



# the social science stem cell initiative

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## Government Strategies and Commercial Models The Politics of the Global Stem Cell Bioeconomy

This project will build on work already conducted as part of the 'Global politics of human embryonic stem cell science' by the Global Biopolitics Research Group at the University of East Anglia to examine the role of the state in the developing bioeconomy of stem cell science.

Dr. Harvey joined the Biopolitics Research Group in early February 2007 and brings to the team a background in sociology, science and technology studies and cultural studies. In the next 12 months Dr. Harvey will work closely with Professor Salter to examine from an interdisciplinary perspective how governments around the world influence and engage in the potentially lucrative markets emerging from developments in stem cell science. The overall aim of the project is to identify the commercial strategies used by governments to develop and maintain national advantage in this area.

In brief, in order to enhance their global position, governments may introduce a range of policies that support and develop stem cell science. Some policies in use currently include: substantial investment in science and industry (UK, Singapore, China), strategic co-ordination of the organisation of stem cell science, the establishment of public-private partnerships, heavy regulation of stem cell science in order to maintain public trust (UK, Australia), and intellectual property rights aimed at facilitating private investment (Singapore).

Importantly, the way that stem cell science can be supported by individual states is also substantially affected by political, social and economic factors. For example, as the limits placed on publicly funded stem cell science in the US attests to, the value attached to the embryo in different national cultures will affect how human embryonic stem cell science can be conducted. Other factors might include the value placed on scientific activity, the structure of economic markets, and the influence that states have on the development of international agreements and conventions (eg TRIPS, TRIMS, GATS).

Taking these two points into consideration, Dr. Harvey will develop a theoretical and practical approach that addresses the nexus between the local and the global in the bioeconomy of stem cell science, with a view to illuminating the competitive possibilities for states interested in capitalising on developments in this field.

Some of the main concerns of this project will include: how the bioeconomy of stem cell science operates on a global scale; how the processes of globalisation affect the influence that governments can have on the development of stem cell science; and how effective current state strategies are at engaging in the stem cell bioeconomy.

There are three broad goals of Dr. Harvey's project. The first goal is to identify the different theoretical perspectives on the role of the state in the global bioeconomy and to synthesise these into an overarching theory. The second goal is to test the operation of this theoretical innovation in dialogue with stem cell scientists and academics working in the SCI. And finally, the third goal is to engage with policy makers on the implications of this theory for the Pattison Report on UK stem cell science and its commercial applications.

This project will be of interest to academics, scientists, industrialists and policy-makers engaged in the global politics of stem cell science. The outcomes of the project will be made available through the activities of the Global Biopolitics Research Group, seminars and a policy-engagement workshop. It is also anticipated that the results from this project will form the platform for a more in-depth empirical study of the government strategies in the global stem cell bioeconomy.

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