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Armed and Unarmed Drone Perception in Conflict Zones

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Armed and Unarmed Drone Perception in Conflict Zones



Introduction

Regions across the globe that are impacted by conflict are often the recipients of both armed and unarmed drones. These dual-use systems blur the boundary between military and civilian objectives. The goal of this literature review is to understand the scope of research conducted in conflict zones from the perspective of the civilian. Civilian includes resident, visitor, and worker. A gap in the available literature has been identified within the context of dual-use systems, conflict zones, and the civilian perspective.

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Research Questions

1. What is the scope of literature on the perception of drones in conflict zones?
2. How are drones perceived by the civilian*?

*refers to residents, visitors, and workers



Methodology

This modified systematic review applied a transparent replicable method to search for and identify relevant peer-reviewed literature. The terms listed in the next section were typed into various databases including Hunt Library and Google Scholar. To address limitations, the search was expanded to include books and sources that were cited in already gathered peer-reviewed articles. Next, the literature was imported* into LitMaps and a third search was conducted. Finally, a literature map was developed to examine the relationship between the articles. Finally, the information was synthesized in a formal literature review.

*books were not imported due to the nature of the database.



Terminology

Armed	Drone	Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)
Conflict	Dual-use	(UAS)
Civilian	Perception	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)
	Trust	(UAV)



Findings

- ▲ The dual use of unmanned systems continues to engage scholars in the context of foreign policy, international law, ethics, humanitarian aid, space systems, and engineering.
- ▲ Drones* are minimally studied in conflict zones through the lens of the civilian
- ▲ Drone* language and terminology is adapted to the end-user's mission

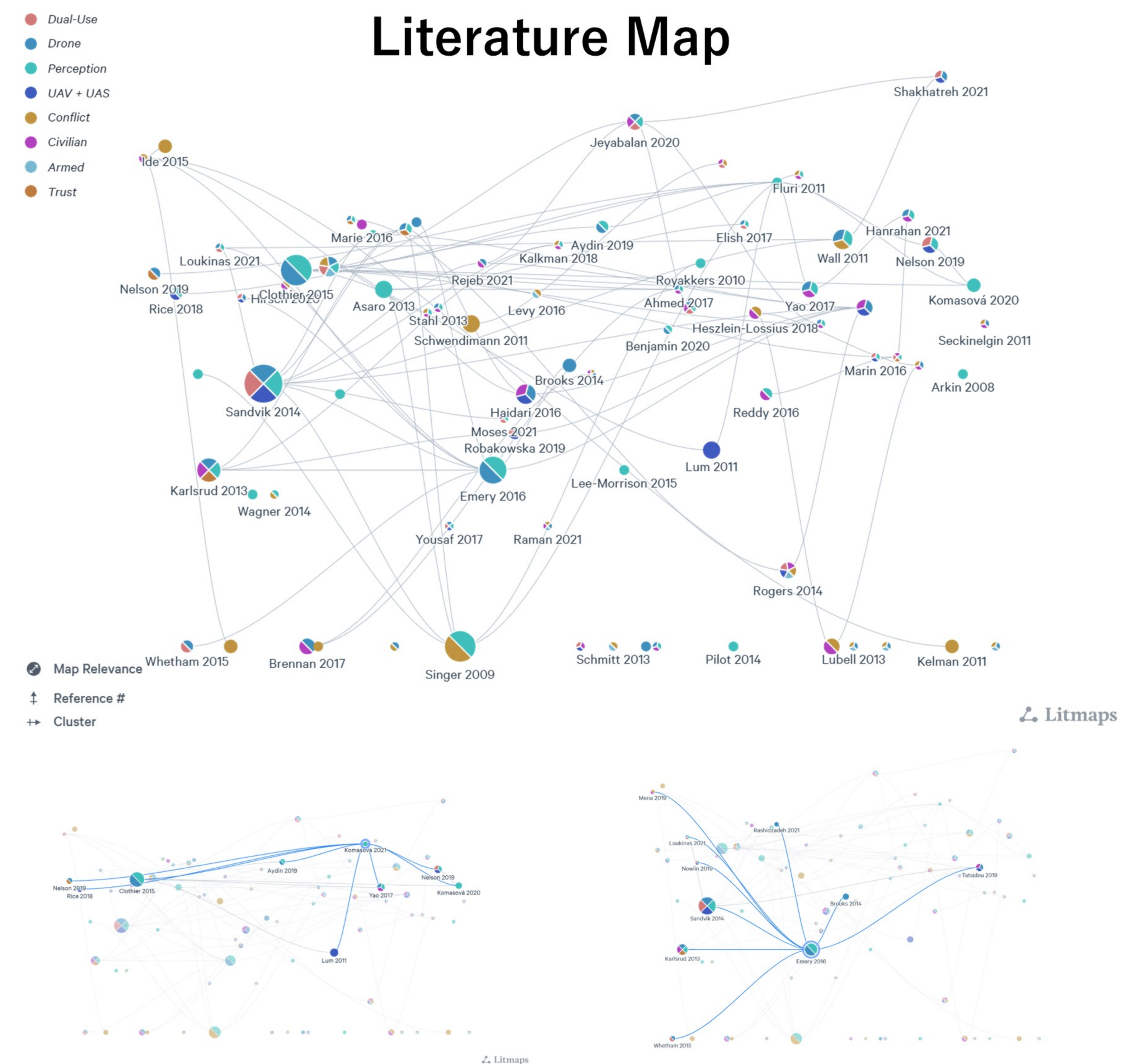
*refers to drone, UAS, UAV



Discussion

This review revealed several characteristics; first, there is little data to examine the perception of drones from the perspective of the civilian. Second, most of the literature examines law, policy, ethics, space systems, and engineering. Third, language used is adapted to the user, the mission, and desired representation. For example, “drone” is used more often by civilians and commercial organizations than by governmental or military institutions. Lastly, it is apparent that the nature of “conflict” impedes the collection of data. The dual-use framework inherently bounds the utility of unmanned aerial vehicles and blurs each system's objective.

Literature Map



Komasová, S. (2021). Possible Inspiration: Drone-Related Literature and its Potential for Public Perception Research. *Journal of Intelligent & Robotic Systems*, 103(3). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10846-021-01498-9>

Emery, J.R. (2016). The Possibilities and Pitfalls of Humanitarian Drones. *Ethics and International Affairs*. 30(2). <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679415000556>



Future Research

The research process will continue and expand upon the findings in this literature review to meet the following goals. First, the regions discussed in current literature will be isolated and analyzed to properly define “conflict zone”. Next, they will be cross-referenced with regions that report the use of drones, both armed and unarmed. Following that, drone and conflict zone mapping methods will be examined to understand the degree of information collected, including how it is collected and the potential for collection in regions impacted by conflict.

