

## Urban Futures Symposium | 21 – 25 August 2023

**Candidate:** Natasha Karner

**School:** School of Global, Urban and Social Studies

**Presentation:** Second Milestone Review

**Title:** Dehumanising War: The Governance Challenges of Lethal Autonomous Weapons (LAWS) and the UN CCW

**Abstract:**

This thesis analyses how the topic of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (a new weapon system) is being addressed at the United Nations. LAWS are an upgrade from current semi-autonomous weapons like drones and have been labelled “killer robots” due to their increasing automation and AI. The international community has expressed concerns of “dehumanising war” by allowing such machines to take human life with little human control or oversight. Since 2014, the topic of LAWS has been discussed under the United Nations Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (UNCCW). This research project engages with the deliberations of UN CCW meetings on LAWS from 2014 to 2021. The aim of the project is to provide insights into the process of global governance when formulating new international rules on emerging technologies/weapons. This research utilises a qualitative methodological design to collect data from document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Given the potential impact of LAWS on warfare (including potential humanitarian risk), this project will have necessary insights into the merits and limitations of the global governance process where new technologies are concerned.

