



East West University

Mini Project- 3

Course Info

CSE487 Cyber Security, Law & Ethics

Section- 1

Spring 2023

Course Instructor

Rashedul Amin Tuhin

Senior Lecturer

Department of Computer Science & Engineering
East West University

Students Info

Maisha Mahajabin

2019-2-60-005

Pranta Nath Nayan

2019-2-60-047

Abdur Rahman

2019-2-60-086

Date of submission

20 May 2023

Ethical Dilemma of a Lethal Autonomous Weapon

A conflicting choice between options and a compromise of some ethical principles is referred to as an ethical dilemma. In both the personal and professional spheres, ethical problems can arise in any situation. Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAW), also known as killer robots, are advanced weapons systems that can independently select and engage targets without human intervention. With that arises a lot of dilemmas. Here is a discussion of one of those dilemmas.

Scenario with dilemma

Suppose in your country the military system is very weak now and there's a possible threat ahead. So to get rid from this situation the authority decided to implement Lethal Autonomous Weapon system. The LAW system has demonstrated superior accuracy and efficiency in eliminating enemy combatants. This AI-driven weapon is capable of **independently identifying and engaging targets**, **making split-second decisions without human intervention**.

Assume you are the military officer responsible for the decision of implementation, and you are faced with the ethical dilemma of whether to deploy the Lethal Autonomous Weapon system. On one hand, it offers potential benefits such as **reducing military casualties and strengthening the country's defense line**. On the other hand, it presents **serious ethical concerns**, including the **risk to innocent lives**, **accountability and responsibility**, **escalation of violence**, and **the potential for unintended consequences**.

Brainstorming Phase

Stakeholders

Stakeholder refers to any people or groups who are impacted (positively or negatively) by a decision. In this scenario stakeholders are-

- Military organizations
- Soldiers and combatants
- Civilian population in conflict zones
- AI researchers and developers
- Human rights organizations
- Governments and policymakers

Risks, issues, problems, consequences

If the LAW system is employed, there may be an increase in the **harm done to people in war zones**. A few of the problems that autonomous weapons systems face include **a lack of accountability** for LAW systems, a potential **violation of international humanitarian law**, an increase in violence and the proliferation of weapons, a loss of human control and decision-making, **ethical concerns**, **unintended consequences**, a lack of transparency, and a lack of public confidence. The employment of autonomous weapon systems may also lead to the development of a new generation of military strategies that prioritize technology over human

life. Additionally, if there are unforeseeable consequences, the use of these weapons could further destabilize already fragile combat zones.

Who get benefits

The use of the LAW system can decrease military fatalities and has improved combat operations' efficiency and effectiveness, possibly improving defense line, tactical judgment and situational awareness. Military personnel must have access to sufficient training, tools, and support to perform their responsibilities successfully and safely. This can boost morale and enable a greater concentration on strategic aims and objectives.

On the other hand, Human soldiers may make decisions with judgment, empathy, and consideration of context, which lowers the possibility of unexpected injury to civilians in battle areas. Without LAW systems, human operators continue to have the last say in all decisions, upholding the idea that people should have discretion over when to use force.

Possible actions

In this scenario, the decision is either yes or no. We can choose one of two choices: implement lethal autonomous weapons or not.

Analysis Phase

Responsibilities of the decision maker

Many lives depend on the decision makers. Which means they must be unbiased. If the decision maker becomes biased, then it will become very hard to trust them. In our scenario, the decision maker who wants to implement this lethal autonomous weapon. He is the one who will make some decisions on the system to function. It is necessary to make sure he is following the general and professional ethics. While designing, he should consider the safety of human well-being by upholding international humanitarian laws and ethics, ensuring safety and well-being of both military personnel and civilians, minimizing harm and protecting human rights. The decision is whether to use a fatal weapon or not.

Rights of the stakeholders

Both military personnel and civilians must have the right to life and safety, as well as accountability and transparency regarding the use of lethal force, protection from harm meted out without regard to who or what is harmed, and involvement in decision-making processes.

Effects on stakeholders

- Military organizations: LAW systems can boost military prowess, lowering casualties and giving a strategic advantage in combat. Conventional warfare strategies and tactics might be required in their absence.
- Soldiers and combatants: Human soldiers maintain command and decision-making authority during combat operations, but they might be subject to greater personal risks because of their capacity for moral judgment and empathy.

- Civilians in conflict zones: While the presence of LAW systems reduces the risk of civilian injury from autonomous weapons, their absence increases the risk of unintended harm to civilians.
- Researchers and developers of AI may encounter moral conundrums when creating autonomous weapons, which may cause a shift to non-lethal technologies in order to avoid moral conundrums and spur innovation in other areas.
- Human rights organizations: Those without LAW systems may advocate for the preservation of human control over the use of force and the protection of civilian lives, while those with LAW systems may advocate for regulations and guidelines to reduce the risks associated with autonomous weapons.
- Governments and policymakers: Prioritizing diplomatic efforts and non-lethal conflict resolution techniques is crucial when deploying LAW systems in order to strike a balance between military objectives, moral obligations, and international norms.

Analyze consequences, risks, benefits, harms, and costs for each action considered

Lethal autonomous weapons (LAW) will have the following effects if they are implemented: LAW has the potential to improve situational awareness, reduce casualties, and increase military effectiveness. Risks include harm to civilians, loss of human control, and the proliferation of weapons. Benefits include decreased soldier risk, precise targeting, greater effectiveness, and improved capabilities. If the decision is made without law, there are consequences such as retaining human control, minimizing harm to civilians, and abiding by international law. Risks include soldier fatalities, restrictions on military efficiency, and dealing with enemies. Benefits include the preservation of human life, improved decision-making, and reduced weapon proliferation. Costs include investing in alternative strategies and preserving competitiveness.

General ethics approaches

Three general ethics approaches have been discussed here. These are Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics, John Stuart Mill's utilitarian ethics and finally John Rawl's theory of justice.

Deontological Theory

Kant's emphasis on universal moral principles and human dignity would almost certainly lead to the decision not to implement LAW due to the potential harm to civilians, erosion of human control, and violation of international humanitarian laws. He would prioritize the protection of human autonomy and moral judgment, implying that LAW should not be implemented.

Utilitarian Theory

From a utilitarian perspective, the decision on LAW should be based on the overall happiness or well-being it brings to society. Proponents of LAW may argue that the reduction in military casualties and increased effectiveness would maximize overall happiness. By reducing military expenses and tightening the country's security a whole country is being benefited. The greater utility should be considered here and we should allow implementation of the LAW system.

Theory of justice

Rawls' focus on fairness, equality, and protecting the most vulnerable would suggest caution in implementing LAW. The potential harm to civilians, risks of arms proliferation, and erosion of human control raise concerns about fairness and justice. As a result, the decision not to implement LAW may be consistent with the principles of justice and human rights protection.

Category of actions

On the first action, we take the decision of implementing lethal autonomous weapons in our country. On the second option, we refuse to implement lethal autonomous weapons in our country.

Decision Phase

In our scenario, we have two options. In the first action, the safety and dignity of people are at stake. The nation's defense will be affected by the second action. Now that we understand that all of the actions are morally wrong, we can see that we are unable to choose any of them. We must decide between the two options, though. We will therefore choose the first option, in which we decline to use such a deadly weapon.

The Theory of Justice by Rawls is not practical for our case, because anyone cannot be deprived of justice and cannot be a victim of a situation.

As utilitarian theory suggests, a decision that increases the overall happiness of the society is the best decision. But if we choose the first action to implement the LAW, the total aggregate utility will be somehow positive but it is against human dignity.

According to the Deontological Theory, we can not ethically do wrong with anyone. Kant argues that moral principles should be applicable to all rational beings universally. When evaluating the implementation of LAW, we must consider the consequences of allowing autonomous systems to make life-or-death decisions without human intervention. This raises questions of accountability, fairness, and the potential for unintended consequences. Following Kant's theory ensures consistency and avoids contradictions by treating all individuals as rational beings deserving of moral consideration. Even if the defense line is affected, we can not implement a weapon that acts as a death clock on civilized society. That is why we choose this option.

In the view of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), human control must be maintained over weapon systems and the use of force to ensure compliance with international law and to satisfy ethical concerns, and States must work urgently to establish limits on autonomy in weapon systems.