Gamete and Embryo donation programs in Islamic countries

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Assisted reproductive techniques brought hope for infertile couple to have a child. For many infertile couples there is no way to conceive a child except using a third party. Gamete and embryo donation is practiced in Iran routinely, but in other Islamic countries all kinds of the third party reproduction are forbidden. There are two main branches of Islam called Sunni Muslims which covers 90% of the Muslims and Shiite (SHIA) Muslims which account for 10% of Muslims mostly located in Iran, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Bahrain. Sunni Muslims have an international Islamic Fiqh academy based in Jeddah consists of major scholars from around the world. In October 1986, this academy has a meeting in which they banned all kinds of assisted reproduction using third party. They compare these programs to adultery and also pointed to the unclear lineage of the resulting children. Shiite Muslims does not have an academy, in which a unique decree is released and can be followed by all Muslims, but there are a number of clergy scholars who can release decrees, and their decrees should be followed by their followers. So, there can be differences between decrees of these scholars but the decree is reliable for the followers. In Iran, donation programs are accepted by some scholars including the supreme leader, and there is "embryo donation" law permitting embryo donation to infertile couples. Shiite clergies do not compare donation programs with adultery, because adultery has a specific meaning in Islamic texts, and also there must be a man and a woman touching each other whereas in donation donor and recipient even don't know each other. Also, adultery is banned in Islam because it ruins the families, but donation gives a child to the family and protects it. In lineage, the vision of Shiite clergies is to give custody of the child to new family. Upon this idea child adoption is accepted in Iran, but religiously forbidden in other Islamic countries except Tunisia. There are also, ways to justify the parent-child relations and rights like intimacy, guardianship, expenditure and inheritance.

Conclusion: It seems that donation programs is accepted by some Shiite Muslim scholars.