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Langlois A. *Negotiating Bioethics: The Governance of UNESCO's Bioethics Programme*. London and New York: Routledge; 2013.

Foreword

The research for this book springs from two sources. First, it comes from Adèle Langlois' research for a doctorate, and subsequently, her early postdoctoral work. As such, it is a perfect exemplar of what can be done by an enthusiastic, highly competent and very hard-working young researcher. But second, it shows the result of one person's commitment to learning more about the global governance of bioethics. It focuses on crucial questions, such as: Can bioethics be global? Is a UN-led intergovernmental approach the best way to construct global governance for genomic science?

The framework for this book is the science and social science of genomics from the sequencing of the human genome at the turn of the millennium. But unlike the many books already written within this context, Adèle Langlois has chosen to focus, unusually, if not uniquely, on intergovernmental relations, but more particularly, on relations between developed and developing countries. She also goes a step further by researching intergovernmental relations around ethical issues, and the even more tricky ethical questions concerning the ethics of life: stem cells, human cloning, and so on.

There is plenty to mull over and debate in the chapters of this book, and I have picked out a few issues that had cadence for me – but there are many others. In particular, one insight I gained is that crucial issues can be both 'high-level' think issues, while also relatively mundane and grounded.

At a 'higher' level, there is the question of whether the focus of research on the international politics of ethics should be different in the South from the North. The book suggests that bioethics in the South are closely intertwined with the ethics of poverty and global power. Langlois shows us that ethics committees are not new to Africa – that there have been ethics committees for many decades in South Africa and Nairobi. It would be easy to jump to conclusions about how poor countries deal with ethics, but relative weakness in terms of professional bioethical skills does not translate as having no capability or evidenced argument. There are voices with something important to contribute. It is important to listen – as Adèle has done.

At a more 'mundane' level, Adèle points to the unequal relations within UNESCO, part of the UN intergovernmental system. At one level there is 'equal' representation of groups of nations. But if poorer nations have lower human and financial resources they will not be able to travel to 'join' the tables of 'equals'. Adèle addresses this and similar issues through the 'lens' of her detailed studies of South Africa and Kenya.

Other important ethical issues go well beyond the resources to travel and engage in UN bodies, such as the huge gap between research on diseases of the poor and diseases of the more affluent, and how to avoid poorer countries becoming a 'research sweat shop' for clinical trials that are no longer placed in developed countries.

Langlois' research fits squarely into the category of 'engaged research'. She shows here that she is an 'expert' engager among experts of many types (UN, scientists, social scientists, ethicists, policy-makers). Such engagement did not come at the end of her research process but at the beginning. This has influenced her rigorous collection of data of various kinds, including large volumes of published and grey materials and extensive observations at meetings, and enriched her research analysis and results.

The chapters of this challenging book will engage those who are serious about the important details of how to build global governance of science and technology, but it is also a key text for those who want to know more about the international politics of treaty negotiation, and those who are keen to learn about bioethics issues in developing countries. Every reader will find something of importance in these pages, and something to debate with their colleagues.

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