

Abstract

This dissertation examines the development of hybrid warfare as an analytical concept, and in particular the development of Russian hybrid warfare post the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea. Russian hybrid warfare has since then developed into large-scale policy and Russia is unlikely to cease its hybrid activities, making them an important field of study. Making use of a comparative case study approach, the dissertation looks closely at two small states, Estonia and the Netherlands, and their respective experiences with Russian hybrid warfare and to what extent there exist differences and similarities between the two cases studied.

The study demonstrates that Russia views itself as at war with the West and that it involves all elements of its state to gain the upper hand, with a particular focus on hybrid methods ranging from information warfare to cyber warfare and proxy warfare. Similarities as well as differences between the two cases exist, although the similarities have the upper hand with information warfare being the strongest asset of the Kremlin in both states. Further, this dissertation argues that studying and understanding Russian hybrid warfare is of significant importance for protecting democratic societies in the West and that future research may engage in exploring possible countermeasures in depth.

Keywords: hybrid warfare, Russia, Estonia, the Netherlands, small states, information warfare, cyber warfare, economic warfare, proxy warfare, political influencing operations