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Stem Cell Politics in Germany and the United States

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Does religious rhetoric feature more prominently in the stem cell debate in the U.S. than in Germany?

Why is stem cell research so opposed in much of "secular" Europe?

Can scientific advances contribute to a more conducive environment for stem cell research?

It has become fashionable to contrast a religious United States with a secular Europe.¹ As with most broad generalizations, this one contains some truth. Levels of religious self-identification and practice are higher in America than in Western Europe. Religious rhetoric plays a more prominent role in public discourse in Washington, DC, than it does in London, Berlin, Paris, or other European capitals. In making broad comparisons, however, much depends on how key terms are defined. If religion is equated with strong traditions and institutions, the United States, with its shifting, decentralized religious landscape, impacted by the forces of individualism and consumer culture, is in many ways a very secular country. And Europe, with its longer religious traditions and closer church-state institutional ties, is not a purely secular space. While generalizations are useful—and inevitable—we can learn more about the complex religious-secular landscape in the Atlantic area through an analysis of particular issues.

Embryonic stem cell research is one such issue.² Here, the United States is often portrayed as a country where religious forces play an important, if not predominant role, in sustaining a restrictive regulatory approach. Since becoming President in 2001, George W. Bush, an Evangelical, has opposed the use of federal funds to derive stem cells from human embryos. And he has done so with religious claims, construing the early human life as "a creation of God," to be protected under all circumstances.³ The contrast with the United Kingdom, the European leader in stem cell research, is quite striking. There, Conservative and Labour governments have consistently adopted pro-science stands, backing embryo, stem cell, and cloning research within a generous regulatory framework. Religion has played a much less visible role in the British debate, which has been dominated by secular concerns about the potential of research to reduce human suffering and increase economic competitiveness. On the surface the U.S.-British comparison confirms the view that a more religious America opposes a more secular Europe.

The U.S.-German comparison, undertaken in this essay, paints a more complex picture. German regulation on embryo research is even more restrictive than in the United States. Bush's ban on federal funding in August 2001, like earlier restrictive federal measures, did not prevent embryo and stem cell experimentation from continuing at the state level and in the private sector. The first derivation of stem cells from human embryos, announced in November

1998, took place on American soil, as did the first confirmed case of a cloned human embryo, announced in January 2008. The German Embryo Protection Law of 1991, still the foundation for stem cell policy, constitutes a much more restrictive framework; it bans all research destructive of embryos at all levels of government and in the public and private sectors. The politics, not just the policy outcomes, have differed in both countries. In contrast to the U.S., with its dominant pattern of sharp religious-secular polarization, the German debate about embryo, stem cell, and cloning research has been marked by a high degree of religious-secular consensus. The Catholic and Protestant churches, politically weak on many issues, have adopted high-profile stances generally opposed to research. And they have been joined not just by Christian Democrats but also by large segments of the secular left, and the Green party in particular, concerned about the threat of new technologies to basic human dignity.

This essay first sets out the main lines of the U.S. policy debate and then examines the German case. The comparison highlights different religious-secular dynamics in both countries, and also points to important shifts over the past several years. As the biomedical promise of stem cell research has grown, religious forces in both the United States and Germany have softened their opposition. Religious and secular actors and arguments now proliferate on both sides of the issue, and momentum has built toward liberalization. It may be that scientific breakthroughs will someday obviate the need to derive stem cells from human embryos. For the foreseeable future, however, controversy surrounding the moral status of the embryo, on the one hand, and the biomedical promise of research, on the other, will continue to unfold, in different ways, in both countries.

The United States: Religious-Secular Polarization

Over most of the decade following the 1998 isolation of human embryonic stem cells, opposition between religious and secular forces characterized the American political struggle. Roman Catholic and most Evangelical leaders opposed the use of federal funds for embryo research, while a growing coalition of scientists, biotechnology companies, and patient advocacy groups supported a more liberal policy regime. This religious-secular polarization, which can be traced back to the 1980s, began to weaken in the early years of the new century. But it continued to shape the contours of stem cell politics in fundamental ways into the new century.

The strong religious inflection of U.S. embryo politics goes back to the abortion issue in the 1980s, and the mobilization of the Catholic Church in particular. Interestingly, the Church did not immediately attack embryo research from a "right to life" perspective. After the first successful laboratory creation of an embryo in Cambridge, England, in 1968 and the birth of the first child by in-vitro fertilization (IVF) a decade later, the Church focused its criticisms on IVF as an artificial reproductive technology. The emphasis was less on the destruction of embryos in research than on an illicit intervention in the natural procreative process. Only after IVF had proven a successful and popular way to treat infertility did the U.S. Church and its allies in the anti-abortion movement shift gears. From the mid-1980s onward, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, echoing Pope John Paul II, forcefully articulated the idea of a "culture of life" from fertilization until death, including strong opposition to all embryo research.⁴

Parallel to these developments, scientists and the nascent bioethics profession developed a range of arguments in favor

of embryo research. The early embryo, it was asserted, was not fully human and therefore did not deserve strong legal protection. From this perspective, the embryo has the capacity to twin until about two weeks after implantation, and therefore cannot be considered a human individual. Moreover, before that stage the embryo lacks even the outlines of a nervous system and therefore lacks the physical capacity to feel pain.⁵ The first expert committee charged with exploring the issue, the Ethics Advisory Board (EAB), reached pro-research recommendations in its 1979 report. The Board agreed "that the human embryo is entitled to profound respect." It also insisted, though, that "this respect does not necessarily encompass the full legal and moral rights attributed to persons." Embryo research to perfect IVF techniques was deemed permissible, in principle, to advance scientific and biomedical knowledge.⁶

At the level of politics and policy these two positions, one opposed to all research on religious grounds, the other supportive of it for utilitarian and humanitarian grounds, deadlocked through the late 1990s. On coming to power in 1981, the conservative administration of President Ronald Reagan refused to implement the EAB recommendations. Through the early 1990s, efforts to allow for federal funding of embryo research, supported by scientists and civil servants, ran up against conservative administrations and their allies in Congress. The election of President Bill Clinton, a Democrat,

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appeared to mark a turning point. In 1993 he set up an advisory body, the Human Embryo Research Panel (HERP), which backed research with surplus IVF embryos and, under certain circumstances, the creation of embryos expressly for research purposes. The publication of the HERP recommendations in June 1994 generated strong public opposition from the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and their allies in the anti-abortion movement. Clinton rejected the Panel's recommendations on embryo creation and, after a Republican sweep of the 1994 midterm elections, Congress legislated an explicit ban on federal funds for destructive embryo research in July 1995.

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possible by the growth of healthy replacement tissues, recasting the political debate in the U.S. Public opinion gradually shifted in favor of research designed to find cures for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and other ailments, even if it involved the destruction of embryos to create the necessary cell lines. On coming into office, George W. Bush, an Evangelical on record against embryonic stem cell research, faced a difficult policy dilemma. In a much publicized speech in August 2001, he sought to thread the needle, authorizing federal funds for research on stem cell lines derived before that date. The U.S. government, he could argue, was supporting promising new research without supporting the destruction of embryos. He concluded his address: "I have made this decision with great care, and I pray it is the right one."⁷

Over the course of his two terms in office Bush managed, with difficulty, to maintain his restrictive posture. He spoke out forcefully against "therapeutic cloning" research—efforts to clone embryos to derive genetically matched tissues for victims of degenerative diseases—but was unable to rally majorities in Congress behind a comprehensive cloning ban, even before the Democrats took over both the House and Senate in 2007. Congress passed a number of measures designed to lift the 2001 ban on the creation of new cell lines, arguing that the existing lines were not sufficient to support the most promising lines of research. Bush vetoed such measures in 2006 and again in 2007. One result of U.S. policy was to drive investment to the state level and into the private sector. A number of states passed generous funding measures, including California's \$3 billion for an Institute for Regenerative Medicine, and university-based scientists stepped up their collaboration with biotech-

nology firms hoping to transform the scientific breakthroughs into therapies.

Into the new century, religious-secular polarization remained part of the U.S. debate. Bush's opposition to embryonic research earned him the ire of leading scientists. James Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, charged, for example, that "the president unfortunately was brought up by parents who taught him to believe in God." A leading stem cell researcher at Harvard, Douglas Melton, rhetorically asked "Has the White House adopted the Catholic Church's position that life begins at fertilization?"⁸ While polarization persisted, a slow shift was taking place in the political and religious landscape, as some key Christian conservatives came out in favor of research, including Senators Orrin Hatch of Utah and Bill Frist of Tennessee. As early as 2001 Hatch publicly urged Bush to allow federal funding of stem cell research in order to reduce human suffering. After "countless hours of study, reflection, and prayer," he recalled, "eventually I determined that being pro-life means helping the living." Frist, for his part, broke with the president in a much publicized July 2005 Senate speech, citing the tremendous biomedical potential of research. "I am pro-life," he asserted. "I believe human life begins at conception." Still, he insisted that given its life-saving potential, "embryonic stem cell research should be encouraged and supported."⁹

By 2007-08 the polarized frame of the mid-1990s—Catholic and Evangelical and pro-life forces arrayed against the secular proponents of science—had given way to a more nuanced debate. The idea of an ethic of healing, firmly embedded within the Jewish and Muslim traditions, and widely articulated by secular proponents of stem cell research, gained more and more Christian adherents. In his unsuccessful bid for the presidency in 2004, Senator John Kerry articulated a liberal, Catholic perspective in this vein, and won the ire of the American Bishops. During the 2008 election campaign, the challengers for the White House, Democrat Barack Obama and Republican John McCain, have also come to articulate an ethic of healing perspective.

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Both oppose the creation of embryos for research purposes and therapeutic cloning. But each called for federal funding to support research with surplus embryos left over from IVF-treatments. As Obama put it in his 2006 speech on the Senate floor, "All over the country, patients and their families are waiting today for Congress and the President to open the door to the cures of tomorrow." For McCain, support

for human embryonic stem cell research combined with opposition to cloning was a way of “balancing the promise on the

foreseeable horizon of stem cell research with the protection of human life.”¹⁰

Germany: Secular-Religious Consensus

A similar softening of opposition to embryonic stem cell research took place in Germany during the first decade of the new century. But it unfolded against a very different backdrop. In contrast to the United States, Germany experienced a high degree of religious-secular consensus around a restrictive regulatory regime, starting in the 1980s. A broad coalition encompassing the leaders of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, and majorities within the Christian Democratic (CDU), Social Democratic (SPD), and Green parliamentary parties supported the restrictive Embryo Protection Law in 1991 (EPL), which criminalized all research destructive of embryos in the private and public sectors. That coalition proved surprisingly resilient in the wake of the 1998 stem cell breakthrough; the ban on embryo research remained in place, even as the Bundestag, in early 2002, allowed the import of some stem cells derived abroad. Gradually, Christian and secular opponents of liberalization, impressed by the healing potential of new research, adjusted their positions in a more science-friendly direction. But a strong religious-secular consensus in opposition to research destructive of embryos persisted.

In Germany, unlike the United States, the Basic Law, or constitution, provided an overall legal framework for debates over embryo research. The first article of the Basic Law, which dates to 1949, underscores that “the dignity of the human person is inviolable”—in part a stance against the crimes of Nazism and the Holocaust and a determination never to repeat them. The human dignity principle has framed bioethical debates in the country. For example, the Federal Court invoked the Basic Law in 1975 and again in 1993 to invalidate legislation permitting abortion on demand in the first trimester, citing the dignity of human life in the womb. Although the Court has never taken a position on whether the early, pre-implantation embryo is covered by the Basic Law’s human dignity provisions, the legacy of Nazi eugenics continues to cast a shadow over the life sciences in Germany. Historical and institutional factors inform the skepticism of embryo research that reaches across parties and religious communities.

The embryo research policy debate in Germany can be traced back to the birth of the first IVF child in the country in 1982. In response to concerns about the eugenic implications of the new technologies, the government created an interdisciplinary working group to develop legislative recommendations. The Benda Group, named after its chairman, former head of the Constitutional Court, Ernst Benda, published its report in November 1985, calling for criminal sanctions for the creation

of embryos for research purposes, but allowing for experiments with surplus embryos from IVF treatments under certain circumstances.¹¹ In the ensuing legislative debates, to the dismay of the scientific

community, the parties took an even harder line, settling on a total ban on research. The shadow of the Nazi past provided a shared frame of reference for most Christian Democrats, Social Democrats, and the new environmental Green party, with only the small liberal party, the Free Democrats, in favor of embryo research under some circumstances.

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The EPL called for prison terms up to three years for “efforts to fertilize an egg cell for any other purpose that to bring about a pregnancy” or for “uses of the embryo that do not serve the goal of its own existence.”¹²

Alongside this cross-party consensus was strong ecumenical support for embryo protection. The Catholic Church’s criticism of embryo research was echoed not only by Protestant conservatives, as in the U.S., but also by the country’s mainline Lutheran organization, the Evangelical Church of Germany (EKD). As early as 1984, an EKD report claimed that “The embryo is already destined to become a unique individual. Even in the stage of the first cell division it has the same ethical quality as a fetus early in pregnancy.”¹³ As the issue moved before the parliament, the Catholic Bishops and the EKD leadership issued a joint policy declaration, the first of its kind. “No matter how great the research goals,” the statement read, “the dignity [of] human life forbids that it should be used simply as a means to an end, let alone created for that purpose.” It continued: “even the smallest step on the path towards destructive embryo research crosses an important line.”¹⁴ One should not make too much of this Church support, given the fact that religious practice in Germany is far lower than in the U.S. At the same time, the quasi official status of the main Churches—they are recognized by the state, which collects taxes on their behalf—does lend them some authority on public policy. The positions of religious leaders on major issues are widely reported; in this case, an unprecedented joint communiqué raised the visibility of the official Church positions.

This strong consensus, carried by the Churches, the Christian Democrats, and large parts of the secular left, persisted through the stem cell breakthrough of 1998. That same year a Social Democrat, Gerhard Schröder, won the chancellorship, putting an end to sixteen years of Christian Democratic rule. Schröder came from the modernizing wing of his party and was much more pro-science. But he found that his efforts to nudge his party and the government toward a more accepting stance on stem cell research met with almost no success. While supporters of research were more vocal in view of the biomedical promise of stem cells, secular and religious consensus behind the 1991 EPL persisted. Schröder's hope for an open debate, centered on science and its potential and unhindered by "ideological blinders," proved unrealized.¹⁵

In policy terms, in Germany as in the U.S., 2001 proved a critical juncture. Early in the year, the German Science Foundation (DFG) received an application to support research with embryonic stem cells imported from abroad. While the EPL clearly outlawed the derivation of embryonic stem cells within Germany, it did not speak to the question of working with cells produced in other countries. DFG leaders opted to wait for parliamentary guidelines before moving ahead.¹⁶ In June 2001 the Bundestag's Investigative Commission on Law and Ethics in Modern Medicine began to consider legislation. As a counterweight, Chancellor Schröder appointed a new National Ethics Council, which included more liberal voices, to formulate its own recommendations. By year's end the bodies reached very different conclusions. A majority of the Bundestag committee came out against all stem cell research in Germany,

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while most of the Ethics Commission backed the import of stem cells from abroad and a large plurality entertained the possibility of reconsidering the EPL itself at some point in the future.¹⁷

The final parliamentary showdown took place in the Bundestag in January 2002.¹⁸ Initially, the largest single group of deputies, including governing Social Democrats and Greens and opposition Christian Democrats, supported the restrictive proposal endorsed by the Investigative Commission—no stem cell research in the Federal Republic. Another group of deputies, centered around the FDP, supported the import of stem cells to Germany. A third proposal, which emerged as the winner after a second round of voting, constituted a compromise—no destruction of embryos in Germany but import of stem cells derived outside Germany before the cut-off date of 1 January 2002. By a vote of 340 to 265 the Bundestag endorsed the compromise. Less

than half a year after Bush's August 2001 decision, the Stem Cell Act of 2002 endorsed a similar effort to maintain opposition to the destruction of embryos while allowing for some research to go ahead. The Catholic Bishops voiced their frustration; from their point of view the import of stem cells "countenanced the killing of embryos" and was therefore counter to the spirit of the EPL and its "value consensus."¹⁹ Still, the fact remained that the destruction of embryos remained forbidden in Germany and that stem cell research could only proceed under considerable strictures.

Not surprisingly, the German scientific community grew increasingly frustrated with these strictures in subsequent years. The number of available stem cell lines was limited, and their quality was generally poor. The DFG began to abandon the passive stance it had taken in 2001, when only one leading scientific figure, Hubert Markl of the Max-Planck-Society had come out strongly in support of embryonic stem cell research in Germany.²⁰ In subsequent years sentiment shifted in favor of some liberalization of the

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2002 law. In a November 2006 press release the DFG lamented that "as a result of the legal framework conditions, science in Germany can only make a limited contribution to this field." All import restrictions should be lifted, the DFG advocated. "German research should be given access to new stem cell lines that are produced and used abroad, so long as these originate from 'surplus embryos'." In contrast to leading scientific organizations in the United States, the DFG continued to oppose therapeutic cloning and did not call for a revision of the EPL itself that would allow for the derivation of embryonic stem cells within Germany. Still, the mobilization of the scientific community was striking, and helped to build momentum for the 2002 law.²¹

It is hardly surprising that the National Ethics Council, in one of its last actions before being dissolved in July 2007, came out in favor of abolishing the cut-off date and allowing liberal imports of embryonic stem cells.²² More surprising was the fact that movement in this direction took place among religious as well as secular forces. The Catholic Church remained opposed to all work with embryonic stem cells, but the state Lutheran Church began to soften its position. A synod of the larger Church, in November 2007, endorsed the possibility of a revision of the 2002 cut-off date for derivation of stem cells imported to Germany if it turned out that existing stem cell lines were hopelessly contaminated. In January 2008, EKD President Bishop Wolfgang Huber came out in favor of a "one-time" extension of the 2002 cut-off, drawing critique from within Protestant ranks. Bishops associated with the German Evangelical Alliance, a conservative grouping within the EKD,

reiterated their opposition to revisiting the 2002 law. And the Catholic hierarchy lamented the dissolution of ecumenical concord around an issue of great import. But the overall trend among German Protestants was in favor of a less restrictive research stance.²³

Particularly alarming for the Catholic leadership was a wavering within the CDU and its Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU). In the 2002 Bundestag vote, a small but significant minority had supported the import of embryonic stem cells to Germany. Five years later the ranks of research supporters had swelled to the point that the CDU party conference held in December 2007 voted by a slim margin against a resolution designed to rule out a shift in the cut-off date for the derivation of stem cells to be imported into Germany. Chancellor Angela Merkel and Health Minister Annette Schavan, Christian Democratic leaders within the governing Grand Coalition that took power in 2005, were among the supporters of a more lenient line. As early as November 2006, after a meeting with Bishop Huber, Merkel had called for ways to liberalize stem cell research without giving up all limitations (*grenzenlose Freigabe*).²⁴ In the ensuing parliamentary debates, she kept a low profile, acknowledging the matter as one of conscience for individual deputies. But her shift was an important signal to others in her party and beyond.

The parliamentary clashes in January and April 2008 saw sharp exchanges similar to those six years earlier. Schavan, in making the case for shifting the cut-off date, drew attention to the need to keep open a “narrow corridor” for embryonic stem cell research, while other research programs not involving the destruction of embryos were developed. She insisted that this was a one-time shift in the cut-off date, designed to secure better quality cells for experimentation. “We are not discussing the Embryo Protection Law,” she told the Bundestag in April. “It is the foundation for all the reflections we are engaged in. It is not up for debate.” Maria Böhmer, a minister of state in the chancellor’s office and research opponent, accused Schavan

and her allies of breaking with the 2002 law. She asked rhetorically whether the law would remain in force, or whether it would come to “a change of ethical direction, to a dam break (Dammbruch) in the protection of the embryo.” Another opponent of any liberalization, Volker Beck of the Greens, charged that any relaxation of the regulations would violate the constitutional injunction to protect human dignity and risked putting Germany on a “slippery slope.”²⁵

In the end, these anti-research arguments proved unpersuasive to the Bundestag majority: 346 deputies voted to shift the cut-off date to May 2007. Only 118 voted for a resolution to ban all stem cell research within Germany. The tide had turned against research opponents, both as a result of scientific advances, shifts in public opinion, and the fissure within and across the major churches. Still, it is worth underscoring that

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destructive embryo research remained illegal within Germany, in contrast to the United States, where it continued mostly unregulated in the private sector and at the state level. The consensus around the Embryo Protection Law, which extended deep into the major parties (with the exception of the Free Democrats) was striking. Even the German scientific community, more openly pro-liberalization than it had been six years earlier, remained reticent in pushing for embryo research within Germany itself. The cautious German approach to embryo and stem cell research, among both religious and secular groups, suggests the long shadow of the Nazi past and its negative eugenic legacy.

Conclusion

A comparison of U.S. and German stem cell politics reveals salient similarities and differences. Both countries grappled with the same scientific breakthroughs and opted for stricter regulatory regimes than the UK and other scientific powers. The stem cell compromise adopted by Bush in August 2001—no federal funds for the destruction of embryos, but approval for research on stem cells derived before a certain date—was very similar to the solution endorsed by the Bundestag four months later, a January 2002 cut-off date for the derivation of stem cells to be imported into Germany. In both cases the political leadership could argue that government policy did not

create any incentives for the further destruction of embryos to derive stem cells. Similarities between the two cases extend to 2007-08, by which time advances in research and shifts in public opinion were driving some liberalization of existing policy: the April 2008 Bundestag decision to change the cut-off date for stem cell imports and, in the United States, a presidential campaign in which both major candidates favored a revision of federal policy to allow for public funding of promising research with surplus IVF embryos.

When one turns from policy outcomes to political struggles,

differences between the two cases emerge in starker relief. In the U.S., stem cell politics have been marked by a high degree of religious-secular polarization, as Catholic and Evangelical leaders have drawn parallels with the abortion issue and scientists and their allies have been scornful of what they see as illicit religious intervention in public policy debates. The secular left in the U.S. is almost uniformly in favor of liberalizing the stem cell policy regime. Germany, by contrast, is striking for its high level of religious-secular consensus. The major parties and the major churches rallied around a restrictive Embryo Protection Law in 2001, and have not abandoned it. The Green party, on the far-left of the political spectrum, remains among the most vocal opponents of stem cell research, citing both environmental and human dignity concerns. Stem cell politics points to the enduring importance of the churches as actors in German politics, and to a less confrontational pattern of religious-secular interaction than the familiar U.S. "culture wars" model.

The future of embryonic stem cell research in Germany, the U.S., and around the world, remains uncertain. Steady advances have raised the prospect of clinical trials that might lead to tissue replacement therapies and a new era of regenerative medicine. But that future remains more than a decade away, by the most optimistic estimates. In the interim, a series of breakthroughs in adult stem cell research, and the November 2007 announcement of a technique designed to reprogram adult cells to act like embryonic cells, raises the prospect of an era of regenerative medicine that will not require the destruction of embryos. Predictably, the opponents of research on embryos claim that these new breakthroughs obviate the need for embryonic stem cell research, while proponents insist that all avenues of research should remain open. For the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that these or scientific advances will determine regulatory outcomes. Those will continue to grow out of different constellations of history, institutions, and religious and secular forces, interacting in different ways from one country to the next.

NOTES

1 One prominent example is George Weigel, *The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics without God* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

2 Unless otherwise noted, "stem cell" throughout this essay refers to stem cells derived from embryos, not adult stem cells.

3 George W. Bush, "Remarks Via Satellite by the President to the National Association of Evangelicals Convention," 11 March 2004, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/03/20040311-1.html>>

4 This concept was most fully developed in John Paul II's 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*.

5 For an overview of secular positions favorable to embryo research see Peter Singer, ed., *Embryo Experimentation: Ethical, Legal, and Social Issues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

6 "Report of the Ethics Advisory Board," 44 Federal Register 35033-58 (18 June 1979).

7 The White House, "Remarks by the President on Stem Cell Research," Press Release, 9 August 2001. On public opinion dynamics, see Matthew Nisbet, "The Competition for Worldviews: Values, Information, and Public Support for Stem Cell Research," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, 17, 1 (2005): 90-112.

8 "Watson, other Scientists Celebrate DNA Discovery," *The Mercury News*, 21 February 2003; "Embryos to be Treated as Human Subjects," *Nature Medicine* (December 2002): 1338.

9 "The Battle over Stem Cells," *New Scientist*, 9 October 2004; Sheryl Gay Stolberg, "Senate's Leader Veers From Bush Over Stem Cells," *New York Times*, 29 July 2005.

10 "Statement of Support for Stem Cell Research," 17 July 2006, <http://obama.senate.gov/speech/060717-statement_of_su/>; "Senator McCain Statement on Stem Cell Research," 11 April 2007, <http://mccain.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.PressReleases&ContentRecord_id=0ef7162d-8d83-4d8d-b342-5f4560f6ab3d&Region_id=&Issue_id=>

11 Report: Working Group on In Vitro Fertilisation, Genom Analysis, and Gene Therapy (Bonn: Federal Ministry of Justice and Federal Ministry for Research and Technology, 1985).

12 "Gesetz zum Schutz von Embryonen vom 13.Dezember 1990," *Bundesgesetzblatt Teil I* (1990): 2746-48. The law went into effect in 1991.

13 Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, "Von der Würde werdenden Lebens. Extrakorporale Befruchtung, Fremdschwangerschaft und genetische Beratung, Eine Handreichung der EKD zur ethischen Urteilsbildung," EKD Texte 11 (Hannover: 1985).

14 "Gott ist ein Freund des Lebens. Herausforderungen und Aufgaben beim Schutz des Lebens," Gemeinsame Erklärung des Rates der EKD und der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz vom 30.11.1989, Gütersloh 1989.

15 Interview with Gerhard Schröder, "Die Notwendigkeit der Abwägung stellt sich immer wieder neu," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 3 May 2001.

16 Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, "Empfehlungen der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft zur Forschung mit menschlichen Stammzellen," Press Release, 3 May 2001.

17 Deutscher Bundestag, Zweiter Zwischenbericht der Enquete-Kommission Recht und Ethik der modernen Medizin. Teilbericht Stammzellforschung" 14/ 7546 (Berlin: Bundestag, 2001); German National Ethics Council, "Opinion on the Import of Human Embryonic Stem Cells," December 2001.

18 Two Bundestag debates were most crucial, 31 May 2001 and 30 January 2002. See *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestags. Stenographischer Bericht*, series 14: 16885-16935 and 21193-21235.

19 Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, "Stellungnahme des Sekretärs der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz," Press Release, 3 May 2001. See also Evangelische Kirche Deutschlands, "Kirchen Schreiben an Bundestagsabgeordnete," Press Release, 17 January 2002.

20 Hubert Markl, "Freiheit, Verantwortung, Menschenwürde: Warum Lebenswissenschaften mehr sind als Biologie," in *Jahrbuch der Max-Planck Gesellschaft* (Munich: MPG, 2001).

21 "DFG Puts Forward New Recommendations for Stem Cell Research," <http://www.dfg.de/en/news/press_releases/2006/press_release_2006_60.html>

22 "The National Ethics Council Issues its Opinion on the Stem Cell Law," 16 July 2007, <http://www.ethikrat.org/_english/press/2007_08.html>

23 Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, "Lockerung der Stammzellforschung von Bischof Huber befürwortet," Press Release, 11 February 2008.

24 "Merkel will Stammzellforschung erleichtern," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 16 November 2006.

25 *Verhandlungen des deutschen Bundestages*, series 16, 11 April 2008: 12286-89

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