Some Slippery-Slope Arguments

Selective Treatment
If we think (i) It is okay to choose not to administer life-saving treatment to a severely disabled newborn.
we’ll end up thinking (ii) It is okay to choose not to administer life-saving treatment to a child who is shorter than average.

Eugenics
If we (the state) adopt (i) A policy of encouraging people with mental disabilities to use contraception.
we’ll end up adopting (ii) A policy of genocide.

Abortion
If we think (i) It is okay to abort nine days after conception.
we’ll end up thinking (ii) It is okay to abort nine months after conception.

The General Form of a Slippery-Slope Argument

There’s a series of normative claims C₁, C₂, C₃,…,Cₙ

P₁ It will be very bad if we accept Cₙ.
P₂ We should not accept a claim if doing so will lead to very bad consequences.
P₃ For any i, if we accept Cᵢ, then we will come to accept Cᵢ₊₁.

C We should not accept C₁.

OR

There’s a series of policies P₁, P₂, P₃,…,Pₙ

P₁ It will be very bad if we follow Pₙ.
P₂ We should not follow a policy if doing so will lead to very bad consequences.
P₃ For any i, if we follow Pᵢ, then we will come to follow Pᵢ₊₁.

C We should not follow P₁.

Motivations for P₃

There’s a Logical Slippery Slope – when we accept the one claim / follow the one policy, then it makes sense to accept the next claim / follow the next policy.

There’s a Causal Slippery Slope – as a matter of fact, people who accept the one claim / follow the one policy will tend to accept the next claim / follow the next policy.