

Constructing an Empirical-Ethical Framework for Navigating Residents' Perspectives on 'Smart' Cameras in Lombardijen, Rotterdam

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Abstract

This article uses a qualitative empirical-ethical methodology, inspired by the grounded theory approach in social science, in order to develop a framework which systematizes and helps to navigate the ethical perspectives of stakeholders on AI-powered 'smart' cameras in neighborhoods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This article uses the neighborhood Lombardijen in Rotterdam (The Netherlands) as a case study, focusing on the perspective of residents, with the expectation that parts of the findings could be generalizable to the broader context of AI and public safety. Meanwhile, the methodological approach for generating the ethical framework can be useful in its own right as a way of navigating stakeholders' ethical perspectives on AI and other technoscience in different contexts, with this article and framework serving as a proof of concept.

This article uses a combination of exploratory fieldwork, e.g. participatory observation, and qualitative, semi-structured one-on-one interviews in order to emergently construct categories of valuation and ethical reasoning. Observation functions to outline the phenomenon to be studied, including the appropriate interview subjects and sensitizing concepts (Blumer, 1954). Interviews and comparative data analysis are aimed at finding significant overlap in ethical terms and concepts used to explain participants' ethical reasoning, leading to a coherent framework mapping "the multiplicity of interactions that produces variation in that process" (Heath & Cowley, 2004, p. 142).

Keywords

Ethics of AI, empirical ethics, 'smart' cameras, grounded theory.