

Ethical perspectives on drones in warfare



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INTRODUCTION

This report is written to explore the different ethical perspectives concerning the controversial topic of using drones for warfare, as well as including the writer's perspective on the ethical dilemma. The report also touches on comparing different Codes of Ethics from Australia, Britain and New Zealand to the case of autonomous vehicles and the control systems governing them. This ultimately allows for the differences between the codes to be highlighted. It is assumed that autonomous vehicle relates to any driverless vehicles mostly focusing on driverless cars for the purpose of this report.

PART ONE: STAKEHOLDER ETHICS A) IDENTIFY AND OUTLINE AT LEAST 3 ETHICAL ISSUES THAT MAY BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE SITUATION AS DESCRIBED IN THE ARTICLE. WHY DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THESE ARE (OR COULD BE) ETHICAL CONCERNS?

Ethics is defined as being "moral principles that govern a person's behaviour" it is essentially what a person feels is right or wrong. There are a number of ethical issues which are made apparent in Drone 2014. First and foremost, the psychological strain of those who are piloting the drones. The pilots bear a heavy burden when they execute someone. It is morally wrong to kill someone, however they are merely following orders from their superiors with a Deontology ethical principle in mind. They are able to see a psychologist however, this will result in them losing their clearance to work. Therefore the pilots would constantly be battling an inner moral struggle with whether their work is right or wrong. On this note, another issue is the distance drones create through unmanned pilots may cause more

casualties than necessary. This argument is also used in war without drones however, still applies whether the aircraft is manned or not manned. How many people need to be killed before they cross the line from necessary killing to murder? The lines are quite blurred for this case. Finally, a prominent issue is who is responsible for the killings? Is it the pilot who controls the drone at an offsite location? The person handing down the orders? The government? If innocent people are injured or harmed, who is at fault?

B) FOR THE 3 ETHICAL ISSUES NOMINATED, IDENTIFY THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS. FOR EACH STAKEHOLDER ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE THE SITUATION AND REASONING FROM THEIR PERSPECTIVE.

The commanders who are handing down the orders to the pilots would be considered a major stakeholder in this case as their command ultimately is what will trigger whether the pilot shoots or not, and where the drone should move. The commanders are merely following orders from those more senior to them. Some may not feel that what they are doing is right, however they have no choice but to comply with what the defence department wants to implement and do. Some commanders may also feel very passionately about the cause, especially considering that one of the pilots mentioned in the interview that they would show them replays of the September 11 attacks on the twin towers to remind them of the purpose of the attacks on the Middle East. The civilians being targeted would feel in constant fear of air strikes whilst attempting to live their daily lives. Some may even feel spite against the drones and those controlling the drones as their friends and/or family are victims to the drone strikes. The civilians may also have doubt and

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wonder what they ever did to deserve to live such a life of violence, loss and fear. Many civilians may suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after witnessing such violent, tragic events. Drone 2014 depicts a significant portion of the pilots remotely controlling the drones roughly being 18-25 year olds when they recruit them. In their eyes, working for the government in warfare is compared to that of playing warfare video games and is idealised with young males. Although these pilots do not realise the full implications of when they kill someone they still carry the burden of ending someone's life, as expressed in Drone 2014. Many do suffer adverse psychological implications through their work. They also feel a lot of pressure from their commanders, if they were to seek psychological help they would be stripped of their security clearance to work in the military.

C) FOR EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP IDENTIFIED, SELECT WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS THE RELEVANT ETHICAL VIEW THEY HAVE LIKELY TAKEN (I. E. CHOOSE FROM THE LIST OF 7 ' ETHICAL PRINCIPLES' GIVEN ON SLIDE 10 OF LECTURE 2) - AND THEN BRIEFLY EXPLAIN WHY YOU ATTRIBUTED THAT ETHICAL STANCE TO THEM.

The pilot manning the drone is one of the three major stakeholders involved in drone warfare. The pilots take on a Deontological ethical perspective as they absolutely must follow orders from their commanders. If their commander has ordered them to shoot then it must be the right thing to do as they are doing a service to their country. This may even be considered Utilitarianism for the pilots, secondary to Deontology as they believe they are providing the greatest good for the greatest number of people. They feel they are protecting their nation from these terrorists and evil people. This, <https://assignbuster.com/ethical-perspectives-on-drones-in-warfare/>

however needs to be weighed against the number of casualties involved for it to be considered 'right' through a Utilitarian lens. Therefore the primary ethical principle would be Deontology for the pilots. Those handing down the orders may also have a Deontological ethical perspective as they would also be following plans and commands from the Defence Department and the government. They may also feel a sense of utilitarianism, this is dependant on how many deaths occur in the attacks as it is meant to benefit the greater good of America. The civilians being targeted may simply look through a justice ethics lens as they simply want their rights respected. With America attacking the innocent, they are not respecting their basic human rights and being judged based on their ethnicity.

D) FOR THE 3 ISSUES YOU HAVE OUTLINED ASSESS YOUR PERSONAL VALUES AND THEN, FOR EACH ISSUE, DETERMINE YOUR OWN CLOSEST FIT TO THE LIST OF 7 'ETHICAL PRINCIPLES'. COMPARING YOUR VIEW TO THE ASSOCIATED STAKEHOLDER POSITIONS, DISCUSS WHICH STAKEHOLDER (IN YOUR ETHICAL JUDGEMENT) IS MOST LIKELY TO BE 'RIGHT'. WHY DO YOU THINK THIS?

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE OF PILOTING DRONES

I personally feel that mental health is not something that should be taken lightly, regardless of which industry is involved. For the pilot, especially it can be a heavy burden for them to bare, therefore, I feel that piloting drones causes more harm than good. From this I take a universalism stance, as mental health should never be ignored in my eyes.

CAUSING MORE CASUALTIES THAN NECESSARY

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Drones creates a greater distance between the pilot and the act of murder/killing. With this ethical issue, I feel, so long as innocent people are not being hurt and those giving the command have a very strong reason to believe that the person they are after needs to be targeted, then I don't see much issue with the distance being made between the pilot and the act of shooting, therefore I would take a justice ethical stance of this Issue.

ACCOUNTABILITY

With regards to who is responsible for the killings, I feel it is the person who gives the order to shoot, as the pilot has a sense of duty to follow orders and there are strong repercussions if they don't. Ultimately it is up to the commander whether a shot is fired, therefore I take on a Virtue Ethics stance, as I don't believe the commander can be acting out of good faith in all instances.

PART TWO: INTERNATIONAL CODES OF CONDUCT / CODES OF ETHICS

A.) IN YOUR OPINION, AND SUPPLYING REASONING, WHAT EVALUATION WOULD EACH INDUSTRY CODE MOST LIKELY GIVE REGARDING THE USE OF AUTOMATED VEHICLES AND CONTROL SYSTEMS GOVERNING THEM?

ACS CODE OF ETHICS

ACS 2018 lists six ethical principles that members and those working within the I. T. industry should abide by;

- Public Interest

Enhance Quality of Life

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Honesty

Competence

Professional Development

Professionalism

With regards to the use of automated vehicles and control systems governing them, the code would allow for the use of them within the means of regulations. Automated vehicles may make for less traffic congestion as traffic can be tailored, saving people time and money (Gemalto 2017). This will ultimately benefit the public interest and enhance their quality of life. On this note, the businesses setting the precedence for the vehicles and control systems governing them must be acting with honesty and transparency, therefore, safety should be at the forefront and any security or safety flaws should be made transparent to the public and its stakeholders. In some cases businesses who operate these vehicles may take advantage of their consumers and be acting based off of their won greed and benefit, in these cases the ACS Code of Ethics who definitely not be in support of the automated vehicles and would aid in regulating them.

BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY CODE OF CONDUCT AND PRACTICE (BCS CCP)

BCS 2018 focuses on four primary values for its members and the industry to abide by;

- Public Interest

Duty to Employers and Clients

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Duty to the Profession

Professional Competence and integrity

The BCS provides a more detailed overview of each of the values their members should abide by. From a BCS perspective the autonomous vehicles and the control systems governing them should abide with ' regulations, legislations and standards' whilst having ' a regard with basic human rights' for them to meet the public's interest (British Computer Society 2018). Those who work on the teams and within the businesses of the autonomous vehicles should carry out their projects on time and within budget, and must not disclose confidential information for their own person gain or to benefit a third party. Furthermore, information should not be misrepresented or withheld concerning a products capability. Therefore, safety and security flaws of the autonomous vehicles should be made known to the public as mention previously for the ACS values and guidelines.

Duty to the profession describes striving for continuous professional development and improvement, whilst seeking to advance public knowledge. In regards to the case study this may be as simple as the autonomous car business making breakthroughs and advancements public knowledge. The Duty to the Profession is more so related to how I. T. Professionals can impact the business, therefore those working on the autonomous car and control systems should not only be acting in good faith to the public, but also to the business. Finally the autonomous cars should be made with good practice including quality standards. No shortcuts should be done to create these cars, especially considering that they are responsible for transporting

people and must be safe and reliable to do so. In the event that a negative event happens, the team working on the cars and the business should be responsible. According to the BCS 2018, autonomous vehicles and the systems that controls them would be able to fit into their society, so long as they are abiding by the core values and professional practice of the code. There may be instances where they may not be allowed to operate if they do not comply with the code.

INSTITUTE OF IT PROFESSIONALS NEW ZEALAND

The IITP NZ 2018 has eight core principles that members should comply with in their Code of Ethics;

- Good Faith

Integrity

Community Focus

Skills

Continuous Development

Informed Consent

Managed Conflicts of Interest

Competence

With regards to the use of autonomous cars, similar to previous arguments from ACS and BCS they will be able to successfully run within their country

so long as the company and I. T. professionals are acting with good faith and ensuring they are working on and building the cars with a 'community focus' and 'integrity'. IITP NZ 2018 also illustrates how 'Informed Consent' should be practiced within the I. T. industry. The company and teams developing the autonomous vehicles must make public the 'economic, environmental, social and legal consequences' of introducing their product to the general public.

B) COMPARE THE CODES OF CONDUCT/ETHICS FOR THE THREE INDUSTRY BODIES. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE CODES YOU HAVE EXAMINED IN REGARD TO THE CASE STUDY SUBJECT MATTER? WHY DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THESE DIFFERENCES, SIMILARITIES OR AREAS OF CONFLICT ARE PRESENT?

The Code of Ethics between each of the three countries and organisations are relatively similar, with slight differences to how certain terms are represented and explained. It is clear that a common theme between the code of ethics is to act with the public interest in mind the IITP NZ 2018 describes this as working with a community focus. On this note IITP NZ 2018 gives a more detailed break down of the code of ethics compared to ACS 2018 and BCS 2018. IITP NZ 2018 differs slightly in that it includes that the ethical principle of informed consent being practiced within the I. T. industry. This is not made as clear in the ACS and BCS Ethical Codes. The core of human values is essentially the same, this is clearly represented through the similarity between the Code of Ethics. Respecting others and their human rights, acting with integrity and good faith are what people generally do in their day to day life without having to read a code of ethics. These are basic

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human principles. Donaldson 2018 suggests that the differences in cultural ethics are due to cultural relativism, that there are no international rights or wrongs as no culture's ethics are better than any other's. Therefore, similarities between the ethics are due to humans already possessing a moral code and differences are due to cultural relativism.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, it is clear that drone warfare does raise many ethical concerns for stakeholders such as the pilots, commanders handing down orders and innocent civilians being attacked. Each stakeholder judges the morality of the drones through different ethical lenses including Utilitarian, Deontology and Justice Ethics. These stakeholders raise concerns over accountability, psychological pressures on pilots and causing more casualties than necessary. Moreover, based off of the codes of ethics written by the ACS, BCS and IITP NZ come to very similar evaluations concerning the operating of autonomous vehicles within the public, so long as they are acting with good faith and the public interest in mind then there should not be a problem with them operating. Comparing the codes of ethics has drawn out many similarities which are weighed against very few differences, mostly between IITP NZ and the other two codes. The differences are due to cultural relativism and the similarities are a cause from humans already possessing a moral code.

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