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Undominated Disability? Republican Freedom, Justice and the Disability Care Agenda

Jurgen De Wispelaere, Institute for Health and Social Policy, McGill University
Kristof Uvijn, Education, Health & Social Work, University College Gent

Disability and Justice: Two Requirements

- The requirement of **sufficient support**
 - Person with disability requires support to live decent and flourishing life
- The requirement of **equal status**
 - Provision of support must not build on assumptions that imply disabled persons are somehow of “lesser value”, as this is incompatible with dignity or self-respect

Disability and Justice: Two Challenges

- Practical Challenge
 - Policies that justify disability assistance often based on affirmation of “special” status of persons with disabilities (e.g, proof of impairment or functional loss)
 - Problem of “shameful revelation” (Anderson, Wolff)
- Foundational Challenge
 - Theories of justice that fail to ground claims of disabled persons a central place
 - Cf. Rawls: theory of justice assumes “normal functioning”; resolving disability claims requires special considerations

Republican Freedom

- Freedom as an alternative basis for determining people's claims of justice
- What is republican freedom?
 - Freedom is **relational**: being able to do things is not what freedom is about, not being hindered by others is (status freedom vs. option freedom)
 - Freedom is **absence of alien control**: mere interference is not all that matters, being in a position where others might interfere is also a problem (freedom as non-domination)
 - Freedom is **political**: freedom requires being in a position where you can robustly resist alien control of your life, only interference permitted is that which affects the interests you have in common with others (*dominium, imperium*)

Republican Freedom and Disability: A Political Argument

- Disability Rights: “Nothing About Us Without Us”
 - Exclusion from decision-making key concern for disability rights advocates
 - Exclusion implies non-involvement in determining what disabled persons need, want, or prefer – i.e., how they want to live “their own lives”
- Republicanism: absence of alien control as condition of freedom
 - Republican freedom denounces any attempt to determine specific interests of disabled persons that is not independently affirmed by them (cf. right to contestation)

Republicanism applied?

Client Centred Practice

- Challenge: how to operationalize republican freedom in the different contexts in which we work with disabled persons?
- Setting the goals objectively
 - Evidence
 - Effectiveness
 - Efficiency
- Client is setting the goals
 - Absence of alien control as condition of freedom
 - Client centred practice

Republicanism applied?

Client Centred Practice

- Client centred practice
 - A **partnership** between the therapist and the client
 - The **client's goals** are given priority and are at the centre of assessment and treatment.
 - The therapist listens to and respects **the client's standards** and adapts the interventions to meet **the client's needs**.
 - The client actively participates in **negotiating** goals for intervention and is **empowered** to make decisions **through training and education**.

Practical complications

- Case:
 - Man, married, father of two children
 - Alcohol addiction
 - Inpatient treatment, following an intensive alcohol treatment program. Has to regain abilities in self care, work and leisure. Improve the client(system) quality of life.
 - Discharged when ready to participate.
 - Relapsed several times.
 - This time he doesn't want to be discharged, even if we believe he is ready for it

Practical complications

- There's a **tension** between the **client's standards** and the **therapeutic expectations**. If we listen to the clients wishes, we don't maximise the **therapeutic outcome**.
- Is it possible to continue to work client centred and demand-driven knowing the requirement to measure the outcomes of the therapy in light of participation and quality of life?
- The republican perspective is more radical – Diagnostic/ evaluative character, helps us to keep the focus.
 - The client has to be in control
 - There's an absence of alien Control
 - There has to be the ability and the possibility for the client(system) to contest when necessary