International Journal of Global Sustainable Research (IJGSR)
Vol.3, No.10, 2025: 723-728

Unchecked Algorithms: The Ethical Vacuum in the Deployment of Artificial Intelligence in Warfare, Law Enforcement, and Governance

Aarif Mohd Waza
JSPM University Punme Maharashtra
Corresponding Author: Aarif Mohd Waza aarifwaza4@gmail.com

A R T I C L E I N F O

Keywords : Law Enforcement, Public Governance, Artificial Intelligence, Human Rights, Democratic Values

Received : 21 Februwary
Revised : 23 March
Accepted: 23 April

A B S T R A C T

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies evolve rapidly, their deployment in critical areas such as warfare, law enforcement, and public governance is accelerating without adequate ethical frameworks. This paper investigates how the unregulated use of AI in these domains poses serious threats to human rights, accountability, and democratic values. Drawing on interdisciplinary sources from political science, ethics, and technology studies, it reveals how opaque algorithms and profit-driven development models are leading to biased, unaccountable, and sometimes lethal outcomes. The paper calls for binding international norms, participatory governance models, and robust regulatory mechanisms to ensure that the integration of AI into sovereign functions aligns with ethical standards and democratic principles

DOI: https://doi.org/10.59890/ijgsr.v3i10.84
ISSN-E: 2828-1519
https://slamultitechpublisher.my.id/index.php/ijgsr/index

INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing how decisions are made in many important areas of our society. This includes things like automatic weapons in war, police systems that predict crime, and how government offices are run. As governments use AI more and more, it is very important to ask questions about its ethics. But, the rules and laws for AI are not being made as fast as the technology is growing. This gap between using AI and making rules for it has created a dangerous situation. It allows for misuse, bias, and even violence, which is often hidden behind the excuse that the machine is just being neutral (Crawford, 2021).

The use of AI in the army, by police, and in governance is a huge change in how humans and machines work together. Most of the time, these technologies don't solve problems of unfairness; instead, they copy and make existing social injustices even stronger (Eubanks, 2018). Also, big tech companies now have a lot of power to tell governments what to do. This is a new worry, as it can lead to corporate control and the privatisation of government work. This paper argues that without proper ethical safeguards, using AI for important state work will make current inequalities worse, harm human rights, and weaken our democracy. By looking closely at how AI is used in the military, police surveillance, and public policy, this study will show the results of this rule-less environment and suggest ways to make things right ethically

LITERATURE RIVIEW

AI in Warfare: From Automation to Autonomy

1. The Rise of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS)

The creation of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), also called "killer robots," is a major example of AI being used for war. These machines can choose and attack targets all on their own, without a human controlling them in real-time (Human Rights Watch, 2018). Some people say these weapons can save soldiers' lives and work more efficiently. But others warn that letting an algorithm decide to kill someone goes against the basic rules of war.

A big worry is who will be blamed if such a weapon makes a mistake and kills the wrong people? Will it be the programmer, the army officer, or the machine? Our current international laws of war (Geneva Conventions) are not made for this situation, which creates a dangerous legal grey area for civilians (ICRC, 2019).

Another serious problem is that these robots could make it easier to start a war. Since no soldiers from your country might die, governments might be more willing to get into fights with less public debate. This could make already unstable parts of the world even more volatile (Crootof, 2016).

2 Arms Race and Regulatory Paralysis

Countries are now in a race to become the best in AI-powered warfare, and this has stopped any real global rules from being made. Big military powers like the US, China, and Russia are spending a lot of money on these systems. They often say no to international treaties that could limit their advantage (Boulanin & Verbruggen, 2017). In this situation, ethics take a backseat to national security.

Private companies are also making this race worse. Firms like Palantir and Clearview AI work with defence departments, helping to quickly put AI tools into use by the military (Ferguson, 2020). However, these companies work in secret, with very little public oversight.

Even though many groups and some countries at the UN have demanded a ban on killer robots before it's too late, the talks are stuck. Countries cannot agree because they have different political interests. This shows a major failure in global governance—its inability to control new technology when powerful countries want to use it for an edge (Scharre, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

Predictive Policing and AI in Law Enforcement

1. Algorithmic Bias and Discriminatory Policing

In policing, AI tools are used to try and predict where crime will happen and who will commit it. These systems use old crime data to make their guesses. But this data is already biased because police have historically focused more on poor and minority areas (Lum & Isaac, 2016).

The result is very serious. Instead of being fair, these AI tools often strengthen existing racial and class inequalities. For example, in the US, a tool called COMPAS that judges use to decide sentences was found to be much more likely to label Black defendants as future criminals compared to similar white defendants (Angwin et al., 2016).

Also, these predictive policing systems are not transparent. It is very hard for people to know why a decision was made or to challenge it. This is especially bad in places where people already don't trust the police. Experts say these tools are a high-tech way of keeping certain communities down (Brayne, 2020).

2. Surveillance, Consent, and the Erosion of Civil Liberties

Facial recognition technology is another big worry in policing. It is used a lot in cities in China, India, and Western countries. Often, it is used without asking the public or having proper rules, putting everyone under constant watch (Brunton & Nissenbaum, 2015).

This kind of surveillance attacks basic democratic rights like privacy and free speech. In countries with strict governments, it is used to find and stop anyone who protests (Feldstein, 2019). Even in democracies, it's getting hard to tell the difference between safety and spying, especially since how the police use AI is kept secret.

A clear example was during the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests in the US. Police used facial recognition to identify protesters in real-time. This caused major concerns about police using too much surveillance power to scare people (Garvie & Moy, 2020).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

AI in Governance: From Efficiency to Technocracy

1. Algorithmic Bureaucracy and the Myth of Neutrality

Governments worldwide are using AI to manage things like welfare benefits, public services, and tax collection. While this promises to be more efficient, it often ignores ethics. These systems can hide biased policy decisions behind a mask of digital neutrality, stopping people from questioning them in a democracy (Danaher et al., 2017).

For example, the Dutch government used an algorithm called "SyRI" to find welfare fraud. It unfairly targeted poor and migrant communities. A court later ruled it was discriminatory and illegal (van Eck, 2020). Similarly, in the UK, a faulty AI model used during COVID unfairly lowered the exam grades of students from poorer backgrounds (Williamson et al., 2020).

In India, the Aadhaar system is promoted for inclusive growth. But it has led to big worries about people being excluded, being watched, and having no way to fix errors. Studies show many poor people were denied food or pensions because their fingerprints didn't match, showing how these systems can hurt the most vulnerable (Khera, 2019).

2. The Disempowerment of Citizens

AI systems are like a black box hard for the public and even officials to understand. This lack of clarity reduces public participation and makes it tough for people to fight decisions that harm them (Pasquale, 2015). When citizens can't question how decisions about their benefits are made, it weakens democratic accountability.

Also, relying too much on AI tools can make public servants lose their own ability to make fair judgments. Officers might just follow the computer's decision even if it seems wrong or illegal. This "automation bias" damages the thoughtful discussion that democracy is built on (Green & Viljoen, 2020).

The high-tech appeal of AI, which claims to manage society "rationally," risks replacing human political judgment with cold data. As Morozov (2013) says, this change makes governance less political and weakens the public's role in deciding its own future.

Ethical Safeguards and Normative Frameworks

1. Current Gaps in Global and Domestic Regulation

Even with rising worries, there are no strong global laws for the ethical use of AI by governments. Documents like the OECD AI Principles and the EU's AI Act are good starts, but they are either just suggestions or only apply to certain regions (OECD, 2019; European Commission, 2021). Different countries also have very different plans and levels of commitment to AI ethics.

Also, many ethical guidelines are just on paper. They talk about ideas like fairness and transparency but have no real power or ways to enforce them (Jobin et al., 2019). Because of this, private companies and government agencies keep using AI with very little accountability.

The situation is worse in the Global South. Countries with weaker systems often import AI technology from other nations. They don't have the ability to properly check or customize it for their own people. This can lead to a new kind

of colonialism, where foreign tech companies control a country's policies and digital systems (Birhane, 2020).

2. Toward a Participatory AI Ethics Framework

To solve these problems, this paper supports a public-focused ethics model based on democratic control. This model should have:

- Compulsory human control for AI decisions that affect people's lives.
- Public discussions and openness when the government buys or uses AI.
- Independent audits to check for fairness and accountability.
- Global agreements to control military AI and stop an arms race.

Using ethical impact assessments, like we do for the environment, can make sure AI is checked not just for how well it works, but for its effect on society (Cath, 2018). Most importantly, AI ethics can't be decided only by experts; it needs everyone to be involved.

Citizen groups, ethics boards with public members, and strong laws can help shape AI policy. Teaching people about digital issues is also key so they can be part of this important discussion.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

AI is changing the meaning of power, authority, and justice. But without strong ethical rules, these tools can increase oppression instead of reducing it. In the military, courts, and government offices, AI systems are being used in ways that avoid responsibility, increase discrimination, and weaken democracy.

This paper argues that blindly using AI in war, policing, and governance needs to be met with strong rules based on ethics and public participation. Leaders must avoid seeing AI as a magic solution and should instead encourage people to question its use. Regulations must be forward-looking and designed to stop harm before it happens.

As AI keeps improving, our government and legal systems must also improve. We must ensure these powerful tools work for people, not against them. The survival of democracy depends on our skill to ethically control the machines we build.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is needed on the topic of Unchecked Algorithms: The Ethical Vacuum in the Deployment of Artificial Intelligence to perfect this research and increase insight for readers and writers.

REFERENCES

Angwin, J., Larson, J., Mattu, S., & Kirchner, L. (2016). Machine bias. ProPublica. https://www.propublica.org/article/machine-bias-risk-assessments-in-criminal-sentencing

Boulanin, V., & Verbruggen, M. (2017). Mapping the development of autonomy in weapon systems. SIPRI.

Brunton, F., & Nissenbaum, H. (2015). Obfuscation: A User's Guide for Privacy and Protest. MIT Press.

Cath, C. (2018). Governing artificial intelligence: Ethical, legal and technical opportunities and challenges. Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society A, 376(2133), 20180080.

Crawford, K. (2021). Atlas of AI: Power, Politics, and the Planetary Costs of Artificial Intelligence. Yale University Press.

Danaher, J., Hogan, M. J., Noone, C., et al. (2017). Algorithmic governance: Developing a research agenda through the power of collective intelligence. Big Data & Society, 4(2), 2053951717726554.

Eubanks, V. (2018). Automating Inequality: How High-Tech Tools Profile, Police, and Punish the Poor. St. Martin's Press.

European Commission. (2021). Proposal for a Regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021PC0206

Feldstein, S. (2019). The Global Expansion of AI Surveillance. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Human Rights Watch. (2018). Heed the Call: A Moral and Legal Imperative to Ban Killer Robots. https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/08/21/heed-call/moral-and-legal-imperative-ban-killer-robots

Jobin, A., Ienca, M., & Vayena, E. (2019). The global landscape of AI ethics guidelines. Nature Machine Intelligence, 1(9), 389–399.

Lum, K., & Isaac, W. (2016). To predict and serve? Significance, 13(5), 14–19.

Morozov, E. (2013). To Save Everything, Click Here: The Folly of Technological Solutionism. PublicAffairs.

OECD. (2019). OECD Principles on Artificial Intelligence. https://www.oecd.org/going-digital/ai/principles/

Pasquale, F. (2015). The Black Box Society: The Secret Algorithms That Control Money and Information. Harvard University Press.

Scharre, P. (2018). Army of None: Autonomous Weapons and the Future of War. W. W. Norton.

Sharkey, N. (2019). The impact of autonomous weapons systems on international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Law, Innovation and Technology, 11(2), 259–278.

van Eck, M. (2020). The SyRI case: A landmark ruling for algorithmic accountability in government. European Data Protection Law Review, 6(3), 308–312.

Williamson, B., Eynon, R., & Potter, J. (2020). Pandemic politics, pedagogical challenges: A sociotechnical analysis of UK school examinations and algorithmic assessment. Learning, Media and Technology, 45(2), 165–179.