

## Abstract

In this new era, the world is progressively moving towards the 4th Industrial Revolution based on the principle of merging the physical with the digital life. This paradigm shift towards greater inclusion of technological innovations and services has incited to reconsider how international security is perceived – particularly within the new cyber domain. In contrast to the physical world, the cyberspace has no borders and invites a more globalised approach, offering abundant opportunities of political, economic and social consequences. Thus, the digital domain highlights new security challenges that may have strategic impact on the real world. The present dissertation was undertaken to investigate the novel phenomenon designated as Net state and evaluate its power and impact in the international security landscape. Adopting a neorealism theoretical framework, predominant paradigm in IR, it also attempted to determine how the integration of a cyber reality into the international politics can alter traditional conceptions of security. Findings suggests that Net states have theoretical implications to be considered as a unit of level under the same conceptual standards as traditional states, and predicts that the cyber-physical revolution has the possibility to exacerbate interactions between states and Net states resulting in hybrid conflicts.

**Keywords:** *cyber security, cyber power, international security, cyberspace, net state, disruption*