

A right to know one's biological parents

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Abstract

Modern technology and biotechnology have provided the possibility of gamete and embryo donations to infertile couples. Consequently, one of the important questions that have arisen is that "Is there a right to know one's biological parents?" To provide and answer this question, it is necessary, first, to determine, what one means by expressing the concept of "right". Four meanings have been identified for the concept. They are right-claim, right-liberty, right-power and right-immunity. Right-claim and right-liberty as the strong and weak claims are applicable to the problem at hand. To choose between the two meanings requires putting forth a well-established justificatory theory of rights. Rights are to protect the very humanity of human beings. This has been a basis for two basic values of human dignity and moral agency. Not knowing one's biological roots does not put in danger one's humanity or the two mentioned values. Therefore, we may only defend a right-liberty of knowing one's biological parents; a right that does not require the state and society to be active in making individuals know their biological parents. Nevertheless, in exceptional cases where the lack of that knowledge of the biological roots does endanger one's personhood and humanity, the weak claim can turn into a strong one.

Key Words: Infertility, Confidentiality, Right, Right-claim, Right-liberty, Biological parents.

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