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Databank consent and scientific citizenship

In the academic debate about informed consent for population genetic research, the question about the social implications of the models of consent has been largely ignored. Those who argue in favour of a narrow, conventional consent usually defend their position by the private dignitary interests of the participants, while those who defend an open consent refer typically to the social benefits that can be harvested from the research. In this paper, I will argue that it is important to look beyond these issues of individual interests and social research benefits and vision the kind of citizenship that is implied in these models of consent. I will maintain that neither the protective stance of restricted consent nor the permissive stance of open consent provide good guidance for such a vision. I will put forth an idea about authorization for database research which invites active and informed participation of citizens without overly restricting the freedom of researchers. This idea implies that the distinction between private interests of participants and public interests for society can be confusing in the context of this discussion.