**Disability, Justice and Freedom as Non-Domination**

**| © Marie Sépulchre, Lund University, Sweden**

**Plain English Summary**

**Source:**

# Introduction

This paper presents a theory called republican theory. This theory can be helpful to protect the rights of disabled people. This is important because not everyone understands that disabled people are citizens like everybody else. Sometimes people think that disability rights cost too much. People sometimes also think that disabled people are poor people who need help. This is not correct. A researcher called Samuel Bagenstos says that we need more arguments to fight for the rights of disabled people. This paper says that republican theory gives us new arguments to help people understand why disability rights are important.

# Summary of the main points of the paper

## Freedom and republican theory

A researcher called Nancy Hirschmann says that freedom is the most important thing for disabled people. She says that it is not good if we only think about providing resources to disabled people. We also need to recognise that disabled people are free citizens like everybody else.

A researcher called Philip Pettit writes about republican theory. He says that freedom is central to republican theory. Freedom can mean different things. In republican theory, freedom means that a person is not dominated. To be dominated means that someone else can decide about your life. For example, a slave is dominated by her master. The slave is dominated because the master can decide about the life of the slave and the slave cannot say anything.

## Freedom and disabled persons

Many disabled people are dominated because they cannot make their own decisions. For example, they cannot choose what they want to eat or when they want to use the telephone. Some disabled people are dominated because they need support from the state, but the state changes the rules all the time. In this case, disabled people are dominated because they are afraid that they might not get the support they need next time they ask for it.

## Equality, vulnerability and freedom

There are many discussions about disability rights. Persons who want to protect disability rights need to have good arguments. People often say that disability rights are important because disabled persons are equal citizens. People also say that disability rights are important because everybody can be disabled someday. This paper says that another good argument is that disability rights are important because they make disabled people free. We need to make sure that disabled persons are free and not dominated.

# Summary of the main implications

This paper says that disability activists and policy makers can use the ideas of republican theory when they fight for disability rights.

This paper says that republican theory is also interesting for researchers. For example, researchers can make a study about the situations of domination that disabled people experience. Or researchers can make a study about the state and see if the state supports disabled persons to be free.

# More information

Marie Sépulchre is a postdoctoral researcher at Lund University in Sweden, at the Department of Sociology. More information can be found on her website [www.sepulchremarie.com](http://www.sepulchremarie.com)

Marie thanks all the people who gave comments and suggestions throughout her work with this paper.