Peter Asaro
Assistant Professor & Director Graduate Programs,
School of Media Studies, The New School
Affiliate Scholar,
Center for Internet and Society, Stanford Law School
Co-Founder & Vice-Chair,
International Committee for Robot Arms Control
peterasaro@gmail.com
Overview

- What is Moral Reasoning?
- Law & Ethics
- Morality of Autonomous Killing
  - Martens Clause
  - Basis of New Law
  - *Mal en se*
What is Moral Reasoning?

- Deliberation & Dilemmas
- Ideals & Norms
- Respect & Consideration
- Responsibility
- Development & Growth
Ethical Approaches

- Sentimentalism
- Utilitarianism
- Rights & Duties
- Virtue & Dignity
- Legalism
Moral Sentiment

- Disgust: “Ugh” Feeling
  - *Mal en se*

- Use in Moral Judgment
  - Proportionality (Hard Cases)

- Try to Formulate as Rules
  - Superfluous Injury

- Dictates of Public Conscience
Utilitarianism

- Machines might be better, make less mistakes
- Value $\times$ Probability = Expected Utility
- Most Likely (Not “Best Case Scenario”)
- Killing vs. Letting Die
  - Consequences
  - Acts
Rights

- Human Rights
  - UN Declaration of Human Rights

- Right to Life
  - Self-Defense
  - High-Standard (Human Judgment)

- Dignity
  - Respect
  - Recognition
States & Duties

The human rights to life and due process, and the limited conditions under which they can be overridden, imply a specific duty with respect to a broad range of automated and autonomous technologies. In particular there is a duty upon individuals and states in peacetime, as well as combatants, military organizations, and states in armed conflict situations, not to delegate to a machine or automated process the authority or capability to initiate the use of lethal force independently of human determinations of its moral and legal legitimacy in each and every case.

Virtues & Dignity

What do we lose in dehumanizing warfare?

- Responsibility & Accountability
- Strategic & Political Control
- Justice

Allowing automatic processes to decide to actively take human lives diminishes the value of human life.
Is IHL Sufficient?

Now

IHL-Prohibited

Possible Future

IHL-Prohibited
What Lawful AWS will we see?

- Boundary Conditions
  - How will we know (testing & verification)

- Meet Art. 36 reviews
  - Will they be used according to IHL?

- Better than Human
  - What will drive this development?

- What other Implications will they bring?
Martens Clause &
the Limits of the Law

Art 1(2) of AP I

In cases not covered by this Protocol or by other international agreements, civilians and combatants remain under the protection an authority of the principles of international law derived from established custom, from the **principles of humanity** and from the **dictates of public conscience**.

Lawful ≠ Moral
Can ≠ Should
(Im)Morality of Autonomous Killing

- IHL & HRL require specifically Human decision-making
- Martens Clause & Public Conscience
- Bad Consequences
- Human Right to Life (in each and every case)
- Human Dignity & Virtue
Why is a Ban Good?

- Existing International Law Does Not Explicitly Prohibit Fully Autonomous Lethal Systems
- A Pre-emptive Ban (But not the first)
- A Comprehensive Ban is the Best Option
- We Need to Establish A Norm
  - Meaningful Human Control