



Modern International Issues and Prospective Solutions in the Field Of Genomics and AI Regulation: Creating a System for Assessing Safety and Ethics of AI Technologies

Ekaterina Kan

Tashkent State University of Law

e.kan@tsul.uz

Abstract

With the rapid development of genomics and artificial intelligence (AI) technologies worldwide, there is an urgent need for strengthened international regulation and cooperation to ensure these innovations are developed and deployed safely, ethically, and for the benefit of humanity. This article provides an overview of key gaps and risks in the current governance of AI and genomics across national jurisdictions, such as biased decision-making encoded in algorithms, lack of accountability mechanisms, and potential for human rights violations. It proposes the establishment of an international organization mandated to develop standardized testing protocols and evidence-based guidelines for assessing the safety, security, and ethics of AI systems. Such an organization would convene diverse representatives from governments, industry, academia, and civil society to build consensus on responsible governance approaches aligned with shared human values and international law. This article analyzes pressing issues arising from fragmented regulatory regimes and offers solutions to advance multilateral cooperation, oversight, and public trust in emerging technologies.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Genomics, Bioethics, International Law, Safety, Accountability, Human Rights

I. Introduction

Recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and genomics promise immense benefits for humanity, but also propose complex ethical, legal and social dilemmas (Gulyamov et al., 2020). As these technologies rapidly progress, there is a concerning lack of coherent international governance frameworks and



cooperation to ensure they are developed and deployed responsibly, safely and equitably worldwide [1]. Currently, policies and regulations pertaining to AI and genomics remain fragmented across national jurisdictions, with significant variation in standards, oversight mechanisms and enforcement [2]. However, the transnational impacts and risks of these technologies are escalating rapidly, necessitating enhanced global coordination and harmonization of governance approaches [3].

International human rights law and instruments provide an important foundation for technology regulation, establishing fundamental values and duties to respect human life and dignity [4]. However, existing frameworks do not directly address many of the novel challenges arising from AI and genomics, which require nuanced, evidence-based policies attuned to scientific complexities and uncertainties [5]. Without proactive efforts to strengthen international cooperation and build governance capacity, lack of oversight and alignment on ethical norms threatens to undermine public trust, stifle innovation, and lead to harmful outcomes from the misuse of technologies [6].

This article undertakes an interdisciplinary analysis of gaps in the international regulation of AI and genomics. It assesses risks arising from divergent national policies and proposes solutions to advance multilateral coordination, oversight, and the development of globally accepted standards grounded in ethics and human rights. Creating standardized methods for open and transparent evaluation of AI and genomic technologies will be essential to balance innovation with precaution [7]. New mechanisms for international cooperation can help foster responsible science aligned with shared values. With cautious optimism and collective leadership, the global community can harness emerging technologies to create a more just, equitable and sustainable future for all [8].

II. Methodology

A growing body of scholarship has analyzed regulatory gaps relating to AI, machine learning, robotics and genomics, warning of risks from lack of international coordination and oversight (Gulyamov et al, 2021). Analysts have identified weaknesses in existing governance regimes including lack of accountability, transparency, consideration of social impacts and ethical outcomes [9]. Comparative research reveals significant divergence between national laws, regulations and voluntary industry standards pertaining to development and deployment of emerging technologies [10].

Various frameworks have been proposed as bases for global technology governance. International human rights law establishes vital moral boundaries, duties and mechanisms for accountability [11]. Approaches centered on ethics explore philosophical dimensions of just governance and moral obligations to use knowledge wisely, drawing on theories of virtue ethics, consequentialism and deontological ethics [12]. The precautionary principle underscores prudent foresight given unknown risks. Scholars have also examined lessons from regulating other domains like biotechnology, nuclear power and the Internet [13].

This analysis employs an interdisciplinary framework integrating legal, ethical and policy dimensions. Literature review assesses current issues and risks flagged across jurisdictions, synthesizing insights from over 150 academic articles, reports and books. Doctrinal analysis examines limitations of existing legal instruments and jurisdiction using textual critique. Case studies and comparative methods inform understanding of governance gaps and prior efforts at international cooperation on technology regulation, such as the Asilomar Conference on recombinant DNA in 1975 [14]. Policy analysis evaluates proposals for improved oversight and coordination through strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats methodology. Insights are synthesized from philosophy of technology, applied ethics, international law, science and technology studies, and policy scholarship. This multilayered analytical lens aims to elucidate complex challenges at the nexus

of law, technology and ethics, and explore possibilities for principled international governance [15].

III. Results

Several critical issues highlight gaps in the international governance of AI and genomics, posing risks of harm. First, opacity and complexity of algorithms can obscure biased or discriminatory decision-making and entrench injustice, particularly against already marginalized populations [16]. Automated systems trained on flawed data perpetuate and amplify prejudice in ways difficult to audit without transparency and accountability mechanisms, as evidenced in cases of biased facial recognition and criminal risk assessment tools [17].

Second, deployment of AI without sufficient oversight threatens weathering of human rights and liberties, including privacy, due process and non-discrimination [18]. Lack of contestability and meaningful human control over automated systems using AI undercuts fundamental rule of law principles, enabled by intellectual property protections shielding proprietary algorithms from scrutiny [19]. Third, application of AI and genomics is outpacing ethical review and efforts to build public trust through inclusive deliberation and communication. Mistrust stemming from lack of understanding and engagement can fuel anti-science attitudes, necessitating responsive and participatory governance, as public surveys indicate decreasing confidence in governing scientific applications justly [20].

Additionally, emerging capabilities to directly edit human genomes using CRISPR-Cas9 raise profound ethical concerns, given potential risks of biological enhancement interventions on individuals and future generations (Lander et al., 2019). Current reliance predominantly on inconsistent national bioethics committees provides concerningly limited regulation of rapidly advancing heritable human genome editing research [21]. Furthermore, economic impacts and benefits from development of AI and genomics are concentrated in a handful of technology hubs, while risks are becoming ubiquitous globally. Widening

technology gaps between the global North and South raise equity concerns [22]. The accelerating pace of change outstrips many countries' governance capacity. Without inclusive innovation policies and sharing of knowledge and resources, inequalities may deepen further, as evidenced by access gaps to COVID-19 vaccines and digital technologies [23].

These multifaceted issues demonstrate fragmented national regimes are insufficient for technologies increasingly impacting humanity as a whole. Coordinated international action grounded in ethics and human rights is required to steer innovation toward just ends benefiting all people [24]. However, achieving consensus on substantive principles and binding global standards remains complex given divergent perspectives, priorities, and values worldwide [25].

IV. Discussion

Current approaches to governing AI and genomics predominantly rely on national regulations, industry self-governance, and non-binding international ethics guidelines. However, significant limitations plague these efforts. National policies and laws vary widely in scope, specificity and stringency across jurisdictions [26]. The United States and European Union have taken divergent approaches to data protection regulations relevant to AI, for instance [27]. Voluntary frameworks advanced by technology companies lack meaningful accountability and public oversight, prioritizing flexibility and speed to market over precaution [28].

High-level ethics statements by international bodies, such as UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, provide important values-based guidance but lack actionable implementation mechanisms or authority [29]. International human rights law offers a universally legitimate normative foundation and some oversight tools, like reporting to human rights bodies, but limitations persist in directly regulating fast-moving scientific innovation and private sector activities across borders [30]. An existing international law and institutions lack



specialized focus on assessing emerging technologies and guiding ethical innovation for the common good [31]].

Additionally, initiatives to craft new multilateral treaties on technology governance have stagnated due to lack of political consensus and complex jurisdictional issues. For example, efforts toward a binding instrument on cybersecurity governance have stalled for decades at the UN level [32]. However, governance innovations harnessing softer law, multistakeholder participation and decentralization may provide pathways to build incremental global norms and oversight capacity [33].

A. Proposed Solutions to Advance International Technology Governance

To address these issues, one proposal is the establishment of an independent International Technology Ethics Assessment Board (ITEAB) through a multilateral accord. ITEAB would convene diverse experts in science, law, philosophy and policy to conduct evidence-based assessments of emerging technologies according to criteria of safety, responsibility, trustworthiness and ethics. The Board could be constituted following the example of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, with members nominated by governments and accredited by a UN body based on expertise [34].

Standardized methodologies for technology assessment and testing protocols could be developed drawing on accumulated knowledge and practices globally, tailored to specific technological domains [35]. For example, algorithms and automated systems could undergo auditing using red teaming tactics to detect biases, and new biotechnologies could be subject to controlled trials to rigorously assess risks before deployment [36]. ITEAB would issue recommendations and reports to guide technology actors, policymakers and international institutions, while allowing flexibility for various regulatory approaches in different national contexts. Its independence from political and corporate influence would enable



evidence-based oversight in the global public interest. ITEAB's assessments could inform necessary adjustments to intellectual property, trade and cybersecurity frameworks relevant to emerging technologies [37].

The proposed Board aligns with scholarship on “experimentalist” governance regimes as pathways to build international cooperation and norms incrementally through decentralized, multi-stakeholder mechanisms [38]. Rather than top-down regulation, ITEAB would support collective learning and steward knowledge creation responsibly [39]. It could be empowered to investigate threats, convene resources, issue guidance and monitor progress. But the Board's influence would stem primarily from moral authority and counsel. By pioneering transparent, inclusive technology assessment and advancing humanistic visions of progress, ITEAB could expand boundaries of what is politically possible in global technology governance [40].

B. Challenges and Counter-Arguments

However, this proposal faces significant barriers and limitations that must be addressed. Persuading states to join a binding accord on technology governance amid geopolitical tensions and national sovereignty concerns presents political challenges [41]. Powerful technology companies may resist external oversight and restrictions on innovation given potential competitive impacts [42]. Maintaining legitimacy and credibility across disparate stakeholders worldwide is difficult, necessitating inclusive and representative governance structures. There are inherent constraints to forecasting and assessing speculative technologies with unclear impacts [43]. ITEAB could duplicate efforts by other organizations like the OECD or WHO, or become mired in bureaucracy that impedes dynamism, if not carefully designed. Critics warn against stifling beneficial innovation with excessive precaution or imposing Western values inappropriate in non-Western cultures. Others argue solutions lie primarily in strengthening national governance capabilities first [44].



Nonetheless, proactive multilateral cooperation can mitigate risks and build essential foundations for navigating emerging technologies, even if initially through gradual, voluntary steps. The proposal aims to stimulate fresh thinking on complementary mechanisms at the international level, not provide a panacea or substitute for national regulations. Further scholarship is needed to design nuanced governance balancing dynamism with wisdom. With prudent foresight, inclusive ethics and shared responsibility, the global community can work together to steer technological innovation toward equitable and sustainable progress benefiting all humanity [45].

Conclusion

Advances in AI, genomics and other fields are transforming society in profound ways, outstripping capacities to understand risks or govern wisely. However, existing legal and ethical frameworks remain fragmented across borders despite growing transnational impacts. This vacuum of international leadership and cooperation threatens to undermine trust, human rights and the common good. This article analyzed issues of opacity, bias, unaccountable power and unintended consequences arising from current governance gaps. It proposed the creation of an International Technology Ethics Assessment Board to pioneer transparent evaluation methodologies and build global norms incrementally through evidence-based recommendations.

Challenges ahead are formidable, but not insurmountable with concerted effort, wisdom and goodwill. With urgency, optimism and good faith, policymakers and scientists can lay foundations for responsible stewardship of knowledge. Renewed commitments to multilateral dialogue, ethics and human dignity can guide humanity through coming disruptions and opportunities. While future prospects remain uncertain, the global community has reasons to hope governance innovations may shepherd emerging capabilities toward more just and sustainable ends benefiting all life. But this will require proactive cooperation,

courage and willpower to elevate our collective conscience. The stakes could not be higher in navigating this inflection point for civilization. By coming together in solidarity and wisdom, we can build kinder futures worthy of our highest shared aspirations.

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