



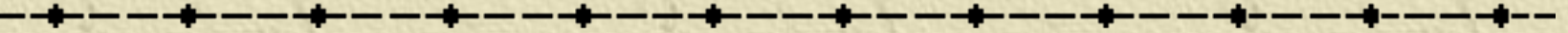
Social and Religious Context of Embryonic Stem Cell Research

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Outline for the Talk



- ✦ The Debate from the Elite Perspective
- ✦ The Debate from the Average Person's Perspective
- ✦ Is there/should there be a link between elites and the masses?

Elite Debate

✦ **Pro ESCR: Medical/Scientific
Community, Disease Interest Groups,
most Bioethicists**

✦ **Anti-ESCR: Fundamentalist, Evangelical
and Catholic Leaders**

Elite Debate

✦ **Pro ESCR: Medical/Scientific Community, Disease Interest Groups, most Bioethicists**

-- **Why In Favor? Relief of Suffering, Value of Discovery**

✦ **Anti-ESCR: Fundamentalist, Evangelical and Catholic Leaders**

-- **Why Opposed? Death of Embryos**

Elites In Favor of ECSR

✦ Pro ECSR: Disease Interest Groups

-- Why only Focus on Relief of Suffering?

1) Personal experience with suffering

Elites In Favor of ECSR

✦ **Pro ECSR: Medical/Scientific
Community**

-- Why only Focus on Relief of Suffering?

Elites In Favor of ECSR

✦ **Pro ECSR: Medical/Scientific
Community**

-- **Why only Focus on Relief of Suffering?**


1) Benefits of consensual goal

Elites In Favor of ECSR


✦ **Pro ECSR: Medical/Scientific Community**

-- **Why only Focus on Relief of Suffering?**

- 1) Benefits of consensual goal**
- 2) Lessons learned from failures to promote other values**



[The scientists have] “a distinctive attitude toward the world.” “a program for utterly transforming it,” an “unshakable,” nay even a “fanatical,” confidence in a “worldview,” a “faith” no less than a “program” for the reconstruction of mankind.



These expressions rather exactly describe a religious cult, if there ever was one -- a cult of men-gods, however otherwise humble. These are not the findings, or the projections, of an exact science as such, but a religious view of where and how ultimate human significance is to be found.

Elites In Favor of ECSR

✦ **Pro ECSR: most Bioethicists**

-- Why only Focus on Relief of Suffering?

Elites Opposed to ECSR

✦ **Anti-ECSR: Fundamentalist, Evangelical
and Catholic Leaders**

-- Why Focus on Death of Embryos

Religious Groups in the U.S.



Catholics

Religious Groups in the U.S.

✠ Catholics

✠ Jews

Religious Groups in the U.S.

✠ Catholics

✠ Jews

✠ “Others”

Religious Groups in the U.S.

✠ Catholics

✠ Jews

✠ “Others”

✠ Protestants

Religious Groups in the U.S.

✦ Catholics

✦ Jews

✦ “Others”

✦ Protestants

-- Black Protestants

-- White Fundamentalists

-- White Mainline (or liberal) Protestants

-- White Evangelicals

Why Believe in Sanctity of Embryos?

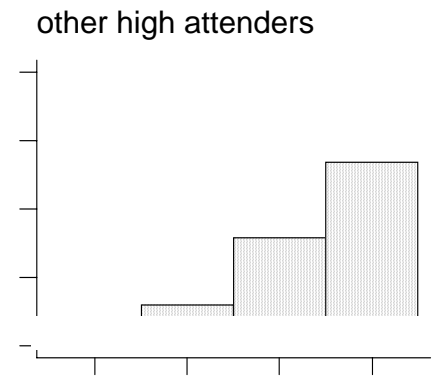
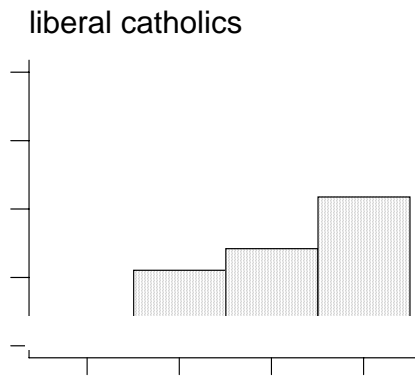
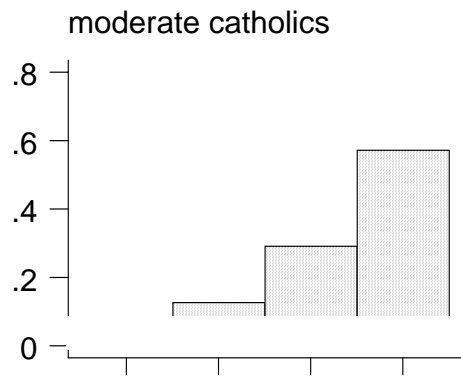
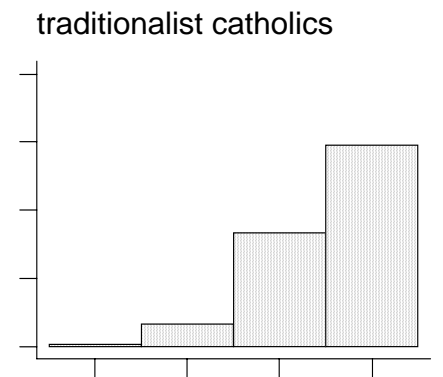
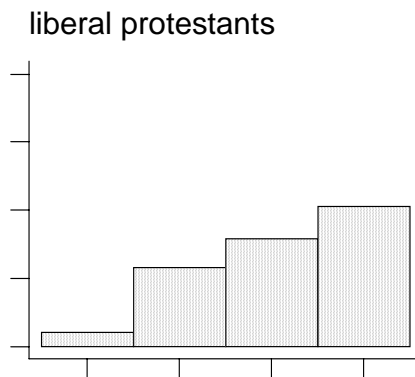
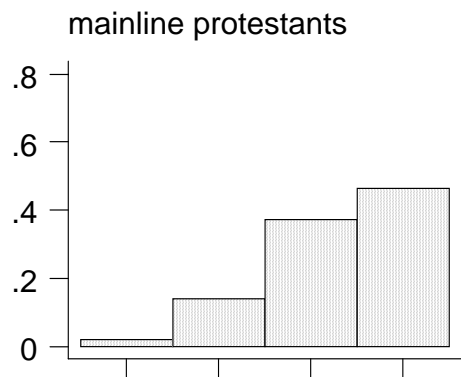
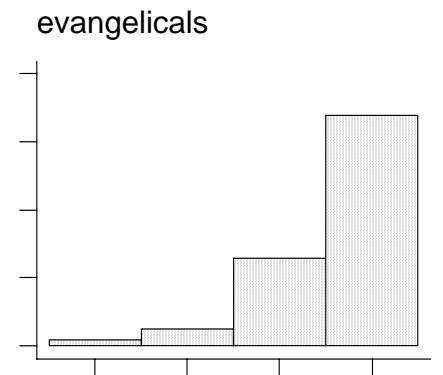
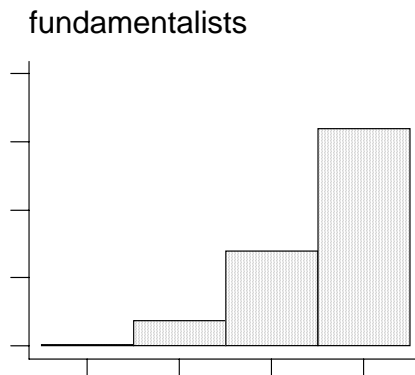
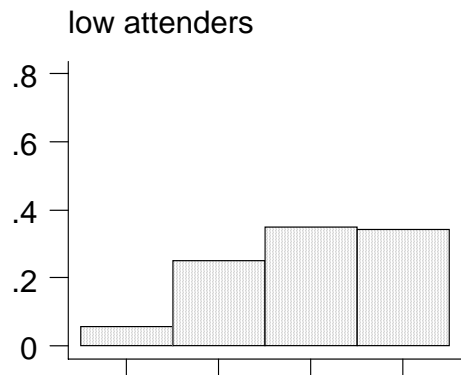
✠ Catholics

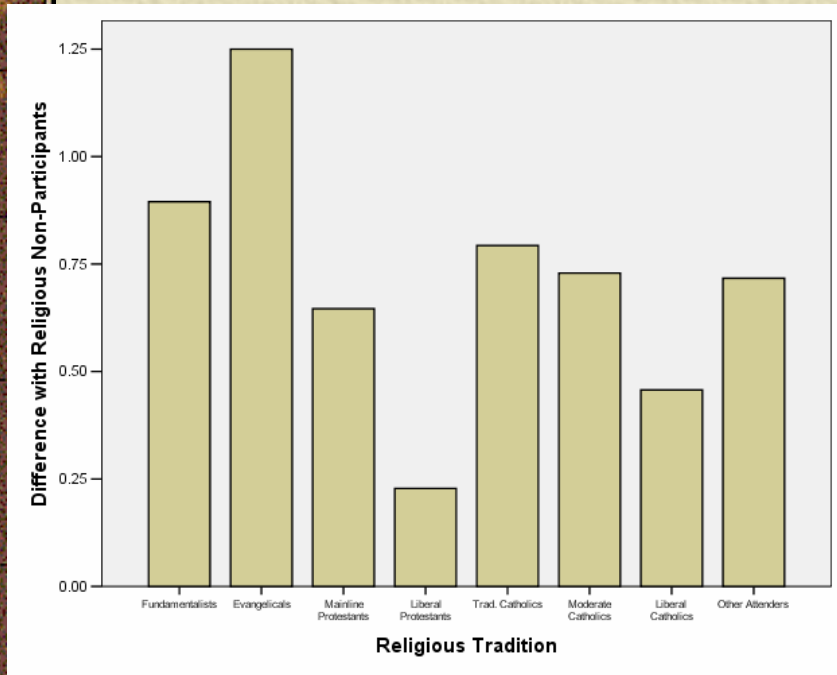
✠ Protestants

-- White Fundamentalists

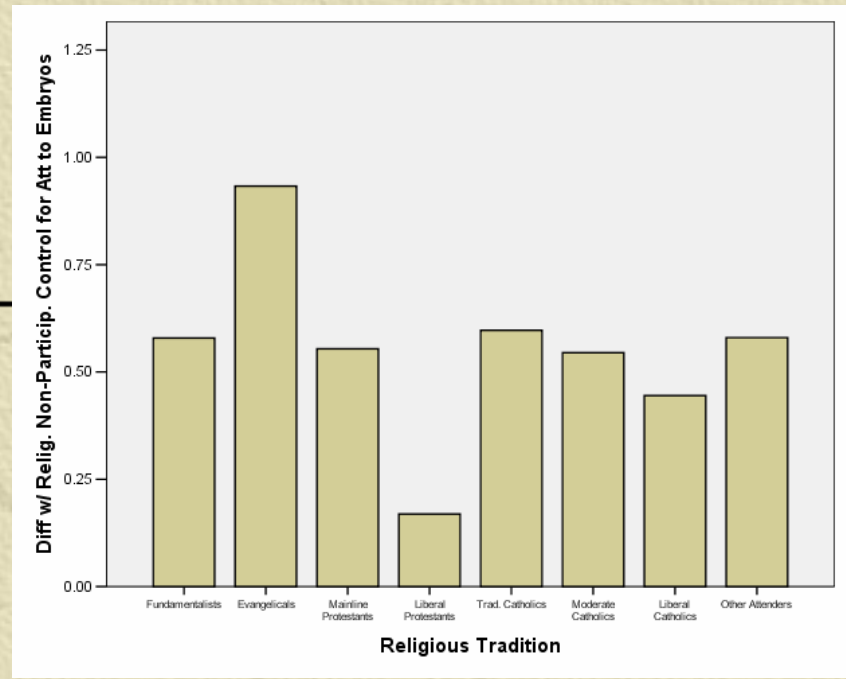
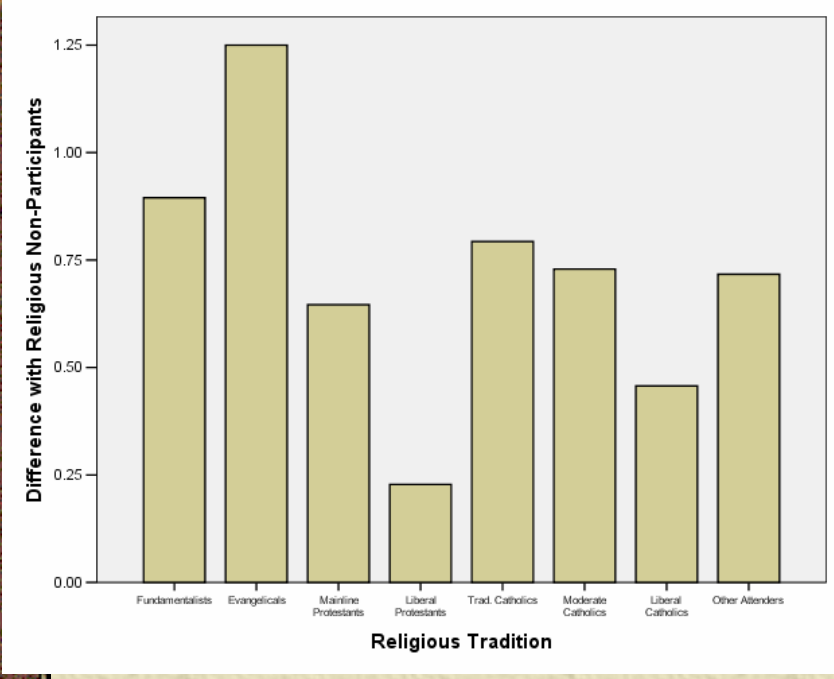
-- White Evangelicals

Fraction





Difference with non-
Religious Public in
Degree of Opposition
To Research Cloning



Difference with non-Religious Public in Degree of Opposition To Research Cloning

What Drives Opposition?

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- ✦ All Americans prefer that things be “natural.”
 - ✦ Americans will over-ride their preference for nature for “good reasons.”

Embryo Moral Status	Total	ESC Research			Policy Preference		
		Approve	Disapprove	Ban	Current	Proposed	Promote
Maximum	27.7	35.5	63.0	34.0	29.8	14.0	18.5
High	25.7	70.1	27.7	7.6	32.4	18.6	39.1
Moderate	14.5	85.4	12.4	6.7	17.4	23.4	49.6
None/Low	29.5	81.3	16.6	10.1	12.0	20.1	53.0

Values in Conflict: Public Attitudes on Embryonic Stem Cell Research




What Drives Opposition?

- ✦ All Americans prefer that things be “natural.”
- ✦ Americans will over-ride their preference for nature for “good reasons.”
- ✦ For some religious groups, the “good reasons” in the debate are not quite so compelling

Differential Notions of Suffering


✦ Religion is the Primary Source of the Idea that Suffering has Meaning

-- “the most decisive challenge which medicine raises for Christian convictions and morality involves the attempt to make suffering pointless and thus subject to elimination” (Stanley Hauerwas 1986: 24).



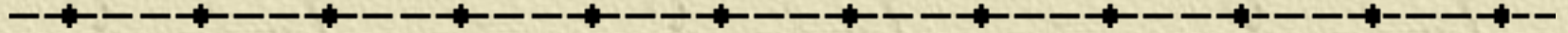
Respondent: [We have] close friends [who have] a daughter with degenerative muscular dystrophy. . . . It's such a tragedy to see ...a human being have to deal with what she knows is a...degenerative disease and...and she's now wheelchair bound and will continue to get worse. But as far as a vibrant mind and a wonderful personality, she is a charming person but I guess that's...if...if...if those parents had been able to remove that gene, wow. That would've been wonderful. However...


Interviewer: Okay.



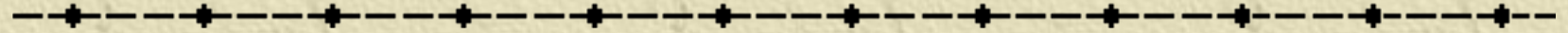
Respondent: I think [genetic disease] can also be a . . . growth experience for that family. I don't think it's the end of the world to have a child with a debilitating disease because parents rise to the occasion and they become more than they might have even know they could become dealing with it. So, I don't think it's the end of the world.

Relationship Between Religious Elites and their Constituents



 Catholicism

Relationship Between Religious Elites and their Constituents



✠ Catholicism

✠ Mainline Protestantism

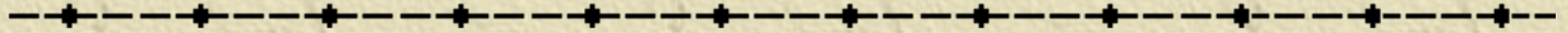
Relationship Between Religious Elites and their Constituents

✠ Catholicism

✠ Mainline Protestantism

✠ Evangelicalism and
Fundamentalism

Conclusion



✦ What Would an Elite-Free Debate Look Like?