

Ethical Arguments For and Against Killer Robots

Seyyed Mohsen Eslami*

Abstract

Killer robots or autonomous weapon systems (AWS) are representative of the application of AI in new areas, where worries about its wide application can be fully expressed. This being said, it is expected that such systems have elicited many reactions. These systems use AI in their main (or critical) functions, i.e. to decide about the target, and what to be done about it. In recent years there have been many debates from ethical, legal, and political standpoints about such systems; these debates revolve around what position one should adopt on their development, production, and use. Though such questions are important theoretically, the actual technological developments are getting closer to the ideals discussed, making the issue even more important. Here I assess some ethical arguments for and against AWS. It seems that none of the arguments, for or against, is compelling enough to take a position. Therefore, either we should look for further arguments, or look into the more general implications of the current state of arguments about the just war theory, the main framework in which the issue is discussed. Along with this examination, some main ethical aspects of the issue are reviewed.

Keywords

Ethics of war, ethics of AI, consequentialist argument, human dignity, killer robots

* Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Humanities, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran. |
s.eslami@modares.ac.ir

