

**UNIVERSITY OF SEVILLE**  
European Master's Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation  
A.Y. 2013/2014

# Remapping the stem cell debate: Beyond the embryo etiquette, unravelling the aphorisms



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## **ABSTRACT**

Chances are very good that everybody has heard about stem cells; whether from scientists pleading this proverbial medical magic bullet, or from religious groups graving the loss of embryos, stem cells have been a hot topic in the news for years. The excitement expressed by the medical community is mainly to the miraculous potentialities and promises in treating degenerative conditions, for understanding genetic illnesses, and for answering fundamental questions about human development. Conversely the division among the society in the subject has provided for fertile ground for the latest controversy in biomedicine amidst scholars. Knives have been drawn about embryonic stem cell research from its inception, since the derivation of embryonic stem cells requires the destruction of early embryos. Some societal groups find this ethical unacceptable, but this is not equivocal; for others early embryos are mere things and for the “reasonable happy medium” embryos have a gradual moral value, which increases in line with the foetal/embryo development. What is remarkable and at the same time flawed in the thus far debate is the absence of clarity and diversification of the different embryo situations, which could shed light in the controversy. This pluralism is also reflected in regulatory policies when encountered with this fervent battle, with nations sitting embroiled over the battle of where to draw the line on embryonic stem cell research and supranational regulatory bodies standing at a standstill.

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