Chapter 6
Ethical Concerns in Human Enhancement: Advantages in Corporate/ Organizational Settings

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is on issue of fairness and equity in corporations and organizational settings due to advantages received as a result of human enhancement. In so doing, the purpose of this chapter will also analyze the paradigms of bioethics and (business) ethics and legality will be utilized in analyzing the issue of fairness and equity in corporations and organizational settings due to advantages received as a result of human enhancement. Human enhancement, used in this chapter, includes any activity by which we improve our bodies, minds, or abilities beyond what we regard today as normal. In relations to advantages in corporations and organizational settings, human enhancement, used in this chapter, means ways to make functional changes to human characteristic, also referred to as neuro-cognitive enhancements, beyond what we regard as typical, normal, or statistically normal range of functioning for an individual.

INTRODUCTION

Research into the ethical, social, legal, and political aspects of emerging technologies, according to Ferrari, Coenen, and Grunwald (2012), is commonly known as ELSA, which began with the launch of the Human Genome Project in 1990, has nowadays acquired a fundamental role as preparatory research for the governance of these technologies. ELSA reflection in Europe has been framed by ideas about the co-evolution of science and society and about the need for reflexive science. In its 2009 report entitled "Challenging futures of science in society—emerging trends and cutting-edge issues", the EU MASIS Expert Group stresses the growing role played by applied ethics—alongside science and technology studies (STS), technology assessment (TA), and other fields—in what it calls reflexive science": the idea is that science should reflect

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on its role and its impacts on society, not only as a purely philosophical exercise. The group gives two examples of this reflective science, the first being the debate on human enhancement (HE), and the second example regards the increasingly important role played by scientific expertise in decision making, possibly under conditions of extremely high uncertainty.

Enhancement is typically compared with therapy (Miah, 2011). In broad terms, therapy aims to fix something that has gone wrong, by curing specific diseases or injuries, while enhancement interventions aim to improve that state of an organism beyond its normal healthy state (Allhoff, Lin, Moor, & Weckert, 2009; Bostrom & Roache, 2008; Miah, 2011). In other words, human enhancement includes any activity by which we improve our bodies, minds, or abilities—things we do to enhance our welfare. These so-called natural human enhancements are morally uninteresting because they appear to be unproblematic to the extent that it is difficult to see why we should not be permitted to improve ourselves through diet, education, physical training, and so on.

Rather, allow us to stipulate for the moment that human enhancement is about boosting our capabilities beyond the species-typical level, or statistically-normal range of functioning for an individual (Daniels, 2000; Miah, 2011). Relatedly, human enhancement can be understood to be different from therapy, which is about treatments aimed at pathologies that compromise health or reduce one's level of functioning below this species-typically or statistically-normal level (Juengst, 1997; Miah, 2011). Another way to think about human enhancement technologies, as opposed to therapy is that they change the structure and function of the body (Greely, 2006; Miah, 2011). As such, by human enhancement we do not mean the mere use of tools; that would render the concept impotent, turning everything we do into cases of human enhancement. But if and when these tools are integrated into our bodies, rather than employed externally, then we will consider them to be instances of human enhancement. Admittedly, none of these definitions is immune to objections, but they are nevertheless useful as starting point in thinking about the distinction, including whether there really is such a distinction.

Now, given the above understanding of human enhancement, let us tease apart the myriad issues that arise in the debate. These too are loose non-exclusive categories that may overlap with one another, but perhaps are still useful in providing an overview of the debate: (1) freedom & autonomy; (2) health & safety, (3) fairness & equity; (4) societal disruption; and (5) human dignity (Lin & Allhoff, 2008). Emphasis will be on the issue of fairness and equity in corporations and organizational settings due to advantages received as a result of human enhancement. Paradigms of bioethics (biotechnology) and (business) ethics and legality will be utilized in analyzing the issue of fairness and equity in corporations and organizational settings due to advantages received as a result of human enhancement. With that said, this chapter is a composition of two paradigms, basic science and business.

HUMAN ENHANCEMENT: BIOETHICS (BIOTECHNOLOGY)

Over the last decade, human enhancement has grown into a major topic of debate in applied ethics. Interest has been stimulated by advances in the biomedical sciences, advances to many, suggest that it will become increasingly feasible to use medicine and technology to reshape, manipulate, and enhance many aspects of human biology even in healthy individuals. To the extent that such interventions are on the horizon that is an obvious practical dimension to these debates. This practical dimension is understood by an outcrop of think tanks and activist organizations devoted to the *biopolitics* of enhancement.

Already one can detect a biopolitical fault line developing between pro-enhancement and anti-enhancement groupings: transhumanists on one