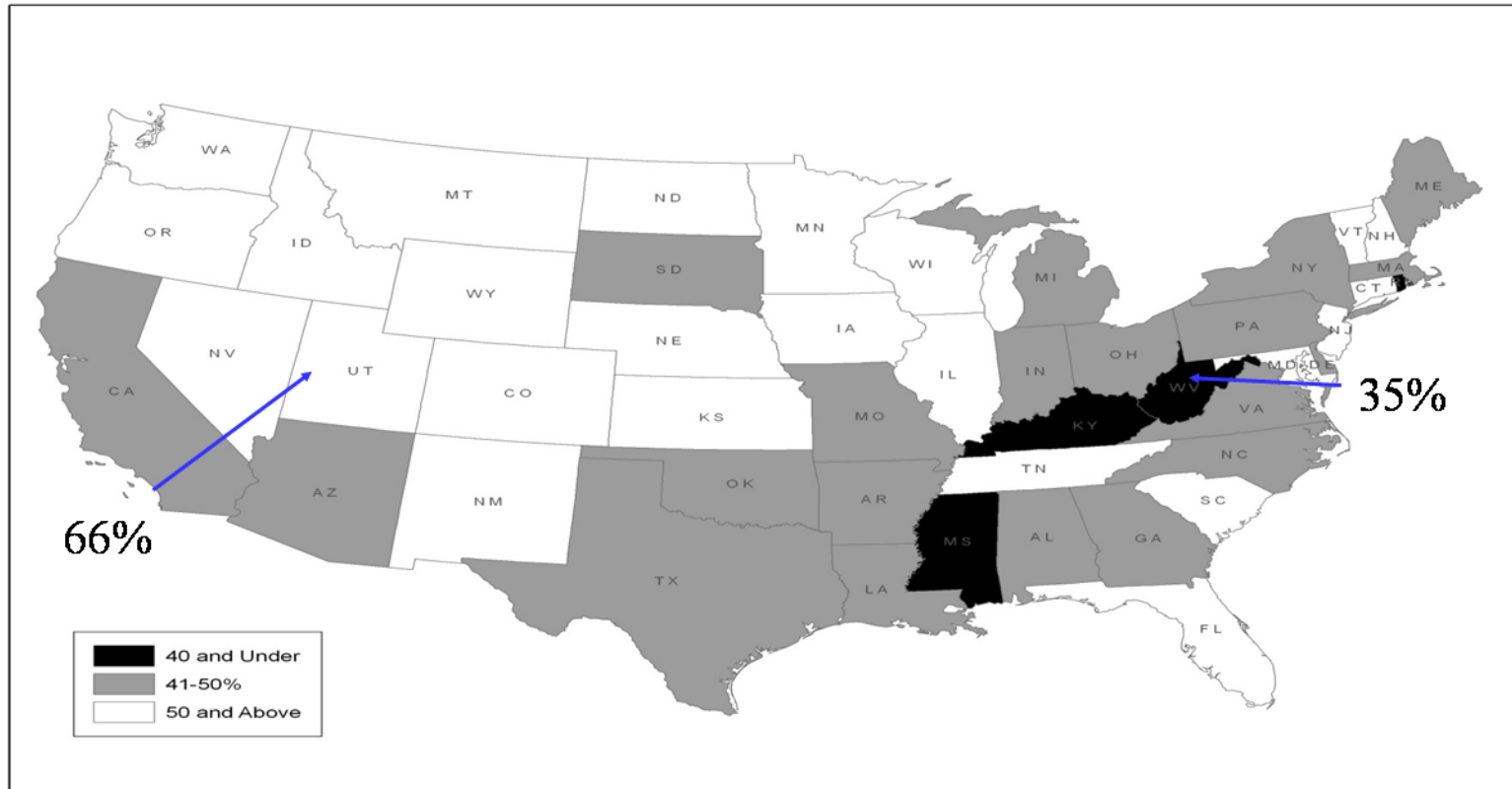


Declining Relative Employment Coincides SSA Program Increases



Source: Relative employment rates represent the employment rate of adults (age 21 to 58) with work limitations divided by the employment rates of adults without work limitations from Weathers and Wittenburg (forthcoming). Employment rate estimates from the CPS. Number of Disability Insurance beneficiaries include disabled workers age 18 to 64 from Social Security Administration (2008) divided by the population age 20 to 64 from the Council of Economic Advisors (2008).

Relative Employment Rates Vary Substantially Across States



Source: Relative weekly employment rates based on Weathers and Wittenburg (forthcoming). Relative employment rates represent the weekly employment rate of adults (age 25 to 61) with a disability divided by the weekly employment rate of adults without a disability. Disability status is based on six disability questions in the ACS.

Other Related Employment Findings

- **Declining employment trends**
 - Findings consistent using other data sources and disability concepts
 - Large gaps exist even after adjusting for demographic characteristics

Policy Implications

- **Declining national trends and poor relative employment rates**
 - Time for new intervention and policy tests?
 - Some tests already in the field
 - ◆ E.g., SSA demonstrations
- **State variations**
 - Indicates a potential role for state policies and programs
 - ◆ E.g., what differentiates high employment rate states from other states?

Planned Data Collection Efforts Should Enhance Understanding of Employment

- **Consistency in data collection**
 - **2008 ACS and 2008 CPS disability questions**
 - **National Council on Disability (2008) recommends further coordination in collecting similar measures across surveys**
- **Administrative data improvements**
 - **More use of state and federal data in research**
 - **Data matching**
 - ◆ **Linkages to CPS, SIPP, and (planned) ACS**
- **New surveys of people with disabilities**
 - **SSA program and demo evaluations**

References

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