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WORKING PAPER:
The Drone Wars and Pakistan's Conflict Casualties, 2010

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Since the start of 2011 organisations dedicated to reporting on conflict in Pakistan have published their 2010 research. The recording of casualties (here defined as fatalities and not injuries) has received much attention, particularly in relation to the use of unmanned aerial vehicles ('drones') by the Central Intelligence Agency.[2] The focus of this working paper, purposefully left open to debate and amendment, in turn, is on civilian deaths caused by drones within Pakistan as reported by eight non-governmental and news organisations. This focus reflects the mission of www.everycasualty.org to be a hub of information and debate on the recording of conflict's casualties worldwide and the organisations that carry out such work. Additionally, it reflects the fact that casualties caused by drones are the common denominator amongst each of the eight organisations discussed.

The eight institutions and their publications examined include: the Conflict Monitoring Centre's (CMC) '2010, The Year of Assassination by Drones'; the India-based Institute for Conflict Management's (ICM) 'Pakistan Datasheet'; the Long War Journal (LWJ); the New America Foundation's (NAF) 'The Year of the Drone' project; The News; Pak Institute for Peace Studies' (PIPS) 'Pakistan Security Report'[3]; Pakistan Body Count; and Strengthening Participatory Organisation's (SPO) publication, 'Trail of Tragedy'.[4]

A paper such as this is particularly necessary because, in general, organisations publishing casualty analyses for Pakistan do not refer to each other's work—save for the occasional, and short, praise or contestation.[5] Only a few short news articles ever compare findings and, generally, not in a systematic manner.[6] A comparative approach, such as is taken here, is necessary to reveal similarities or differences between, as well as shared challenges amongst, such studies.

Given the purview of this working paper, and the existing body of work on the subject, its objectives are twofold: first, it seeks to be a resource for readers and fellow researchers by providing an informed and informative look into work on civilian casualties within Pakistan. And second, it offers critical insight and constructive recommendations in response to the disparities in reported findings. The first objective is approached through a thorough discussion of each project's scope and methodology. The second objective is approached by discussing methodology in relation to the gaps in counts of civilian casualties (the 'civilian gaps') and what can be done to support such work. This paper concludes with some observations on key challenges facing those attempting to record civilian deaths caused by drone attacks as well as some potential solutions.

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[1] This paper was reviewed by Hamit Dardagan, John Sloboda, Elizabeth Minor, and Mike Spagat of Oxford Research Group. All organisations reviewed in the report were also sent a pre-publication copy for comment.

[2] See Federico Sperotto's essay and the Council on Foreign Relations' elaboration of the conflict for greater insight on the use of drones.

[3] PIPS only provides a short version of their report for free online. An attempt was made to acquire the longer version, but without success.

[4] *So that readers have access to material discussed and so that all information derived from outside sources is cited, each source is hyperlinked in paragraph. For the time being, this serves as an informal works cited.*

[5] See Katherine Tiedemann's tweet with regard to Amir Mir of *The News* here cited by pakistanmediawatch.com. Several other similar publications are discussed throughout.

[6] One such example is *Wired* magazine's blog, 'Danger Room.' See here for an example of a mid-2010 comparison between LWJ, PBC (which has since then changed its website), and NAF.

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1.0 Understanding Scope

For those readers unfamiliar with research dedicated to recording casualties, it is worthwhile examining each project's general approach and aims. To this end, 'scope' and 'methodology' are elaborated.

Scope, or alternatively 'range,' is used by social science researchers to describe the variation in the measures discussed. Similarly, here scope is used to describe the parameters of information gathered by organisations in their reports. To this end, it is helpful to qualify each organisation's scope through two sets of binary characterisations.

1.1 Type of Event: Broad vs. Narrow

The purpose of the 'broad v. narrow' characterisation is to evaluate the *kind*, or *type*, of event(s) that organisations investigate. Specifically, in the context of this paper, 'narrow' studies focus strictly on casualties of drone-related attacks, whereas 'broad' studies incorporate a wider variety of causes of casualties (and in some cases injuries).[7] NAF, CMC, LWJ and *The News* have a 'narrow' scope as they only incorporate drone-related casualties; PBC is placed in this category because that was the only part of their data available at the time of writing.[8] In their published work, ICM, PIPS, and SPO are more inclusive and so belong to the 'broad' camp. Their projects include some combination of fatalities as a result of terrorist, suicide, drone, and targeted attacks as well as military operations, border clashes, ethno-political violence, and inter-tribal clashes.

1.2 Victim and Incident: Thorough vs. Basic

An additional characterisation is whether each organisation's scope includes 'thorough' or 'basic' evaluations of *who* was killed and the *context*[9] of their death. This is not to be confused with the previous binary. For instance, a 'narrow' scope that focuses on drones might be 'thorough' insofar as it elaborates the details of the context and individuals killed (i.e. whether a person killed was a combatant or civilian; and personal details such as sex, name, and age). Alternatively, a report with either a 'broad' or 'narrow' scope may only list the number killed (i.e. three died) and so classify as 'basic.' Consequently, the 'thorough v. basic' distinction is qualitatively different from the 'broad v. narrow' one insofar as it addresses the details of individuals killed and incidents of a particular *kind*, or many *kind*s, of event.

This distinction is fundamental as it differentiates casualty recorders from casualty counters. 'Basic' scope limits analyses to the number killed in specific incidents or in groups of incidents over space and time. As such, a 'basic' approach may provide aggregate numbers with

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[7] More generally, a 'narrow' scope is one that incorporates a particular kind of conflict. In contrast, a 'broad' study is one that seeks to identify many kinds of conflict.

[8] PBC also accounts for deaths related to suicide bombings. However, as their website was under renovation, this list was not available at the time of research. As such, only details of their work related to drone attacks are discussed here.

[9] 'Context' incorporates a wide swathe of details: time/date; target (house, car, etc.); location (town, village, province, etc.); number and type of weapons used; etc.

with minimal accompanying explanation. In this way, it is well suited to providing tallies as used by casualty counters and news outlets, as well as statistics-oriented academics who practice casualty estimation. The following table charts where organisations sit in relation to these categorisations. It also elaborates whether organisations give victim and/or incident-level detail.

	Scope				Explanation	
	Broad	*Narrow*	*Thorough*	*Basic*	Victim Detail	Incident Detail
CMC		X	X		Differentiates between 'militants' and 'civilians.' These are further broken down so that the former includes 'foreigners' and 'locals' whereas the latter incorporates a total count, women, and children. CMC presents the term 'persons' without qualifying whether this designates civilians or militants.	Provides 'locality' details, as well as the date and number of attacks per incident.
ICM	X		X		Provides a count that differentiates between 'civilians,' 'militants,' and 'security personnel' whereas others (such as the datasheet on drone-related deaths) provide short narratives describing the context and persons killed. The drone datasheet differentiates between 'Al Qaeda,' 'TTP,' 'Haqqani,' and 'Taliban' militants. Only once does ICM use the term 'civilian.' Sometimes presents the term 'persons' without qualifying what this designates.	Different causes of death are given their own datasheets. Targets, dates, and 'place' and 'district' are also elaborated. Sometimes details about the attack are given, such as number of missiles launched and target.
LWJ		X	X		Differentiates between 'civilians' and 'militants.' Militants are further broken down to include Taliban and Al Qaeda, though their count does not elaborate how many of each has been killed per incident.	Includes the distribution of strikes over time by: 'agencies,' 'tribal agencies,' 'territories targeted,' and the 'number of high value targets killed in territories managed by individual Taliban commanders.'
NAF		X	X		Makes the distinction between 'militants' and 'non-militant' or 'other.' 'Militants' include 'Taliban,' 'Baitullah Mehsud,' 'Al Qaeda,' 'Haqqani.' 'Unclear/Other' category is ambiguous. Where possible, NAF gives the names of militants killed.	NAF provides details on location and context of drone attack, including the 'assumed targets.'
The News		X		X	Differentiates between 'civilians' and 'militants' and number of militants killed per network.	Mention of most-attacked agency.
PIPS	X			X	Does not qualify those killed and instead provides a total denoted as 'overall casualties.'	
PBC		X	X		Differentiates those killed to include 'Al Qaeda,' 'Taliban,' 'civilian,' and 'Foreigner.'	Provides date, location, province, and agency.
SPO	X		X		Provides a tally of deaths and their causes, making no distinctions.	However, throughout its 'chronology,' SPO provides short detailed narratives.

A caveat: this chart overlooks many other nuances contained within each project. Whilst some 'thorough' projects are very detailed, others are only slightly more detailed than 'basic' ones. Similarly, some 'basic' projects are more detailed than others. For instance, NAF is qualified as 'thorough' because it differentiates between 'others' or 'non-militants' and 'militants' as well as amongst different groups of militants; it also gives contextual information on the date, location, and the 'assumed target' of each attack. However, ICM and SPO, which are also 'thorough,' provide considerably more detailed descriptions of each incident's context as well as information (sometimes personal) on those killed.

With regard to projects with a 'basic' scope, LWJ, [10] being more detailed than *The News*, publishes data on the location of attacks and civilian death counts per year; it also provides aggregate data on attacks per territory and militant group over 2010; finally, there is aggregate data for 2004-2011 on militant leaders killed. In contrast, *The News* provides aggregated numbers without any sort of elaboration save for the distinction between civilian and militant; a breakdown of how many militants of each network were killed; and a mention of the most-attacked agency. In short, neither provides incident-level or individual-level reporting. In light of these distinctions, it is worth acknowledging that these categorisations exist on a continuum.

Whereas the projects' respective scopes tend to diverge from one another, their methodologies tend to (at least nominally) converge. This convergence of methodology is important with regard to the points raised in below discussion on the shared challenges and potential development of the field amongst practitioners.

2.0 Methodologies

Unlike 'scope,' the projects have one methodological commonality: surveying news publications. The breadth of coverage ranges from two to fourteen news publications at the local, domestic, and international level.[11] Additionally, PIPS, LWJ, and PBC incorporate additional data-accumulation or data-confirmation methods. Whilst PBC includes hospital reports in accounting for victims, PIPS incorporates fieldworkers' confirmation of data monitoring, television reports, and consultation of local administration and journalists. Like PIPS, LWJ has its own staff of researchers. None of these organisations, however, articulate how and when[12] these alternative means of gathering data are utilised.[13]

An understanding of methodologies employed illuminates how organisations arrive at a particular number. Whilst the means by which organisations obtain their data is an important dimension of methodology, also significant is how they *re*-present their findings and bolster their conclusions. This is relevant to determining the reliability of their findings and whether their work makes 'falsifiability' possible.

To illustrate, ICM, SPO, PBC, and NAF all offer 'thorough' accounts of each incident, elaborating when, how, and how many people were killed. However, transparency about sources is more varied. SPO (describing themselves as using two sources) and ICM (not mentioning sources on their drones datasheet, though on their 'terrorist violence' datasheet they do mention 'news sources') both provide detailed narratives for each incident, but without citation. On the other hand, NAF provides brief explanations, citations, and links to up to 14 news reports for each incident. Importantly, where NAF finds differentiation amongst reports, they cite both the lowest and highest findings. Similarly, though less exhaustively, PBC provides a range for each category

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[10] It is important to note that Long War Journal offers thorough descriptions of events in their archive, which contains publicly accessible LWJ-authored news that generally cites several sources to substantiate reports. Furthermore, the archive features reports that are both broad and thorough in scope, accounting not only for drone-related casualties, but also suicide bombers and other forms of conflict. Problematically, there is no indication of how archived news informs the aggregated data which is considered here. For instance, it cannot be claimed, from viewing their website, that self-authored accounts inform aggregate data entirely. As such, erring on the side of caution, aggregate data are assessed alone.

[11] The chart in Appendix 2 demonstrates source material usage and overlap between organisations.

[12] For instance, this might be demonstrated as '75% of the time' or, more carefully and transparently, 'on the X of March, fieldworker Y confirmed that two civilians and four militants died by drone, via interview with Z.' In this way, readers gain a sense of how the organisations would cross-check their findings: validating particular accounts by challenging or supporting them with evidence from an additional source.

[13] Such elaborations may be excluded from reports to preserve the safety of informants. This, however, was not mentioned by the organisations.

of person killed, but provides only one news source per incident for the purpose of validation: it does not provide sources that validate each part of its published range. Here it becomes clear that even projects sharing the same general methodology (surveying news sources) and scope (elaborating some degree of detail about incidents) are not necessarily completely transparent about how they acquire their data. This is fundamental insofar as it is necessary to fully understand how each organisation has arrived at their particular findings.

The benefits of transparency are multifold, reflecting the point that 'it's not enough to see the numbers; you need to know how they are collected'.[14] First, full transparency provides insight into the reporting organisation in that it demonstrates how its findings were arrived at; second, it places the onus of authenticity on the source cited, rather than the reporting organisation; and third, it better enables readers to verify or dispute the information provided. In the jargon of social science, this enables 'falsifiability' by opening up findings to disproval (or approval) so that the representation of events may be refined and made accurate through contestation.

However, it may be noted that even where transparency is lacking, its power can be approximated where 'thorough' accounts such as those offered by ICM and SPO elaborate incident identifiers that would enable comparability, or cross-checking, with other resources. In this way, we see how 'scope' and 'methodology' interrelate. For instance, by providing the context (date, location, cause of death) and identity of victims thoroughly, that information can be used to find sources that support or contest the data represented. Whereas work with detailed citation places the onus of authenticity on the sources cited, un-sourced narratives place the onus of authenticity on the author and may have deleterious implications for readers' trust and scepticism in instances where reports are found to be untrue.

Below are synopses of the numerical findings from each study and the methods used.

2.1 Projects' Findings

Findings of Estimated Total ('Militants' and 'Civilians') Deaths and Stated Methods in 2010

Organisation	Estimated Total Findings	Reported Methods
Conflict Monitoring Centre (CMC) (drones only)	938	Based on the data collected from mainstream national and international media. A list is provided that accounts for attacks per date as well as deaths and injuries. Cases are not described thoroughly nor are sources attributed.
Institute for Conflict Management (ICM)	Drone: 831 Bomb blasts: 1,547 Terrorist Violence: 7,435 Suicide Squad: 1,176 Nato-related: 37 Sectarian violence: 509 Sectarian attacks in mosques: 180	Does not discuss sourcing on their drone datasheet. On their 'fatalities in terrorist violence datasheet,' ICM states that figures are derived from a 'compilation of news reports' and are provisional. Each case is described thoroughly without citing.
Long War Journal (LWJ) (drones only)	815	Data are accumulated from press reports from the Pakistani press, wire reports, and in-house reporting. No sources are cited for this figure.

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[14] Neil Johnson quoted in Bohannon, J. 'The War in Afghanistan: Counting the Dead in Afghanistan' *Science,* 11 March 2011, Vol. 331 no.6022

New America Foundation (NAF) (drones only)	607-993	Draws information from at least 14 sources and lists them by name. Each case is well sourced and links to original news articles are provided. Accounts for both the lowest and highest numbers provided in the sources, reflected in a range for the year's total.
The News (drones only)	1,184	Data are gathered by The News itself and 'local and international news outlets,' which are not named.
Pak Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS)	Drone: 961 Terrorist Attacks: 2,913 Clashes between security forces and militants: 2,007 Operational attacks by security forces: 2,631 Border clashes: 65 Ethno-political violence: 660 Inter-tribal clashes: 766	Data are accumulated through the 'conflict/security database and PIPS archives.' These, PIPS explains, 'are the outcome of a meticulous monitoring process on every relevant incident in the country on a daily basis,' using more than 30 English and Urdu publications, television news, and field sourcing. To confirm data, PIPS correspondents conduct follow-ups primarily in provincial capitals. Finally, when it is challenging to 'verify facts of a particular incident,' PIPS gives preference to the official statements. No attribution of sources is made available on an incident-by-incident level.
Pakistan Body Count (PBC) (drones only)	483-933	'Data are collected from media reports, hospitals, and internet. All data are publicly available.' Each incident is linked to only one online news source for verification, even if it contains a range.
Strengthening Participatory Organisation (SPO)	Drone: 544 Suicide/Bomb attacks: 1,801 Military operation: 2,060 Target killings: 273 Total: 4,678	Refers to Pakistan-based www.dawn.com.pk and www.thenews.com.pk as sources. SPO admits that this does not 'represent 100 percent coverage.' Each case is described thoroughly, though without citing.

Key Points of Methodology:

1. Methodology incorporates how data are accumulated and how they are *re*-presented

2. Transparency places the onus of authenticity on sources

3. Falsifiability is enabled by a 'thorough' scope, but benefits best from transparency

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3.0 The 'civilian gap' and its possible causes

As the above and below tables show, the findings for 'total killed' by drones tend to converge in the 800s and 900s, with 483 and 1,184 as outliers. Meanwhile, totals for civilian deaths caused by drones in 2010 have an implausibly broad range across organisations: from 2 to 806. At the low end are ICM, SPO, CMC, and LWJ (all less than 20). NAF's findings sit in the middle of the range at 36 to 59 deaths. Finally, *The News* reports 703 without explanation and PBC reports between 405 and 789, listing one source per incident. These differences in reported

civilian deaths demand explanation in contrast to the trend towards convergence in total deaths. This is especially so given the shared (nominal) methodology amongst organisations.

Enumerated Deaths by Drone in 2010: Civilian and Total Count

Organisation	Total killed (combatant and civilian combined)	Civilians killed
CMC	938	17 (qualify this with a methodological caveat that is discussed below)
ICM	831	Ambiguous (7)
LWJ	815	14
NAF	607-993	36.4-59.8 (calculated as 6% of total as per NAF's introduction). In consideration of percentage added to the 'Unclear/Other' category, the total range is ambiguous.
The News	1,184	703
PIPS	961	Ambiguous
PBC	483-933	405-789
SPO	544	Ambiguous (2)

The 'civilian gap' refers to the discrepancy in findings of civilian casualties. Three arguments are offered that may explain the gap. Additionally, these arguments highlight problems inherent to the field of casualty recording and so merit consideration outside of this paper.

3.1 Importance of Terminology

The first explanation, and the simplest conceptually, rests in the use of terminology and requires that we question whether there is descriptive continuity between each project's use of the terms 'civilian' or 'non-militant.' Dr. Charli Carpenter of University of Massachussetts-Amherst, approaches this issue on her blog, stating that 'the very concept of the "civilian" is being degraded in popular, media and diplomatic discourse both by evolving events and by the notion, among other things, that a person loses their civilian status simply by being *suspected* of militancy against their government.' The point made hones in on the designation's volatility and, when considered in relation to organisations that record casualties, is a means by which a particular category of persons might be inflated or deflated. This problem is fundamental, especially given that none of the organisations here considered, within their publications, explicitly define the terms used. The sole discussion of this issue appears in CMC's report, which simply maintains that officials have no 'specific definition of combatant militants' (2011:12).

However, in private communications and in other articles, there are indications of how, and by whom, 'civilian' is defined. Notably, while the LWJ explains that 'civilian deaths [are counted] if they're specifically mentioned in the news stories,' NAF actively counts *militants* as defined by press reports.[15] For NAF, this leaves those killed and not defined as militants as

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[15] Information was gathered through private communication. With regard to NAF, Dr. Carpenter points out that they overestimate the militant death count by 'rely[ing] on what mainstream reporters say...but another reason is completely within their control: by using "militant" rather than "civilian" as the default code when the actual status of the deceased, according to the reports, is "unknown" or contested.' Certainly such a practice will inflate combatant numbers. However, in an email correspondence with Katherine Tiedemann, it was explained that NAF 'count the number of people described as "militants" in the reliable press reports

'others' or 'non-militants'—presumably civilians but not specifically described as such, leaving a total of civilian deaths ambiguous. Finally, Pakistan Body Count uses an alternative scheme for designating civilians. As interviewed by Wired Magazine, Dr. Zeeshan-ul-hassan Usmani, PBC's founder, explains that 'the Arab word 'Talib' means student, so 'Taliban' means students. Almost 100% of the population of [these] areas go to the local Madarasah for their basic education....Therefore we can surely categorize every single habitant of these areas as 'Talibans.' Each of the three, therefore, demonstrates that the qualification of 'civilian' or 'nonmilitant' relies on different empirical cues: first, newspapers directly; second, to *not* be a militant as defined by the press; and third, to be understood in one's appropriate socio-cultural context.

Whether the discrepancy between numbers of civilian deaths can be explained by divergent definitions of this loaded word is difficult to substantiate here. In an essay published by *Foreign Policy* online, Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann of NAF explain the challenge of counting casualties generally, but differentiating between militants and non-militants in particular: "counting drone strikes and fatalities is an art, not a science, as it's not possible to differentiate precisely between militants and non-militants because militants live among the population and do not wear uniforms, and because government sources have the incentive to claim that only militants were killed, while militants often assert the opposite.' By pinpointing one of the practical difficulties of determining militants from non-militants, Bergmen and Tiedemann reveal what amounts to a systemic issue concerning the work of casualty recording, and one that relates closely to both how individuals are characterised as well as how information travels. This also points to the importance of transparency applied to methodology itself, in particular the definitions a project employs in its work.

3.2 Information Flows

The 'information flow' refers to how information moves from the site of an attack to a report. This transition, as CMC[16] and SPO[17] explain, is often precarious and unreliable. As a consequence, it is worth considering as a cause of differentiation in findings.

First, CMC asserts that news outlets are predominantly dependent on US and Pakistani official reports. These reports, on one hand, are held to 'whitewash civilian casualties' in fear of public reaction and, on the other hand, the officials often lack any mechanism for gathering accurate data in the first place.

Secondly, CMC holds that the media deliberately under-reports civilian deaths in order 'to avert public reaction.' CMC maintains that this explains why the media has reported so few incidents and, as a consequence, questions the validity of New America Foundation's work as it depends entirely on news sources.

Echoing the point made by Bergmen and Tiedemann, CMC's final claim is that militants, in their self-interest, conceal the identities of those killed. The Long War Journal partially reinforces this explanation on their website, holding that 'given the Taliban's control of the areas where strikes occur, and a dearth of reporters in those areas, accurate numbers for casualties are difficult to know.'

Another related explanation for the difficulty of reporting deaths caused by drones is offered by *Dawn*, Pakistan's oldest and largest-circulation English-language newspaper. Like the LWJ and CMC, *Dawn* explains that 'the problem is that no one — not the news wires, not the foreign media, not even Pakistani papers or news channels — has direct access to the site of a strike.' Additionally, *Dawn* provides an insight not found in any of the organisations' publications by describing the chain of information flow in detail. According to *Dawn*, information regarding those killed in drone attacks comes mainly from four sources: militants, politicians, intelligence personnel, and local correspondents. Local correspondents, whilst closest to the site and most likely to be unbiased, are also most likely to be influenced (i.e. pressured) by militants attempting to generate political tension. As a consequence, the warnings proffered by CMC, and echoed by other organisations such as LWJ, NAF and SPO, appear plausible. Another part of the 'civilian gap,' then, may be explained by a limitation to which each of these organisations is to some degree

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[they] follow, and code the rest as "others."' This, ultimately, contrasts with Dr. Carpenter and so whilst the point is considered here it is not explored further.

[16] CMC 2011: 10-12

[17] Information was gathered in a private correspondence.

susceptible: the inability to create reliable and comprehensive means of data-accumulation with correct information on the status of the dead.

3.3 Extent of Sourcing

A third plausible cause of the discrepancy between civilian death counts may be discerned if we consider the way that the nominally shared methodology is implemented.

New America Foundation, whose work is the most methodologically transparent, provides findings that stand apart from both the extremely low and high (civilian) counts. In addition to its transparency, NAF uses the most (cited) sources[18] of all the projects in this review whilst enumerating numerous sources per incident for the purpose of cross-clarification. If the chief problem is defined as one of the extent of coverage, and if we regard the cited sources used as the *only* sources used, then this suggests that NAF's approach is likely to lead to the most comprehensive coverage. Its transparency about sources gives it the additional advantage of providing the most readily verifiable claims, since these can be cross-checked, ultimately enabling robust conclusions.

Despite the benefits of transparency and extensive source coverage, NAF's work negates neither the problem of terminological inconsistency nor that of information flows. Where other organisations explain that they use 'news sources' or 'other sources' without elaboration, there is the possibility that overlap exists between their research and NAF's. Additionally, because there is terminological ambiguity, there is no way to know whether organisations are making conclusions in contrast to, or in support of, one another. As such, the problems of information flows and terminology appear to haunt research. Ultimately, the 'extent of sourcing' explanation would be most powerful if each organisation's work could be cross-checked, enabling more robust conclusions: but lack of details and specificity makes this impossible.

Plausible Explanations of Civilian Gaps Summary:

1. Un-standardised terminology and lack of transparency about terminology used

2. Unreliable information flows

3. Difference in extent of source coverage

4. The systemic nature of these challenges/explanations

4.0 Moving Forward

This working paper aims to be comprehensive in addressing projects committed to the recording of drone-related casualties within Pakistan during 2010. In so doing, it seeks to fulfill the twin goals of acting as a learning device for readers and to discuss the means of good practice for practitioners by evaluating plausible explanations for, among other discrepancies, the 'civilian gap' in findings. This discussion has revealed that each of these plausible explanations, in turn, poses a serious challenge to the research discussed. Consequently, when critical scrutiny meets practice, it appears that resilient limitations complicate resolving discrepancies.

As discussed, practicable solutions do exist for discrepancies even as serious as the 'civilian gap.' Foremost amongst these, and conceptually the easiest, is to standardise the terms used and what they represent. However, even here there are both political and logistical complications. In the case of political complications, defining who is a civilian is matter of much contestation. Hypothetically, for instance, should an organization take a particular position on the conflict, they may favour inflating a category of persons that would best bolster their cause.

With regard to logistics, as we have seen from Dr. Carpenter's comment mentioned above, that persons merely *suspected* of participation in violence are regarded as combatants indicates that distinguishing civilians from combatants is necessarily imperfect. This particular logistical problem can ultimately be located in several places, two of which include with the

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[18] See source chart attached as Appendix 2. This claim is made with reference to those sources enumerated by each organisation. Some groups are ambiguous with their source material, elaborating only that 'other sources' or 'news sources' are used. Otherwise, an organization, such as PIPS, will list some sources and remain ambiguous about others. In this case, only those listed sources are considered.
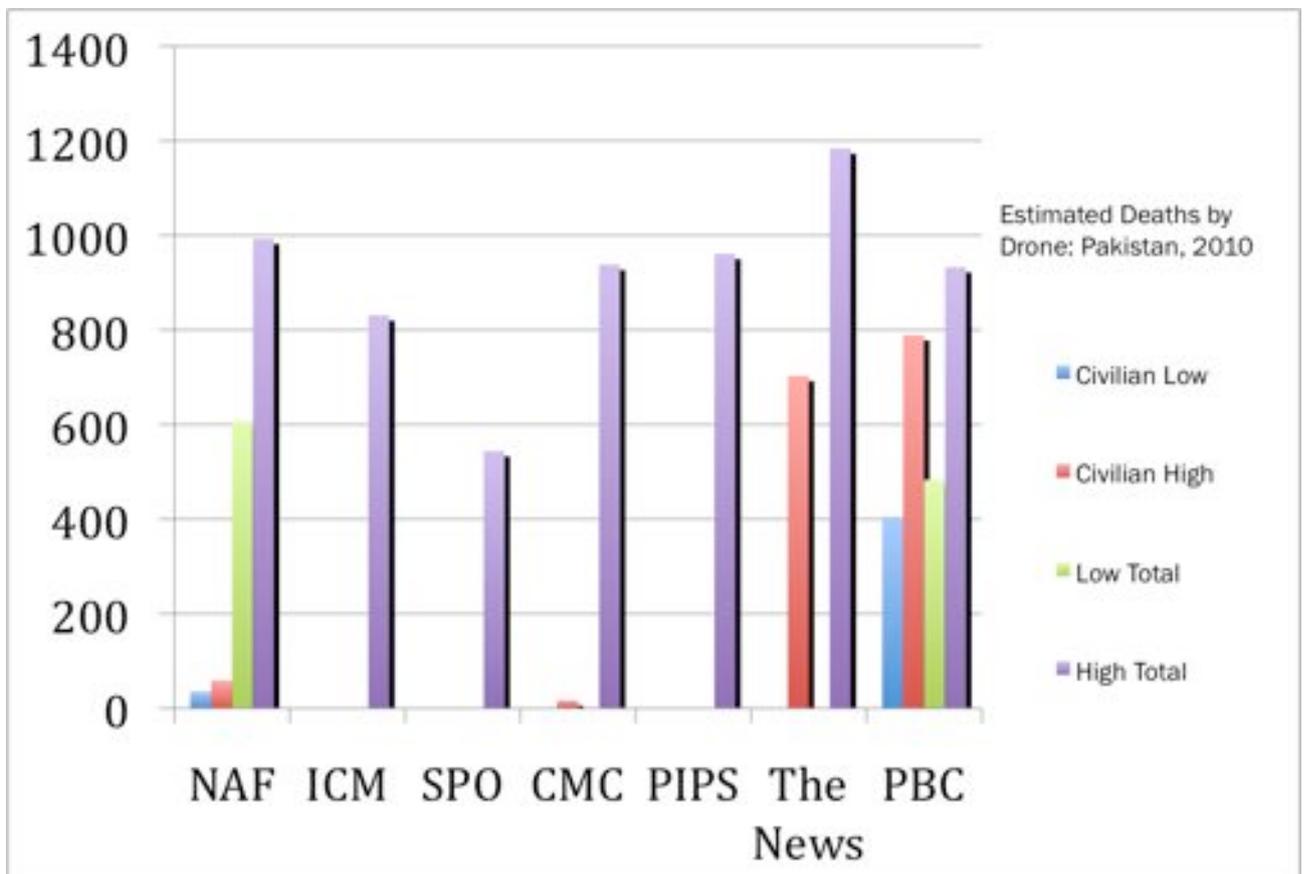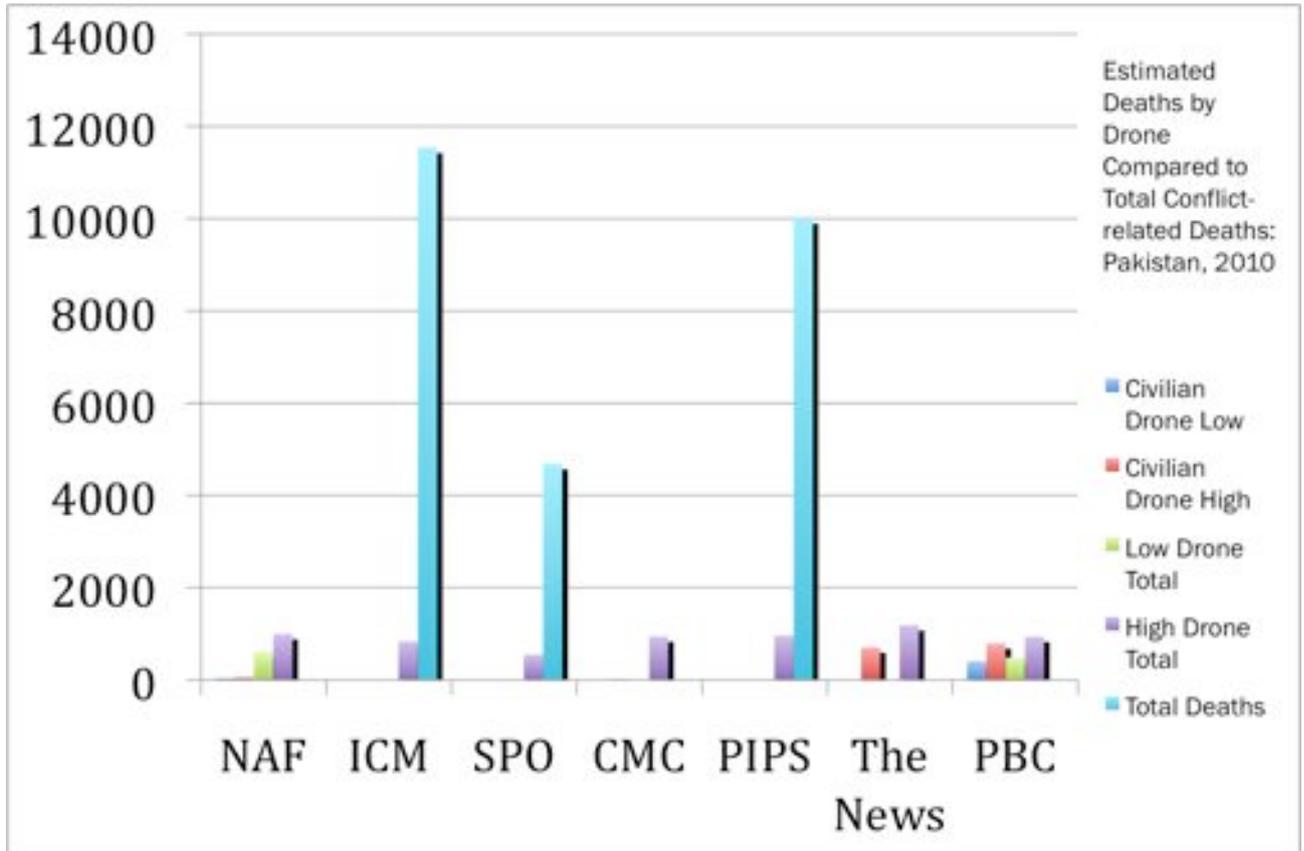
military and with reporters. With regard to the military, such imperfection is demonstrated in contemporary news regarding Afghanistan. As *The Independent* reports, the cause of 10 civilians deaths by airstrike in September 2010 was 'the crucial failure…[of] the military's inability to cross-reference its signals intelligence with human intelligence' in differentiating combatants and non-combatants. With regard to reporters, we need only refer back to the cautionary words of LWJ, CMC, SPO, and *Dawn,* each of whom emphasise that one man's combatant is another's civilian. Importantly, these two facets of the 'logistical complication' affect 'information flows.'

It is clear that the explanations discussed above are interrelated and that the problem of information flows and terminology compound each other. From this it follows that there is unlikely to be a single solution that addresses both issues at their root. However, *transparency* about definitions and the use of sources would enable a better understanding of the origin of particular discrepancies. As such, the best approximation of perfect practice may rest in adopting transparency of definitions, a 'thorough' scope that allows incidents to be identified through the provision of detailed descriptions, a fully outlined methodology that discusses its own assumptions, and the diligent citation of the sources for all published data. A significant advantage of such practices is that they are fully compliant with standard academic and research practice. Most importantly, perhaps, they are well within the power of practitioners to implement.

Addenda

1. In light of the ACLU's revelation that the US Department of Defense does not record casualties caused by drones, the work of the researchers discussed in this short paper becomes all the more important. Additionally, this affects the discussion regarding the 'flow of information.'

2. This is the second version of the paper. Having acknowledged that PBC's website is under construction, there was (between the first and current versions) a discrepancy in the representation of their data between March and May, 2011. This revision corrects for this discrepancy.

3. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism has released a thoroughly documented and transparent analysis of the deaths caused by drones. It can be accessed here: http://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/2011/08/10/most-complete-picture-yet-of-cia-drone-strikes/

APPENDIX 1

Estimated Deaths by Drone Compared to Total Conflict-related Deaths: Pakistan, 2010

- Civilian Drone Low
- Civilian Drone High
- Low Drone Total
- High Drone Total
- Total Deaths

Estimated Deaths by Drone: Pakistan, 2010

- Civilian Low
- Civilian High
- Low Total
- High Total

Notes for Appendix 1: 'Total' denotes the aggregated numbers offered by each site. All original sources have been hyperlinked above.

Org.	ABC	AFP	AJE	Al Jazeera	AP	BBC	CNN	CSM	Daily Express	Daily Times	Daily Ummat	Dawn	Express Times	Foreign Policy	Fox	GEO	Guardian
CMC				X			X		X	X	X	X				X	
ICM																	
LWJ		X								X		X				X	
NAF	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X
The News																	
PIPS																	
PBC				X			X		X	X		X			X		
SPO												X					

Org.	MSNBC	Nation	NBC	NYT	The News	Nawaiwqt	Online News	PAJHWOK	Reuters	Times of India	VOA	Washington Post	Wall Street Journal	Self-reporting
CMC				X	X									
ICM														
LWJ					X				X					X
NAF		X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	
The News														
PIPS														X
PBC	X				X	X			X					
SPO					X									

Notes for Appendix 2:

ICM: No mention of sourcing (http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/pakistan/database/Droneattack.htm)

The News: Claims that data was gathered by *The News* from 'primarily from local and international news sources' (http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=23631&Cat=2&dt=1/3/2011)

PIPS: Claims to use 'more than 30 English and Urdu dailies, magazines, and journals, and various television news channels' as well as 'regional daily newspapers and weeklies from Peshawar, Quetta, Gilgit, Karachi' (2011: 3).

* Some organizations discuss 'additional sources' but do not elaborate further. In these charts only the sources explicitly mentioned by organizations are listed.