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No "Light Footprint" in the American Drone Programme: Measuring the Gendered Impacts of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Surveillance on Local Populations in Afghanistan

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Introduction

The project of reducing casualty and ultimately rendering warfare more "ethical" has led to a shift in military engineering from direct, grounded interactions to distant, areal strikes. This effort of distancing belligerents further and further from the combat

zone (Gregory 2011a) is the foundation of innovation in the development and practice of drone strikes (Robson, 2019, p. 101), the technology *par excellence* for today's military operations. However, the increased use of military drones, or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs)[1], calls for recalibrations of many spheres of military affairs and society. This essay aims at measuring the need for one of these recalibrations, one that is concerned with the significance of the employment of UAVs for development theory and programmes. The impact of this type of technology has been analyzed extensively by experts through legal, economic and ethical lenses. However, its impacts for the field of development have been under studied. Through the study of the case of Afghanistan, the following pages thus assess those impacts from a bottom-up, feminist perspective in the hopes of emphasizing the very specific implications the use of UAVs have at the intersection of gender and development. More precisely, **I ask how the use of UAVs, particularly via their surveillance feature, impacts the lives of women and their role in Afghanistan's development.** Building on many feminist projects interested in reattributing the fighting power and roles that women have historically occupied in armed and terrorist groups, I use a feminist, critical framework in order to re-establish women at the centre of impact assessment in development studies, and ultimately in the study of UAVs. In the study of war and conflict, gender should never be considered an afterthought. It should be integral to understanding how wars are justified and practised (Dyvik, 2017, p. 3), as well as how technology in the context of conflict affects women

[1] As a precision, the vocabulary I choose to employ is inspired by Strawser (2011). His work refers to remotely controlled weapon systems primarily as UAVs (Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles) and occasionally as drones. I will do the same. Although I will not be using that locution here, UAVs that are used for lethal combat purposes are sometimes referred UCAVs (Uninhabited Combat Aerial Vehicles). For a far more in-depth classification of various types and kinds of remote weapon systems see Sparrow (2009).

differently than their counterparts. A feminist perspective, as opposed or complementary to gender analyzes, ensures that this research paper works not only as a way to uncover the various experiences of women vis-à-vis drone operations, but also as a step towards informing policy and programme management to empower Afghan women within the cultural and geopolitical context. It therefore entails exposing implications of UAVs that are rooted in broader systems of oppression (colonial history, sexism, power relations, gender-based violence) and which operate within the context of conflict and occupation.

In order to answer the question, the following pages will be separated in three parts. Chapter one will address the consequences of drone surveillance on local gender roles and categorization, particularly when it comes to identifying "targets". Chapter 2 focuses on the impacts on everyday tasks performed by women in the region and their participation in development in the context of aerial surveillance. Finally, chapter 3 tackles surveillance from a technology-facilitated violence perspective, considering micro and macro consequences. That said, the essay starts with a brief overview of the literature concerned not only with discussions of the use of UAVs, but also with surveillance studies and feminist international relations. It also provides an account of the methodology and theoretical framework(s) mobilized throughout the paper.

Literature Review

The project of answering the above-mentioned question first requires a quick overview of the literature concerned with different themes tackled throughout the paper: unmanned aerial vehicles, surveillance and technology-facilitated violence, as well as feminist perspectives of terrorism and warfare.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles

Regarding the use of drones, clear trends were established and examined in literature throughout the last two decades. Indeed, the deployment of drones for airstrikes since 2002 has inspired substantial literature, namely tackling their military effectiveness, legality, and ability to fulfill ethical requirements, among other issues (Williams, 2015, p. 94). However, it seems that neither the legal nor the public debate around drones have been able to keep up with the technological developments that enable remote warfare. This has opened up a Pandora's box of legal and ethical questions (Zwijnenburg & Blok, 2016, p. 210).

First of all, UAVs have sparked the interests of scholars in terms of technological and big data development. Austin (2010) and Bloss (2013) are examples of authors who looked into the development of the machines, their practicalities and the system that controls them. A reference handbook of military robots and drones (Springer, 2013) was put together in 2013, laying down the foundation for technical literature and providing a basis for future research into technological advances in the field (Kreuzer, 2015).

Reviews of some of the latest innovations and applications for unmanned vehicles have also been accompanied by reflections on their social (Masutti & Tomasello, 2018), military (Bloss, 2014; Kreuzer, 2015) and economic efficiency and value (Bergen & Tiedemann, 2011; Boyle, 2013), especially on the state-level (Rae, 2014). Byman (2013) and Cronin (2013) both published the same year articles following similar formats defending, respectively, why drones work and why they do not. The debate has taken extensive space in literature, generating insights from military personnel (Bloss, 2014; Kreuzer, 2015) and scholars (Terrill, 2013; Rae, 2014) on whether their use is efficient and sensible. While authors such as Bergen & Tiedemann (2011) and Boyle (2013) focus

exclusively on the economic costs of UAV usage, Rupka & Baggiarini (2018), Espinoza (2018), Espinoza & Afxentiou (2018), Walsh & Schulzke (2018) and Calhoun (2018) examine the tactical advantages and disadvantages from a state-level and an international relations perspective. Many reports by international and domestic organizations also offer valuable discussions regarding changes in policy that could ameliorate efficiency and accuracy of UAVs (Zenko, 2013) while increasing accountability (Amnesty International, 2018). Overall, trends show that apart from some exceptions stemming from vested interests in providing positive (Blair, 2012; Bloss, 2013; Bloss, 2014) or negative reporting (Cronin, 2013; Espinoza, 2018) most authors offer nuanced arguments, providing comprehensive accounts of the machines' economic and tactical value. That said, although economic and military interests in the matter have sparked a great deal of research, legal and ethical considerations are most debated in the UAV usage literature.

Ethical discussions mostly concern the ability of UAVs to reduce harm for operators, who kill from a distance, as well as to erase potentially harmful human factors (Bartsch, Coyne & Grey, 2016; Moghaddam, 2005; Berkowitz, 2014). Strawser (2010; 2013) is cited by many and provide an interesting overview of the "duty to employ uninhabited aerial vehicles". Blair (2012), Williams (2015) and Coeckelbergh (2013), on the other hand, discuss the moral and ethical effects of attacking from a distance on the operators' ability or willingness to kill. Similarly, but from another angle, Royakkers & Olsthoorn (2014) and Custers (2016) look into the effects on local populations, and wonder if the use of military robots could be counterproductive to "winning the hearts and minds of occupied populations, or if it could result in more desperate terrorist tactics given an increasing asymmetry in warfare" (see for that debate Lin, Bekey, and Abney,

2008; Lichocki, Kahn, and Billard, 2011; Olsthoorn and Royakkers & Ol, 2011). A dedicated portion of the literature has shown that the American drone programme terrorizes the civilian population that it keeps under surveillance (Cavallero, Sonnenberg, and Knuckey 2012; Gibson 2012; Coll 2014; Greenwald 2012; Levich 2012; Saif 2014; Salama 2014; Salama 2013). Finally, De Volo (2016), Vallor (2014), Brown (in Custers, 2016), Bartsch, Coyne & Gray (2017) and Huntington (2016) tackle morality and ethical discussions linked to social cohesion, public opinion and the global order.

The literature also examines their position in the eyes of law (Grayson, 2016; Robinson, 2012) and the "undemocratic" nature of their use (De Volo, 2016; Eikenberry, 2015). The legal discussion delivers arguments regarding the concept of Just War (forced protection and observation of *jus ad bellum*) (Williams, 2015; Amnesty International, 2018), actions short of war (according to *just in bello*) (Pollack, 2018; Walsh & Schulzke, 2018) and the very definition of "warfare" (Sharkey, 2011; Blakeley, 2018). Relatedly, Rothenberg (2014) and Ravich (2009) discuss and compare international regulations related to targeting. Masutti & Tomasello (2018) & Volovelsky (2016), finally, invoke the implications and uses for aviation laws. Nevertheless, observations of humanitarian laws, accountability (Amnesty International, 2018) and whether the use of UAVs constitute the introduction of armed forces or not remain at the centre of the legal debate.

In sum, the military practice of drone strikes is one area which has attracted attention, with authors tackling the question from a philosophical perspective (Strawser 2010; Chamayou 2015), from that of political geography (Gregory 2011a, 2011b, Gregory 2018), and from within critical approaches to terrorism itself (Espinoza 2018; Calhoun 2018; Rupka and Baggiarini 2018; Afxentiou 2018; Blakeley 2018) (Robson,

2019, p. 101). The literature thus remains quite polarized and is forced to evolve quickly as innovations are developed and their usage remains legally and ethically ambiguous. The complete disregard for gender in such debates provides insufficient contextual tools for comprehensive measures of the impacts of drones, justifying the scope and framework of this paper.

Feminist Contributions and Critical Terrorism Studies

In light of this, the growing literature on drones indeed has yet to incorporate a sustained gender analysis. Apart from contributions from, among others, De Volo (2016), Roff (2016), Clark (2018) and Manjikian (2014) discussing gender roles associated with both operators and local populations, little feminist or even gendered analyses of drone usage is present in literature. It is under the Critical Terrorism Studies body of literature that feminist contributions useful for this essay are found. Indeed, authors such as Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān (2009), Stiehm (1982), Young (2003), Brison (2002), Sjoberg (2007), Sylvester (2014), Roff (2016), Clark (2018) , Briggs (2017), Sjoberg (2010), Dixit (2015), Barrinhaa and da Mota (2016) and Bashir & Crews (2012) provide invaluable analyses into biopolitics, gendered representation and performativity, as well as reproduction of gender roles in the context of occupation, conflict and war. Laura Sjoberg has written extensively about war and gender, and highlights in one of her publications (2011) that feminists have provided evidence that gendered logics and war logics are co-constituted. The counterterrorism and conflict context under which UAVs operate in Afghanistan thus provides an opportunity to look into feminist understandings of autonomous technology, terrorism and conflict studies as a starting point to feminist analyses of UAVs. While these reflections on the current security state and counterterrorist strategies prove valuable (Gregory, 2011; Robson, 2020), a significant

limitation of the feminist international relations and feminist terrorism studies literature is their poor consideration for UAVs and their future in military affairs.

Surveillance Studies

The last body of literature that is relevant to examine in order to understand the context implied in the question this paper is answering relates to surveillance studies and its relationship with UAVs and violence. Lyon, Haggerty & Ball (2012)'s *Routledge Handbook of Surveillance Studies* provides significant background knowledge that participates to enhanced understandings surveillance in many spheres of society, including within the (industrial) military complex. Authors such as Nieuwenhuis (2016), Wright and Finn (2016) and Volovelsky (2016) tackle the particular questions regarding surveillance, privacy and civil liberties when it comes to UAVs in times of peace as well as conflict (that is, for domestic and foreign security tactics). Additionally, Wall & Monahan (2011) offered a valuable contribution to the literature by introducing the term "drone stare", a useful concept on which to base measurements of impacts.

From a micro perspective, feminism is indeed interested in surveillance and its intersections with gender, sex, race, class and (dis)ability. Parallelly, feminist international relations provide useful contributions to surveillance and the policing of "feminized" states (De Volo, 2016). On that subject, Sjoberg (2011) notes that "feminisms have seen security policies as performed in/on women's bodies, and personal security at the margins/periphery as every bit as important as (and often threatened by) state security/ies at the center/core of the international system" (p. 56). Interesting feminist accounts also posit surveillance against protection: on the one hand, surveillance equipment can be read as a sign of danger (distrust, need for control) and can thus amplify a sense of vulnerability. On the other hand, the promise of increased security

generates a pressure for women to accept surveillance (Koskela, 2012). The idea also relates to concepts of biopolitics and policing of women's bodies (Stiehm, 1982), although it their case not applied to the context of counterterrorism and a conflict zone. Comprehensive measurements of consequences of aerial surveillance of women's bodies via UAVs therefore necessitate an expansion of the scope of the literature, which is mostly interested in impacts of surgical strikes rather than the surveillance itself.

Lastly, analyzing UAVs from a surveillance studies approach brings us into the literature of everyday terrorism (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2015; Pain, 2014) and technology-facilitated violence (See reports by ICRW). Extensive work under critical terrorism studies has addressed the exclusion of everyday violence from theorizations of terrorism, regardless of their similarity (see for example Pain 2014; Sjoberg 2009; Parashar 2013; Sylvester 2014; Ortbals et Poloni-Staudinger 2014; Sharlach 2008) (Sjolberg & Gentry, 2015). Once again, feminist theories increasingly look into these types of gender-based violence, which occur at the intersection of technology, gender and extremism. The mobilization of this particular knowledge for UAV usage is rarely found in literature (De Volo, 2016, p. 50), and thus will be a useful contribution to the field. This addition will participate to the integration of feminist understandings of violence to the study of UAV surveillance and attacks, rectifying an omission characteristic to the study of conflicts and terrorism.

Theoretical Framework

Building on arguments proposed by Turcotte (2016) [Greene, 2007], this essay employs two distinct, but mutually constitutive theories. This strategy, identified by the authors as triangulation, offers specific advantages related to mixed-methods research. It

provides space for wider understanding of the issues at play, as well as for the use of data that could participate to a decolonization and decentralization of preconceived knowledge and categories (Mohanty, 2009; Martin & Roux, 2015). Defined as "the concomitant or sequential use of different qualitative and quantitative strategies aimed at increasing the internal validity of the research when results converge or mutually corroborate" (my translation of Turcotte, 2016), the method proves to be a worthy avenue towards a relevant contribution to feminist research in the field of counterterrorism and drone usage.

Therefore, the theoretical framework of this research paper combines two bodies of literature. Building on feminist international relations research (including new feminist war studies, as imagined by Hawkesworth, 2005 and Sylvester, 2014) and critical terrorism studies (Stump & Dixit, 2013), it uses gender as an analytical tool as a project of putting the everyday life struggles of (in)visibilized subjects of surveillance at the forefront. This approach also encourages questioning of current knowledge production based on masculinity and men's experiences of war and conflict. It shows first how the study of people and their experiences of drone warfare might productively inform war research on weaponry, strategy, and abstract considerations of the state (Enloe, 2000; Hawkesworth 2005; Ruddick 1998; Sylvester 2013) (De Volo, 2016, p. 55). In other words, this essay posits war and gender as mutually constitutive, with warfare as an "extension of 'masculine' domination and 'masculine' domination [as] an extension of and preparation for war" (p. 55). Analyzing UAVs through gender lenses thus does not exclusively imply assessing its impacts on women, but rather it investigates the relationship that is built between feminization, masculinization and surveillance as they

inform and affect each other. This essay does not consider the role of women in terrorism as passive in any way; rather, it questions the essentialization of their roles perpetrated by drone operators, whose tasks include categorizing populations as "targets" or "civilians". It follows gendered conceptualizations of protection and defence by Stiehm (1982), an important contribution to feminist IR.

The understanding of the war-gender nexus in this theoretical framework projects a categorization of soldiers and enemies based on predetermined notions of a masculinity, embodied by warrior-protectors that spur fighting (De Volo, 2016, p. 55). This *ex-ante* categorization, as critiqued by Dunezat (2015), draws on essentialist biases hierarchizing power relations (p. 3) inherent to the war-gender nexus. Using the standpoint theory (Harding, 1991) therefore proves useful, as it exposes the undeniable biases faced by drone operators when they determine the guilt of local participants. Indeed, soldiers and their leaders, as observant, determine the "situation" (as enemies or civilians) of their "subjects" using assumptions on their race, gender and age. They are therefore subjected to their own position as social subjects within the military apparatus and reproduce power relations they have grown to embody all their lives. In light of this, in the context re-evaluations of the efficiency and the value of UAV usage, this paper will examine the consequences of tactics such as the "guilt-by-association" (De Volo, 2016, p. 54) logic that operates within aerial surveillance, and its signification for Afghan women's roles in development and their everyday lives.

Relatedly, critical terrorism studies (Stump & Dixit, 2013) mobilizes feminism and postcolonialism to question the very definitions of security (and violence), working on the assumption that what counts as "normal" or "secure" varies substantially and is

highly context-dependent. Wibben (2011) notes that because feminist theorizing starts from women's experiences of everyday life, it has to accommodate the varied contexts of women's lives while also remaining attuned to the contextual nature of 'normality'" (p. 1–2). Using CTS as a framework will also provide additional tools of analysis specific to terrorism, including existing work on questioning non-gendered production of knowledge and data in the field. Its critical nature makes its interaction with feminist international relations all the more relevant to the subject at hand. As mentioned earlier, the increased use of UAVs for counterterrorism operations points to the importance of using theories of terrorism to analyze impacts of such automated machines.

Methodology

The limits of the current bodies of literature interested in UAVs, surveillance and gender point to a need to assess the (gendered) impacts of drone operations on local populations. Stump & Dixit (2013) suggest in their book *Crtitical Terrorism Studies: An Introduction to Research Methods* an array of research methods in line with the theoretical framework espoused in the following paper. According to the authors, a feminist methodology in critical terrorism studies is not about just adding women to a particular research concern but rather:

- Asks what does an analysis which centralizes women's experiences tell us about that particular question or issue that would otherwise remain unheard and unresearched
- Examines the role of women in relation to other processes, institutions, genders, that they interact with (p. 57).

Thus, feminist analysis is about making visible sites of (in)security which usually remain outside of conventional terrorism scholarship (p. 57). According to Wibben (2011), in general, feminist methodological commitments include an “emancipatory agenda” (p. 112). Building off Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān (2009) and her work with Palestinian women, this project explores the resistance, agency, and victimization that women experience in conflict zones and under occupation in an inescapably analytical feminist location that should be acknowledged and acted upon (p. 2). In the context of my own research, I measure the impacts of UAVs on Afghan women’s participation in the development of the country by analyzing content created by other authors. Indeed, I will evaluate implications of the use of drones by compiling accounts from reports (The Asia Foundation, 2018; Amnesty International, 2013; Zenko, 2013), transcripts (Aziz, 2010) and scholarly sources. In the hopes of reattributing the roles of subaltern voices, I assess the direct and indirect impacts of surveillance by UAVs on Afghan women by examining, to the best of my abilities, their everyday life under drones and the consequences for their everyday tasks contributing to state building and development. As mentioned earlier, I question the essentialization of their roles in society and insist on their invisibilized participation in development programmes as well community and family life.

However, I understand the limitations of such a research method. I choose nonetheless to carry on with this type of research, considering the difficulties associated with conducting interviews, for instance. Ethical considerations would be too great for the scope of the paper and could potentially hinder my capacity to carry out the project of measuring impacts. In that sense, from a strictly practical point of view, I choose to analyze documents and articles easily accessible online. These considerations also point

to the necessity of positing myself as a feminist author in relation to the subjects of my research. Writing about the everyday life of women under surveillance and subjected to violence is an exercise that surely will bring about some bias. As a white woman, I cannot pretend to fully grasp the extent nor the impacts of drone usage. I started working on this research paper in all humility, knowing that participating in this conversation in academia would bring forth an effort to fill the gaps in military and security knowledge, but would need to be further complemented with local and racialized voices. Other research methods involving direct conversations with Afghan women could supplement this paper, adding perhaps more comprehensive points of view on the subject.

As mentioned earlier, the impacts of drone operations have been measured in literature according to general themes mostly concerned with the actual operators, states and capitalist markets. The focus on the implications of spatial distancing for operators, exposing namely emotional and psychological harms drone operators face from the psychological disjuncture between intense and stressful operations juxtaposed with returning immediately to everyday domestic life, reiterate the necessity of analyses of such implications for local populations. As was proven for impacts on all other actors (operators, law, international relations, security, ethics), a feminist approach placing gender at the centre of the analysis proves particularly useful (Dixit & Stump, 2011) to understanding the absolute and relational impacts of UAVs. In that sense, the methodology of this research uses Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000) in order to denounce the existing power dynamics manifested through drone operations in Afghanistan. By examining the impacts on the most vulnerable and invisibilized populations – women, I mobilize a feminist bottom-up approach, proven by many to be a

tool for assessing real implications and providing the best, most accurate accounts of the reality of the "subaltern" (Motta & Nilsen, 2011; Thomson & Tapscott, 2010; Sandoval, 2000; Mohanty, 2009; Martin et Roux, 2015).

Consequently, my methodology is in line with efforts towards decolonization of knowledge as well as towards bringing down the private/public dichotomy; an old designation dominating academia which suggests that "women" are bodies sequestered in the private and non-political realm of households and privacy, while "men" move freely about the public realm nearly monopolizing socially valued positions (Sylvester, 2014, p. 2). It will aim at decentralizing and decolonizing (Mohanty, 2009; Martin et Roux, 2015) preconceived knowledge, unravelling constructed metacategories (Dunezat, 2015) and ultimately building an inductive research (see Ollivier & Tremblay, 2000). As Sylvester (2014) point out, "feminist war studies is indeed imagining people, places, words and contingencies of war instead of chewing around its edges in ways that leave most of its people and practices out of sight and sound" (p. 1). Underpinning this approach is the idea that such research methods can yield new insights into the workings of both war and gender, relating to the objective of the overall paper.

Chapter 1: Gendered Categorization and Socialization

The American drone programme, let alone the use of UAVs in Afghanistan specifically, has been difficult to assess and analyze (Amnesty International, 2018, p. 24). Started in the 1990s, it was originally designed to spy on al Qaeda activities in Afghanistan (Bergen & Tiedemann, 2011, p. 12). Today, its mandate extends to a round-the-clock surveillance of all movements in given areas of the country, as well as noted presence in Yemen, Pakistan and Somalia. The expansion of surveilled activities in

Afghanistan led to particular issues related to categorization of combatants and civilians which have dire consequences for local understandings of gender and gender roles. These consequences are what are examined in the next pages of this essay.

However, before proceeding with the analysis of such categorization on women's participation in development, it is crucial to account for some important additional domestic and international factors and variables affecting development. Indeed, development projects and programs in Afghanistan have been flagged by the 2018 *Survey of Afghan People* (The Asia Foundation, 2018) as being undermined by elusive security and political stability. Recent elections have proven the country's political structure to be as fragile as ever, hindering the negotiation efforts with the Taliban and the overall peace-building process. With growing political instability, deteriorating security, a decline in foreign aid, and slower economic growth, the relative progress the country enjoyed in recent years is at risk. Food insecurity, rising poverty rates and broader economic concerns for households continue to be main concerns for Afghans (p. 89). In addition, the threat of severe droughts looms over some 15 million agricultural workers, ultimately affecting two thirds of the country in 2018. In sum, many factors not directly related to security and usage of UAVs contribute to unstable conditions for many Afghans, impacting development programmes and projects. These factors, it must be added, disproportionately affect women in their everyday lives, especially when it comes to education and food security/sovereignty (p. 183). The following analysis will not be examining the implications of such issues but remains cognizant of their weight in the matter as well as their particular relationship with security and conflict.

Categorization and Decision-Making Processes

One of the indicators useful to measure the impacts of UAVs on women has to do with the preliminary steps of identifying "targets" and their inherent biases. Indeed, drone operators and their superiors, from their ivory towers, are faced with their own understandings of a "target" drawing on assumptions about race, gender and age (De Volo, 2016, p. 55). Whereas the robotization of military affairs would suggest more objective combat ethics, the human component behind the attack process indicates otherwise. Humans and machines do not operate in autonomous realms. They are entangled and indissociable from each other (Schuppli, 2014 [Espinoza, 2018, p. 380]). One example pertains to the fact that in order for attacks to comply with international humanitarian law, "American troops must distinguish between, on the one hand, combatants and individuals who are directly participating in hostilities and, on the other hand, civilians, and they must not cause civilian casualties disproportionate to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated by the attack" (Amnesty International, 2012, p. 11). To comply with this requirement, reports (*New York Times* in Amnesty International, 2012) have shown that the American administration uses a method for counting civilian casualties that in effect registers all military-age males in a strike zone as combatants unless there is explicit intelligence proving them innocent.

This "guilt-by-association" rhetoric (De Volo, 2016, p.54) projects a categorization of soldiers and enemies based on predetermined notions of a masculinity, embodied by warrior-protectors that spur fighting and act as sole defenders of "civilians", a group associated with femininity (Stiehm, 1982). This *ex-ante* categorization, as critiqued by Dunezat (2015), draws on essentialist biases hierarchizing power relations (p. 3) inherent to the war-gender nexus and its many branches. Operators are thus

subjected to their own position as social subjects within the military apparatus and reproduce gendered power relations through their decision-making process, an argument which will be expanded later. Relevant to the argument of this section is the impacts of such categorization not one those deemed “dangerous,” but rather on automatic logic associated with femininity and gender roles for the “protected” women. Surveillance studies, as an emerging field, highlights that the operation of surveillance is full of male assumptions and assorted gendered dynamics. Focusing on gender relations negotiated under surveillance therefore helps us come to terms with forms of power and exclusion (Koskela, 2012, p. 49).

The necessity for this focus on gender is transparent in available transcripts between American drone operators. As De Volo (2016) notes, they can inform us on the type of discourse operators hold regarding their “victims”, regardless of their gender, and their role within terrorist groups. According to her analysis of transcripts, “drone crews were primed to identify the group as exclusively MAMs, marking them as both a menacing enemy and a killable target. While the enemy, it seems, can be imagined as feminized, it cannot be imagined as embodied women” (De Volo, p. 67). Safe from danger, sitting comfortably in their cubicle, these soldiers thus participate in the essentialization of the gender roles in warfare through the categorization of their targets according to gender and age. In the process of interpretation of unclear visual footage and data, UAV systems may force homogenization upon difference, thereby reducing variation to functional categories that correspond to the needs and biases of the operators, not the targets, of surveillance (Wall & Monahan, 2011, p. 240). The drone crew and video analysts, unfamiliar with and disdainful of local customs and traditions, attempt to

identify weapons and interpret behaviour of those they are tracking. Once again, they can fall back on judgments based upon visible characteristics such as height and clothing, which shows how highly gendered the identification is, a point often missed in critical analyses of drone warfare (p. 66). In other words, the gendered, raced and aged bodies of those killed and maimed speak back to the very crew tracking and targeting them (p. 66). It demonstrates the general assumptions built on personal standpoints counterinsurgency troops had and have in Afghanistan concerning those they are there to eliminate and those they are meant to protect against the "baddies", (p. 66) and the blurred lines between the two. The next section will show the implications of performing gender roles through surveillance and UAVs for women and their participation in development and society.

Surveillance and Norm Internalization

Another way we can measure implications of drone surveillance on gender roles is through not only what American drone operators perpetrate, but also what Afghans understand from their perspective and the subsequent attitudes they adopt. The idea that the use of drones can have such an impact on local populations has been reported extensively by namely Amnesty International (2012; 2018) and Cavallero et al. (2012) mostly in terms of changed attitudes towards U.S. occupation and renewal of terrorist activity. Ruddick (1998) precisely refers to this influence by stating that "[m]ilitaries invoke for their soldiers and project onto the enemy models of masculinity that spur fighting" (p. 199; see also Elshtain 1987; Goldstein 2001). While advocates of drones argue that they present significant advantages in relation to discrimination and proportionality, Williams (2015) states that the "intimacy" it creates between the operators and their targets reiterates the asymmetric nature of their relationship (p. 96). I

argue that this intimacy also impacts the surveilled, in terms of their conceptualizations of masculinity and gender roles in their own society. For instance, by “invizibilizing” Muslim women’s bodies and keeping them in the private sphere of society, operators not only participate but also reproduce personal ideas of the role of women in the Afghan society and in their own. As mentioned earlier, history tells us that women, in times of war, have been reduced to their roles of mothers, factory workers and/or victims. In the case of the counterterrorist operations in Afghanistan, as it has been shown by De Volo (2016) through an analysis of transcripts, these discourses still remain unchanged. Discourses regarding masculinity and femininity in terrorism is done through “representations of terrorists as masculinized and a “bunch of young guys” while females are seen as manipulated by the patriarchal society or men” (Stump & Dixit, 2013, p. 58). Despite the growing blurring of the lines between civilians and combatants, visibly and ideologically, decision makers, at the lowest or the highest levels, tend to categorize too quickly the targets of their operations according to their age and their gender. For lack of a visible distinction such as uniforms, American troops resort to a “guilt-by-association” strategy guided by the military-aged men concept. Thus, masculinization and feminization are once again associated with certain behaviours perpetuated by the “enemy”, even before surveillance is completed.

An important stance to take here in light of this internalization of gender roles is the colonial context in which it takes place. Indeed, drone vision must be considered not as neutral, but as part of a long history of imperial looking that divides the world into those who are rightful subjects and those who are mere objects of the colonizer’s gaze (Stahl 2013 [Espinoza, 2018, p. 380). Indeed, drones reconfigure time and space as a new

technology of intervention in the Global South; a technology that is based on an "algorithm of racial distinction" (Allinson, 2015). As argued by Allinson, they draw a dividing line between 'worthy lives' and a subjugated population unworthy of life and a priori destined to death (p. 255). Barrinha and da Motta's analysis of how drones operate as instruments of radical life as well as space differentiation between the margins of the Global South and the rest of the world is an important contribution to the literature and serves to reiterate the place power relations occupy in drone operations. Their contribution ultimately serves to demonstrate how racialized bodies are rendered essentialized subjects (p. 253). The authors write:

> "Wilcox's contribution crucially highlights the epistemological implications of how precision warfare makes civilian bodies 'unknowable', physically 'killable' and how the absence of body counts makes them also 'abject', 'unseen' and 'ungrievable' bodies. […] This 'detachment' and 'lack of empathy for human life' expressed by Haas are to work as facilitating factors to kill just 'terrorists' and not people" (p. 262).

On this subject, Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān (2009) adds that this kind of politics of representation that encourages a-historicization and de-contextualization of the "subjects" is rooted in Orientalism (p. 2). She states that this discourse transforms men and women into faceless, voiceless, and a-historical subjects who lack agency and who are in need of 'modernization' to raise them up from their 'uncivilized' state. Espinoza (2018) reiterates this argument, specifying that racism, inherited from colonialism, is what informs the gaze of surveillance as to who is targetable (p. 379). This particular take on occupation and drone usage relates to this feminist analysis, as it provides cues into the racial component of the "saviour" complex and the masculinist discourses regarding occupation and liberation of Afghanistan. While this rhetoric on state-level will be discussed further in another section, it is useful to consider the preconceived notions held by operators

when it comes to Arab men and women. The women's already marked bodies are placed into the political sphere and surveilled according to the assumption that being an Afghan woman means being "an object of protection from her own kind" (De Volo, 2016, p. 66). This idea, rooted in imperialism and sexism, is used to justify "white men saving brown women from brown men" (Abu-Lughod, 2002; Spivak 1988, p. 296). This goes to show that the use of drones can have impacts beyond direct psychological and physical damage, and that it can dictate understandings of concepts by externalizing gendered and racial preconceptions.

UAVs as Agents of Socialization and Teachers of Norms

Another implication of drone surveillance and targeted strikes concerns the exposure to patriarchal gender roles perpetuated by drone operators and the categorization they perform. In other words, UAVs act as teachers of norms stemming from American masculinized understandings of the military and combatants. Drone warfare, as argued by many authors (Clark, 2018; Masters, 2005; De Volo, 2016), is a deeply gendered phenomenon.

As spectators, drone operators embody a certain mode of "looking", the same way an audience or spectators conceptualize the material at hand Diawara (1998). Dixit (2016) extends this relationship between spectatorship and representations to the study of security, by incorporating it into discussions of the politics of representations of "militants" (p. 111). Similarly, representations of "terrorists" or "combatants" versus "civilians" is highly dependent on gender performance and the spectator's understanding of gender and race. According to Koskela (2012), "disciplinary power and control also tend to sustain moral norms and cultural codes, whereby heteronormativity, for instance,

has been proven to be reinforced" (p. 50). It could be said that the operators' interpretation of the material they consume, i.e. surveillance footage of Afghan populations, is determined by Western, American conceptualization of gender roles, as well as representations of militants.

Social constructivism suggests that as social subjects, drone operators understand concepts, norms and ideas through learned and constructed pathways. Applying a constructivist approach to this context means conceptualizing socialization as a process in which the socializer (American drone operators) has targeted and sometimes affected changes in the definitions of identity and interests held by the socialized (Gheciu, 2005, p. 976). The literature on international organizations and social constructivism is particularly useful to explain this phenomenon. Indeed, authors such as Kelley (2004), Gheciu (2005) and Finnemore (1993) have theorized the social nature of IOs and their subsequent ability to influence states to adopt certain norms and values. They use examples of adoption of democracy, coordination and value of science and risk-management strategies as results of socialization and teaching methods by international organizations to prove the constructivist power they mobilize. In the context of UAV usage, this idea of socialization would transpire through the operators' ability to affect changes in attitudes towards the targeted people; constant associations between military-aged men and terrorist activity would "teach" local populations to also make that association. John Fiske, with his assertion that surveillance "is a way of imposing norms" where "those who have been othered into the 'abnormal' have [surveillance] focused more intensely upon them," (1998, p. 81), jump-started the discussion within surveillance studies that today proves more than useful for analyzing drone operations.

On a broader level, one's rights and liberty are defined by those in power, by the state and by the occupiers (Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān, 2009, p. 3). Continued occupation holds the message of need for change in the occupied society, and the freedom and rights of women were used extensively in the rhetoric of invasion of Afghanistan. This "Western liberal" value of gender equality is indeed relayed through American presence and surveillance in the affected regions. As a result, it also perpetuates ideas of a masculinized protector, "a mythical being exhibiting courage, strength and mastery of emotions (including the suppression of fear and empathy)" (Butler 1990; Goldstein 2001 [De Volo, 2016]). This norm stems from myths concerning the American service member, whose gender performance is idealized as masculine (De Volo, 2016, p. 252). This construction of gender has been reported by many authors, including Goldstein (2001) who notes that masculinity, which confers status, is not an essential quality that one simply is but rather a quality that must be achieved, produced, and reproduced continuously. Interestingly, the case of drone operators introduced to the field a new conversation regarding the place of courage and heroism in warfare. Clark (2018), De Volo (2016), Braudy (2005) and Francis (2008) analyze the fact that the capacity to kill at such an extreme distance (and the lack of physical risk to the crews), erodes the mythic power of the dog fight, the historical legacy on which the fighter pilots draw their status (Clark, 2018, p. 615). This contributes to a growing de-masculinization of warfare, which creates a need for overcompensation characterized by the hyper-masculinization of the American militaries (Clark, 2018, p. 604-605). After all, one wonders how apparently riskless crew members can perform warrior masculinity while those brave souls are risking their lives below; this very question pushes operators towards a need for a

reaffirmation of their gender performance and identity, furthering the “divide” between the masculinized target and the feminized civilian. As Clark (2018) and Manjikian (2014) demonstrate, this stabilization of their own gendered status is facilitated by, among other things, the lethal capacity UAVs provide (p. 615; p. 50). Another strategy of gender reaffirmation consists in positing femininity as the binary contrast, lending meaning to masculinity by representing that which masculinity is not (Elshtain 1987; Scott 1999) (De Volo, 2016, p. 55). While the field of feminist technoscience, led by Donna Haraway (1990) among others, predicted that the development of human/machine hybrids would provoke a conceptual disruption (Roberts, 2008, p. 80) including the breaking of the male–female and protector–protected dyad, more recent contributions such as Manjikian’s (2014) argue that robotic technology reinforces hegemonic masculinity rather than eliminating it or disrupting it. That said, drone operators do not only reproduce ideas of who is allowed or should be perpetuating violence and terror, but also how they should act and the specific criteria they must respect in order to fit into American understandings of masculinity. Their Western, American conceptualization of norms regarding warfare and masculinity as well as of gender more generally contributes to the socialization of local populations through extreme exposure and direct involvement in their everyday life. The (coded masculine) “drone stare”, Holmqvist (2013) argues, “furthers the subjugation of those marked as Other” (p. 452), generating remote gendered interactions with local populations, affecting their own perceptions of gender and masculinity. Everyone touched by the attacks, whether they be the “targets” or anyone outside this definition, is thus rendered a victim of oppressive gender norms (Brison, 2002, p. 439).

Who Exactly Does These Changes Impact?

As mentioned earlier, the reproduction of gendered relation of power through the use of drones calls for a consideration for the impacts it has on local population's perspective of gender roles and the place women occupy in society. In that sense, it is useful to analyze how this particular way of doing warfare is damaging for women, regardless of their involvement in violence or lack thereof.

First of all, it is worth noting that in Afghanistan, not only have women played a significant role in terrorist organizations, they also participated in the political life through the construction of their own nationalist, nation-building movement (Fluri, 2008, p. 35; Taylor, 2010, p. 209; Sjoberg, 2007; Dyvik, 2014). However, as history now tells us, the employment of Wester-biased images of Muslim women in need of saving to construct their idea of the "terrorist" (De Volo, 2016, p. 59) once again evacuates women's agency and role in terrorism, dictating who should be considered to be a part of militarized operations and who should not. With that in mind, and with intent to take into account the experiences of women involved in violent activity, this section focuses on the impacts of UAVs on women who do not participate in terrorist or violent activities in surveilled regions. These impacts mostly relate to their response to processes of reflexivity on their societal roles sparked by imposed narratives as well as the tense lifestyle under American surveillance. Indeed, "narratives about the ways that politics works are both implicitly and explicitly gendered: they exclude women and values understood to be stereotypically 'feminine'" (Sjoberg, 2010, p. 55). These narratives are, however, not limited to politics; Jean Elshtain (1987) qualified the victorious story that states tell about wars as one about just warriors and 'beautiful souls'. According to him,

the protagonist in the narrative is the just warrior, who is a hero because he protects (his) (innocent) women and children from the evils of the enemy (Sjoberg, 2010, p. 55). The 'beautiful soul' narrative, thus, "sets women up as the prizes of most wars – fragile, removed from reality, and in need of the protection provided by men" (p. 55). Women who do not engage in terrorist or violent activity (and arguably, even those who do) are thus associated with fragility, perpetuating myths about gender and femininity.

Parallelly, Lyon, Haggerty & Ball (2012), theorizing surveillance, contributes to this argument by stating that today, surveillance helps to reinforce sexual norms by creating pressures for self-regulation (p. 49). Although understood from a Western perspective, this idea of "forced" self-regulation is interesting in the context of Afghanistan, where women themselves believe wearing some type of head coverage is the most appropriate way to dress in public[2] (The Asia Foundation, 2018, p. 173). While drone usage and surveillance are not the cause for self-regulation regarding customs and tribal practices, head covering and behaviour in the region, it does contribute to fear for increased shame or reprisals if some customs or roles are not respected. Politics, policing and war, in that sense, can no longer be simply understood as a bodily disciplining of individuals, but should increasingly be approached with a consideration for aerial surveillance and activity (Nieuwenhuis, 2016, p. 499). This idea of aerial surveillance reiterates the reality of a double control, in the private as well as in the private sphere. Feminist understandings of biopolitics (Foucault, 2003; Espinoza, 2018) informs us, regarding this matter, that the imaginary around the old public/private divide suggests

[2] Taking into account the historical, religious and social context behind the judgement of some kind of headscarf being the most appropriate way to present oneself in public for a woman, I do not argue here that it is solely a result of self-regulation.

that women are nothing more than bodies stuck in the private and non-political realm of households and privacy, while men are expected to move freely in the public realm while nearly monopolizing socially valued positions (Sylvester, 2014, p. 2). While the freedom by which men are allowed to move into the public realm is significantly reduced under drone surveillance, the small place women gained in the public sphere in Afghanistan is compromised by thorough surveillance, pushing them into the private realm again. This aerial control over women's bodies through surveillance and American attempts at "female liberation" constitute damaging impacts for women living under UAVs.

Gendered Representations and Foreign Intervention

Finally, the impacts linked to the representation of combatants and civilians by American UAVs also need to be assessed from a state-level perspective. Indeed, feminist international relations as a theory proves the value in analyzing phenomena from a macro perspective in order to understand micro or individual issues. Examining how Afghanistan as a state and its population as an entity provide clues into the gendered notions behind invasion and occupation, which have tremendous consequences for the "invaded" as well as the "invader". Unmanned aerial vehicles, as a symbol of the occupation, constitute an ideal weapon to analyze to assess impacts on local populations.

The very nature of the occupation of Afghanistan by the United States is understood by many (Young, 2003; De Volo, 2016; Manjikian, 2014) as highly paternalistic. From the beginning of the operation, the U.S. has projected a role of the male protector (Young, 2003; Steihm, 1982), which inherently subordinates the position of the protected occupied by the invaded country. Bashir and Crews (2012), reporting on the skewed representation of populations at the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan, note

that local populations are “portrayed as living without any sense of change, eternally wallowing in a world of barbarity, which if left to itself would ultimately strike out against the security of the West” (p. 2). Similarly, but from a feminist perspective, Young (2003) identifies this “logic of masculinist protection” relative to post-9/11 U.S. security events, revealing a paternalistic state promising protection from the assaultive “masculine enemy-other” (p. 2) in exchange for citizens’ blindly ignoring human rights violations, which both legitimates authoritarian power led by the U.S. and which justifies occupation (p. 2). De Volo (2016) clarifies this logic through a concise account:

> “[…] the patriarch (a national leader or the state itself) assumes protection of the feminized weak (figuratively, “women and children” at home or abroad) in the face of a menacing or predatory masculine threat (Enloe 1993)” (p. 62).

This feminization of the “Other” and of the weakened invaded state is what pushes Pakistan, for instance, to take the blame for certain UAV attacks perpetrated by the Americans. Faced with criticism and backlash from their population, the Pakistan State chooses to deceive and lose the trust of its population rather than to admit a breach by foreign powers, which would signify weakness and “femininity” (Ahmad, for *Al Jazeera*, 2011). This patriarchal stance on warfare and international relations, when analyzing Afghanistan, must be accompanied by an understanding of the myth of the Muslim woman “in need of saving” (Abu-Lughod, 2002). Indeed, as it has been exemplified again and again in politics and in media discourse, the “liberation” of Muslim women from the male oppression through the image of the headscarf also took the West by storm, constructing once again Muslim women as passive “victims” rather than the active political and social actors that they prove to be (Abu-Lughod, 2002). Siim (2011) additionally states that “gender equality can serve as an anti-Islam strategy” as liberal values of empowerment can carry underlying assumptions of oppression that exacerbate

the categorization of women as helpless victims. In reality, this ideal of gender equality and liberation of women is a façade behind which militarized femininity hides. The integration of women into the U.S. military is adding women to the forces, but experts denounce the little attention that was paid to the discursive and performative elements of gender dichotomies (Sjoberg, 2007, p. 84). Once again, this lack of consideration for discursive power relations transpires through counterterrorist operations abroad, including UAV surgical and targeted strikes. This kind of militarism in the end relies on control of femininity generally and women specifically (p. 84). In sum, women's vulnerability is used to justify fighting wars and to impose idealized gender roles and ideas about masculinity (p. 84).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this section exposed the gendered impacts of UAVs on local populations and women more specifically. It discussed reproduction of American gender roles as a conduit for influence on norms and values, which feminist IR suggests are at the core of the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. The logic of "guilt-by-association" espoused by American drone operators opens a Pandora box of implications for (gendered) power relations and reveals deeper ethical and legal issues regarding the use of UAVs. While this masculinist rhetoric does imply that attacks disproportionately target men, women are at the centre of consequences of surveillance measures – and have always been. Surveillance has been justified by essentialist understandings of women's security and roles in society, and in the context of American presence in Afghanistan, by assumptions about Muslim women and Afghan women. It has also been used, as many authors from various disciplines have shown, to control women's bodies and their everyday life. The next sections delve into these subjects more deeply.

Chapter 2: UAVs and the Everyday Lives of Afghan Women

Conflict zones and crises have been proven to disproportionately affect women's livelihoods and their lack of decision-making power renders their needs unmet and their voices unheard (WIEGO, 2020). Instances of sexual/family violence, difficulty accessing reproductive health services as well as pre-and post-maternal services, decreased access to food and water and high economic precariousness are only some examples of the multidimensional implications conflict and crises can have on women's participation in development and in their community. Aerial surveillance by foreign powers aggravates these impacts. Indeed, in addition to such threatening consequences, the presence of drones terrorizes a powerless population, and has given rise to (anticipatory) anxiety and psychological trauma. According to Barrinha & da Mota (2017), for survivors and witnesses, the symptoms are multiple: fear, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), emotional breakdowns, loss of appetite, and sleep disturbances, among many others (p. 254). As a result, not only have behaviours been affected, social practices have been disrupted, but habits have also been broken: "children have ceased to go to school, and group gatherings for mourning, burials, tribal reunions have been avoided" (p. 254). In addition to consequences for individuals, "[…] democratic values of due process, separation of powers, free assembly, and holding powerful actors accountable come into danger when leaders mobilize fear and present themselves as protectors" (Young, p. 3). This means that everyday tasks as well as core social apparatus are further frozen and therefore prevent the development of a working, stable state. The second section of this research is interested in the impacts drone operations and surveillance have on Afghan women and their ability to conduct daily tasks associated with the development of the

country and the survival of their own family and community. Much of development studies is interested in the consequences security issues and conflict can have on a macro as well as a micro perspective. Considering the fact that UAVs are used in state-building operations, their ability to facilitate relative stability and development must be questioned and analyzed from a feminist perspective. The following pages outline the impacts UAVs have on the roles assigned to women in society and more particularly, on their ability to conduct everyday tasks contributing to the wellness and development of their community and of the country in general.

The Security-Development Nexus and UAVs

Analyzing the security-development nexus specific to Afghanistan offers a relevant account of the impacts some foreign military operations can have on the development of the country and its relationship with regional actors, including implications linked to the use of UAVs. As Stern & Öjendal (2010) mention, the emerging literature – including the official, there is a seeming consensus that 'security' and 'development' are interconnected, and that their interrelationship is growing in significance given the evolving global political-economic landscape (p. 6). Another example of their relationship is exhibited through the inclusion of explicit references to development and poverty reduction in security policies related to the globalized fight against terrorism (see, for example, European Council, 2003, p. 2). The authors define a nexus as "a network of connections between disparate ideas, processes or objects"; alluding to a nexus implies an infinite number of possible linkages and relations (p. 11). The following pages mobilize these linkages from a feminist perspective to assess the

impacts of UAVs on women's ability and willingness to participate in development programmes and activities when under surveillance.

Understanding this nexus means taking into account the myriad of ways issues of security can impact a state, especially in the Global South, and vice-versa. For this research, a micro-level analysis rooted in theories of development in conflict studies is used to assess these impacts. Indeed, part of the body of literature interested in conflict studies is concerned with a micro-level analysis of support (Justino, 2009; Malthaner, 2015; Verwimp et al., 2009; Kalyvas, 2006, 2012; King, 2004) as opposed to a traditional regional, national or global perspective, often using country-level data (Verwimp et al., 2009, p. 307). According to the aforementioned experts, an analysis of the micro-dynamics of support relationships (concept brought about by Malthaner, 2015) allows for a specification of patterns of support in certain cases by examining the particular combination of social ties on which they are built – and allows to trace their transformation by analyzing the way certain ties shift and are undermined or reinforced over the course of violent conflicts (Malthaner, 2015, p. 434). In other words, analyzing individual and household-level relationships with UAVs (see also Steele, 2009) allows for a deeper understanding of the heterogeneity of experiences (p. 434), providing more accurate and precise insights into the implications for the role(s) women must fulfill under surveillance, which cannot be reduced to a single relationship or experience with the American drone programme. Considering this specification, the following section is interested in the gendering of suspicious activity and the determination of guilt according to certain tasks performed in Afghan society.

Everyday Tasks for Women Under the "Drone Gaze"

Living Under the Drones (2012), a report compiling testimonies from civilians and survivors of UAV attacks, reveals the very consequences surveillance can have on individuals. Going back to surveillance studies and feminist understandings of the “drone stare” (Espinoza, 2018; Wall & Monahan, 2011), the following section outlines the impacts of UAV surveillance on everyday tasks performed by Afghan women, who are confronted with this “gaze” in the private and public spheres.

First of all, it is worth noting that unmanned aerial vehicles do indeed qualify as instruments of surveillance: Wall & Monahan (2011) state that drones are forms of surveillance in keeping with the precepts of categorical suspicion and social sorting that define other contemporary surveillance systems (Gandy, 1993; Murakami Wood et al., 2006; Lyon, 2007; Monahan, 2010). While participating to a renegotiation of the relationship between militarization and surveillance, their underlying complexity and rationalities are more nuanced and problematic than simple visual modalities of surveillance (Wall & Monahan, 2011, p. 240). This reiterates the necessity to analyze their effects while keeping in mind the additional factors and considerations their categorization as a type of surveillance technology entail.

That said, *Living Under the Drones* conveys the constant and inescapable fear of being killed by a drone. In order to avoid becoming a target, such all-pervasive fear has led people to sacrifice their education, their social lives and their freedom. Just like Espinoza (2018) puts it, clearly, signature strikes have disrupted the political, as well as the economic and social spheres of civilian lives (p. 384). The report also shows how UAVs cause considerable and under-accounted-for harm to the daily lives of ordinary

civilians, beyond death and physical injury (Cavallero et al., 2012, p. 11). Civilians are afraid to go to the market, afraid to send their kids to school and afraid of whether the next drone might hit them or their loved ones (Zwijnenburg & Blok, 2014, p. 218). The determinants of guilt, Williams (2015) notes, are associated in some way with “known militants”, a profile drawn from acute and aggressive surveillance : “Repeatedly crossing certain borders, being present in certain areas at specific times, being caught by a drone’s cameras engaging in suspicious activity can all, in combination, be enough to single someone out for targeting” (p. 97). As Grayson (2012) notes, personalized strikes involve

> “the decontextualisation of the killing from the broader conflict by focusing upon the claimed characteristics of the specific person killed. The individual is found to be deserving of such a death not just because of their potential capabilities, but also due to their perceived intentions being considered uncivil. Being targeted is therefore an indicator that one has been primarily determined to be an illegitimate political subject rather than an important one” (p. 98)

U.S. drones have intimidated the population to the point that it has changed habits and routines. As Safdar Dawar states:

> “If I’m shopping, I’m really careful and scared. If I’m standing on the road and there is a car parked next to me, I never know if that is going to be the target. Maybe they will target the car in front of me or behind me. Even in mosques, if we’re praying, we’re worried that maybe one person who is standing with us praying is wanted. So, wherever we are, we have this fear of drones (quoted in Cavallero, Sonnenberg, and Knuckey 2012, p. 98)” (Cavallero et al., 2012, p. 11).

This exert demonstrates the hardship under which women, who perform certain tasks for their community and family requiring exposure to this surveillance, must live when they are surveilled. While the report does not disaggregate data by gender, a gender analysis of its results shows “the disproportionate effects of armed conflict on women” (The Asia Foundation, 2018, p. 165). To live under drones is thus to be made to feel entirely

vulnerable. As Gibson (2012) states, "... It's all terrifyingly random. Suddenly and without warning, a missile launches and obliterates everyone within a 16-yard radius". These people at the mercy of U.S. pilots can do relatively little to assert their innocence (Jalal, 2016). As a consequence, those under drones internalize being watched and having their every action scrutinized and thus, by necessity, they alter their behaviour (Williams, 2015, p. 98). A (feminist) critical terrorism perspective shows us that this vulnerability and this necessary change in behaviour is much more important for Afghan women.

Considering that Afghan women have historically been erased from these public spaces and are considered "at the bottom of a development chart among poor countries" (Bashir & Crews, 2012, p. 253), this deterioration of people's lives under surveillance points to exponential changes in women's ability to carry out their roles in society as well as to enjoy some level of agency and empowerment. Their key role in agriculture (including culture of opium, a lucrative market in the country) at a rate of 44%, in manufacturing at 70 percent and in other sectors including informal artisans for a total of almost one fifth of the Afghan workforce, a significant rise since the ousting of the Taliban, means they are likely exposed to surveillance during their commute and possibly at work (Bashir & Crews, 2012; The Asia Foundation, 2018). Their representation in the informal market also renders their economic independence highly precarious, especially in the context of a conflict (WEIGO, 2016). Additionally, and most significantly, women are predominately the sole member of the household performing housework. They return from work, cook, clean, and take care of their children (Bashir & Crews, 2012, p. 245). The tasks they must perform under these gender roles, including procuring food and water and accompanying kids to school, places them in plain sight and therefore subjects

them to acute surveillance by UAVs. Lyon, Haggerty & Ball (2012) argue on that subject that surveillance is indeed gendered at a very simple level: most people behind a surveillance camera are male and the people under surveillance are disproportionately female (p. 51). More importantly, more than men, women tend to occupy the spaces where surveillance cameras are present, such as shopping malls and public transport (Lyon, Haggerty & Ball, 2012, p. 51). While the Afghan context calls for a nuancing of this Western perspective, it highlights the gender dynamics at play in surveillance politics and operations. In Afghanistan, this is especially true in regions where access to services is limited due to the conflict or any other reasons, and these difficulties to carry out household managing tasks can create additional burdens and stress for women (WEIGO, 2020). Care work, also disproportionately performed by women and generally unpaid[3], adds strains and stress to the lives of women who are just as fearful of and anxious about drone surveillance (Cavallero et al., 2012, p. 86; Hirata, 2011). In the context of conflict and occupation, decreased rates of school attendance, disabling of bodies and unstable infrastructure constrain some children, adults and the elderly to the home. Women once again bear the sole burden of caring for these impromptu homebound members of the household. Some spaces, usually occupied by women because of the aforementioned assigned societal roles and tasks, are also sometimes targeted, signifying a direct targeting of women. Coupled with attacks from the Taliban, as was seen in May 2020 with the attack on a maternity ward in a Kabul hospital (Al Jazeera, 2020), these strikes and the surveillance climate suggests that there is no safe space for women. Interesting to

[3] See Verschuur (2013) and Hirata (2011) for sociological background on careworkers, the sexual division of labour and social gender relations. The authors also highlight the North-South divide relative to these questions.

note here is the relative progress the country had made after the fall of the Taliban; growing support for girls' education, for women in the workforce, a young population concerned with women's empowerment and a decrease in women's constriction to their houses or inside spaces (Bashir & Crews, 2012, p. 244). Unfortunately, the numbers that show the continued destitution of women has grown worse and women's relative freedom to move around has been significantly reduced by aerial surveillance and the drone gaze (p. 245). As a result, but also due to other factors regarding gender equality and gender-based violence in the country, "significantly more women (17.7%) than men (8.7%) always experience fear for their personal safety, and more women report that they or a family member experienced violence or crime in 2018" (The Asia Foundation, 2018, p. 195). As will be shown in the next subsection, conflict and perceptions of insecurity has dire consequences for local populations. Considering the specific tasks women are expected to do in society, a decreased access to services related to health, education, and food accompanied by conflict and surveillance impact women and their ability to participate fully to familial and community activities.

Occupation, Conflict and Survival Tactics

Implications associated with UAV surveillance for the everyday lives of women in Afghanistan also concern the broader occupation and conflict context, which as was mentioned before impacts multiple factors of development. Insecurity as well as perception of insecurity leads to a decrease in many development activities, including participation in the economy and in social and community activities. Afghanistan is no different: the Asia Foundation's Survey of the Afghan People "reveals a link between perceptions of security and access to quality public services. Afghans in insecure areas

are more likely than those in relatively safe areas to say that access to electricity, schools and teachers, health-care services, and good quality food has worsened" (The Asia Foundation, 2012, p. 89). Conflict and occupation of the aerial space also means 24/7 noise, reminding local populations of the presence of UAVs and of their surveillance, causing psychological and physical stress and ultimately altering their behaviours (Cavellero et al., p. 11; p. 150). Some testimonies report a lack of sleep due to this looming noise, making drones "always on people's minds" (p. 84). A testimony by Ajmal Bashir, an elderly man who has lost both relatives and friends to strikes, states that "every person—women, children, elders—they are all frightened and afraid of the drones . . . [W]hen [drones] are flying, they don't like to eat anything . . . because they are too afraid of the drones " (p. 84). Another man explained that "[he] doesn't eat properly on those days [when strikes occur] because [they] know an innocent Muslim was killed. [They] are all unhappy and afraid" (p. 84). This points to the fact that anxiety is such that the simplest bodily functions are disturbed, straining the body and the mind.

Occupation and 24/7 surveillance by foreign forces also mean different things for Afghan women. Indeed, these disturbances in people's routines and bodies can have, for instance, disproportionate impacts on women, not to mention on pregnant women. The work of social reproduction carried out by women – a type of work intricately linked to economic activity and development – once again vulnerabilizes women by requiring their body to deal with stress while carrying a child, breastfeeding or caring for a family. In other words, the roles attributed to women place them in situations of greater stress, especially while performing care work for children, the elderly or other community members. Concern for the well-being of children and the impacts of UAVs thus primarily

fall on women; impacts of UAVs on children are indeed an additional source of stress for mothers, who see the children grow up under surveillance. A testimony by a mental health professional suggests that “the kinds of images [children] will have with them are going to have a lot of consequences. You can imagine the impact it has on personality development. People who have experienced such things, they don’t trust people; they have anger, desire for revenge . . . So when you have these young boys and girls growing up with these impressions, it causes permanent scarring and damage” (Cavallero et al., 2012, p. 87). This shows how occupation and surveillance by foreign parties, as Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān (2009) argues, impact women and their relationship with gender roles, with social reproduction and with gender relations in everyday life. As “frontliners” (p. 21), they must renegotiate their space and roles in society and in their family while adapting their behaviour to threatening surveillance. Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān (2009) writes:

> “The frontline for these women is many things: a place, a span of time, a place to grow, to change, to transform, and to transgress. For many if not all of these women, the house itself is a militarized and occupied space, whether directly or indirectly, but it is also a site of resistance and transgression. The frontliner can be a woman who is lining up or is humiliated at a checkpoint, a woman singing her children to sleep in the middle of night raids and incursions, one selling yogurt to make some additional money and buy food for her children, a woman giving birth at a checkpoint because she has been prevented from reaching a hospital, or one screaming and crying in court while refusing to accept the law’s failure to protect her rights, and more” (p. 21).

Despite the obvious differences between the occupation of Palestine and Afghanistan, this concept of frontline for Afghan women remains relevant and extremely telling of the impacts of UAVs on their everyday lives.

The author’s account of life under occupation for women in Palestine can also inform the impacts American presence can have on the Afghan population and women in particular. As was documented about South Africa as well, populations under occupation and surveillance devote all of their energy and time to survival; their everyday lives are deeply transformed, and their priority is set on protecting themselves and their family.

Populations living in situations of emergencies and conflict need to adapt and perform their everyday life differently. Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān (2009) recounts a testimony by a Palestinian woman that states: “We have many dreams but the most essential one is to free Palestine. And to get rid of this cancer that is between us which is called the occupation. Because when we are free, we can concentrate on our private things in a better way and care about our personal life more which means we will live in peace. Our kids in the future will live in peace, and so on” (p. 37). A lot of work associated with survival falls into the range of tasks attributed to women in Afghan society, but is invisibilized because it takes place in the private rather than public realm. Focusing on survival also means for women navigating violence against women, gender oppression and systemic sexism while simultaneously absorbing the effects of trauma and constant monitoring of women and their community in surveilled areas (Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān, 2009, p. 35). The COVID-19 pandemic, although not a “typical” military crisis, has shown how women, yet again, are likely to be disproportionately affected by the impact of a crisis in Afghanistan. It has also been shown that increased care-burden of women is likely to expose them to increased risk to contracting COVID-19. At the same time, if they do become ill, cultural limits on their movement in combination with a lack of female medical staff are likely to restrict their access to health care (both COVID-19-related and non-COVID-19- related) (OCHA, 2020, p. 16). These added layers represent significant impacts of occupation and aerial surveillance for Afghan women.

Conclusion

In conclusion, imperialist-colonialist endeavours, such as American presence in Afghanistan, imprint local societies with fear and anxiety. More precisely, Shalhūb-Kīfūrkiyān (2009) shows the way in which colonialist military power carves its strength

and inscribes its boundaries on the most personal realms of individual women's lives, bodies, families, sexuality, homes, spaces, and gender relations. This proves once again the necessity of a feminist analysis of conflict spaces and, in the context of changing technologies in military affairs, of unmanned aerial vehicles. This section aimed at assessing the impacts drone usage have on Afghan women's ability to perform their assigned roles in society, especially those related to the development and wellness of their community and family. Using ideas and concepts from conflict studies, it argued that surveillance imposes a threat that affects women directly in their everyday lives, and therefore that development and stability cannot be achieved without security and safety for women. The occupation of Afghanistan, manifested largely today through American UAVs, generates such anxiety and stress among local populations, and especially women given their particular roles in society, that behaviours and tasks are adjusted and, in some cases, completely changed.

Chapter 3: Surveillance as Technology-Facilitated Violence

The final section of this research aims at providing, in addition to the normative and behavioural impacts examined in the previous pages, an analysis of the implications of UAV usage for women. It first lays down the relevance of considering drone surveillance a form of technology-facilitated violence and then analyzes how such an argument can highlight the particular ways whereby women are impacted. It therefore brings a fresh feminist take on UAV literature and the body interested in their consequences for local populations. That said, I argue in the following pages that the constant surveillance done by American troops through UAVs can indeed be perceived as a type of technology-facilitated violence. Critical surveillance literature has shown time

and again that surveillance has historically functioned as an oppressive tool to manage particular bodies and populations (Koskela, 2012; Fiske, 1998; Espinoza, 2018; Gandy, 2006). The disproportionate effects of UAVs on women once again call for a particular consideration for the gendered changes in behaviours and attitudes under surveillance and for the way technology-facilitated violence shape these changes.

Technology-facilitated violence is defined as an "action by one or more people that harms others based on their sexual or gender identity or by enforcing harmful gender norms" (ICRW, 2018). This action is carried out using the internet and/or mobile technology and includes stalking, bullying, sexual harassment defamation, hate speech and exploitation (ICRW, 2018). While this definition does not directly refer to military affairs or instruments, it does include drones intended for personal use; the definition provides a valuable framework to assess impacts on victims of UAV surveillance in the context of a foreign occupation. The emotional, psychological, financial impacts of technology-facilitated violence are not less dangerous than physical violence, namely because of its inherence complexity, among other reasons. In brief, starting from Sarah Haddjeri's assertion that the current age of surveillance strengthens gender inequalities and shapes women's online and offline behaviour (Haddjeri, 2020), this section reiterates that UAV perpetration of violence disproportionately affects women.

TFV on an Individual Level

The use of UAVs as a surveillance apparatus facilitates violence, in turn affecting local populations in major ways. Measuring the impacts such aerial violence has on women on an individual contributes to the overarching objective of this paper, namely to

expose and analyze the implications of drone usage for Afghan women's ability to carry out their roles in development.

Technology-facilitated violence perfectly provides an insightful framework for identifying and analyzing the impacts of UAVs on women. Its six distinctive characteristics, for instance, pertain to the context at hand: anonymity, action-at-a-distance, disinhibition, accessibility, propagation and digital permanence and relentlessness (ICRW, 2018) have all proven to be at the heart of the "drone stare" experience for local populations. The case of drone operations in Afghanistan, because of their marked gendered implications as well as colonialist-imperialist nature, I would argue can even be considered a type of technology-facilitated *gender-based* violence. This means that the behaviour is in part the result of a social context of gender inequality that in turn shapes normative expectations surrounding femininity and masculinity. A violent act is defined as gender-based if the survivor was targeted due to their gender or if the tactic (or the content of the incident) itself reinforced harmful gender norms (ICRW, 2018). The impacts assessed in chapters 2 and 3 speak directly to this definition, and thus provides solid ground on which to effectively and accurately measure the implications of constant drone surveillance on women in particular. In that sense, we see that impacts on women are physical (self-harm[4], assault, arrest), psychological (shame, depression, anxiety or fear), social (exclusion from family, friends, coworkers, etc.), economic (extortion or loss of income-generating or educational opportunities) and functional (having to change a route or choosing not to use technology) (OCTEVAW).

[4] Women resist in tragic ways—the Afghan health ministry reports that an average of 2,400 Afghan women self-immolate every year. The ministry lists depression from war, forced marriages, abuse, and displacement as reasons women set themselves on fire. But Afghan women also survive in creative ways, their resilience a testament to human tenacity (Bashir & Crews, 2012, p.245).

To these significant consequences is added, as mentioned earlier, the necessity for women to navigate gender-based violence, gender oppression and systemic sexism. A crucial point to raise when it comes to assessing women's ability to participate to community and family life is the country's high level of intimate-partner and family violence. Indeed, while simultaneously absorbing the effects of trauma and (de)victimization of themselves and their community perpetuated by drone surveillance, 87% of Afghan women have reported being a victim of sexual, physical or psychological violence (OCHA, 2020, p. 16; Ghezali, 2020). Despite having adopted in 2009 the Law for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Afghanistan still ranks among the worst countries when it comes to intimate partner and gender-based violence (Ghezali, 2020). The tactics they might employ to escape such violence, including getting out of the house for work, to run errands or to visit family and friends, places them at the mercy of another form of violence perpetrated by UAVs. This paradox renders their ability to conduct everyday tasks and participate to community and family life highly jeopardized. What's more, their assigned role as caretaker puts them at higher risk of family violence. While never-ceasing conflict and drone operations occur outside, the "vulnerable" community or family members are put under women's care, once again exposing them to higher risk of violence in their own homes. Finally, potential attempts at fleeing the violence would not only be highly reprehended by patriarchal social expectations, but also extremely complex if children or family members depend on the women's care. Coupled with the fact that support services are already extremely limited, the presence of American troops and their constant surveillance makes accessing services or fleeing GBV an almost impossible avenue (OCHA, 2020).

The violence committed by unmanned aerial vehicles also exacerbates existing power relations at play within society as well as within households. Indeed, the increased stress levels, trauma and dire consequences of surveillance and conflict generally impact populations economically, politically and socially. In turn, "as Afghan men suffered the consequences of war—physical disability, joblessness, homelessness—they took out their frustration on the women. The emasculation of Afghan men has led to […] domestic violence against women" (Bashir & Crews, 2012, p. 244). This shows the necessity to consider not only direct, but also indirect implications of drone operations for women, who ultimately are the ones carrying the burden and suffering the consequences of this type of violence. These lived experiences, often characterized by trauma associated with this type of violence and intricately linked to aerial presence and asymmetrical space occupation, are accompanied by a dichotomical conversation between protection and threat for women. Experts of feminist surveillance studies have insisted on the gendered nature of the act of surveillance and on its roles in the policing of the feminine body. As Koskela (2002) stresses, the act of surveillance hides an ambivalent nature: it can increase a sense of security but can also exacerbate feelings of mistrust (p. 52). Linking back to the implications for women's ability to participate in development and community life, asymmetrical spaces of high surveillance reduce women's opportunities to influence their own destiny, a type of violence that cannot be underestimated. The author also adds that in a surveillance context, the gendered dynamics of looking at play create a new form of "mediated chaperoning, where male camera operators (ostensibly) look out for the security of their female charges" (p. 52). Once again, this reiterates ideas promulgated in previous chapters and highlights the violent role of American surveillance

in everyday spaces where women are subject to violence from multiple but intersecting sources. In that sense, although drone operations perpetuate violence to local populations independently of their gender, and to some extent, mainly perform surveillance on military-aged men, the impacts of the "stare" are more important for women, whether they be direct or indirect. The "drone stare" thus represents a tool of control to maintain dominance and to reinforce harmful patriarchal norms, roles and structures. The key is to understand that the issue is indeed gender inequality and the tool to perpetuate this inequality is technology. Implications of using technology-facilitated violence as a framework to understand and ultimately assess the consequences of this type of surveillance can generate extensive and valuable data to feminist as well as military and security-related literature. On the other hand, the field of technology-facilitated violence mostly focuses on gender-based violence perpetrated online (e.g. cyberbullying, hacking, cyberstalking, doxing, etc.) within romantic partnerships, creating a precise understanding for survivors and experts that could be undermined if extended to the practice of drone operations. Nevertheless, providing a gender-based violence or technology-facilitated violence framework to violence perpetrated by American troops abroad can participate to a denunciation of such practices within the feminist community, as well as, ideally, the questioning of military occupation and target killings within the military field. In the end, similarly to the Government of Canada's recommendations for domestic TFV, a culturally-safe and trauma-informed support system to survivors of the constant surveillance is much needed in order to alleviate or reduce the impacts of UAV attacks and predatory surveillance for women in Afghanistan and, ultimately, for every member of society.

TFV on an International Level

The concept of technology-facilitated violence can also be extended to a higher level; it can indeed be used to analyze and assess the impacts of state terrorism (Rupka & Baggiarini (2018), Espinoza (2018) and Calhoun, (2018)) and the violence of occupation. According to feminist international relations, the drone programme not only perpetuates violence through the colonial gaze and a strong link to orientalism (Espinoza, 2018), but its surveillance also constitutes a form of state terrorism that uses biopolitics to affect gendered policies and violence. Espinoza writes that

> "Although the term "terrorism" has not usually been applied to state violence due to their presumed legitimate authority to wage violence, theorists of critical terrorism studies have argued that states can be terrorists as well (Blakeley and Raphael 2016; Heath-Kelly 2016; Jackson 2008; Grosscup 2006; Sluka 2000). They argue that states, like non-state actors, also engage in terrorism – violence directed towards or threatened against civilians – which is designed to instill terror or intimidate the population of people as a means of preventing or changing their political behaviour (Jackson 2008; Blakeley and Raphael 2016)" (p. 383).

In other words, by limiting movement and disrupting social lives through the threat of bombardment and surveillance, the state controlling the UAVs indeed commit technology-facilitated violence towards local populations. Linking back to arguments provided in previous sections, the failure of the drone programme to impose surveillance solely on "terror suspects" and to distinguish between the innocent and the guilty must be seen as a form of state terrorism (Espinoza, p. 387). Surveillance thus acts as a political vision whose structure promotes a binary opposition between the familiar "us" and the strange "them" (Loomba, 1998 [Espinoza, p. 380]), once again legitimizing violence. While the U.S. (and other powers with UAV programmes) sell technology as a way to close this gap and render the operations more ethical, it actually participates to a very specific form of violence operating under state terrorism and indeed impacting women disproportionately.

On that subject, critical political geographers have looked into the military concept of space as a political arena rooted in and expressive of power relationships (Williams, 2015, p. 102). Williams (2015) mentions that "the construction, possession, and utilization of knowledge within a spatial context that itself manifests power inequalities creates, enables, and legitimizes a relationship that, in this instance, is distinctively, and possibly uniquely, asymmetrical. Dronespace places all of the cards—every one of them—in the hand of the drone operator" (p. 102). This means that the very space occupied by women through their participation in community- and country-level development activity is designated, from the very beginning, as "terrorist", erasing individual lived experiences and degrees of involvement and creating highly asymmetrical power relations between the foreign power and the invaded country. This form of terrorism, facilitated by technology, renders local populations more vulnerable and once again places women at the mercy of state regulations and biopolitics through surveillance as well as the perpetuation of conflict. Moreover, the very lethality of the surveillance drones is a key consideration to take when analyzing the impacts of their presence in the sky. Reiterating the idea that their presence constitutes a form of technology-facilitated state terrorism, Calhoun (2018) notes that "lethal drones hovering above in the sky threaten all persons on the ground with the arbitrary termination of their lives and as such represent a form of terrorism no less than the suicide bombings of jihadist groups such as al Qaeda and ISIS" (p. 357). She adds that the similarity between state-inflicted terrorism and factional terrorism promulgated by non-state actors has been largely ignored by authors coming from the West. Highlighting this monopoly on narratives of drone operations targeting the "bad guys" (going back to De Volo, 2016),

the author stresses the utter dismissal of "the perspectives of bereft and terrorized survivors of missile strikes" and thus of the voices of women on which the various impacts fall.

Conclusion

In sum, crises, conflict and occupation indeed exacerbate instances of GBV, further adding to the burden women in Afghanistan carry. The current COVID-19 crisis exemplifies this fact perfectly, as data collected daily builds strong evidence that Afghanistan is following global trends during lockdowns with a jump in GBV risks, for which support services are limited (OCHA, 2020, p. 16). When it comes to the occupation in the region, also a notable crisis, women face multifaceted and intersecting levels of oppression created and/or exacerbated by UAV surveillance of their everyday space. One of these oppressions, tied to feminist international relations, relates to the country-level implications of the occupation and the gendered nature of the power relations imposed on Afghanistan, once again dictated and facilitated by technology. These dynamics ultimately perpetuate a gendered technology-facilitated violence that disproportionately affect women and their participation in development and community life.

Conclusion

More than ever, it is crucial to recognize the heterogeneity of lived experiences "under the drones." Life under surveillance and the threat of lethal foreign power is itself conditioned by personal histories informed by class, race and gender dynamics (Lyon, Haggerty & Ball, 2012, p. 51). As a feminist project, this research aimed at providing a deeper understanding of the implications of UAV usage for all actors involved, in time

leaving the international community and the implicated parties better equipped to address gendered impacts on local populations. That is indeed the goal of this feminist analysis of drone surveillance and operations.

The elements analyzed and discussed in the paper enabled me, first, to question the narrative often used in literature to approach unmanned aerial vehicles in the Afghan context. More precisely, the first chapter showed how the operation of surveillance is deeply gendered. In the case of UAV presence in Afghanistan, it is also tainted with imperial and racial agendas. Mobilizing feminist international relations and critical terrorism studies in order to assess the normative and performative implications of UAVs and surveillance on local populations, my analysis allowed me to show their highly gendered and colonial intricacies. From this, I therefore conclude that the imposed and replicated gender and racial roles proved to have important negative consequences for Afghan women's participation in the development of the country, hindering their ability to work towards empowerment[5]. Moving on to the second chapter, the paper measured the impacts of the "drone stare" on local populations through the analysis of the disruptions of women's everyday social and economic lives. The essentialization of their roles in society, coupled with disturbing psychological, physical and social impacts on their bodies, bears witness to the toll they must face in the region. Thanks to the analysis presented in this section, I have come to the conclusion that UAVs have long-lasting impacts on the well-being of local populations, and that a feminist analysis of such implications highlights the additional barriers faced by women which exacerbates their

[5] "Empowerment" here is used while acknowledging that it means something different for Afghan women, and for each of them individually. It should not be an encompassing term taken out of individual experiences and contexts.

unequal standing in Afghan society and, to a certain extent, in the American narrative. Finally, the last chapter linked surveillance studies with concepts of gender-based violence in an effort to bring new narratives and data to both bodies of literature. In the end, my analysis allowed me to conclude that there is a need to question narratives of technology-facilitated violence that capitalize on the vulnerability of women and girls in order to justify new powers to surveil, de-anonymize, police and censor on domestic and foreign territory.

A further look at physical and psychological impacts of trauma would be a great added value to the literature: based on information synthesized in McCallum & Ng (2020), an analysis of intergenerational trauma caused by technology-facilitated violence in Afghanistan by the drone programme would be a logical next step for the field. This research could also be complemented with knowledge on the subject generated by racialized voices; a look at Islamic feminism and religiosity in relation to drone operations and the power relations exhibited through mostly Christian, American UAV programme would be a great potential avenue to further the gendered analysis undertaken in this research.

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