THE THREAT ABOVE OUR HEADS

Does drone warfare undermine accountability and thereby encourage counterfactual interventions?

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Abstract

The paper investigates the relation between drone warfare and democratic peace, how this technology weakens traditional governmental accountability mechanisms, which would ensure transparency, and thereby undermines the electoral incentive pillar of the DPT. The hypotheses - tested by a comparative case analysis - suggests that the probability of interventions (happening also in cases where otherwise it would not) and their intensity would rise due to the reduced costs of opting for war.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The first armed drone strike was deployed in Afghanistan in 2001 by the United States, only weeks after the 9/11 attacks, and since that, they accompanied such major conflicts as Yemen, Iraq or Pakistan. For a while only little was known about these tools and the whole concept of targeted killing\(^1\), but the controversies tied to these methods quickly raised the attention of the public.

The growing reliance on this technology comes as no surprise, as they offer numerous advantages and loopholes compared to traditional, human based methods, but the emergence of drones and other technological advancements in general, have a double effect: on one hand they reduce the internal costs of war, but on the other hand, they also encourage counterproductive consequences, as they simultaneously lower serious incentives to avoid the escalation of violence and commit to a rather peaceful way of solution.

The basic hypothesis, which the paper is engaged to examine, is that drone warfare and its characteristics undermine accountability, which is a core element of the democratic peace theory’s electoral incentive pillar. To test this assumption, I have analyzed the structure of accountability to draw up which components it is built up from, and systematically examined the implementation of these elements to see whether they are fulfilled under the given circumstances of drone use. The results suggest that drone use does reduce the costs and open up loopholes for policymakers to opt for using force by treating the constraints posed by accountability mechanisms in a rather flexible way, and therefore undermines the institutional pillar of the theory, which is based in the stability of accountability and transparency.

Arising from this result it is reasonable to assume that the capability to deploy drones - thereby reduce the costs of using force – encourages counterfactual interventions. Therefore, the probability of intervention rises under such circumstances where otherwise – without drones – the government would not get militarily involved because of the unbearably high costs.

This paper uses small-n qualitative case study analysis for theory testing. Hypothesis testing is generally difficult in social sciences because of the lack of counterfactuals: cases which only differ in the explanatory variable of interest (in our case, the availability of drone technology). There are myriads of other relevant factors that might influence the dependent variable and

\(^1\) “The intentional, preplanned killing of a specifically identified individual” (Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic and Sana’a Center For Strategic Studies, 2017, pp. 23)
there are limited options for researchers to control for them. Comparative case study analysis (Ragin and Schneider 2011: 150–166) is one research design alternative in such cases. It allows for the analysis of relevant factors and assess similarities, differences and establish patterns. A small-n case study analysis deployed in this paper provides a good starting point for a possible large-n empirical analysis. It is important to be aware of the limitations of establishing causal relations based on a limited number of cases and many possibly confounding factors.

At this point, it is also important to emphasize that my paper would principally focus on states as “territorial entities that are recognized as such by other states” (Buchanan-Keohane, 2015, pp. 17), as the source of drone strikes. Even though it is clear that non-governmental actors, such as terrorist organizations are another major actors behind drone-warfare, my paper is does not intend to detail this perspective of the issue. It requires a fundamentally different approach, theoretical framework and is not necessarily relevant in connection with the central question. My paper is divided into six sections, each of them in charge for one of the core elements of this paper. Being this introduction the first one, in the second one provides a brief overview about the theoretical framework through the work of some of the most significant democratic peace theorists. The third chapter draws up a systematic picture about the elements and structure of accountability, while the fourth provides examines whether these mechanisms are efficient in the case of drone warfare. In the fifth chapter drone warfare is examined in the light of terrorism. Eventually, the sixth section introduces a hypotheses regarding the increasing probability of counterfactual interventions, and a qualitative case study analyses to test the assumption.

2. THE DEMOCRATIC PEACE THEORY

The democratic peace theory refers to the notion that democratic states are less likely to go engage in war (Doyle, 1983). Regarding the theory’s roots, it traces back to Kant’s Perpetual Peace.

Democratic peace theorists often tend to pose a rather ideological approach referring to the democratic culture, its norms and values. It basically implies a mutually respectful relationship between states, a shared commitment to the norm of committing to peaceful negotiations instead of the quick escalation of violation, considering war only as last resort (Layne, 1994) (Doyle, 1983). However, Layne (1994) emphasizes that no scholar argues fondly that this
pattern would simply arise from the democratic regimes being less self-seeking, less aggressive or less war-prone.

One of the basic assumptions of the theory is that the governments of the republican regimes - as opposed to the non-representative ones – incur certain costs and constraints coming from the structure of power and the public, which can serve as barriers when evaluating the option of war and peace. Therefore, as more and more regimes become republics, the so-called “pacific union” will also expand. (Kant, [1970])

Layne (1994) refers to two structural restraints: the significant weight of public opinion, and the checks and balances system arising from the distribution of power – by whom the government is held accountable for its actions. Doyle (1983) agrees that the significant role of the public is a major reason behind democratic peace. It is the civilian mass that needs to suffer the most unbearable costs and burdens of war – including casualties, property loss, economic and social consequences – and arising from the power of the electorate, the government will be less likely to engage in war if the costs appear to be unbearably high. These elements can be identified as the institutional pillar of democratic peace - as they arise from the structural characteristics of democracies – and will serve as major base for the further chapters of the paper.

3. ON ACCOUNTABILITY

As for accountability, in the following the paper provides a closer and more detailed look at its concept. Given its rather intangible and ideological character, it is quite difficult to provide adequate and measurable data about this phenomenon, which Schedler (1999) refers to as the way we domesticate power and keep it under control.

"A is accountable to B when A is obliged to inform B about A’s (past or future) actions and decisions, to justify them, and to suffer punishment in the case of eventual misconduct" (Schedler, 1999, pp. 17). As easy as the concept might seem, it covers a wide range of elements and mechanisms, which all together form what we refer to here as accountability.

Legal accountability is based on the doctrinal frames drawn up by the Constitution of the state and other relevant documents of the international community, which is supposed to form a rather consistent system to operate according to (Farley, 2013, pp. 406).

Supervisory accountability consists of even more direct and straightforward tools - such as impeachment - for revision between parties that theoretically stand on roughly even levels.
The threat above our heads | Flora Hevesi

(Kyriacou, 2008, pp. 1; Farley, 2013, pp. 401). On one hand, the government is obligated to provide access to information for the relevant institutions. On the other hand, it is also required to cooperate with their opinion, regardless it being either supportive or contrary. This is labelled as the horizontal accountability mechanism of a state (Kyriacou, 2008, pp. 1). However, the concept is somewhat paradox. It implies an accounting party, which is in a way dependent on the accountable party, which is “immensely more powerful on all accounts, except in the (accounting) agency's specific sphere of competence” (Schedler, 1999, pp. 24).

Political accountability - which is based on a vertical relationship - refers to the transparent functioning of the government which enables the constituents to receive an overall and precise image about the administration’s pursuit to evaluate according to. It makes them capable to form a well-found decision whether they accept the given circumstances or want to generate changes. The election functions as a potentially projected ex post sanction, in case the citizens happen to disagree with their government’s steps. On the other hand, it also functions as an ex ante deterrent for the administration to avoid such measures, which would result in their replacement. The core idea of political accountability is consequently aiming to guide the actions of those with the power in their hands. (Farley, 2013, pp. 395)

Moreover, moral accountability covers normative standards referred to certain actions (Schedler, 1999, pp. 22).

**Types of Accountability**

![Diagram](kyriacou_2008_types_of_accountability.png)

Figure I. Types of Accountability, source: Kyriacou, 2008, pp. 2

What should be noted here is that these “fields” of accountability are not strictly divided and should not be examined separately. They could rather be described as an interplay of tightly interconnected pillars, where the characteristics we detect in one of the spheres, also indicates the traits of the others, together forming the complex system of governmental accountability.
4. UNDERMINED ACCOUNTABILITY

After briefly conceptualizing accountability, the paper systematically analyzes how each of the elements are affected by drone warfare.

“No government will send young men into battle to kill and be killed without offering some justification for what they are doing” (Walzer, s.a., cited by Kaag-Kreps, 2013, pp. 107). But what happens when the human factor is becoming less and less of a basic element?

With the introduction of highly advanced technologies in warfare - including armed drones - the need to send ground troops to the battlefield is greatly reduced, and the human personnel behind the operation of these remotely directed tools are not threatened in a direct way.

The core subject of accountability is knowledge - which comprises of both the informative dimension and its explanation and justification - and potential sanctioning arising depending on what we are informed about (Schedler, 1999). This is the point where the two pillars of this paper, the whole concept of accountability and drone warfare conflict each other.

The recent movement into the direction of ‘smart weapons’, which tends to eliminate the human factor from war, seems to result in loosening domestic constraints that can provoke military conflicts (Kaag-Kreps, 2013).

4.1. LEGAL ACCOUNTABILITY

“Drones are a tool, not a policy. The policy is assassination.” – is it to be read as one of the first sentences of the infamous Drone Papers published by The Intercept in 2015 after an anonymous source offered a narrow insight into the classified world of the government’s drone policy (Scahill, 2015). However, they are not the only one raising doubts regarding the lawfulness of this method – beside ethical and moral concerns –, to which the answer of the government has been consistently refusing. “On occasion, I read or hear a commentator loosely refer to lethal force against a valid military objective with the pejorative term “assassination.” (…) Under well-settled legal principles, lethal force against a valid military objective, in an armed conflict, is consistent with the law of war and does not, by definition, constitute an ‘assassination’.” – argued Jeh Johnson, Pentagon General Counsel at the time during one of his speeches held at Yale Law School (Johnson, 2012).

The assumption may seem plain and clear. But being aware of how the concept of valid military objective and armed conflict – the two fundamental pillars to which Johnson in the representation of the Government lays its argumentation – have been modified and deformed
in the last two decades, a number of ambiguities and shortcomings emerge from the slippery ground of various legal regulations.

4.1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

First of all, to get a basic idea about the issue of legal framework, we must examine the three main international doctrinal backgrounds: the U.N. Charter, which guides the *jus ad bellum*\(^2\), International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) for *jus in bello*\(^3\).

The *sovereignty* of countries is in general regulated by the Article 2(4) of the first chapter in the U.N. Charter. The incursion into another state’s territory either by human soldiers or military devices is prohibited with only two exceptions: the consent of the other government, or the aim of self-defense (International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic and Global Justice Clinic, 2012, pp. 105).

Looking back through history we can see that from time to time it occurs that under certain circumstances the troubled government lacks overall and effective control over the whole territory and population of the state. It was the case in Pakistan or Yemen, which happen to be two of the most controversial and disputed incidents of drone use. Such a scenario makes the justification and equity of governmental consent questionable. Additionally, drones also carry the ability to operate without leaving a “signature”, which would tightly link them to a certain state and make the detection of violations also more difficult. It “encourages” the overuse of violence by lowering the costs. (Buchanan-Kehoane, 2015)

However, the nature of threat has been changing arising from the spread of terrorism, the concept of sovereignty was also forced to gone through certain transformation. “We are at war with a stateless enemy, prone to shifting operations from country to country.”- says Attorney General Eric Holder - “International legal principles, including respect for another nation’s sovereignty, constrain our ability to act unilaterally.” This new kind of interpretation allows significantly greater latitude for the U.S. to decide whether they are entitled to cross the restraints posed by the traditional understanding of sovereignty. If the government decides that a nation is unable or unwilling to tackle the threat, the use of force within their territory becomes lawful. (Holder, 2012).

\(^2\) *Jus ad bellum* refers to the conditions under which States may resort to war or to the use of armed force in general.” (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2016, pp. 8)

\(^3\) *Jus in bello* regulates the conduct of parties engaged in an armed conflict.” (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2016, pp. 8)
Nevertheless, these kind of open-ended conditions hold the risk of another actor using their elasticity in favor of their own gains. This is exactly what happened when Russia “copied, or rather caricatured” the “American idea” regarding Georgia, and put a forthcoming intervention – and an emerged control over the country – into view based on the state’s incapacity to tackle the local forces of Chechen terrorists (theeconomist.com, 2002). Even though the United States did not consider Georgia to be a failed state in the need of such bailout, and suspected other motives in the background, the administration lacked clear and defining legal criteria to refer to and indisputably undermine and disprove Russia’s idea.

As for the question of lawful deployment, in case of armed conflicts both IHL and IHRL would normally serve as guiding lines. However, outside of armed conflict the IHRL would function as legal background (International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic and Global Justice Clinic, 2012).

According to the law of war, the four plus one pillars for the use of force is distinction, proportionality, humanity, military necessity and additionally, honor.

(Curtis E. LeMay Center, 2017, pp.1). “Of course, any such use of lethal force by the United States will comply with the four fundamental law of war principles governing the use of force.”- claims Attorney General Holder (Holder, 2012).

By distinction we mean the discrimination between militants and non-militants (or civilians). The binary terminology is misleading, as it refers to all “combatants” as legitimate military objectives (living under drones). The reporting of these numbers shields a great part of the truth, as most of the unintended targets end up being labelled as unidentified Enemies Killed in Action (EKIA) – and they often cover a significant amount of the targets of drone strikes. (Begley, 2015)

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5 It needs to be mentioned that according to recent evidence the civilian violations of drones are still significantly lower compared to conventional methods, but their number is still not negligible. (Zenko, 2013, cited by Buchanan-Keohane, 2015, pp. 22)
The Rate of Targets Classified as EKIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>#Ops</th>
<th>EKIA</th>
<th>Detainees</th>
<th>JP</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enabled Ops</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinetic Strikes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I. The Rate of Targets Classified as EKIA, source: Begley, 2015

This data was also published as part of the leaked documents which would otherwise represent classified information shielded from public eyes.

Second, the term of proportionality refers to the notion that the anticipated loss of incidental civilian life and property shouldn’t outweigh the military advantage gained from the attack (Curtis E. LeMay Center, 2017). This concept is tightly interconnected with distinction discussed above. “Drones have not caused a huge number of civilian casualties, for the most part they have been very precise strikes against al Qaeda and their affiliates” – even though the government strongly argues for the precision of drone strikes compared to other types of attack, this claim appears to impeachable arising from their tendency of underreporting relevant numbers (Obama, 2012).

Reports and Estimations on Civilian Casualties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>U. S. Assertions</th>
<th>TBIJ Reported Civilian Deaths</th>
<th>Examples of Contradictory Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 2012</td>
<td>President Obama, acknowledging the drone program for the first time, states that it is “kept on a very tight leash,” enables the U.S. to use “pinpoint” targeting, and does not inflict huge civilian casualties. President Barak Obama</td>
<td>Jan. ’09-Dec. ‘11 Total strikes: 259 Total Killed: 1932 Minimum Civilians Killed: 297-569+ Minimum Children Killed: 64+ Minimum Total Injured: 901</td>
<td>Since Obama took office three years ago, between 282 and 535 civilians have been credibly reported as killed, including more than 60 children. A three month investigation including eye witness reports has found evidence that at least 50 civilians were killed in follow-up strikes when they had gone to help victims. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism Between May 2009 and June 2011, at least fifteen attacks on rescuers were reported by credible news media. New York Times / CNN / Associated Press / ABC News / Al Jazeera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2012</td>
<td>U.S. “has no reliable evidence” of civilian deaths in any of the examined strikes. Unnamed U.S. counterterrorism official</td>
<td>AP Report (10 strikes) Total Civilians Killed: 53 Total Children Killed: 3</td>
<td>(re: April 22, 2011 strike) AP Study finds “[m]issiles hit a compound in Hasan Khel village, killing 25 people, including 20 militants, three children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Third, *military necessity* means that the target counts as a valid military objective (Curtis E. LeMay Center, 2017). To register as such and be placed on the infamous “death list” of the government, the victim should to fulfil certain strict terms, for instance they have to pose imminent threat to the United States or their capture must be infeasible. “This is a targeted focused effort at people who are on a list of active terrorists (…). This thing is kept on a very tight leash” (Obama, 2012).

In fact, the implementation often contradicts the notion. On one hand, if we take a look at the Watchlisting Guidance and their criteria for future targets, it seems that those *tight leashes* appear to be significantly loosened in practice. On the other hand, even the legal terms - such as imminence or feasibility - have gone through radical redefinition during the last few years, and the possible interpretation of *military necessity* is getting greatly broader and more flexible.

Fourth, *honor* or chivalry means the necessary amount of fairness and mutual respect between the parties in spite of their opposing position (Curtis E. LeMay Center, 2017). Even though this paper doesn’t intend to study the question in deeper terms, the primary reason why drone warfare gets criticized and attacked by the public is its alleged capability to eliminate the human costs of killing. However, the assumption started to raise greater and great awareness and has been disproven by multiple sources. \(^6\)

Finally, *humanity* stands for the prohibition of unnecessary suffering. Out of the five pillars this is the one regarding which drones do not fulfil such flagrant conditions that would justify their distinction from other kinds of warfare, even in the face of their ability the reduce transparency and accountability.

Lacking any presence of armed conflict in a legal sense would lead to the base of IHRL (International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic - Global Justice Clinic, 2012). However, shortly after the events of September 2001, The Authorization for Use of Military

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\(^6\) The paper briefly touches upon the question in chapter *Moral accountability*. 
Force (AUMF) has come to life. The resolution opens up completely new conditions regarding the legal regulation for the deployment of force. According to section 2(b), “the President is authorized to use all necessary and appropriate force against those nations, organizations, or persons he determines planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on September 11, 2001, or harbored such organizations or persons” (U.S. Congress, 2001, pp. 1). The text does not declare further restraints or terms which should be fulfilled and therefore after 17 years it still allows an open-end for the legitimate use of force.

Former president Barack Obama consistently rejected the ‘global war on terror’ concept of the Bush-era, and criticized the resolution and the broad sphere of action it authorizes. “I asked Congress, let’s update the authorization (…) So far, Congress has refused to take a vote.” – expressed his concerns in 2016 (Obama, 2016). Simultaneously, similarly condemning voices emerged from the side of the Congress: “The 2001 AUMF is a blank check for endless war. (…) The war is over. Congress should recognize this by repealing this blank check for endless war.” – argued Congresswoman Lee two years (Lee, s. a. cited by lee.house.gov, 2014). Even though both parties appear to share the strong disapproval regarding the AUMF in front of public eyes, the reduced obligations regarding transparency and the lowered costs of opting for war still seem to be politically advantageous enough for the Resolution to remain in power after nearly two decades of the events that brought it into life.

Besides the fact that the doctrinal sources miss to form a consistent background, the ambiguity of legal definitions – and the government taking advantage of the loopholes arising from that – create further confusion and opportunity to gear the supposedly stable legal framework to certain interests.

4.1.2. THE SLIPPERY GROUND OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

“Just as surely as we are a nation at war, we also are a nation of laws and values.” – states Attorney Holder – “Even when under attack, our actions must always (…) be consistent with statutes, court precedent, the rule of law and our founding ideals” (Holder, 2012). It appears that the administration followed the suggestion of the national security team after all, and applied the concept of “pragmatism over ideology” under certain circumstances where the interest required so (Becker-Shane, 2012).
Given the technology of drones being rather new and uncommon, it’s difficult – or at this point even impossible - to see a complete and consistent picture about where its place is within the legal system. This uncertainty opened up new loopholes for policymakers, mainly depending on its representation.

Drones have on one hand already been demonstrated as such a whole new and unusual concept that they can’t be considered within the tight restraints of the traditional legal system. To bring just one instance to confirm this statement, the paper briefly analyzes the case of Libyan drone strikes which have been deployed without Congressional approval. The action relied on the argument that no potential harm on the American troops was risked in the operations (Kaag-Kreps, 2013). “U.S. operations do not involve sustained fighting or active exchanges of fire with hostile forces, nor do they involve the presence of U.S. ground troops, U.S. casualties or a serious threat thereof, or any significant chance of escalation into a conflict characterized by those factors.” – answered the White House in a report (Schell, 2011). The War Powers Resolution had been phrased before UAVs became a widespread tool of the U.S. forces, therefore it lacks such elements that could clearly and directly refer to drone technology. As Walzer says, the government must provide justification if it sends its citizens to the battlefield – but as it appears with the elimination of the human element, the ought of transparency and accounting disappears as well (Walzer, s.a., cited by Kaag-Kreps, 2013).

In contrast to the case above, under different circumstances there have also been arguments for drones only being more advanced stage of targeting rather than some sort of new technology. The method has for decades been functioning as a lawful and accepted way of using force, consequently nothing justifies the current concerns regarding it legitimacy. “During World War II, for example, American aviators tracked and shot down the airplane carrying the architect of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor (…). This was a lawful operation then, and would be if conducted today.” – argues Legal Adviser Harold Koh (Koh, 2010). Apparently, the perception and categorizing of drones can vary depending on what the interest would require regarding the relevant legal principles.

Furthermore, as the paper has already briefly addressed this issue, most legal terms do not have a narrow and tangible interpretation which could not be geared to particular conditions, even though Johnson (2012) claims that “we must apply, and we have applied, the law of armed conflict (…). Put another way, we must not make it up to suit the moment.”

It has already been discussed above how our approach to sovereignty has changed over time.
Similarly, the definition of *imminence* - which is a fundamental condition to be fulfilled to legitimate the use of force against a U.S. citizen associated with terrorism - has also had to be modernized: “Practically speaking, then, the question turns principally on how you define imminence. We are finding increasing recognition in the international community that a more flexible understanding of “imminence” may be appropriate when dealing with terrorist groups” (The U.S. Justice Departement, 2013; Brennan, 2011). *Infeasibility* is one of the three pillars of deploying force against U.S. citizen who is alliable with terrorist groups (The U.S. Justice Departement, 2013). But “what does it mean for capture not to be feasible? How hard do you have to try?” – expresses his concerns law professor Daskal regarding the elasticity of the concept (Daskal, s. a. cited by Currier, 2015).

Over and above, beside the demonstrated fundamental doctrinal sources we could also examine a number of additional documents⁷ (and also in each case of drone use we could take a glance at the domestic legal system of the certain state) to see further concerns emerging, whether drone strikes comply with the constraints stated there. But the real hazard lies in the fact that in spite of the continuous violation of the legal system, the government has its tools and practices which makes it possible to represent their policies as being consistent with the legal principles and ideals. This element is in tight interconnection with Political Accountability (see below) and the electoral incentive of the Democratic Peace Theory’s structural pillar. The misleading and shielding communication deforms the public’s sources for a genuine and overall knowledge regarding their government’s pursuit and thereby undermines their ability to evaluate and act in a responsible way.

4.2. **SUPERVISORY ACCOUNTABILITY**

“Currently, any President can wage war in any place, at any time against nearly any enemy without Congressional oversight or debate.”- says Congresswoman Lee (Lee, s. a. cited by lee.house.gov, 2014). As the paper has briefly touched upon the issue before, the legal system

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⁷ For instance the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, as its content that is “potentially violated by US drone practice include Article 7, the prohibition on cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment or punishment, Article 9.1, the right to liberty and security, Article 17, the right to freedom from arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family, and home, Article 21, the right to peaceful assembly, and Article 22, the right to freedom of association” (International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic and Global Justice Clinic, 2012, pp. 118).
often offers loopholes for policymakers which enables them to lawfully operate without the approval of a supervisory institution, like in the case of Libyan strikes. “There exists no appropriate judicial forum to evaluate these constitutional considerations” – clarifies the White Paper obviating any further disputes, quoting justification as "[m]atters intimately related to foreign policy and national security are rarely proper subjects for judicial intervention," (The U.S. Justice Departement, 2013, pp. 9).

The most general argument that is referred to as a justification for the exclusion from decision-making is the situation-dependent nature of drone strikes. “Military and civilian officials must often make real-time decisions that balance the need to act, the existence of alternative options, the possibility of collateral damage, and other judgments – all of which depend on expertise and immediate access to information that only the Executive Branch may possess in real time.” – argues Holder (Holder, 2012). If the window of opportunity is missed, it “would cause to civilians, and the likelihood of heading off future disastrous attacks against the United States.” (Holder, 2012). Consequently, the previous discussion of strikes would result in serious losses arising from missed opportunities, while the posterior evaluation is simply unrealistic lacking a proper overview of the time-dependent information and alternatives that the operator’s decision was based on.

The ambiguity arising from the slippery legal framework makes it difficult to the relevant institutions to make objective and watertight decision. The equivocality of the legal background leads to obstacles in the practice of implementation, as lacking any kind of stable standing-ground undermines the base for compellability and the power of the relevant supervisory institutions to impose sanctions or any kind of restriction. Given the field’s rather new and immature character, it causes complications to refer to precedent or international practice, which is common in other, more well-practiced spheres.

Undermined supervisory accountability is built up from two elements which affect and strengthen each other in the relation of complex interconnectedness: the incapacity of compelling transparency regarding drone strikes, and the consequence that they have to approve their deployment arising from their duty towards the people.

In sum, supervisory bodies are having less and less oversight and control over the decision of opting for war, and they are also losing the power to compel transparency regarding the external costs of war. This enables the government to pursue highly misleading and underreporting communication towards the public. The constituents are not aware of the high rates of civilian deaths or the unintended loss of property caused by drone strikes, and thereby these growing
external costs of war are not internalized. They only perceive the lowering *internal costs* – for instance that human troops no longer have to carry the burden of fighting on the battlefield – and as a result drone strikes remain strongly supported by the public. The responsibility of the Congress is to represent the interest and mind of the population – therefore in case it takes part in the process of evaluating the option of a drone strike, the Congress must approve the decision. The process has come full circle, and there is no base to challenge the government for deciding to deploy the next drone strike, as the way it has acted is consistent with the will of the people and the consent of the Congress.

### 4.3. **Political Accountability**

Political accountability refers to the power concentrated in the constituents’ hands to evaluate the acts and policies of the government and if all else fails, replace the administration (Farley, 2013). Even though the notion represents the core values of democracy, its real life implementation has its anomalies. It would also be worth to examine how the periodicity of the elections or the method of voting undermines the effective functioning of the system. But to narrowly stick to the spheres relevant in the case of drone warfare, it is the informational disparity what has to be emphasized (Farley, 2013).

Governments can be devastated by the burdens that the citizens must suffer during war. In this scenario, by opting for alternatives, which are cheaper and lower the number of casualties, governments can reduce their vulnerability to the opinion and leverage of the public. The lower the costs of certain conflicts are, the lower the probability of negative electoral sanction gets. The purpose to reduce this possibility often results significant informational asymmetry between the leaders and the public, either arising from the covert nature of missions for instance into geographically remote locations, or by the tendency of underreporting of the scale of casualties and pursuing greatly misleading communication regarding the circumstances of these strikes (Farley, 2013; International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic and Global Justice Clinic, 2012).

Separately from the legal base of a conflict, the administration would be obligated to provide regular and detailed statistics about the casualties and injuries among other things. It should be broken down by country, year and months, location, sex and age, including their status (civilian, unknown, combatant etc.). This hasn’t been fulfilled perfectly, and neither has the criteria regarding the transparency about the institutional decision-making process, the compensation system or the acknowledgement of each and every strike and civilian violation. This kind of
data is mostly delivered by journalist estimations, NGOs and other on-the-ground investigations. (Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic and Sana’a Center for Strategic Studies, 2017)

As it has been described above, the supervisory institutions are no longer able to enforce accountability, and only the misleadingly law internal costs are presented toward the public. Therefore, drone technology is consistently supported by the people, which serves as a justification for the government for the use of force. Additionally, the public polls - which are referred as a straightforward evidence of civilians backing the deployment of drones – often turn out to be highly manipulative. As Kreps (2013) described, the typical phrasing of the central questions (e.g. “Do you approve or disapprove the Obama Administration using drones to kill high-level terrorism suspects overseas?”) frames the further flow of thoughts and the final answer, as it incorporates misleading assumptions about the drones’ legal authorization and their consistency with international law (e.g. regarding targets, proportionality or necessity etc.). The major danger of these polls with approximately 60% approval rate is not that they mislead the public, but that they create a stable base for the administration by serving as clear evidence for the constituents’ support.

4.4. MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The question of moral accountability might be the one most difficult to examine. As it has been briefly touched upon earlier, the primer concern regarding drone warfare has been that it creates a great distance between the operator and the destruction itself. Being one of the parties vulnerable and defenseless while the other one sitting in a safe office with a joystick in his hands, it is claimed to give the impression of the video games with no real consequence of death. However, among others Warrior (2015) introduced quite a new approach to the field. She analyzed the mental burdens of such missions, which are still not clearly communicated. “Ever step on ants and never give it another thought? That’s what you are made to think of the targets (...) You had to kill part of your conscience to keep doing your job every day – and ignore those voices telling you this wasn’t right.” – explains Haas, former operator (Haas, s. a. cited by Pilkington, 2015). The weight of killing is also heightened by the previous process of monitoring the victim - as most of the targets are condemned to “persistent stare” - during which the pilot gets familiar with their living conditions, their family and children, who often also fall prey to the strikes as collateral damage.

Warrior (2015) also mentions how anomalies in transparency towards the public could end up in a self-generating cycle, which will constantly increase the costs of revealing true data about
drones as time passes by. As more and more leaked information and scandal appear and unfold the tendency of airing misleading data by the government, it would represent the use of drones as an act of rather questionable or even illegal motives – and lead to a suspicious public attitude. However, this pattern has not yet seem to emerge to be dominant.

5. The Consequences arising from Shattered Accountability

5.1. Timeline of the U.S. Drone Strikes

At this point of the research we can assertively state that the introduction of drone warfare has also been accompanied by deep changes in the traditional accountability mechanisms that the government should correspond to. It leads to the weakening of certain incentives that would normally guard the leaders’ decision-making when evaluating the deployment of force. So where does it lead when those constraints - intended to restrain the unnecessary use of force - are loosened?

The results suggest that as the costs of deploying force are reduced, the frequency and intensity of these conflicts start to rise. As the government has certain loopholes to successfully avoid its traditional obligations to transparently and clearly account for the use of force and its justification, it might encourage the policy-makers to opt for interventions.

**Reported U.S. Drone Strikes in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan**

![Graph showing reported U.S. drone strikes in Yemen, Somalia, and Pakistan from 2002 to 2016.](image)

Figure I. Reported U.S. Drone Strikes in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan, source: Begley, s. a.

The graphic aims to demonstrate the tendency how drone technology spread over the last two decades. It has been based on the API database called *dronestream* created by Josh Begley,
which covers all the reported drone strikes and deaths in Yemen, Somalia and Pakistan between 2002 and 2017 March⁸. The chart only intends to serve as visual representation, but fails to provide trustworthy numbers, because the data is based on the official rates of the U.S., which have been proven to be strongly misleading and underreporting. Additionally, it only incorporates the strikes deployed in three states, as we lack any consistent database regarding the interventions in other countries.

The first U.S. drone strike has been deployed in 2001 in Afghanistan, nearly 9 months after the events of 9/11, but the spreading of the technology began only after 2004, and showed a drastic augment after 2007 and a less intense, but still significant drop after 2012.

The fallback can be traced back to the reason that the first years of excessive drone use provoked the emergence of untraditional platforms demanding the transparency and accountability that the traditional institutions – such as the Congress – were no longer capable to compel, as the new technology had undermined their mechanisms.

The deployment of drones has been publicly challenged by such prestigious institutions as such as the Columbia University Law School’s Human Rights Clinic, the Stanford University’s International Human Rights and Conflict Resolution Clinic, the New York University School of Law’s Global Justice Clinic or the The American Civil Liberties Union. Additionally, the New York Time has revealed in May that the President was personally responsible for deciding about the death of potential targets and also other details about drone warfare – which became “one of the biggest news stories of the year”. (Woods-Serle-Ross, 2013)

Nevertheless, it also appears from the tendency that even though the sudden backlash in 2012 has caused some direct setback, at the end of the day these new channels have hardly been powerful enough to be able to pursue compellability against the administration.

The response from the government has been mostly refusing, continuing to refer to the efficiency, precision and reduced internal costs of drone warfare (Woods-Serle-Ross, 2013). This shielding governmental communication and the war without bloodshed turned out to be more efficient and convincing than the attempts to internalize the external costs, as the public remained strongly supportive regarding the deployment of drone technology. While according to a poll in 2012 55% of the participants approved drones and the rate started growing to 56% in 2013, in 2015 the support increased to 58%, which covers almost twice the amount of the

⁸ The chart but does not involve 2017 arising from the incompleteness of the data in that year.
ones against the method. In sum, the backlash in 2012 did not affect the public opinion, neither in short and nor in the long run.

Public Support for U.S. Drone Strikes

![Bar chart showing public support for U.S. drone strikes from 2012 to 2015](image)


It is reasonable to assume that the official casualty numbers after 2012 might be even more underreporting than before. After the traditional accountability mechanisms had been undermined, it also turned out that the emerging untraditional channels are also unable to compel transparency and dominate the public opinion as opposed to the misleading communication. The experience could have encouraged the government to increase the shielding of information, as no real constraints have been posed to contain them from doing so.

It will be emphasized later but must also be mentioned at this point that the paper does not claim that drones and their interconnectedness with accountability mechanisms serve as the only determinative factor when governments evaluate the opportunity of intervention. There is a wide range of circumstances contributing to the decision, among which drone technology only increases the probability of opting for the use of force by lowering its costs.

5.2. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

In sum, drone technology seems to undermine certain accountability mechanisms and thereby reduce the costs of intervention. This result leads to the hypotheses that the capability to use
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Drones raise the probability of deploying force under such circumstances where otherwise – without drones - they would not intervene because of the unbearably high costs.

The paper investigates the assumption through the small-n qualitative case study analysis of three relevant cases from the past two decades of the United States’ international operations. The first one refers to the lack of intervention – within such circumstances under which it would have been reasonable - in 2002, before the use of drones became widespread. The second one is the first attack in Pakistan in 2004, from the early years of drone warfare – the deployment can be traced back to the previous months of growing terrorism threat, though no direct incentive for action can be identified. The third one is a strike with outstandingly high number of casualties from 2016, with an official explanation which does not certainly meet the criteria of adequate and valid justification. The comparative case study intends to highlight that as time has been passing by and drone technology has been becoming more and more widespread, simultaneously the accountability restraints which would hold back the government from the use of force has been weakening.

On the other hand, this argumentation does not imply a deterministic relationship between the generality of drone use as independent variable and the decision to intervene as dependent variable – it intends to uncover probabilistic interconnectedness: the spreading of these tools might encourage interventions and increase their probability, but does not lead to certainty in the option of deploying force. The dependent variable might be influenced by a great number of different factors, which are difficult for researchers to control arising from the characteristics of the discipline.

5.2.1. Non-intervention in Kenya, 2002

The Horn of Africa has been of particular significance in the fight against terrorism from the beginning, mainly within the frames of humanitarian and security cooperation which refers to anti-terrorism training and security equipment donations. (Turse, 2015; United States Institute of Peace, 2004). The U.S. had been present in the area ever since the Cold War, including a list of port access, airbase, and over-flight agreements (United States Institute of Peace, 2004). However, after 1998 they have taken even more measures to establish its footprints in the area and intensify the relationship.

In 2003, the Kenyan government has officially acknowledged a firm local presence of Al-Qaeda together and a detected future terrorist attack which would have been targeted against Western
objectives. There has also been inconclusive evidence about a link to the local forces and the largest and most powerful radical Islamist organization, the al Ittihad al Islamiya. (United States Institute of Peace, 2004)

Only a few months earlier, members from the terrorist network deployed a coordinated attack against a hotel and an airliner in Mombasa, even managing to evade the security restraint of the state by transporting certain arms. “If you want to hit an American jet, why do it in the United States? You can try it other places, where it's easier.” – explained an intelligence official, while other experts discovered evidence that made them suspect Al Qaeda involvement behind the plans (Ignatius - International Herald Tribune, 2002). However, “they lacked definitive proof” and therefore were not able to declare certainty (Johnston, 2002).

The attack did not provoke any particular reaction from the United States. This response – or more precisely the lack thereof – poses great contrast to the events of 1998, when terrorist missiles in Kenya were answered by large-scale bombings in Afghanistan and Sudan against alleged supporters of the network. The action has been described as “one of the most debated military actions undertaken by the administration”. An investigation was set to review the doubted legitimacy of the U.S. missiles and the adequacy of intelligence that they were based on. (Gikunda, s. a.)

Additionally, the government has also been accused of negligence and was required to compensate the community up to $1 million per each casualty (Johnston, 2002).

This strong legal and public backlash could have contributed to the fact that later the U.S. missed to react to the attacks of 2002, even though they took place in one of the most intense areas during one of the most intense periods of fighting back against the headway of terrorism. Legal and public accountability and transparency mechanisms have been identified by the former chapters of this paper as major channels that get undermined by the use of drones – so it is reasonable to assume that in a hypothetical counterfactual case, public and legal backlash might not have succeeded to deter government action if the option of using drone strikes was there (the technology was not widespread at the time of this case).

To conclude, the Kenyan case is an example where it was reasonable to expect intervention both because of the high salience of terrorism in 2002 and the importance of the region. The fact that it did not happen can be linked to the public and legal backlash following a previous intervention.

5.2.2. Intervention in Pakistan, 2004
U.S.-Pakistani relations also trace back long before 9/11, the United States and their political, economic, social and diplomatic support – which refers to both assistance and funds - have been a key element behind the relative stability of Pakistan. On the other hand, the region’s geostrategic importance has risen after 2001 because of its location near Afghanistan, which was suitable for the U.S. for airspace bases and local logistic support. The cooperation began as highly advantageous for both parties (Akhtar, 2012)

The U.S. military and law enforcement personnel started began “direct, low-profile efforts” to provide a more intense anti-terrorism assistance in 2002 (Kronstadt, 2004, pp. 5). Al-Qaeda and its affiliates have deep ties in the region, which has been claimed to pose a direct threat to the United States and other Western states, similarly to Kenya (Armitage – Berger – Markey, 2010). Apparently the Kenyan conditions mostly resonate with the circumstances of Pakistan, with the major difference that while in the first case terrorist operations remained without reaction, in the second one they seem to have provoked a strike as response.

The first U.S. drone attack has been carried out in 2004, even though this data often causes misunderstanding, as the Pakistani forces claimed responsibility for the attack – but in fact, it has been deployed by the CIA. In a back-room bargain it has been agreed to eliminate a Pakistani state enemy rebel, in exchange for a strategically important airspace access. C (Mazzetti, s. a.)

Consequently, the attack was not targeted against some top operative of the terrorist network. But arising from the characteristics of drone technology not leaving a signature behind, the backlash of the strikes is not even to be compared with the one after the response attacks in 1998 Kenya. The Pakistani government has also given its consent for further drone attacks. As the strikes operate under covert actions of the CIA, the United State does not even have to account for their deployment – additionally, Pakistan was also made to agree to take responsibility for the actions, if needed. (Mazzetti, s. a.)

Without drones, this bargain could have not been made. The technology offered such solution for the issues of Pakistan that they would not be able to pursue through traditional methods. The agreement prevented any potential public backlash, many databases still refer to the attack in 2005 as the first U.S. drone strike in Pakistan, even though we already have a greater access to information than it was possible at the time. Additionally, it has also created a legal base for the justification of further drone use, which made it relatively impossible to compel accountability for the actions.
5.2.3. Intervention in Somalia, 2016

Regarding U.S. – Somalia relations one of the most significant events is the Black Hawk Down case. In 1993, two American helicopters were shut down in the middle of a failed raid of elite troops (bbc.com, 2017). It became the symbol of American military intervention in Somalia, and President Clinton called the forces back a few months later from the area.

Until 2017, it had been the last example of American military victim in the area, even though in 2013 a small number of troops have returned to provide anti-terrorist support. The assistance mainly refers to training, planning, advising and humanitarianism, but the U.S. does not deploy forces unless in self-defense situation. (Martinez, 2017)

The third case intends to demonstrate how the spreading use of drone technology have lowered the mechanisms of accountability, and thereby it encouraged the government to deploy such strikes for which the explanation would not necessarily meet the criteria of a valid and well-found justification.

This particular strike in Somalia from 2016 is considered to deserve distinguished attention arising from the fact that it was reportedly responsible for the death of more than 150 people – which number is significantly higher than the usual rate of 1-10 victims, accounting for the highest death toll ever caused by one single attack (thebureauinvestigates.com, s. a.).

The strike was targeted against the Camp Raso al-Shabab training camp that after some time of surveillance raised the suspicion of posing imminent threat against the United States. "There was a sense that the operational phase was about to happen” for offensive actions – no further details about the alleged attack has been published, though (Davis, s. a. cited by bbc. Com, 2016a). The al-Shabab group has been associated with a number of attacks in the previous month, but no event took place which could be considered as outstanding in comparison to the general level of terrorist operation in the area within the reviewed period. On the other hand, the Australian navy has just caught a great amount of weapons transported by a fishing boat which “was apparently heading for Somalia”, even though the ship from Oman would have also passed by the harbors of Yemen (bbc.com, 2016b).

The explanation provided by the government poses a greatly representative example about the misleading and shielding governmental communication which has earlies been detailed, as it avoids the use of factual and therefore challengeable statements⁹. The fact that this justification has been enough to base an outstandingly lethal strike on it due to shattered accountability

⁹ See: „there was a sense“; „apparently“
mechanisms – even though the only reason of force deployment is reportedly self-defense - poses great contrast to the case of Kenya, where the “lack of definitive proof” regarding Al-Qaeda involvement behind the bombings strongly contributed to hold back the U.S. from a response attack (Johnston, 2002).

5.3. SUMMARY

<table>
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<th>Comparation of the Analised Cases</th>
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Table IV. Comparation of analised cases, source: personal collection

The purpose of the analyses has been to compare counterfactuals, such cases, which only differ from each other in the explanatory variable, which here refers to drone technology. All of the three countries have a quite a long history regarding non-military U.S. cooperation and assistance, they are all highly affected by terrorism, are alleged to pose direct threat to the United States and are located in a geographically and strategically relevant area.

The Kenyan case took place in 2002, shortly before the spread of drone warfare began. Even though there are reasonably expectations for a U.S. response strike to the terrorist attacks, this assumption has not been fulfilled, which is presumably to be traced back to the great public and
legal backlash of a similar attack in 1998 – before the spread of drones, these accountability mechanisms have not been undermined.

In Pakistan, the access of the U.S. to drone technology enabled them to make such agreement which have served as a justification for the further years of drone strikes. On one hand, it eliminated the direct public backlash, as the state has been unidentifiable behind the attacks. On the other hand, it Pakistani government’s lack of access to drones – and thereby their lack of solution to their domestic and terrorism-related issues – created a great bargaining position for the U.S. who have been in possession thereof.

The loosening constraints of accountability mechanisms is greatly demonstrated in the case of Somalia. According to the official approach, the U.S. personnel in the area only offers logistics and humanitarian assistance, unless they have to deploy force for the purpose of self-defense. The explanation behind the outstandingly lethal attack was reportedly based on allegation, no clear evidence served the assumption of imminent threat, which could have provoked a preventive strike – however, the accountability mechanisms are no longer able to compel such.

Even though the brief review analyzes in the light of the prevalence of drone use, it must be strongly emphasized that there is an infinite number of other factors – such as domestic and international political, economic, financial etc. - which could have contributed to the decision about intervention.

Regarding only the first case discussed above, a great range of diverse circumstances must be considered. For instance, the first attack in 1998 happened right in the middle of the Lewinski-scandal, and therefore the response strike could have served as a diversion. Additionally, the period in which the second attack in 2002 took place is framed by the invasions in Afghanistan and Iraq, so the government might have simply lacked the capacity to open a third military front at the time.

It would be highly misleading to ascribe the decision to intervene exclusively to the effects of drones on accountability, and the paper does not intend to do so. It only implies that drone technology enables the government to make use of certain loopholes that are not present otherwise. Consequently, these lowered risks increase the probability that they will deploy strikes in also such cases where without drones they would not intervene because of its costs.

6. “THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN”
The title of the chapter is a reference to Dennis C. Blair, former director of the U.S. national intelligence, as he has been criticizing the increasing reliance on drone strikes (Blair, 2010 cited by Becker-Shane, 2012). Drone warfare symbolizes the American attitude and power in the yes of many: sovereignty, law, civilian casualties and accountability can no longer serve as restraints, which lead to the” normalization of assassination” (Becker-Shane, 2012; Schahill, 2015).

UAVs hold two major advantages over manned aircraft. On one hand, they reduce the costs both literally and figuratively, as the paper has already discussed in the former chapters. On the other hand, the reason behind the increasing reliance on this technology is that they suit the changed characteristics of the threats.

Terrorism poses a radically new kind of challenge, which we did not have an answer to. Traditionally, the dangers towards a state used to arise from other states – but terrorism, given its rather international and intangible character lacks a well-defined source. The nature of terrorism is similar to guerillas or insurgents regarding their warfare strategies like bombing, kidnapping, shooting or barricade, and they lack an identifiable signature such as a uniform, which makes it greatly difficult to properly distinguish them from civilians (Byman, 2014).

There are two major elements regarding drone technology, which makes it effective against terrorists in an unprecedented way. One of the key issues regarding the terrorist network is its firm local presence which is widespread – and ever increasing – regarding multiple areas all over the globe. Arising from the barriers of military capacity such as the narrow supply of soldiers and arms, persistent standing and preparedness for regional attacks or prevention has its limitations. Drone warfare eliminated the need for human troops, and besides the reduced public costs, it enabled the military to give a more competent and extensive answer to the constant threat. The U.S. developed strategic centers at most of the geographically relevant areas, such as the Horn of Africa, which enables the government to implement a constant local presence.

On the other hand, drones are also to be deployed as tools for exploration and intelligence. Before a person gets on the death list of future victims, they became a member of the Terrorist Screening Database, and the personnel starts to build a detailed intelligence package – so-called ‘baseball card’ – around the potential target (Scahill-Devereaux, 2014). However, the elastic concept of “reasonable suspicion” is enough to count as such (National Counterterrorism Center, pp. 33).
The classified documents leaked by The Intercept provide an overview of who is in charge for judging according to these information, whether one poses imminent threat to the US and therefore should be included on the official kill list of the government.

In 2012, Obama has claimed in an interview that ultimately he is “responsible for the process” - which seem to be consistent with our knowledge regarding the Chain of Command - even though he did not confirm that he would individually approve each of the targets before the strike (Obama, 2012 cited by Woods, 2012; Currier, 2015). Nevertheless, some expressed serious concerns about the President’s capability to access trustworthy data regarding the targets and deployed strikes. “There is the greatest danger here of a falsehood being told by US intelligence services, which misleads President Obama into taking decisions which are manifestly contrary to America’s best interests.” – says human rights lawyer Smith (Woods, 2011).

Once a person has been confirmed to become a lawfully targeted victim, in general there is a 60-day window for execution (Begley, 2015). Those institutions in charge of deploying drones have turned out to lack a proper distinction regarding the sphere of action. Both the CIA and JSOC operate drone strikes separately, and instead of consistent cooperation and communication, the two agencies’ relationship appears to rather be characterized by turf battles and pointing fingers – for instance, their decisions are based on their own different sources of intelligence. Even though former president Obama and the Congress had taken measures “turning to the U.S. military to take the lead”, President Trump has returned to the “hybrid approach” and “put the CIA back in charge of drone strikes” (Miller, 2015; Evans, 2017).

Ironically, even though Obama has been labelled as the ‘Drone King’, we know that current President Trump’s drone strikes are reportedly responsible for more civilian deaths during the first 9 months of his presidency than Obama had been during all his 8 years - we lack proper data from the very last years, though. (Blevins, 2017)

In sum, even though it has its consequences and the paper focuses on the issue from another aspect, the primary reason behind the quick spreading behind drone warfare is not that decision-makers’ intentional seeking to undermine accountability mechanisms. “Our product in war is dead targets, and our product in peace is all that goes into generating the warrior proficiency that kills those targets in wartime.” – in this scenario, no method before has been able to pursue such a great progress in the fight against terrorism: these tools provided a relatively low-cost and unprecedentedly effective solution which had seemed to pose an unapproachable threat (Jumper, 2000 cited by Tirpak, 2000).
7. CONCLUSION

The paper intends to investigate how the concept of democratic peace is affected by the spreading of drone warfare. It has examined the initial hypotheses that drone warfare undermines traditional accountability mechanisms and thereby shatters the institutional pillar of the theory. After systematically splitting accountability into its core and more tangible elements, I’ve analyzed how certain loopholes are posed by the deployment of drone technology and how it disables the traditional channels to compel accountability. The results have underpinned the former assumption, which lead to the reasonable theory that the loosened constraints and reduced costs encourage counterfactual interventions and therefore raise the probability of such.

The substance of this work resides in its character of giving a detailed, systematic overview about the elements of accountability and how these mechanisms have been undermined. It enables this paper to function as a competent starting point to analyze how these constraints can be rebuilt step by step so that we can come up with a more powerful answer that suit the changing circumstances.

The qualitative case study that analyses has been deployed to test the theory regarding counterfactual interventions seems to unfold such results that would carry a great political importance beside its academic relevance. Given the limitations of my paper I strongly believe that the concept would deserve and require a further research.

Nevertheless, even though my paper is focused on the hazards and threats, which are tied to the use of drones, there is an unnegligible amount of arguments considering the deployment of these tools as the best of the existing alternatives. „The Obama administration relies on drones for one simple reason: they work.”- argues Byman (2013:4). It suggests that instead of emphasizing the unavoidably burdensome consequences of this method, it would be more relevant to concentrate on possible solutions to fit the mechanisms to the changing conditions.

Buchanan and Keohane (2015) has introduced a possible scheme about the Drone Accountability Regime, using the Missile Technology Control Regime as a starting point and analog for further shaping. Such a regime would function on a global level, based on states, non-governmental actors and an Ombudsperson, which are intended to enforce accountability and transparency as the mechanism clearly needs to outgrow its currently domestic frames. On the other hand, it would be too naïve to believe that such a plan would be instantly feasible and the circumstances are already ready for the implementation. However, the issue poses a great
challenge and it would be of significant importance if a progressive process would unfold from the current position of stagnancy.
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