

THE GLOBAL POLITICS OF SURVEILLANCE:  
AN IMBALANCE OF POWER AND PRIVACY

by

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Privacy is a basic human right that all human beings are entitled to under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). For those living in the United States, privacy is further protected by solid positive and negative rights built into the framework of government. The value is widely regarded as ‘American’ and has caused significant political and social uproar when violated. The judicial system in America has seen thousands of privacy cases, protecting a value that the citizens believe, and know, they are entitled to. In the international political system, the United States is grouped in a category known as the West, the Global North, or the Occident. This complex naming system seems daunting for an outsider of the political realm, but as this thesis will show, it essentially means the dominant international political group, a category that defines the Other to help characterize itself. This group is made up of a substantial number of historic colonizers, a relationship which this thesis will explore by using a postcolonial lens to analyze surveillance and privacy today.

This thesis uses a literature review section, two cases studies and the interviews from two scholars in the field to analyze how the state of privacy in locations around the world has been degraded by surveillance coming from foreign powers, largely the Global North/West/Occident. In this analysis this thesis finds that by using their historic and current place in the international power hierarchy, this category of nations infringes upon the privacy rights of people living in the

Global South/East/Orient. This degradation of privacy rights serves to not only reinforce and remind the international community of the position of the alternate group at the top, and to maintain some aspect of colonial control.

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## Terminology

This thesis surrounds issues of global power politics and will be using more encompassing terms at times rather than names of individual nations. In using these terms, it is important to recognize who came up with the terms and what connotations they may have. Below is an explanation of the terms that will be used to better understand where power lies in the global scheme and how terms will be used accordingly in this thesis.

**Af/Pak or Af-Pak:** This term was introduced in 2008 by the Obama Administration, thought to have been coined by the administration's special representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke.<sup>1</sup> Holbrooke explained that the term was made to express the fact that U.S. military policy regarded the two states as in the same theatre when he introduced it before his appointment in 2008. However, Holbrooke himself stopped using the term and announced that the Obama Administration was done using it, when Pakistanis began to express their distaste with the term.<sup>2</sup> Former President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf summed up Pakistani issues with the term by saying that it puts Pakistan on the same level as Afghanistan, noting that Pakistan has a more stable government system, and that it ignores historic and current struggles with India and terrorist groups from that region.<sup>3</sup> The term was successful in grouping together Afghanistan and Pakistan in both military strategy and political discourse, giving Americans the idea that the two players are intertwined in terrorist activities.<sup>4</sup> This term has therefore had damaging effects to

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<sup>1</sup> Josh Rogin, "Team Obama scuttles the term 'AfPak'", Foreign Policy, January 20, 2010, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2010/01/20/team-obama-scuttles-the-term-afpak/>

<sup>2</sup> Neal Conan, "No Easy Answers in Afghanistan", National Public Radio (NPR), September 22, 2010, <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=130050789>

<sup>3</sup> Spiegel, "Obama 'Is Aiming at the Right Things'", Spiegel International, July 5, 2009, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/spiegel-interview-with-pervez-musharraf-obama-is-aiming-at-the-right-things-a-628960.html>

<sup>4</sup> John Feffer and John Pardos, "The AfPak Paradox", Foreign Policy In Focus (FPFIF), April 1, 2009, [https://fpif.org/the\\_afpak\\_paradox/](https://fpif.org/the_afpak_paradox/)

both Afghans and Pakistanis. Its use in this paper is due to the fact that literature being reviewed in this study uses the term to point out U.S. strategy's impact on the region and is not used with intent to group the two areas together.

**Global North/Global South:** These are global ordering terms used to delineate certain areas of the world/countries as different. The world has been broken up into these regions for some time, beginning in 1952 as Alfred Sauvy broke the world up into three blocs: the 'First World', comprised of the United States and its Western allies, the 'Second World', made up of the Soviet Union and its outposts in the East, and the 'Third World' which was made up of so-called "developing" or unaligned nations who recently broke colonial ties. Soon after, the term Global South became a synonym for the 'Third World' and gained traction in 1980 with the Brandt report. This document drew a line known as the Brandt line that draws an imaginary boarder between countries with comparatively higher GDP per capita, concentrated in the Northern Hemisphere, and poorer countries, concentrated in the south. The line does not geographically line up with the designations of some nations though, as countries located in the Southern Hemisphere like Australia and New Zealand are labelled as 'Northern' and vice versa. When the Cold War ended and the Second World ceased to exist, the term 'Third World' gradually stopped being used. Today the Global South is a term that is used in the same context as the Group of 77, which is 134 postcolonial and developing countries that are united in order to increase their negotiating power in the UN. The term is still not great however, as it is a huge category that does not represent the unique attributes of all the countries it is said to include.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, while this term is easily recognizable in the field of politics and international relations, it is misleading

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<sup>5</sup> Stewart Patrick and Alexandra Huggins, "The Term 'Global South' Is Surging. It Should Be Retired," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, August 15, 2023, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/08/15/term-global-south-is-surging.-it-should-be-retired-pub-90376>.



and still holds prejudice, the fact that there is a Global South means there is a Global North which implies that the North is ahead and the South is trying to catch up.<sup>6</sup>

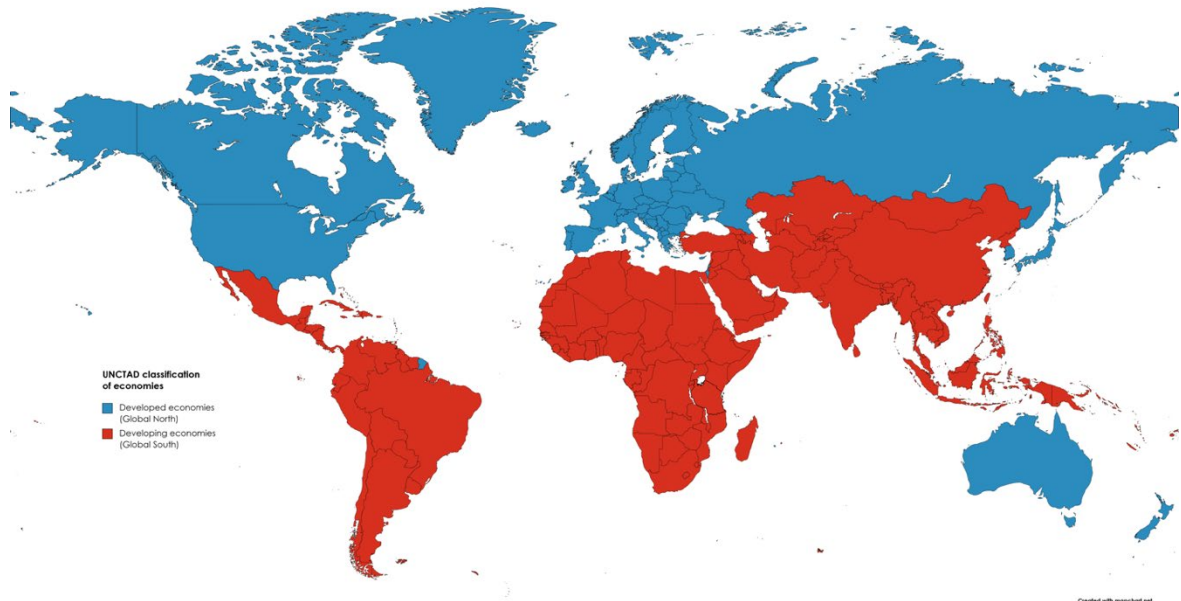


Figure 1. Reproduced Map that reflects UN Data from <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Classifications.html>

**Locutionary Silencing:** When speech (or the performance of an act, using a broader definition of speech) does not happen because the speaker is physically prevented from speaking, or is threatened with consequences if they do speak.<sup>7</sup>

**Scopic regime:** In this context, the scopic regime refers to the visual power in international relations, although the term comes from theatre. Introduced by Christian Metz in 1975, the term was only used to distinguish cinema from theater in the sense of how the object is being seen.

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Nye, “What Is the Global South?”, Project Syndicate, November 1, 2023, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/global-south-is-a-misleading-term-by-joseph-s-nye-2023-11>.

<sup>7</sup> Bertrand, Sarah. “Can the Subaltern Securitize? Postcolonial Perspectives on Securitization Theory and Its Critics.” *European journal of international security* 3, no. 3 (2018): 281–299.

The term has since been applied to a wide range of subjects, drawing in theories about how the seen affects perception. From the ‘scopic’ part of the term comes considerations about the techniques of observation, who has the power to look, the obligation to be on view and create the status of objects. This extends to what is visible and invisible for and in different cultures. ‘Regime’ implies a coherent order with binding rules and invokes the political suggestion that behavior is regulated. The term has many different meanings, but for the most part in IR it is used to refer to the power of who is creating the visual.<sup>8</sup> For the drone, the scopic regime refers to the ocular operations of the drone, its sensing capabilities, visual capture, and perspective on the target. The visual also refers to the target’s range of vision, whether they can see the drone that is looking down on them.<sup>9</sup>

**The West/Western Powers:** This term primarily refers to the United States and parts of Europe in the context of this thesis but has different connotations depending on who is using the word. Those who feel they are part of the West will have better things to say about it than those who see the West as ‘other’.<sup>10</sup> In characterizing the West there is a dominant feature of the acceptance of the ethics of security, a view that security is apparent in life at both the public and private level. Nationally, Western governments strive for economic, political, and military security while at the international level they pledge for peace and security through world-wide organizations. These organizations do tend to reinforce the status quo, demonstrating that the West’s ethics of security are defensive measures.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Jay. “Scopic Regimes of Modernity Revisited.” In *Essays from the Edge*, 51-. University of Virginia Press, 2011. Chapter “Scopic Regimes of Modernity Revisited” (51-63)

<sup>9</sup> Kathrin Maurer, *Visual Power: The scopic regime of military drone operations*. Pg. 1

<sup>10</sup> McNeill, William H. “What We Mean by the West.” *Orbis (Philadelphia)* 41, no. 4 (1997): 513–524.

<sup>11</sup> Marchant, P. D. “What Is The West?” *The Australian quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1956): 48–57.

## Introduction and Background

In powerful, wealthy, and liberal democracies like the United States, privacy is not only an expectation of the country's citizens, but a right that the government is sworn to uphold, with a legal remedy that is within the reach of the public shall any violations occur. The source of this 'right' to privacy in America comes from a court case. In *Griswold v. Connecticut* the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) established that citizens of the United States had an implied right to privacy through the penumbras and emanations of the First, Third, Fourth and Ninth Amendments in the Bill of Rights.<sup>12</sup> However, as put forward by the Supreme Court, this right only applies to citizens of the United States, living in the United States. As noted by the court in *United States v. Verdugo-Urquidez*, 'the people' referred to in the Fourth Amendment are only those in the national community and any restrictions on searches and seizures of people not part of this 'community' must be created by the political branches through legislation or foreign treaties.<sup>13</sup> This seems to invoke Article 12 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which says that "no one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor or reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."<sup>14</sup> However, there is not much legal accountability with the UDHR, as it is up to national authorities to punish those responsible for international crimes. In the cases where this does not happen the International Criminal Court (ICC) can be called in to assist. Further, if the state in question has not ratified

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<sup>12</sup> *Griswold v. Connecticut*, 381 U.S. 479 (1965)

<sup>13</sup> *United States v. Verdugo-Urquidez*, 494 US 259 (1990)

<sup>14</sup> UN General Assembly, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights," Article 12 (Paris, 1948)  
<https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

the Rome Statute, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights can call upon the United Nations (UN) Security Council to refer the state to the ICC.<sup>15</sup>

In 2014, Obama's Presidential Policy Directive 28 (PPD-28), noted that in response to advancing technology that can increase risks to humans, the United States will ensure signals intelligence practices are thoroughly thought out, due to the "leadership role that the United States plays in upholding democratic principles and universal human rights...and the legitimate privacy and civil liberties concerns of U.S. citizens and citizens of other nations."<sup>16</sup> While there are many words to note in this policy directive, this quote encapsulates why this directive is applicable to the topic of this thesis and concisely articulates the position of the United States in the realm of thought on global privacy rights. Straight from the White House comes a phrase that makes it clear that the US believes it is a world leader, a country that encapsulates the most democratic principles and serves as a guide for other countries to follow. The second point of interest in this statement is that it calls out both the human rights concerns of U.S citizens and citizens of other nations, but it does not combine the two groups to make an overarching statement about human rights, it keeps them separate and distinct, a symbol of the way that policy is enacted, with the US not treating the two groups as equals.

The unequal commitment of the US to privacy rights is demonstrated in a number of ways, but a clear and recent example that uses evidence of new technology like described in this thesis is with the issue of China's weather balloon over America. In the Senate's subcommittee on Department of Defense in the Committee of Appropriations, Senators discussed China's

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<sup>15</sup> Navanethem Pillay, 'Establishing Effective Accountability Mechanisms for Human Rights Violations', United Nations, December 2012, <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/establishing-effective-accountability-mechanisms-human-rights-violations#:~:text=It%20is%20fundamentafl%20that%20States,a%20luxury%2C%20but%20an%20obligation.>

<sup>16</sup> Report to the President on the implementation of Presidential Policy Directive 28: Signals Intelligence Activities. (2014). Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

actions in a hearing called ‘The People’s Republic of China’s High Altitude Surveillance Efforts Against the United States’. In the hearing Senator Tester of Montana addressed the weather balloon issue in saying “make no mistake about it, what China did last week was completely unacceptable and a real threat to American sovereignty, and it deserves a real response from a United America.”<sup>17</sup> Later on Tester continues by saying “folks all across this country value their freedom, they value their privacy. Those are American values.”<sup>18</sup> Senator Collins of Maine echoed this point when she spoke, saying to the committee “obviously, every Administration has an obligation to protect Americans on the ground, but also to defend U.S. airspace against incursions by known foreign surveillance aircraft.”<sup>19</sup> The act of shooting down the aircraft by the US Department of Defense is described by Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, Melissa Dalton as sending a “clear message to the [People’s Republic of China] PRC that activity such as this is unacceptable.”<sup>20</sup> In all, this committee hearing established that China’s actions in flying a balloon that could be a surveillance device over American territory constituted an overstep of China’s power in threatening US sovereignty and a violation of Americans’ privacy.

These quotes provide a perfect starting point for this thesis, demonstrating the way US government officials and nation approaches the topic of international surveillance and privacy. Although the country used in this example is China, it can reasonably be inferred that any foreign country entering US airspace with a device capable of surveillance would be treated

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<sup>17</sup> United States Senate, Subcommittee on Department of Defense, Committee on Appropriations, *The People’s Republic of China’s High Altitude Surveillance Efforts Against the United States* (Washington, DC: US Government, 2023), 1-27.

<sup>18</sup> US Senate Subcommittee on Department of Defense, *The People’s Republic of China’s High Altitude Surveillance Efforts*, pg. 2

<sup>19</sup> US Senate Subcommittee on Department of Defense, *The People’s Republic of China’s High Altitude Surveillance Efforts*, pg. 3

<sup>20</sup> US Senate Subcommittee on Department of Defense, *The People’s Republic of China’s High Altitude Surveillance Efforts*, pg. 5

similarly. The act would be taken seriously, seen as an invasion of territory that would invoke a response by the United States to defend US territory, sovereignty, and privacy. In the following pages this thesis will explore cases opposite to this example. In these cases, the US will be entering foreign airspace with technologies far more advanced than a weather balloon, collecting data on the people living in the countries below, violating the very standard they have set for themselves. To understand why the US operates with this ‘double standard’ this thesis will use a postcolonial lens, attempting to use political theory to help answer the question of how the surveillance policies of other countries reflect an abuse of power in the field of global affairs. Postcolonial theory, in taking into consideration the history of power dynamics between nations, may show us how the international ordering structure plays into the mentality of US surveillance policy and enables the current unequal state of privacy rights.

To interrogate how these differences can be legally upheld, this thesis will also examine which domestic and international laws govern privacy rights and how these play into measures taken “at home” in Western countries and abroad. If the concept of a right to privacy is a freedom inherently American as Senator Tester asserts, then there must be solid protections built into the American legal system that differentiate it from the privacy that the international community promises. As previously described, the American right to privacy as we know it today is derived from *Griswold v. Connecticut* and is most commonly thought of through Fourth Amendment protections. Interviews from scholars in the field will help to determine how much of a Western concept privacy is, investigating why the West acts as though they have power over the privacy across the globe.

The final guiding question of this thesis is as follows: What specific “security” technologies are Western countries using abroad that violate privacy rights and how is their use

justified on foreign lands but not at home? The technological focus of this thesis will be on drone surveillance, a form that inherently creates new questions about the power dynamics at play due to the nature of how a drone operates. The aerial visibility granted by a drone implicates colonial ordering hierarchies and aerial surveillance regimes. This question will be analyzed through a review of existing literature which will include a brief history of the regions that were subject to aerial surveillance by colonizers, allowing for use of the postcolonial lens for analysis, as well as a few case studies of current states under Western drone surveillance. By drawing parallels between these two the narrative about the global ordering hierarchy that current aerial surveillance perpetuates will become clearer.

In new security technologies, especially the use of drones, the West invades the space and privacy of those living beneath the aerial region of the drones. Drones gather a variety of visual and signals (SIGNIT) data which gives the US military the power to identify and track people.<sup>21</sup> This practice would never go unchallenged in the United States, as demonstrated by President Bush's actions after 9/11 and the resulting policies and court cases. Along with the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), former President Bush used his executive order power liberally after 9/11 to enact policies that he claimed were in the interest of national security. Most of these policies involved collecting large amounts of data from internet communications inside and outside the US without a warrant. Thanks to the rights given to US citizens and the legal processes in the country, concerned citizens were able to challenge these policies in court, resulting in many cases with varying decisions such as *Jewel v. National Security Agency (NSA)*, *American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) v. NSA* and *Hepting v. AT&T*.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, acts that

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<sup>21</sup> Agius, Christine. "Ordering without Bordering: Drones, the Unbordering of Late Modern Warfare and Ontological Insecurity." *Postcolonial studies* 20, no. 3 (2017): 370–386.

<sup>22</sup> *Jewel v. National Security Agency* 673 F.3d 902 (2011); *American Civil Liberties Union v. National Security Agency* 493 F.3d 644 (2007); *Hepting v. AT&T* 439 F.Supp.2d 974 (2006)

were enacted in the name of national security that may infringe upon the privacy rights of those living in the United States have been challenged by elected officials and amended in order to better protect the rights of US citizens. These acts include the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) and the Patriot Act, the former which the House subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance is currently working, as of April 2023, to modify sections to fit better with Fourth Amendment standards.<sup>23</sup> Challenging government actions that violate privacy rights is a remedy that does not apply to those living abroad who are under surveillance, demonstrating how these rights can easily be taken away without a challenge for some people.

By unequally enacting these surveillance policies onto foreign subjects, the West partakes in a form of othering that is seen in postcolonial theoretical discourse.<sup>24</sup> This othering cements the idea that the West sees themselves as a superior global power and uses this position to enact policies that would be challenged if they were made by other global actors. This thesis will explore these ideas through the theoretical lens of postcolonialism which is an international relations theory. Postcolonial theory refers to the entire period after the beginnings of colonialism and while it is intended to draw attention to the inequalities in our world that lead to suffering through occasionally being critical of ‘development’ and ‘modernization’ it is not meant to be a form ‘non-Western IR.’<sup>25</sup> Similarly, this thesis is intended to cast a critical eye on Western involvement in international affairs relating to the individual right to privacy, examine connections between policies and mindsets, and identify specific actions and power structures that may be causing unfair suffering to certain parties.

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<sup>23</sup> United States Congress House Committee on the Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Federal Government Surveillance “Fixing FISA: How a Law Designed To Protect Americans Has Been Weaponized Against Them”. Bethesda, Md: ProQuest, 2023.

<sup>24</sup> Agius, “Ordering Without Bordering” pg. 376

<sup>25</sup> Seth, Sanjay. Postcolonial Theory and International Relations: A Critical Introduction. London; Routledge, 2013.



This thesis will be examining colonial legacies and exploring topics of harm in relation to colonialism. A last note to consider before turning to the issues at hand is that some societies in our world have been neither colonizers nor subject to colonialism, but even in these regions security governance has been affected by colonial encounters and adaptations in security technology/practices that will be discussed subsequently are products of colonial encounters.<sup>26</sup> It is from this analytical lens that this thesis will proceed.

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<sup>26</sup> Honke, Jana, and Markus-Michael Muller. "Governing (in)Security in a Postcolonial World: Transnational Entanglements and the Worldliness of 'local' Practice." *Security dialogue* 43, no. 5 (2012). pg. 385

## **Significance and Implications**

This project urges the world to think about Western power from a more critical perspective, emphasizing that the historical origins of the power being used to undermine human rights are problematic to continue to carry into the future. By laying out these problems and presenting their cause and effect, this thesis is written in hopes that Western policy makers and leaders will consider the widespread effect that certain procedures have on the lives of others living abroad, and that the violation of human rights is not justified simply because the parties negatively impacted are not citizens of the violating country.

### **Undue Influence of the West**

In a broad context, for better or worse, the West has had a huge impact on the rest of the world. Westernization, a term that means the influence of the West on the world, politically, socially, and economically, is one such way of demonstrating the undue influence of the West.<sup>27</sup> Westernization has involved colonialism, imperialism and fabricated dependencies through a particular idea of development. Through these means the West has maintained rank as the top player in the global international order, the proliferation of Western norms being a clear example of the power it has over the rest of the world.

Anthropologist Payal Arora examines the overarching influence of the West in a study she conducted, and where she begins this analysis is an interesting place to start. She notes that many countries in the Global South have very lax privacy protections or none at all, a remnant of the societal legal distrust that resulted from colonization. Payal argues that colonial surveillance was repackaged as a tool to maintain social harmony, as colonizers wielded surveillance

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<sup>27</sup> Ritzer, George, and Paul Dean. "Globalization and Related Processes: Imperialism, Colonialism, Development, Westernization, Easternization, and Americanization." In *Globalization*. United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2015. Pg. 99

technologies to crush dissents and create order, a fact that will be discussed later in this thesis.<sup>28</sup>

These historic operations and current examples of aerial surveillance place the West at the top of the international hierarchy and the vertical form of control implies a system of neo-colonial surveillance.<sup>29</sup> Not only do the militaristic policies in use have clear bias that they have been written with a background of Western superiority, even the names of specific aerial strategies reinforce the hierarchy through English Common Law phrases of hunting.<sup>30</sup> By calling out these practices this thesis hopes to serve as a call to action for change in the power of the hierarchy.

### **Importance of Privacy Rights**

Privacy has been recognized as a right of utmost importance for centuries, written in ancient Roman, Jewish and Christian texts.<sup>31</sup> In the case studies about the effects of new surveillance warfare on Afghanistan and Pakistan, it is clear how the invasion of privacy rights can lead to a negative change in all aspects of life. The case studies demonstrate how privacy is a fundamental human right. Looking to the panopticon phenomena/experiment, the knowledge that one is being perceived, or that one does not have privacy, changes our behaviors and actions. The panopticon, a prison designed by philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham, is a prison that allows the guard to watch all prisoners from a single vantage point, but the inmates do not know whether they are being watched. This experiment, and the clear effects of a similar regime in this instance, demonstrate the very importance of privacy rights. The panopticon is a mode of power that is applied continuously through supervision that creates control, dictates punishment, and

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<sup>28</sup> Arora, Payal. "General Data Protection Regulation—A Global Standard? Privacy Futures, Digital Activism, and Surveillance Cultures in the Global South." *Surveillance & society* 17, no. 5 (2019): 717–725.

<sup>29</sup> Agius, "Ordering Without Bordering", pg. 380

<sup>30</sup> Maurer, Kathrin. "Visual Power: The Scopic Regime of Military Drone Operations." *Media, war & conflict* 10, no. 2 (2017): 141–151

<sup>31</sup> Vile, John R, and David L. Hudson. "The Importance of Privacy Rights." In *Encyclopedia of the Fourth Amendment*. United States: CQ Press, 2012.

changes behaviors. Through this framework, “the disciplining power construct of the prison-panopticon has already been realized in many aspects of Western societies as instruments of surveillance that create respective norms of behavior and limit freedom.”<sup>32</sup> This thesis will revisit the idea of the panopticon a few times, but will investigate the idea a little differently than this quote, instead demonstrating that the panopticon has been actualized in surveillance regimes conducted by Western countries on *non-Western* countries. The premise of the panopticon and its realization today in the form of surveillance regimes that are seen in the case studies used, demonstrate how taking away the right to privacy leads to the degradation of many other human rights. These rights may be seen as even more integral, like rights to liberty, autonomy, speech and more. The case studies examined demonstrate this, providing real examples of how surveillance changes the lives of the people living beneath it. In constant fear due to their lack of privacy, the residents of surveilled areas in Afghanistan and Pakistan found it necessary to stop certain cultural practices, not attend gatherings and even fail to let their goats out to graze at night. This individual behavioral change is exactly what Bentham described with the panopticon. When the privacy rights are taken away, many aspects of life are affected, meaning that Western infringement on privacy rights of those in foreign countries has a much deeper reach than one would originally imagine.

## **Dangers of Surveillance**

To summarize what was touched upon in the last section and concisely iterate the dangers that surveillance poses, this section will cite Neil Richards and explain the two dangers he raises

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<sup>32</sup> Jannusch, Tim, Florian David-Spickermann, Darren Shannon, Juliane Ressel, Michael Völler, Finbarr Murphy, Irini Furxhi, Martin Cunneen, and Martin Mullins. “Surveillance and Privacy – Beyond the Panopticon. An Exploration of 720-Degree Observation in Level 3 and 4 Vehicle Automation.” *Technology in society* 66 (2021): 101667-.

with surveillance, both of which will be discussed in this thesis. To begin, Richards attempts to convey the importance of being concerned about government surveillance. He says that the public does not have enough fear about the surveillance power that the government holds, and what can be done with the data collected through surveillance.<sup>33</sup> After posing this warning, Richards outlines the main dangers that come with surveillance.

The first danger is the chilling of the exercise of our civil liberties. This danger was expressed in the previous section and will be further discussed in the case studies of this thesis. Richards expands upon this idea, noting that surveillance can harm a deeper and more specific level of privacy that is called intellectual privacy. Surveillance of people reading, thinking, or communicating with others can cause people not to “experiment with new, controversial, or deviant ideas.”<sup>34</sup> Therefore, surveillance can curtail social and political movements, a point that will be discussed in relation to colonial regimes later in this thesis, drawing parallels between history and today. The second danger discusses the effect that surveillance has on power dynamics between the watcher and the watched. Richards talks about this danger in the context of the government being able to selectively enforce laws, advancing principles of discrimination and coercion. This danger is important in this thesis, but will be discussed in a more international context, exploring how the power dynamics between the watcher and the watched come into play when the global power imbalance is added into the mix.

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<sup>33</sup> Richards, Neil M. “THE DANGERS OF SURVEILLANCE.” *Harvard law review* 126, no. 7 (2013): 1934–1965.

<sup>34</sup> Richards, “The Dangers of Surveillance” pg. 1935

## **Literature Review:**

This section will provide the reader with the background information that will provide clarity in understanding and applying the subsequent research portions of this thesis. It will introduce the scholarship on the theoretical model that will be used, point out corresponding policy and examine a few case studies that have been done by other scholars that can shed light on this topic.

### **Background and Theoretical Perspective:**

The following sections will review literature on various aspects of the subject, helping to answer the questions of how analyzing the issue of privacy and surveillance through a postcolonial lens helps one understand the global power imbalances at play. To further this, the literature will examine how the manipulation of these power imbalances by the West/Global North results in lessened privacy for the South. In ‘Comparing Past and Present’, historic colonial surveillance regimes will be brought at odds with current surveillance practices, referencing present-day and past military techniques to draw out their similarities. ‘The Power of Sight’ discusses the inherent power dynamics at play in surveillance, explaining how the term ‘scopic regime’ can be used within this context to explain the proliferation of Western knowledge and power. The next section is titled ‘Sovereignty and Bordering’, focusing on how current aerial surveillance regimes can show the imbalance of power in international relations, as evidenced by whose sovereignty and borders remains intact and off-limits, and whose is violated. Finally, in ‘The Presence of Colonial Hierarchies Today’, the global ordering system is explained through a postcolonial lens, demonstrating how the Global North uses its position of power over the Global South to enact otherwise questionable policies.

## *Comparing Past and Present*

When analyzing any issue through a postcolonial lens it is necessary to consider how the colonial past impacts the modern day. In “Drones: A History from the British Middle East,” Priya Satia details the history of the regional that is currently under aerial surveillance from US drones, so to better understand how a postcolonial lens applies to this situation.<sup>35</sup> As she describes, aerial policing was used in British Iraq after World War I to maintain British control by patrolling their colony from above and collecting information through surveillance that would later help them crush uprisings and those opposed to their rule. Iraq was where surveillance from above began, but this aerial control scheme was soon expanded to include the Northwest Frontier of British India (which is today known as “AfPak”, a term used within US foreign policy rhetoric to represent that Afghanistan and Pakistan have a single theatre of military operations) and parts of Yemen. Again, this demonstrates why a postcolonial framework of analysis is applicable because these regions of the world that are under surveillance today have a history of being watched from an aerial Western eye. Military intelligence also reveals that the landscape of these areas are uniquely suited for aerial surveillance, lacking dense forests or large buildings to hide in, the people of these areas can be surveilled with much greater ease.

About Britain’s aerial policing, Satia says “air control would exercise a disciplinary effect in the manner of the classical Benthamite Panopticon. Best of all, terror guaranteed humanity: constant surveillance would simply awe tribes into submission without loss of life.”<sup>36</sup> Without the right to be free from constant surveillance, knowingly or unknowingly, one does not have liberty or autonomy. Satia even mentions how British plans would intentionally fly lower

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<sup>35</sup> Satia, Priya. “Drones: A History from the British Middle East.” *Humanity (Philadelphia, Pa.)* 5, no. 1 (2014): 1–31.

<sup>36</sup> Satia, Priya. “Drones: A History from the British Middle East.” pg. 5-6

than necessary to invoke a fear response in the people below and get them to conform through the threat of surveillance. Satia's research found Air Ministry documents that cement this saying that air control would work regardless of accuracy, but because every villager would be under "the impression that the occupant of an aeroplane is actually looking at *him*... establishing the impression that all of their movements are being watched and reported."<sup>37</sup>

In 'From Colonial Air Attacks to Drones in Pakistan' Satia explains how the colonial history of the region shapes the dynamics of any aerial strategy there.<sup>38</sup> Due to the history of the region, Pakistanis see the drones employed by the US as neocolonial. In her research, Satia uncovered a key point of strategy that governs how Britain when looking through Air Ministry documents, finding that officials confessed air warfare made distinctions between civilians and combatants 'obsolete.' This finding cements the idea that the West is aware of the large-scale effects that their 'military' operations have on the rest of the population but continues to employ this strategy. Further cementing this Cachelin expands on this in 'The U.S. drone programme, imperial air power and Pakistan's federally administered tribal areas,' explaining how the U.S. drone program was influenced by aerial policing of Britain's Iraq colony in the 1920s when Britain used air power to suppress those who opposed their presence and demonstrate their superiority as a Western power. In this study Cachelin also explains how this historic example of locutionary silencing by a dominant power demonstrates through a postcolonial lens how the current drone program is simply a contemporary manifestation of imperial air power.<sup>39</sup> Cachelin makes a clear distinction at the beginning of her piece, using the word "exploiting" to

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<sup>37</sup> PRO, AIR 1/426/15/260/3, Air Staff, "On the Power of the Air Force and the Application of that Power to Hold and Police Mesopotamia," March 1920; Payne, "Use of Aircraft."

<sup>38</sup> Satia, Priya. "From Colonial Air Attacks to Drones in Pakistan". *New perspectives quarterly* 26, no. 3 (2009): 34–37.

<sup>39</sup> Cachelin, Shala. "The U.S. Drone Programme, Imperial Air Power and Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas." *Critical studies on terrorism* 15, no. 2 (2022): 441–462.



characterize how the United States is using its drone power. While this piece of research in particular is referencing the exploitation of the unique legal status that the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan have, this word can be used more broadly in this context.

The FATA region served as a battleground for the British Empire in the nineteenth century, protecting British influence over India and serving as their buffer for the expansion of Russia. British control was enacted through Frontier Crimes Regulations which was the legislation that allowed the British to manage the people living in the region, suppressing any dissent. Even after Pakistan gained independence in 1947, the colonial regulations over the FATA region remained. This resulted in the area being outside of Pakistan's jurisdiction and being excepted from courts and Parliament, a unique status that the US exploits to inflict their violence and surveillance, Cachelin says.<sup>40</sup> This predatory relationship and the use of colonial policies to support the US agenda demonstrates the nature of the US drone program. Through her research Cachelin supports the idea that the US exploits its power on the global scale to enact military practices that essentially serve as unwarranted surveillance policies that would be legally challenged if brought back on themselves. She explicitly states that surveillance warfare is setting a dangerous precedent for the future of human rights and the continuation of colonial power.

On the subject of human rights and colonial legacies, Kwet uses the example of US surveillance in South Africa to demonstrate what he calls imperial state surveillance. A formally colonized state, South Africa has a history of being surveilled by its colonizers, a fact that the US has used to administer their own surveillance practices in the region. At the turn of the nineteenth

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<sup>40</sup> Cachelin, "The U.S Drone Programme" pg. 445

century this surveillance was on the ground, US officials watching black miners in order to control their behaviors.<sup>41</sup> Now, with the progression of technology, Western surveillance in South Africa has become more entrenched in daily life, but less visible. Kwet cites multiple instances in which the US and Britain have been caught spying on human rights organizations in South Africa. He affirms that this surveillance differs along lines of the global power hierarchy saying “countries in the Global South, by comparison, have a small budget, a paltry repository of data, and less capacity to analyse large data sets. In the domain of state-corporate surveillance, the Global North holds the power.”<sup>42</sup> The hold that the West/the Global North has over the world allows for mass and targeted surveillance in the Global South which degrades human rights and changes the day to day lives of those in the South.

### *The Power of Sight*

Grayson and Mawdsley state that drones are the scopic regimes of modernity, determining who is seen and how they are seen, in turn shaping the narrative that the West perpetuates. Grayson and Mawdsley use the work of Martin Jay as a starting point, as Jay proved the importance of scopic regimes to modern Western knowledge and power in 1988 and introduced the concept to the field of International Relations (IR).<sup>43</sup> However, this idea has not been used very widely in IR to analyze situations, making this research from Grayson and Mawdsley stand out. They use the metaphor of ‘God’s eye’ to describe the drone, cementing the position of the West at the top of the hierarchy which reflects colonial ideals. Not only does the ‘God’s eye’ metaphor explain the power hierarchy, but it also demonstrates that in drone

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<sup>41</sup> Kwet, Michael. “Digital Colonialism: US Empire and the New Imperialism in the Global South.” *Race & class* 60, no. 4 (2019): 3–26.

<sup>42</sup> Kwet, “Digital Colonialism,” pg. 16

<sup>43</sup> Jay, Martin. “Scopic Regimes of Modernity.” *Index*, no. 3–4 (1995): 94–132.

surveillance there is power in who can see who. The drone operator is invisible to the subject, the drone may even be hidden, but the subject on the ground is being watched without the power to look back. This one-way view emphasizes the power that the drone operator has, shaping the narrative without consent or knowledge, which also has negative cultural repercussions as an outside culture is analyzing a view without the full story. Grayson and Mawdsley call for the decolonialization of scopic regimes, acknowledging that they are not a uniquely Western phenomena, but the ones emphasized in this case with drones and practices to combat ‘terror’ have been entrenched with Western cultural influence.<sup>44</sup>

### *Sovereignty and Bordering*

It is important to also think about how the West initiates these practices in foreign lands, as following the Treaty of Westphalia, these borders should be solid and sovereign. Feldman explores this in ‘Empire's Verticality: The Af/Pak Frontier, Visual Culture, and Racialization from Above’, analyzing what legal and social systems govern the expansion of the West through surveillance. Looking at history, imperial sovereignty has moving parts with ‘designated’ borders that imperial power could operate beyond. Currently, the U.S. security state has “capitalized on this instability through practices of ‘ubiquitous bordering’ at a variety of local, regional, and transnational scales that persistently rub against the Westphalian system.”<sup>45</sup> Feldman cites Amy Kaplan, who says that the term ‘homeland security’ is meant itself to legitimize these practices of expanding U.S. imperial sovereignty.<sup>46</sup> He also cites Allen Feldman, who says that the borders of the homeland operate not as barriers but as “a flexible spatial

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<sup>44</sup> Grayson, Kyle, and Jocelyn Mawdsley. “Scopic Regimes and the Visual Turn in International Relations: Seeing World Politics through the Drone.” *European journal of international relations* 25, no. 2 (2019): 431–457

<sup>45</sup> Feldman, Keith P. “Empire’s Verticality: The Af/Pak Frontier, Visual Culture, and Racialization from Above.” *Comparative American studies* 9, no. 4 (2011): pg.379.

<sup>46</sup> Kaplan, Amy. “Homeland Insecurities: Some Reflections on Language and Space.” *Radical history review* 85, no. 1 (2003): 82–93

pathogenesis that shifts around the globe and can move from the exteriority of the transnational frontier into the core of the securocratic state.”<sup>47</sup> Feldman analyzes this issue seriously, believing that this extension of bordering processes creates flexible biopolitical zones that certain subjects can use to wield power over the lives of others. He calls this ‘racialization from above,’ a process which traverses defined notions of boundaries and uses visual technologies to supplement bordering practices of imperial sovereignty on the ground. This vertical process emerged between the start of the homeland security state and the killing of Osama Bin Laden and has since used imperial visioning in the war on terror. Feldman wraps this up, demonstrating through the study that through the drone program operator countries, historic colonizers, wield power over the lives of others through their categorizations of terrorists, emerging from settler colonial violence.

In coming to this conclusion Feldman analyzes the drone program in the United States, gleaning information from a document published in 2010 by the US Army called ‘Eyes of the Army.’ The report details the types of drones used and where they are deployed, noting mostly missions in the Middle East but also on the U.S-Mexico border and the Mexican interior. Key outposts and missions noted though are the ones that will be further discussed in this piece, Pakistan’s FATA region and the Af-Pak region. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) initiated a program in 2004 using Hunter and Hermes drone systems that “routinely run surveillance over the Palestinian Occupied Territories.”<sup>48</sup> This US control of international airspace is technically permitted, permission obtained through a Certificate of Waiver or Authorization, but this authorization is becoming increasingly contested as the consequences on

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<sup>47</sup> Feldman, Allen. “Securocratic Wars of Public Safety: Globalized Policing as Scopic Regime.” *Interventions (London, England)* 6, no. 3 (2004): 330–350.

<sup>48</sup> Feldman, “Empire’s Verticality” pg.384

the ground and for bordering theory are becoming more apparent. The 273 active Certificates of Waiver or Authorization during the time of bin Laden's killing demonstrate the depth to which the US has permeated international airspace and the extent to which the West surveils the non-Western world.<sup>49</sup>

### *The Presence of Colonial Hierarchies Today*

Arora studies how to decolonize privacy and security studies, noting that colonialism is deeply entrenched in the global power system today, its remnants creating a “deeply structured, essentializing and historically reproduced power asymmetries within social and technical norms, knowledge, values and infrastructures.”<sup>50</sup> Within these power asymmetries lies the ‘us’ verses ‘them’ narrative, an idea that will be further explored in the case study section of this thesis, but which encapsulates the ‘othering’ processes of entire group. This process essentializes those non-Western groups as other and renders them distinct, serving to reinforce and uphold Western knowledge and superiority. Through this othering, “the lived lives of Global South communities, be it their privacy perceptions, harms, values, and norms, are seen as too distant to be relevant to those pursuing reforms in the design of socio-technical systems within the Global North.”<sup>51</sup> This quote from Arora demonstrates that mentalities remaining from colonialization have created a real and current hierarchy that places the Global South below the Global North. Due to this position of power over the Global South, the North feels no need to change their actions in regard to the South.

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<sup>49</sup> Feldman, Keith P. “Empire’s Verticality: The Af/Pak Frontier, Visual Culture, and Racialization from Above.” *Comparative American studies* 9, no. 4 (2011): 325–341.

<sup>50</sup> Arora, Payal. “Decolonizing Privacy Studies.” *Television & new media* 20, no. 4 (2019): 366–378.

<sup>51</sup> Arora, “Decolonizing Privacy Studies”, pg. 367

Arora provides an example of this, saying that the West “often uses the Global South public in ‘low-rights environments’ as testbeds for innovations in technological surveillance.”<sup>52</sup> In this example privacy rights are directly related to the global power hierarchy. The privacy concerns of those in the Global South are marginal, a reality that Arora attributes to colonial attitudes, referencing the core and the periphery. However, Arora does give hope that these attitudes can be changed, saying that “while power asymmetries exist and are often relatively stable and reproductive, the core and the periphery can be moving targets that evolve alongside shifts in geopolitics.”<sup>53</sup> In this, Arora demonstrates that the current global power structure can be changed. To achieve this change however, remnants of colonial mentalities must be completely disregarded, and the West must throw out the othering narratives that it uses to reinforce its status at the top. These remedies will be further discussed in this thesis later, and the changing of the global order will be touched upon in the interview section.

### **Case Studies:**

In this section two case studies will be analyzed to determine the current surveillance practices of the West and the immediate effect of those practices on the people living below. Both case studies take place in the region that could be characterized by US foreign policy as “Af/Pak.” These studies were chosen for that reason, the area encompassed has a rich relational history with the West, and the involvement of the US in these regions today is widely known and undisputed. These regions are also the center of a large amount of scholarship on the Westernization of the world, and how the West Others this region.

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<sup>52</sup> Arora, “Decolonizing Privacy Studies”, pg. 368

<sup>53</sup> Arora, “Decolonizing Privacy Studies”, pg. 373

An early scholar on this topic was Edward Said, coining the term Orientalism in his book, “Orientalism,” which is largely just another framework in which to differentiate different parts of the globe. In this book the ‘Orient’ is separated from the ‘Occident’, terms that have fallen out of use in favor of the ‘East’ and ‘West’. Said describes Orientalism as not only a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Western experience, but the perpetuation of an image of the Orient, that by its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience, helps define the West.<sup>54</sup> Later came the work of Fernando Coronil, who came up with ‘Occidentalism,’ which he defines as

the ensemble of representational practices that participate in the production of conceptions of the world which (1) separate the world’s components into bounded units; (2) disaggregate their relational histories; (3) turn difference into hierarchy; (4) naturalize these representations; and thus (5) intervene, however unwittingly, in the production of existing asymmetrical power relations.<sup>55</sup>

By this definition, the US engages in practices of Occidentalism, and these case studies explain how this manifests in lives of people rather than just in theory. In these case studies the Othering that is complicit in the West’s treatment of the East is made clear, demonstrating that the West uses this constructed difference to create hierarchy (as used in Coronil’s definition of Occidentalism), that is then used to justify unequal privacy protections.

### *Pakistan and the FATA Region*

The first case study is conducted by Cachelin and examines the FATA region of Pakistan. Cachelin acknowledges that while the US drone programme is in regions other than the Middle East and Pakistan, this region was chosen for the case study due to the unique civilian experience under imperial airpower, which can be used to illuminate broader patterns of exploitation.

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<sup>54</sup> Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. [25th anniversary edition]. New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, 2003.

<sup>55</sup> Coronil, Fernando. *Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories*, n.d.

Further, “the institutionalization of, and continued reliance on, drones, in and outside the Middle East, as a means to enforce American influence, sets a dangerous precedent for the future of warfare, global order, human rights, and the continuation of colonial policing.”<sup>56</sup> This region was also chosen to demonstrate a contemporary example to an area with a colonial legacy.

Honke and Muller explain that through the postcolonial discourse of ‘us versus the inferior other’ it is clear that the United States is using drone surveillance to submit people living in these regions to locutionary silencing to demonstrate their power and ‘improve’ the world through the spread of Western thought.<sup>57</sup> Cachelin furthers this by saying that the us and them mentality began in the 1920s through the colonization of the Middle East, portraying the area as essentially having no civilians, and the U.S. drone program has only furthered this narrative. A clear example of this is the phrasing that the U.S. military uses, commonly referring to the targets that the program surveils as ‘military-age males’ or MAM for short, reducing people, many who are innocent civilians, to an acronym. Cachelin alludes to the scopic regime in saying “crossing borders and international air space, the lens through which the West views the Orient is transposed, rendering foreign populations intrinsically suspicious.”<sup>58</sup> Cachelin’s study finds that in Pakistan, this has led to civilians being fearful to wear certain cultural dress, grow beards, participate in community gatherings like burials or festivals, and hold jirgas, a decision-making body of male elders that are essential to the political and cultural community in the FATA region. These groups are deterred from these actions because they know to the CIA, a group of men doing jumping jacks could be a terrorist training camp, one holding a gun and sporting a beard, both traditional things in the FATA region, could be a Taliban fighter.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Cachelin, “The U.S Drone Programme,” pg. 443

<sup>57</sup> Honke, Jana, and Markus-Michael Muller. “Governing (in)Security in a Postcolonial World”

<sup>58</sup> Cachelin, “The U.S Drone Programme,” pg.447

<sup>59</sup> Cachelin, “The U.S Drone Programme”



This population is effectively othered through the surveillance regimes enacted by the U.S. military, a point that demonstrates the hierarchical power dynamic reminiscent of colonialism that is at play in this situation. Drone programs force the operator to decide about who will be killed, a decision often informed by stereotypes and political power. While Cachelin makes this point in the context of drone strike targets and civilian versus militant deaths, this thesis applies this evidence to a different point. The fear that these civilians are experiencing in going about their daily lives is due to the constant surveillance and lack of privacy. Cachelin touches on this when explaining the physical and mental effects of drone violence. Drone strike killings are often messy, taking down a number of people in one area and leaving family members and onlookers to clean up a mess of body parts. Knowing that you or your family could be next is a terrifying state to live in and this lack of security due to a lack of privacy erodes many other structures, from the education of children to community structures.

### *Afghanistan*

In 'f,' Edney Browne studies how the effects are similar in Afghanistan, a region chosen by the author in order to give a voice to these people, whose lived experiences are rarely documented in academic scholarship. This study was conducted through direct interviews of Afghan people that Edney Browne met in Afghanistan and are now living as refugees and asylum-seekers in Greece. Twenty-nine people were interviewed by Edney Browne, the majority being men and all between the ages of nineteen and seventy. Some of the people interviewed were still living under drone surveillance at the time of the study and travelled to Kabul to meet with Edney-Browne, being reimbursed for their travel and accommodation costs. This data-collection framework allowed for the personal experiences of the interviewees to be shared and published, adding to a body of scholarship that is very thin. The region was also chosen due to

the link between the beginning of the War on Terror and the start of the usage of military drones by the US. In this area, the US-led coalition told the Afghan media that the drones “could see down to one inch,” leading to the suppression of jirgas, wedding ceremonies, and even work tasks like taking the goats to graze or irrigating the fields at night. Even young boys spending their evenings socializing could be targeted, as a result of the ‘othering’ that the U.S. military does, which scares these men from doing it again, demonstrating the locutionary silencing effect of the drone program.<sup>60</sup> Feldman calls this racialization from above, categorizing the people living in these regions as the ‘other’ to justify strikes and suppress in acts of locutionary silencing.<sup>61</sup> In this suppression, the importance of privacy rights is made obvious.

Common rhetoric in the American debate surrounding new technologies and privacy rights is ‘Why should my privacy matter if I have nothing to hide?’. These cases demonstrate exactly why personal security in privacy is still important if one is not committing criminal acts, especially for people who live in areas entrenched in false stereotypes like those given in these case studies. In these cases, decisions are being made based off very little information at times, just like how Americans’ own metadata could be flagged after 9/11 for calling or emailing someone outside of the country. Even if one does not have anything to hide false conclusions can be reached and lead to damaging consequences. The people that live under constant surveillance know this and consequently change their daily routines to mitigate the potential harms that could arise from going about their lawful lives. The cascade of negative effects that stem from a lack of privacy rights are explained to some extent in IR theory with Andrew Linklater’s taxonomy of harms. In this taxonomy Linklater classifies harms in society with multiple criteria, one of which

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<sup>60</sup> Edney-Browne, Alex. “The Psychosocial Effects of Drone Violence: Social Isolation, Self-Objectification, and Depoliticization.” *Political psychology* 40, no. 6 (2019): 1341–1356.

<sup>61</sup> Feldman, “Empire’s Verticality”

being about modes of humiliation or stigmatization that cause psychological harm or destroy personal or collective identity.<sup>62</sup> However, Linklater does not link these harms to an international community and rather their only recognition of psychological harms at an international level is in regards to “the deliberate harm countries do to their own citizens.”<sup>63</sup> Therefore, this framework does not fit very well within the context of this thesis, leading to the abandonment of IR theory to characterize this issue. Jasbir Puar, a professor in the realm of Women’s and Gender Studies, focuses on Israel’s use of drones in Palestine. In the majority of her study she looks at the physical harms of these regimes, again demonstrating the gap in the literature for this subject, but in a smaller part she clearly iterates the psychological harms that these practices have on the Palestinians, specifically children.<sup>64</sup> In a larger framework Puar argues that internationally created psychological harms can debilitate people and their communities, a theme that Edney-Browne pulls out through direct interviews. Therefore, these cases demonstrate why privacy and protection from surveillance has greater human rights implications, improving both autonomy and liberty through the protection of privacy.

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<sup>62</sup> Linklater, Andrew. *The Problem of Harm in World Politics : Theoretical Investigations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pg. 51

<sup>63</sup> Linklater, *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*, pg. 63

<sup>64</sup> Puar, Jasbir K. *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

## Interviews:

This section contains the information gathered from interviews with two scholars coming from different specializations about the issue. These interviews were conducted over Zoom due to locations of the interviewee. Both people interviewed were asked the same basic set of questions to determine the difference in views, but follow-up questions diverged based on responses given so some topics were only covered in one interview. The beginning question set looked like the following:

What do you see as the biggest obstacle to a universal right to privacy?

What do you think of the use of drones as a security technology?

Do you think that drone power is connected to colonial ideals at all? Would drone use by other countries ever be allowed over the West and why or why not?

Thinking about historical colonial examples such as aerial policing, in what ways do drones and other types of aerial surveillance ‘warfare’ demonstrate colonial power structures at play?

Do these surveillance practices demonstrate an entrenchment of colonial ideals within the world of Western policy or rather something else like a legitimate pushback to terrorism or real national security interests?

Are there any measures you would prescribe to better protect privacy rights around the world/ create fair surveillance practices across the realm of global powers?

Is there any way to decolonize these practices?

In this section both interviews will be analyzed and compared, the variation in responses explored to see how people with different expertise may see the subject. Additional analysis will be added to further explain responses and provide the appropriate context.

The first interview conducted was with Dr. Gregory Stiles, a professor currently at the University of Sheffield in England, an international relations expert whose doctoral research focuses on the role of the Group of 7 in managing the international order. Stiles' interview sheds light on how global power structures influence the use of drone technology and subsequently privacy rights. Next comes Robin Brackett, a Doctoral student and graduate employee at the University of Oregon who is also in the field of international relations but specializes in Nuclear Policy, a technology far more detrimental than drones which gives her a different approach on questions of that matter.

For Stiles, the key issue with an international right to privacy is the lack of global oversight. No one is taking global responsibility for dealing with emerging technology and “the degree of pushback from what is called a liberal international order means that it’s highly unlikely we’re ever going to get, at least in the next decade or two, any kind of form of coordinated action that deals with international privacy rights.”<sup>65</sup> As one example of how privacy may be protected by major powers, Stiles notes the action of the UK Prime Minister holding an AI Summit. From this action Stiles believes that it is clear the United Kingdom is attempting to be a player that sets up these norms, however Stiles is unsure if non-Western powers and other non-European powers will acquiesce to that. He is certain that it will be more difficult to get major powers such as the United States and China to agree to rules that they haven't come up with.

Brackett lists two major issues with privacy, the first one clearly being technology in her opinion. The second thing she notes is the will of those who benefit from policies that infringe on privacy. As an example, she cites people or governments that benefit from surveillance policies

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<sup>65</sup> Stiles, Gregory. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 1, 2024.

or having drone strike capabilities. This is one of the biggest issues for her for, as she points out, is it is difficult to convince those who have this power to not use it, and there is a lack of accountability in the international community. Treaties can be violated, and social norms can be eroded. This concern is similar to the one voiced by Stiles, that major power players in the global scheme will not agree to policies that do not allow them to fully use their power.

For Stiles, drones as a security technology is heavily entrenched in global policing already and would be extremely difficult to remove. The UK police force uses drones in the interior of the United Kingdom going as far as policing people on walks during lockdowns. The police have also used these drones to oversee and control protests, demonstrating a Western-on-Western use of this surveillance power. When discussing the potential of drones carrying on a colonial legacy, Stiles emphasizes the importance of borders. Stiles references a ‘colonial mentality’ when Western powers use these technologies, flying over borders with little regard to sovereignty in a demonstration of colonial entitlement. However, Stiles brings up the fact that drone technology is so cheap and easy to come by, making it so that former colonial dependencies have their own ability now to access this data gathering. This is seen in examples of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Armenia to name a few, therefore “there are colonial elements definitely to the use of drones and the breaches of sovereignty and national airspace, but there's also something about almost decolonial in the sense of the spread of drones now.”<sup>66</sup> Although, this proliferation is one-sided, demonstrated by the fact that the United States flies drones over places like Mexico, but a drone from Mexico flown over the US would never be permitted, as evidenced by the Chinese weather balloon scenario.

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<sup>66</sup> Stiles, Gregory. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 1, 2024.

Brackett sees drones and aerial surveillance technologies as entrenched with colonial ideals at their very core, as there is always a sense of control and subjugation. She also references the inherent land control aspect of colonization and compares that with aerial surveillance regimes. Land control is still an aspect of these regimes, since countries build military outposts from which to launch their aerial vehicles in these foreign lands. Brackett calls these bases a form of land colonization, a symbol that the West is watching and present if the country being occupied steps a toe out of line. While not directly land control, Brackett compares the airspace invasion that aerial surveillance requires with colonial land control. While there may not be boots on the ground like a typical colonial regime, the owning and control of the airspace of a foreign country has a very similar effect in Brackett's opinion. In this conversation she references the panopticon, as discussed earlier in this thesis, which may demonstrate a power structure and control even more severe than the typical land occupation in the historic colony.

When asked if he believes surveillance policies demonstrate an entrenchment of colonial ideas or if he sees them as a legitimate exercise of power to promote national security interests, Stiles says the key point to consider is the mentality of the actors involved. When specifically talking about the United States and the surveillance efforts in terms of drones that they have taken, Stiles says that the argument could be made that "it is a form of colonial action, but the US and US administrations would not see it that way. The US has never seen itself as a colonial power, even it has been and is an important colonial power."<sup>67</sup> Former colonial powers like Britain may be more open to challenging these narratives, but Stiles says that at the end of the day it doesn't matter if it is a former colonial power or a new instigator, the use of surveillance

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<sup>67</sup> Stiles, Gregory. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 1, 2024.

technologies is universal. Policymakers do not care about the labelling of their actions or state like academics do, focusing on colonial narratives will not change the policy in Stiles' opinion.

Brackett answers this question with two key points: national security and terrorism. She starts her discussion with a nod to the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, noting that US security was damaged at this point and required certain measures to be built back up. However, she says that “I think that national security and terrorism have become the new terms of colonial behavior.”<sup>68</sup> In this same vein she speaks of freedom, asking the question “who is free” under these surveillance tactics that are marketed to be for the safety of a nation. Following this line of thought, Brackett voices that from a perspective such as hers, it seems like many things that are done in the name of national security do not achieve this goal and do very different things than what they are advertised to. Onto her second point, Brackett talks about labelling, noting that “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.”<sup>69</sup> She argues that this labeling is counterproductive, creating more enemies and national security threats. This second point ties back into the labeling discussion had earlier in this thesis, how Othering the East and South creates a hierarchy that the West and North is able to exploit. Brackett’s argument seems to follow this same idea, and in doing so affirms the colonial nature of foreign surveillance.

Stiles emphasized the point that surveillance technology is increasingly common and able to access these days, making it so that many actors in the international scheme can employ similar methods such as the ones used by the West in the case studies above. This thought prompted a follow-up question about fairness in the international order, and if access was correlated to ability. Thinking about fairness internationally, Stiles points out that this access

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<sup>68</sup> Brackett, Robin. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 12, 2024.

<sup>69</sup> Brackett, Robin. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 12, 2024.



does not mean that most states can push back against the dominant hegemonic powers, but it does level the playing field regionally.

Bringing larger access to the conversation of decolonizing these practices, Stiles is unsure if access effectively does that. One point that both Stiles and Brackett emphasize that was not directly included in the line of questioning was the issue of buying and selling surveillance technologies. Stiles brings up the example of Turkey, a postcolonial, historically imperial power that supplies drones to other states. This line of thought again invokes discussions about fairness and decolonizing surveillance. While the spread of this technology means that states other than large, former colonial powers, have access to surveillance technology, access does not entail equal use. As emphasized in case studies and with the China weather balloon example, the use of surveillance technologies in the international community is not equal nor fair. Stiles notes that the only thing this increased access will provide is a new distribution in the realm of regional powers. It also important to consider in this analysis the difference between having the technology and being able to use the technology. Brackett's concerns with the proliferation of surveillance technologies seem to come from her area of expertise in nuclear warfare. More than once in her interview she brings up the issue of weapons deals, and how the same logic can be applied to the buying and selling of surveillance technology. While Brackett is unsure how to solve this issue, she does point out that watching who the buyers and sellers are can demonstrate the shifting power structures within this topic.

While Stiles' prescription was more about acknowledging a current trend that may lead to a decolonization of surveillance practices, Brackett makes a recommendation that may unfortunately be far off in the future. She suggests promoting the interests of the global majority, norms and rules made by people rather than militaries and governments. From her

perspective, the majority of people in the world would not want their privacy degraded twenty-four hours a day, to be surveilled within their daily lives. By promoting the interests of the people of the earth, rather than the people in power, or the militaries that serve the powerful, privacy rights would be more highly regarded and international surveillance would decrease. In saying this she again acknowledges that this discussion is being held in a country that holds a large position of power, but at the same time, between two people who would agree with what she sees as the global majority's view on privacy. She says: "we need to start thinking about it as the global majority and not the Global South or XYZ minority group."<sup>70</sup>

Along these lines, a point that Brackett brought up right away in her interview was the sociological aspect of the matter in terms of Global North vs. South, East vs. West. Brackett references the 'western narrative' which she defines as similar to Orientalism and Occidentalism, a narrative that the West/ Global North perpetuates in order to make those living in the juxtaposed areas of the world seem lesser. Specifically referencing areas that were used in the beforementioned case studies, Brackett explains that the narrative is spun to paint certain people as targets and not as humans with actual lives and uses the term 'systematic dehumanization' to describe the treatment of these people, both literally and ideologically.

A last thought from Stiles' is on a similar vein, addressing the very core of the issue covered in this thesis. Stiles notes

The idea around privacy, the idea around data collection, is viewed very differently from you or me sitting in a North America or European setting to someone in the Global South who, for better or worse, does not have a say in this context. The narrative, the debate, the argument, the things you and I are talking about, is happening in the Global North... These conversations are of course being had in the Global South but they are not part of this narrative about what do we do with this surveillance data.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Brackett, Robin. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 12, 2024.

<sup>71</sup> Stiles, Gregory. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 1, 2024.

This is an important point to remember, that this thesis is being written by someone from the Global North, with views and a personal privacy experience much different to the cases and situations being discussed. A conversation about if the very idea of privacy rights was a Western/Northern concept ensued after this comment, Stiles concluding that while thoughts around privacy may be different, “when you are on the receiving end of state surveillance that is constant and overbearing, you care. Do you have a voice? That’s a different matter.”<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Stiles, Gregory. Interview with Katlyn Kenney. March 1, 2024.

## **Where do we go from here? Decolonizing Scopic Regimes**

As demonstrated throughout this thesis, the entrenchment of colonial powers runs deep in the world of surveillance warfare and therefore the right to privacy globally. While these regions of the world may be technically decolonized, it is important to remove any sort of colonial hierarchy or ideal to begin upon the path of truly universal human rights. This is a large problem that doesn't have the simplest solution and will take time, but the following discussion will lay out some possible avenues through which this decolonization of thought and practice may begin.

### **A Creative Solution**

The first suggestion is not one of policy but one of creativity. American-Pakistani artist Mahwish Chishty paints the Western drones that fly above Pakistan with cultural meaning, incorporating religious symbols, calligraphy, and even stylized logos of trucking companies on her paintings. While these paintings may not provide the people in Pakistan any further privacy protections in the way that a new international law or court order may, they can act as a mode of decolonizing these regimes. In her paintings, Chishty connects the West with the East, North with South, as she creates a visualization of the Western surveillance model through Eastern eyes. Unlike language, art has the capability of transcending borders and differences, and Chishty's depiction of these drones conveys a deeper meaning to the onlooker, no matter the sphere of the world they are living in. By bringing artistic representations of surveillance from the perspective of those being surveilled, the first step towards decolonizing these regimes is taken. Art is a form of self-expression, of storytelling, and providing this art with a platform to be seen and heard brings voices from the Global South to the table. Representation like this in the international global order is the first step towards challenging the hegemony of the Western states and improving privacy rights around the world.



Figure 2. *Reaper* by Mahwish Chishty



Figure 3. *MQ-9 Reaper* by Mahwish Chishty

The first of these images is titled “Reaper” and the second “MQ-9 Reaper,” describing the type of drone that the images depict.<sup>73</sup> Upon first look, the surveillance aspect of these drones is obvious to the viewer in these paintings. Both drones have an eye, or a set of eyes in the middle, seeing all that is below. Other aspects of Chishty’s work may be harder for just anyone to decipher, as the vibrant colors and symbols are a reference to the art seen on trucks in Pakistan. This cultural element is a crucial part of the reclamation of these drones, as it

<sup>73</sup> Chishty, Mahwish, “Drone Art,” Mahwish Chishty, 2021, accessed February 12, 2024, <https://www.mahachishty.com/work#/drone-art-series/>

demonstrates an acknowledgement that the technology is part of the region's past and present but takes the West out of the picture as much as possible. Grayson and Mawdsley analyze Chishty's work deeper, arguing that it challenges the usual representation of the drone and gives it a cultural meaning rather than being seen as an imposition of Western power. The symbols used on Chishty's drones are a nod to the realm of the spiritual/magical, things that are not seen. This feature can further decolonize modern scopic regimes by demonstrating that vision is reliant on what cannot be seen, and therefore the invisible defines the visual. Thinking of the drone, there are limits on what can be seen and assumptions are made based off limited information. Chishty's work reminds the viewer that the Western scopic regimes relies on invisibility that an invisible threat distinguishes visible actions. By symbolizing invisibility in a cultural context Chishty reclaims the idea that underpins these regimes. Therefore, the symbols demonstrate the power of the invisible and the role of invisibility in scopic regimes, challenging the rationality of science and rationality of visibility.<sup>74</sup> To assist in visualizing the drones that Chishty is portraying through her art, the following figure is a depiction of the MQ-9 drone and its specifications.

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<sup>74</sup> Grayson, Kyle, and Jocelyn Mawdsley. "Scopic Regimes and the Visual Turn in International Relations"

**2.1.7 MQ-9 Predator B**

**User Service:** Air Force  
**Manufacturer:** General Atomics Aeronautical Systems Inc.  
**Inventory:** 6 Delivered/60 Planned



**Background:** The MQ-9 is a medium-to-high altitude, long-endurance unmanned aircraft system. Its primary mission is as a persistent hunter-killer for critical time sensitive targets and secondarily to act as an intelligence collection asset. The MQ-9 system consists of four aircraft, a ground control station (GCS), and a Predator Primary Satellite Link. The integrated sensor suite includes a moving target-capable synthetic aperture radar (SAR) and a turret that houses electro-optical and mid wave infrared sensors, a laser range finder, and a laser target designator. The crew for the MQ-9 is one pilot and one sensor operator. The USAF proposed the MQ-9 system in response to the Department of Defense request for Global War On Terrorism (GWOT) initiatives, in October 2001. In June 2003, Air Combat Command (ACC) approved the MQ-9 Concept of Operations. The objective force structure includes nine combat-coded systems and 36 aircraft. ACC approved the final basing decision to put the MQ-9 squadron at Indian Springs Air Force Auxiliary Field in February 2004.  
[http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet\\_print.asp?fsID=122&page=1](http://www.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet_print.asp?fsID=122&page=1).

**Characteristics:**

	MQ-9 A		MQ-9 A
Length	36 ft	Wing Span	66 ft
Gross Weight	10,500 lb	Payload Capacity	*750 lb
Fuel Capacity	4,000 lb	Fuel Type	JP
Engine Make	Honeywell TPE 331-10	Power	900 shp
Data Link(s)	BLOS	Frequency	Ku-band
	LOS		C-band

\* Up to 3,000 lb total externally on wing hardpoints.

**Performance:**

Endurance	30 hr/clean 16-20 hr/external stores	Max/Loiter Speeds	225/TBD kt
Ceiling	50,000 ft	Radius	2,000 nm
Takeoff Means	Runway	Landing Means	Runway
Sensor	EO/IR	Sensor Make	MTS-B
	SAR/MTI	Weapons	Four, 500 lb class or 8-10, 250 lb class

Figure 4. Unmanned Aircraft Systems Roadmap description of the MQ-9 Predator Drone

Another artistic prescription to the imperialistic U.S. drone program is the work of Iraqi artist Wafaa Bilal. One of Bilal’s most famous works is titled *Domestic Tension*, and it is a direct representation of the lack of privacy in modern warfare. For the exhibition Bilal lived in a gallery for a month equipped with a paintball gun machine. Over the course of the project, viewers could log into the space online where they could watch Bilal through a live webcam, and if they chose to, deploy the paintball gun to shoot him. Bilal’s confinement to the gallery space represents the very real challenge Iraqis face daily of being unable to escape the surveillance from above, and

the shooter making decisions through a live web-cam feed is an accurate representation of how drone warfare works.<sup>75</sup> In analyzing Bilal's work Professor Ronak Kapadia describes how Bilal's work makes us consider the link between vision and the logic of war. The long war may be control of a global image and data, and understanding the importance of field of vision and who is controlling the narrative is an important step in checking power.<sup>76</sup> By making the viewer contemplate the visual, Bilal's artwork plays a role in recognizing and ending the broad use of Western power to control lives through the visual sphere and infringe on privacy.



Figure 5. Wafaa Bilal in his piece *Domestic Tension*

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<sup>75</sup> Bilal, Wafaa, "Domestic Tension," Wafaa Bilal, 2024, accessed February 26, 2024, <http://wafaabilal.com/domestic-tension/>

<sup>76</sup> Kapadia, Ronak K. "NINETEEN. Up in the Air and on the Skin: Drone Warfare and the Queer Calculus of Pain." In *Critical Ethnic Studies*, 360–375. New York, USA: Duke University Press, 2020.



## **Recommendations from Interviewees**

Moving away from artistic reforms into policy recommendations, Stiles suggests a scheme similar to that currently in use in the UK and Europe, where citizens have the ability to access the information that is held on them. Under General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) rules in these countries citizens can request to view the data private institutions, companies, the government and even the police have on them. Stiles explains that there are of course some issues, like how much data is given to the citizen, how long the data collector takes to grant the request, how much is redacted, etc. but along the lines of a Freedom of Information request citizens can access data and request the data be deleted. An international right like this could be one step in further protecting the privacy rights of global citizens. While not granting them complete privacy it does give them some liberty and autonomy in the privacy scheme of their lives. One issue with this remedy that Stiles points out is that it may not work as well in states that do not have similar legal frameworks or independent judiciaries.

This recommendation sounds great in theory, but when thinking about the practical application within the logic of this thesis, it may fall short. As demonstrated throughout this project, the West and hegemonic states feel as if they have the power to determine the rights of others, encapsulated by Stiles' use of the term 'colonial entitlement.' If the right to privacy is being violated, what principle will stop these same states from violating a data transparency law such as this one? Furthermore, as evidenced by the American security state, governments will hold that any information they collect is important enough in some way to be kept secret. Author Kerry Howley describes the currency of America as the secret, "but the currency is degraded. Documents are marked classified for no particular reason, because it's always the safest, because they may be potentially embarrassing, because no one takes a document not marked secret

seriously.”<sup>77</sup> Powerful states will find reasons to deny information requests and redact as much as possible if they must comply, demonstrating how an international law forcing compliance may not even be helpful. Kwet also voices a potential issue with this recommendation, explaining how the asymmetries in the global power structure may make this unfair:

The US stranglehold over tech infrastructure, combined with a vast pool of resources, provides it with leverage over other countries. When countries like South Africa want information about a person of interest, they must apply through the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty to access private information from social networking platforms like Twitter or Facebook. US spy agencies, by contrast, can demand access in the name of national security.<sup>78</sup>

Brackett’s recommendation is more centered around international norm setting. By using the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, she theorizes that countries may be able to come together and create a set of rules for the international community to follow regarding the use of drones. In this discussion of what worked with nuclear weapons, Brackett brings up the importance of social norms in determining how these weapons were used. Attaching a negative connotation to certain practices will cause people, and in this case states, to stop participating in these actions. By making the use of nuclear warfare shameful it made countries more likely to sign onto this treaty preventing the spread of these weapons and effectively ended their use in the international community. Consistent with this example, Brackett suggests making surveillance practices shameful. Once this norm has been set, countries will be more likely to stop these practices and agree to policy that would set legal guidelines for surveillance.

Stiles does not see the same promise that an international agreement kickstarted by norm setting holds. One of the main reasons that he articulates in defense of this position is that drone

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<sup>77</sup> Kerry, Howley, *Bottoms Up and the Devil Laughs* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2023), pg. 45

<sup>78</sup> Kwet, “Digital Colonialism,” pg. 16

warfare is incredibly common and cheap, with a variety of uses, and can be easily made. Not only would getting countries to sign onto this agreement would be difficult, but the treaty would be nearly impossible to enforce due to the scale of drones and the ease at which they can be built. While Stiles does not foresee any international agreements regulating drone usage or creation for this reason, he does believe that the emergence of AI will change the game for drone warfare and require immense international norm setting.

## Conclusion

For most of the West, privacy rights are a promise. The privacy right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights backed up by Western governments in the form of written rights, legal remedies and societal norms. In the United States these protections come in the form of the Fourth Amendment and the establishment of privacy through *Griswold v. Connecticut*. Additionally, strong western governments protect these people, promising military repercussions to any foreign entity that dares to mess with the privacy rights of the Western people. This can be seen with the international privacy regulations that the UDHR holds, and the threat that America gave China when Chinese surveillance technology was believed to be hovering over the American people. All these measures show that the West values privacy, considers it as important a human right as freedom (to reference Senator Tester).

When roles are reversed however, the West seems to have an opposing view. When looking at surveillance measures that the West uses abroad, it is clear that principles of privacy are unevenly applied depending on the sphere of the world in question. In the arena of political science, the terms Global North and Global South, the East and the West, First World and Third World, Orient and Occident, all mark the difference between the spheres of the world we live in. The labelling system is not entirely based on geographic location, but rather a power hierarchy, that allows those at the top to stay in power through the Othering of those below. This relationship is partially explained through world system theory, which sees the world in groups like the ones previously described, the groups with more power being the core and the ones underneath them being the periphery. World system theory articulates that the periphery is

dependent on the core, but more relevant to this thesis, that the periphery is exploited by the core states.<sup>79</sup>

Through a literature review, case studies and comments from interviewees, this thesis has explored Western control over international privacy through surveillance measures. New surveillance technologies, such as drones, demonstrate this double standard that the West acts in. Drones gather a plethora of data, collecting enough information about the lives of people below them to piece together a picture of their whole life (as demonstrated by the mosaic theory). When similar data gathering technologies are used in the United States, citizens are quick to defend their rights, using the legal remedies available to them through the court system to ensure that the government no longer intrudes upon their privacy. Foreign individuals do not have this same assurance, without having the privacy right and legal access that comes with being a US citizen, their privacy can be and is infringed upon with little hope of reparations. Most of this analysis took place through a postcolonial lens, finding that when looking at current surveillance measures through the memory of colonial practices, it is clear use of the international power hierarchy aids the West in curtailing privacy rights.

Postcolonial theory sees the world as a result of the colonial processes of the past, and it is through this lens that it is evident the West's stance on surveillance comes from this colonial entitlement. Beginning the analysis of these colonial underpinnings comes Satia's work on the history of aerial surveillance from a colonial perspective. Satia details the imperial air regime of Britain in the Middle East, explaining how information on colonists was gathered from airplanes, this data being used to crush dissents and control the lives of those below.<sup>80</sup> Comparing this aerial surveillance to the Panopticon, Satia says that simply the fear that comes with being

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<sup>79</sup> Ritzer and Dean, "Globalization and related processes" pg. 98

<sup>80</sup> Satia, "Drones: A History from the British Middle East"

watched pushed people into submission.<sup>81</sup> Due to this history, the current residents of Pakistan see the drones used by the US as neocolonial. Cachelin affirms this feeling, iterating that through a postcolonial lens the history of locutionary silencing by a dominant power shows the current drone program as a contemporary manifestation of imperial air power.<sup>82</sup>

Another aspect to the current surveillance practices is the expansion of borders and therefore sovereignty implications. Entering foreign airspace, building aircraft outposts in other nations and inflicting surveillance on a people that are not your own are all bordering practices, as Feldman argues.<sup>83</sup> In the expansion of these Western borders comes the infringing upon the sovereignty of the nations the West is expanding into. By examining the direction of this sovereignty stealing it is evident which nations have greater power in the international order. Arora expands on this, adding that colonial histories and mentalities play into this order which determines whose privacy rights are defended, and whose can be easily taken away.<sup>84</sup>

Case studies in Pakistan and Afghanistan affirm the colonial nature of these surveillance regimes, and the real-life impacts that surveillance has. Through direct interaction with the people who have lived under the aerial surveillance practices of today, researchers have discovered that constant surveillance creates fear which in turn curtails civil liberties, autonomy, and has detrimental mental health impacts. These cases and their results demonstrate the timeliness of this issue, and the extreme importance of a global standard for privacy rights.

In the interviews, Stiles and Brackett brought different viewpoints to the table. While Stiles called for greater global oversight in the realm of privacy rights, Brackett was concerned with the powerful not stopping their ways. Both Stiles and Brackett saw surveillance by drones

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<sup>81</sup> Satia, "From Colonial Air Attacks to Drones in Pakistan"

<sup>82</sup> Cachelin, "The U.S Drone Programme," pg. 445

<sup>83</sup> Feldman, "Empire's Verticality"

<sup>84</sup> Arora, "Decolonizing Privacy Studies"

as a security technology that holds some colonial entitlement, especially in regard to bordering and sovereignty. However, Stiles believes that with the easier access to this technology, there is something decolonial about the spread of drones. Many powers have them and use them, but the proliferation is still one sided, evidenced by a few examples given in this thesis like US-Mexico relations and the Chinese weather balloon incident. Brackett is more of a firm yes on believing that aerial surveillance technologies are contemporary manifestations of colonial power, due to the inherent sense of control and subjugation. Both recognize the context of the interview discussion, being held in a Western sense, and point out that this fact may account for some of their beliefs about privacy.

Moving forward, Stiles suggests a data sharing scheme similar to that under GDPR rules. In this scheme people could request and access data that foreign governments collected on them, requesting the deletion of this data if they so wish. Issues with this are again relating to power, and if the powerful will comply with these requests and how helpful they will be if they do comply. Brackett recommends a treaty and imbuing surveillance practices with a norm of shame. This is a recommendation Stiles sees as less effective, due to the heavy proliferation of drone technology. Both recommendations would have great positive outcomes for the state of privacy rights around the world, but as demonstrated, there may be some issues with their applications.

Bilal and Chishty use art to decolonize surveillance practices, Chishty using cultural symbols and beliefs to reclaim the machines that watch her people, while Bilal demonstrates the effects that surveillance has on a person to a wider audience. Both examples show how endorsing the work of people from the Global South can assist in taking down these regimes and bringing awareness to the narratives that they perpetuate.

## **Final Suggestion**

As discussed by Stiles in his last interview point, this thesis is written by a Western author, in a Western context, for a Western institution, but about issues that the West is inflicting on the non-West. This first suggestion attempts to begin to bridge the gap between these two facts. To reiterate what Stiles said, conversations about surveillance and privacy are happening in the Global South, but they aren't being heard. Endorsing scholarship from these areas of the world on this subject matter would therefore be the first suggestion in bridging this gap. Inviting voices from the Global South into policy conversations, academic settings and the norms of everyday life is the first step at reversing Westernization and adding a little equality into the global ordering hierarchy.

While the concept of a right to privacy may be a more Western idea, the case studies mentioned here and many other current examples of surveillance and data-collection schemes, demonstrate the importance of ensuring that everyone is free from unreasonable intrusion by outsiders. Forcing each country to adopt their own Fourth Amendment or change their governing documents to include a right to privacy is not the answer here. This would be just yet another example of Westernization, pushing Western views and standards on the rest of the world. Instead, it is the West/Global North that needs to change. Leaving behind colonial mentalities and respecting each person as if they were a citizen of a Western country is an idealistic remedy to this issue. However, as Arora and Stiles pointed out, geopolitical dynamics are always shifting, and as technology advances this very soon will become a concern for the entire world. So, while historically and currently this is a reminder to the West and the North, it should serve to tell every state that privacy of the people needs to be respected, as it is a concept that is crucial to maintaining the liberties that allow us to be who we are each day.