



ETHICAL POLICIES FOR AUTONOMOUS SYSTEMS

Hard problems, realistic solutions,
and rebounding questions about
human morality

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ABSTRACT

Driverless cars, autonomous weapons systems and cyberweapons, algorithms for financial transactions and loan granting, Watson-like systems for medical diagnosis and treatment: autonomous robots and software systems are being increasingly required to perform tasks that have significant implications in the way of human duties, responsibilities and proper respect of fundamental rights. Accordingly, one must endow the controllers of these artificial autonomous agents with suitable ethical policies. I will show that major hurdles towards the identification of ethical policies for artificial autonomous agents are raised by moral dilemmas and conflicts between different theoretical frameworks in normative ethics. By reference to the case studies of driverless cars and autonomous weapons systems, I will discuss various strategies for defusing these moral conflicts and converging on locally shared ethical policies. Finally, I will argue that engineering control problems about ethical policies for autonomous systems raise fundamental questions about the ultimate justification of human morality and the consistency of underlying ethical models.

SPEAKER: Guglielmo Tamburrini - DIETI - Università di Napoli Federico II

Guglielmo Tamburrini (PhD 1987, Columbia University in New York) is Philosophy of Science and Technology Professor at Università di Napoli Federico II, Italy. His main research interests concern the methodology of robotics, AI and the cognitive neurosciences, in addition to ELS issues arising in the context of human-computer and human-robot interactions. He acted as coordinator of the first EC project on the ethics of robotics (CA ETHICBOTS, 2005-2008, VI FP). Visiting Scholar in 2009-10 at ZIF (Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung, Universität Bielefeld, Germany), in 2014 he was awarded the Giulio Preti International Prize by the Regional Parliament of Tuscany (Italy) for his research and teaching activities on ethical and social implications of ICT and robotic technologies. He is member of ICRAC (International Committee for Robot Arms Control). Additional info about his publications and research activities are found at <https://www.docenti.unina.it/guglielmo.tamburrini>

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