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**Deploying the Silicon Web – The Role of ICT Companies
in the Russian Invasion of Ukraine**

Master's thesis abstract

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Abstract

With the start of the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Western Information and Communication Technology (ICT) companies have found themselves in a strange position. Providing Ukraine's military resistance with critical capabilities and resources, these companies seem to have become geopolitical actors in their own right. Due to its novelty, academic research has so far been lacking theory-driven approaches for the implications that accompany this phenomenon. To help fill this research gap, this thesis offers a new perspective on the actions of ICT companies in interstate war by utilizing Slaughter's theoretical framework

focused on connections and networks in geopolitics. It conducted a qualitative comparative analysis of these company action's and their impact on both sides of the war to determine how they shape the conflict and to which degree they provide a strategic advantage to their beneficiaries. The analysis of individual within-cases yields support to the notion that ICT companies can enhance the resilience of a country under military attack, while also constituting an important factor for the aggressor. Both findings highlight the critical role ICT companies can play in military conflict. At the same time, the thesis finds that ,webcraft' alone yields only limited or diminishing returns unless underlined by traditional state-centric instruments of war.