

A critical examination of the criteria of functional “personhood” in Bioethics

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Abstract

The concept of "person" as a key concept in philosophy, law and ethics refers to beings who have moral dignity and fundamental rights. Characteristics such as consciousness, intelligence, self-awareness and the ability to communicate are the criteria for identifying a being as a "person". This concept is important in human rights and bioethics, especially in life and death issues such as abortion and infanticide. Clarifying different approaches about the concept of "person" can have profound effects on moral and legal decisions. While the use of this term is common in the West and it is the criterion of many moral and legal judgments, in Iran its moral dimensions have not yet been addressed and this gap necessitates a detailed investigation. This article examines two main approaches to the concept of "person" in bioethics: the gifted approach that emphasizes the inherent value of all human beings and the functional approach that considers only humans with certain characteristics to have moral dignity. The requirement of the functional approach is that all human beings do not have moral dignity and do not have equal rights.

Keywords

Human, person, functional personhood, consciousness, self-consciousness/self-awareness.

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