Abstract

The thesis employs critical discourse analysis to map the debate regarding the deployment of armed Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) in warfare and analyses the arguments that legitimise drone strikes and those which criticise their deployment. It also identifies the contentious issues regarding new technologies in warfare. The thesis is aimed at examining the kinds of arguments and justifications that have been provided by different actors for the deployment of armed drone strikes by the United States in Pakistan over a fifteen-year period, beginning with the first strikes in June 2004. It focuses on the bureaucratic debates regarding the strikes and how political leaders have framed the rationale for their deployment. Consequently, it is important to critically analysis how the strikes by United States have been interpreted by different voices and whether the actions of the United States and its drone policy can or cannot be normatively and ethically justified. The thesis sets out by identifying the common themes that emerge from the public discourse and sets out to answer one key question that assesses the intertextual framework that has bounded the official discourse, the wider political, academic and public debate regarding armed unmanned drone strikes. That is:

How have the US drone campaigns in Pakistan been framed and justified?