

From Kelly Roe to Kim Sterelny 3 October 2021 at 9:18pm

Research Proposal

I would like to write a PhD on the notion of consent.

I envisage the thesis being in three parts of up to 30,000 word each.

Each part will be a case study in consent.

The first part will look at consent in the context of vaccination. I will focus on Covid vaccination. I am interested in what needs to be the case (or what needs to be plausibly believed) in order for the state to be justified in coercing citizens to be vaccinated rather than engaging in a process of informed consent.

The second part will look at consent in the context of euthanasia. One aspect of this is Kantian around whether it is possible for a person to consent to their own demise (suicide, or euthanasia). I am interested in what needs to be the case (or what needs to be plausibly believed) in order for the state to be justified in coercing citizens to consent to euthanasia rather than engaging in a process of informed consent.

I suppose I am thinking of how in ethics there is a case of a train which will run over 5 people if not diverted. If diverted it will run over only 1 person. Most think the right thing to do is to divert the train. I am then thinking of how in ethics there is a case of a surgeon who can allow a patient to die by refraining from intervening in order to harvest enough organs to save 5. Most people think the right thing to do is to save the 1. It is then worth explaining what the relevant difference is between those cases. I am interested in why people generally think it is acceptable to strongly coerce people to take vaccination (by withholding their rights, even) but not okay to strongly coerce people to take euthanasia drugs. I am concerned that there is a slippery slope with respect to 'for the good of society' type reasoning or rationale for why people should be required to consent.

The third part will look at consent in the context of a state consenting to being part of a country. I am interested in how it is in the Australian constitution that New Zealand is a State of Australia, but it is acknowledged that the New Zealand Government does not consent. I am interested in what this means for the people of New Zealand who may, themselves, choose to take up the rights and responsibilities of Australian Citizenship, or not. I am interested in whether Australia is required to acknowledge New Zealanders who do choose to take up Australian Citizenship or whether Australia has freedom to refuse to acknowledge or accept people born in the State of New Zealand.

From Kim Sterelny to Kelly Roe Monday 4 October 2021 at 1:20am

Kelly

This is way too premature. I think you would first need to contact the ANU graduate student office to see whether you are eligible and what funding options there may be. There is no point in even considering research proposals until then

Kim