"LIVING IN A WORLD RISK SOCIETY"[1] – THE CASE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AS A RISK

By

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[1] Term taken from Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006).

Abstract

This thesis will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) as an "umbrella term" in order to later explain the terms "hybrid threat," "hybrid warfare," and "social media" and its conceptual linkage to the definition of risk. To this end, the literature on risk will rely heavily on Ulrich Beck's risk society thesis, but also on other views of risk as well as James Der Derian's virtual theory, and it will be argued that social media constitutes a risk. Furthermore, Beck's approach to the concept of "reflexive modernity" and the concept of "risk management" by other scholars will be illustrated using the case of NATO Strategic Communications Center of Excellence and its management of social media risk in order to explain the effect of risks in the international level. It will be argued that state actors, namely Russia, have capitalized on this social media risk and as a result have challenged the world order of neoliberal, universalist socio-political projects of good order. What we are currently witnessing is the end of "The end of History" and the challenge to Western ways of life by alternative order projects.

Key words: risk society, uncertainty, social media, artificial intelligence, ontological security, hybrid warfare, risk.

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Introduction

Risk is not a new and monolithic concept as humankind has always faced danger and uncertainty.[2] However, its usage has evolved depending on the specific circumstances of the time.[3] Uncertainty and panic in the past arose from the Bible or magic, they were considered events that could possibly not be controlled.[4] With modernity, the view of risk with rationality and progress changed and risk became scientifically calculable and controllable.[5] By the end of the twentieth century human-kind started to confront globalized high-intensity risks such as climate change, terrorism as well as nuclear meltdown.[6] These risks were no longer calculable and were considered unknown and uncontrollable.[7]

The work of Ulrich Beck in the risk society and his definition of risk offers an understanding of risks in the present era given that its semantics have become especially important in the languages of economics, natural sciences, and that of politics.[8] The natural sciences (as reproductive medicine, human genetics, nanotechnology, etc.) and its speed of development have become an overwhelming cultural imagination. [9]

In the present era, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its application in social media and hybrid warfare constitute a new risk as it has become a new medium to gain attention that has infiltrated

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[2] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 30.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).
[8] Ibid., 21.
[9] Ibid., 21.

in many areas of the society from the economy, the electoral process, war, international politics and even the way diplomacy is conducted.

The social media interaction between nations through tweets as diplomats and heads of states join the social media revolution, has radically altered interactions among nations. For instance, Twitter has allowed politicians to openly threaten other nations, discuss the possibility of using nuclear weapons against other states, and even, in the case of President Trump, issue policy proposals that surpass check and balances of the U.S. democratic system and call for policies that even contradicted those of his own administration.[10]   These new technological interactions have opened the door to what now is called Digital Diplomacy.[11] These relationships are radically different from the old and ritualistic system ruled by international law and international relations as social media has reshaped diplomacy making it more public as it is being witnessed by millions of people in real time. However, diplomacy is not the only change that social media has brought with it.

Social media has also had a tremendous effect on the way elections are conducted in democracies around the world. Even though foreign meddling in elections is not a new phenomenon as during the Cold War both superpowers used information warfare to undermine the opponent,[12] the meddling of elections is a new phenomenon of "tried-and-true methods with modern technology."[13] Indeed, some activities are reminiscent of the Soviet era, such as sponsoring coups and spread of fake news, however, Russia now counts with new tools to

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[10] Josh Israel, "Trump's tweets debunk his own lies about government shutdown," *Think Progress*, January 18, 2018,
 https://thinkprogress.org/trump-twitter-shutdown-2d6605f00749/.
[11] Rashica Viona, "The Benefits and Risks of Digital Diplomacy," *SEEU Review* 13, no. 1, 2018.
[12] Michael Chertoff and Anders Fogh Rasmussen, "The Unhackable Election: What It Takes to Defend Democracy," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2019 Issue,
https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-12-11/unhackable-election.
[13] Ibid.

manipulate social media such as robotic armies and paid accounts.[14] Non-state actors have also used social media tools such as Facebook to spread misinformation and influence the outcome of elections in the West.[15] For example, the far-right party AfD (Alternative for Germany) won seats in parliament in 2017 helped by a big push from the social media industry as it has been shown that they were the political party with the most activity on social media.[16] With the European Parliament Elections approaching in May, scholars and policymakers alike are warning that the same disinformation campaign that took place during the 2016 Presidential Elections in the U.S. is taking place in Europe coming from far-right groups as well as the Kremlin.[17] These disinformation campaigns aim at spreading uncertainty and insecurity among the population inciting fear of immigrants, NATO, or the EU.[18] This use of social media with the aim of disestablishing campaigns as well as used as a parallel tool to gain territories in war is referred to as "hybrid warfare."

Indeed, technological means have increased the agency of states and human beings and are changing the international system in ways that history has not previously witnessed.[19] By employing online networks along with automatic "bot" accounts, foreign agents can inject propaganda into the social media platform and create a trend to diffuse a message faster than

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[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Thomas Davidson and Julius Lagodny, "Germany's far-right party AfD won the Facebook battle. By a lot," *The Washington Post*, September 26, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/09/26/germanys-far-right-party-afd-won-the-facebook-battle-by-a-lot/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.0fe947ccafe6.

[17] Matt Apuzzo and Adam Satariano, "Russia Is Targeting Europe's Elections. So Are Far-Right Copycat," *The New York Times*, May 12, 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/12/world/europe/russian-propaganda-influence-campaign-european-elections-farright.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FSocial%20Media&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics&region=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=2&pgtype=collection.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Joseph S. Nye, "CyberPower," *Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs,* (May 2010).

through any other tool.[20] In this new era it is not only the skilled hackers who can participate in undermining the system and be part of possibly the next World War; now anyone with access to internet can actively participate in the "information warfare."[21] In turn, this has increased the lethal capacity of individuals and small groups to act violently.

Meanwhile, as witnessing during Facebook testifying in Congress regarding Russia's meddling in the U.S. elections, policy-makers seemed naïve and clueless regarding how a social media giant – Facebook- operates and the function of its AI in boosting content on the net.[22] This lack of understating from the part of policy-makers shows on the one hand, and the lack of communication and interactions between governments and technological companies on the other, shows at the structural level, the failure of the current society to keep up to date with the technological advancements of AI.

Social media has also radically changed the way wars are conducted. To give one example of this change, before ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) had gained control of Mosul and despite their lower military capabilities in comparison with the Iraqi Army, they were able to create instability and uncertainty through hashtags such as #AllEyesOnISIS which became top-trending on Arabic Twitter and showed the torture and execution of those who dare to resist this terrorist group.[23] The hashtag #AllEyesOnISIS achieved to "take on the power of an invisible artillery

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[20] Jarred Prier, "Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 52.

[21] P. W. Peter Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).

[22] Emily Stewart, "Lawmakers seem confused about what Facebook does — and how to fix it," *Vox,* April 10, 2018,
 https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/4/10/17222062/mark-zuckerberg-testimony-graham-facebook-regulations.

[23] P. W. Peter Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).

bombardment sparing out in front of the advancing force"[24] all which incited terror and defection among the inhabitants of Mosul as well as the army to the extent that when ISIS arrived to conquer Mosul few were left to flight them.[25] Therefore, what we are currently witnessing is how virtuality, with the case of social media, is transforming the reality of war as Der Derian argued.[26]

The examples above show how social media uses constitute a risk in the risk rociety and demonstrates the need for scholars in security studies to address this risk. The present thesis will attempt to do so by examining the literature of the risk society by Beck as well as Der Derian's virtual theory. To this end, the terms "hybrid warfare," and social media will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis in order to link the notion of risk to that of social media. This is because this thesis will only focus on the political uses of social media and given that the term "hybrid" has come to address a varied scenario from physical disruption that combine military and non-military action such as Russia's annexation of Crimea, to merely those focused on social media campaigns such as Russia's meddling in elections around the world using "fake news" campaigns.[27] Furthermore, even though infiltrations by state and non-state actors through the mere use of social media does not produce physical disturbance, as Peter Singer argues the platform of social media has created a "new war-like scenario" in which case the "war" is fought by acquiring as many "likes" as possible in sites like Twitter and Facebook helped by the AI and algorithms that analyze words, hashtags, and phrases to create topics sorted in order of popularity.[28]

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[24] Ibid., 5
[25] P. W. Peter Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.

Furthermore, it will be argued that as institutions are left to cope with this risk, this situation is reminiscent of Beck's claim that in the risk society modern institutions are failing to manage risks. This is because the institutions of modern society try to anticipate to what cannot be anticipated[29] as governments seem to have left up to the companies of technology to deal with the many threats that its algorithms create. Indeed, even the CEO of one the most powerful social media sites – Facebook -[30] has called for more government regulations for its social media platform as well as a "common global framework" for laws to be standardized globally instead of being considerably different from nation to nation.[31]

Even though Europe has created laws such as the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that protect privacy, and the U.S. is currently debating the possibility of breaking up the social media giant,[32] we seem to be far from Zuckerberg's demand to create a global framework to counter-attack the challenges brought by the "hybrid warfare" phenomena. With this context in mind, the present thesis will attempt to understand the present era analyzing Beck's risk society thesis, and asking the following questions: are we witnessing a *risk society* in international relations? Does the case of social media constitute a risk? If so, how do uncontrollable risks such as social media affect security decisions at the international level?

After examining the literature on risk, defining risk and differentiating it from threats, and deriving from the literature of critical studies on risk and Der Derian's virtual theory, the present

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[29] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006): 329.

[30] Rosamond Hutt, "The world's most popular social networks, mapped" *World Economic Forum,* 20 March 2017,
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/03/most-popular-social-networks-mapped/.

[31] "Mark Zuckerberg asks governments to help control internet content," BCC, accessed May 21, 2019,
https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-47762091.

[32] Adam Gabbatt and Kari Paul, "Facebook cofounder calls for company to break up over 'unprecedented' power," *The Guardian*, May 9, 2019,
https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2019/may/09/facebook-chris-hughes-break-up-company-zuckerberg-power.

thesis will first argue that social media constitutes a risk. Hence, this thesis will not attempt to create an authoritative definition of risk, but rather by looking at the literature on risk, select those views that suit best the case of social media as a new risk from the critical security scholars and from Der Derian's virtual theory. In a later chapter it will be explained the application of "risk management" linking it to the concept of "reflexive modernity." In this regard, "reflexive" does not mean that a society has mastered consciousness, but rather that it has become aware that mastery is impossible to achieve.[33]

Therefore, the "reflexive" nature in the laws that are created in order to manage the danger that itself has created,[34] but also given that hybrid warfare, as an important advancement in technology, represents the dynamic, human intervention and transformation characteristics of modernity. Thus, the present thesis will show how the "reflexivity of international agency such as NATO's is the result of the reflexive modernity."[35] This thesis will make the argument that the Western ways of life have come under sustained challenge by alternative order projects arisen by the social media risk. This transformation exemplified by the counter-hegemonic projects that challenge the neoliberal order will be explained using the concept of "reflexive modernization" which is based on the idea that societies are witnessing societal transformations within modernity.[36] This 'meta-change' of modern society results from a "critical mass of unintended side effects."[37] In other words, what Beck calls risks in his risk society. Therefore, I will argue that

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[33] Bruno Latour, "Is Re-modernization Occurring – And If So, How to Prove It?," *Theory, Culture & Society* 20 no. 2 (April 2003).

[34] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[35] Ibid., 156.

[36] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

[37] Ibid.

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social media constitutes a risk arisen as a "critical mass of unintended side effects" of the process of modernization.

Therefore, by criticizing some scholars such as Rasmussen in the security field that have successfully shown the mechanism of "reflexivity," while leaving the concept of modernity behind, this thesis will show the case of "reflexive modernity" in the case of management of "hybrid warfare" or social media. Indeed, this thesis acknowledges that the notion of "reflexivity" is often overlooked and a central component of constructivism,[38] and hence, a special emphasis is placed in it.

The case study selected to illustrate the notions of "risk" and "risk management" is NATO and its Strategic Communications Center of Excellence. The reason for the selection of this case study is because it portrays the risk (hybrid warfare) explained in the previous chapter, and its application or "management" as the NATO's Strategic Center of Excellence provides the perfect example to illustrate the "reflexive modernity" aspect present in Beck's theory. Furthermore, NATO has been characterized as "the most important risk community of all,"[39] and unlike many military alliances NATO is highly institutionalized.[40] Hence, provides for a good empirical case study of Western institutionalism. In order to understand this risk society policy briefs as well as discourses made by NATO leaders will be examined.

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[38] Stephano Guzzini, "A reconstruction of constructivism in international relations," *CEU working paper IRES*, 1999.

[39] Christopher Coker, *Globalization and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk* (New York: oxford University Press, 2002).

[40] Zoltan Barany and Robert Rauchhaus, "Explaining NATO's Resilience: Is International Relations Useful? ," *Contemporary Security Studies* 32, no.2 (August 2011): 289.

CHAPTER 1: OLD THREATS – NEW RISKS: WHAT DOES THE RISK SOCIETY HAVE TO SAY?

The present chapter will first provide the reader with a general foundation on the theory of the risk society and produce an overview of the literature on risk. Two streams of view on risk will be identified in the critical security scholarship: the constructivist view of risk and the post-structuralist view of risk based on Foucault's governmentality and will derive from them key points that will be described in more detail in the subsequent chapter in the case of social media. Furthermore, a brief overview of the concept of risk management will be presented and its linkage with "reflexive modernity" will be made. The following chapter will provide more specific examples that link the literature of risk to the case of social media and AI.

1.1. The Risk Society – From Threats to Risks

In the International Relations (IR) scholarship the concept of security has been, until recently, strictly linked to the realist conception of power politics and balance of power dynamics for the survival of the state. Therefore, this approach has been purely state-centric not analyzing "referent objects"[41] other than that of the state. In this regard, *threat* is a quality which would allow a state to measure and assess the capabilities of other states in order to understand its status in the context of power politics. In other words, *threat* allowed states to know their place in order to "balance" with other states. Hence, *threat* in the context of the Cold War was based on "agency and intent between conflicting parties" and its interpretation relied on intelligence gathering in order to attempt to eliminate it.[42]

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[41] Barry Buzan, Ole Waver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, (Boudler: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

[42] Claudia Ardau, Luis Lobo-Guerrero, and Rens Van Munster, "Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors' Introduction," *SAGE Publications* (2008): 148.

As Heng argues in *War as a Risk Management*, during the Cold War *threat* was characterized by two major components: the quantifiable dimensions of the Soviet Union's military capabilities and the intentions.[43] This conception followed the means-end rationality based on material quantifiable threats fought against through deterrence. Contrary to this understanding, scholars in the security field view risks as socially constructed that occur once a potential danger has been identified and measures are taken in order to manage its effects in the future rather than about deterring quantifiable threats in the present.[44]

The concept of risk historically found in sociology, economics, and natural sciences[45] only became popular among scholars in IR at the end of the Cold War when major states and international organizations such as the UN, NATO, and the EU began to refer to the security environment in terms of *risks* rather than *threats*.[46] This shift in terminology has allowed for an understanding of the security environment post-Cold War characterized by an uncertain environment where risks[47] that encompass nation states proliferate such as pandemics, terrorism, poverty, terrorism, and climate change. Hence, the common argument among security scholars on risk[48] is that the previous understanding of dangers that threaten the "survival of the state" based

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[43] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 30.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Karen Petersen, "Risk Analysis – A field within Security Studies" *European Journal of International Relations* 18 no. 4 (2011): 4.

[46] Claudia Ardau, Luis Lobo-Guerrero, and Rens Van Munster, "Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors' Introduction," *SAGE Publications* (2008): 147.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3: 329; Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Christopher Coker, *Globalization and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk* (New York: oxford University Press, 2002); M. J. Williams, "(In) Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization and the Risk Society," *Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 43 no. 1(2008); James Der Derian, "Global Events, National Security, and Virtual Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001); Mikel Vedby Rasmussen "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (2001).

solely on threats of what Weber called "means-ends rationality" is rendered obsolete as there is a prominence of risks that are unquantifiable and ones that policy-makers do not attempt to erase as it is not possible as it was in the case of threats, but instead they try to minimize its impact by *managing* those risks.

In order to understand the shift from threats to risks in the post-Cold War, Ulrich Beck's thesis of risk society has proven extremely useful as it provides explanatory power to this change. His theory is also particularity useful in the field of IR given the risk society's explanation of the transnational and international phenomena. This is the reason why many scholars of security studies have used it in their research.[49]

The risk society thesis is based on the structural argument that the transition from an industrial society to risk society takes place given the "unintended" side effects of the industrial society[50] where the institutions of modern society try to anticipate what cannot be anticipated.[51] Hence, there is a shift away from "means-end rationality" or from what Beck calls "rationality" as in the risk society rationality is no longer useful when assessing risks given that the experience from the past, encourages anticipation to the wrong kind of risks, ones that can be anticipated and calculated, whereas the real risks arise from "what we do not know and cannot calculate."[52] Beck described this situation as an "irony" giving the example of a superpower like the United States that spends billions of dollars in anti-missile defense systems, but was shocked by suicide terrorists

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[49] Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, "'It Sounds Like a Riddle': Security Studies, the War on Terror and Risk," *Millennium: Journal of International Relations* 33, no. 2 (October 2004); Christopher Coker, *Globalization and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk* (New York: oxford University Press, 2002); Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[50] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

[51] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006): 329.

[52] Ibid., 330.

who succeeded in turning commercial passenger aircrafts into rockets.[53] This impossibility to cope with the current era where rationality is no longer useful when assessing dangers leaves "ironically" the American world power "struck to the heart of its security and self-confidence."[54] Therefore, Beck seemed to approach risk from a realist perspective – risks are "out there"- but also using a weak constructivist approach – the nature of the risk is understood differently in the West compared to other societies and eras.[55]

Another important distinction between *threats* and *risks* is that threats generate fear while risks fuel anxiety.[56] Most sociologies today agree that we are living in an era of profound anxiety and social media has only intensified this emotion in the society. [57] The application of risk to the case of information technologies used by Der Derian is relevant to this thesis given that his theory provides a linkage between the concept of risk and hybrid warfare. What for Beck and other scholars in the critical security field is denominated a "risk" given its "unintended and unquantifiable" effects, is perhaps what Der Derian in his virtual theory names "accident" described as "an unusual effect of a known cause; a causality, a contingency." [58]

The main difference of the risk society from previous societies according to Beck is that the contemporary - industrialized society has given rise to new types of risks which are different from the previous ones that were qualifiable and tangible to a certain degree as it was the case

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[53] Ibid., 330.

[54] Ibid.

[55] Colin McInnes, "Fatal attraction? Air Power and the West," *Contemporary Security Policy* 22 no. 3 (December 2001) in Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[56]Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 50.

[57] Scott E. Caplan, "Relations Among Loneliness, Social Anxiety, and Problematic Internet Use," *Cyber Psychology & Behavior* 10, no. 2 (April 2007).

[58] James Der Derian, "Global Events, National Security, and Virtual Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001): 677.

during the Cold War assessing the number of weapons that the Soviet Union had. Furthermore, Beck argues that the risks in the risk society are characterized as constituting "new forms of temporally and spatially de-bounded."[59] Beck's refence to new forms of temporality refers to the idea that risks as no longer predictable as it cannot be expected when they will arise, and the characteristic of spatially de-bounded to the idea that they are no longer only present within the limits of national or geographical boundaries, but that achieve to transcend them and are no longer calculable. Indeed, as Tuathail argues in the present era "space appears to be displaced by pace while telematically appears more significant than territoriality."[60]

Der Derian makes a similar argument regarding the shift in national security in the case of threats in the United States, stating that:

"what strikes me the most is the accelerating pace of change in so many areas that affect our nation's interests. Numerous examples come to mind: *new communications technology[61]* that enables the efforts of terrorists […] rapid global population growth that will create new strains in parts of the world least able to cope, the weakening of internal bonds in several states […]"[62]

In this context, the present thesis does not argue that the traditional dangers of, for instance, rouge states do not constitute a threat. But it aims at challenging the traditional ways in which the danger has been represented as mostly territorial and quantifiable using the case of a new communication technology: social media. The most recent United States *Quadrennial Defence*

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[59] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).
[60] Geraroid O Tuathail, "Undersdtanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22 no. 2 (1999): 118.
[61] Emphasis added.
[62] James Der Derian, "Global Events, National Security, and Virtual Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001):677.

Review also reflects this trend away from state-based threats to a more abstract risk which described the enemies that we face today, not as nation states, but rather as distributed multi-national and multi-ethnic networks of terrorists as the main security challenge.[63] Such challenges have been described as risks which are multidirectional and often difficult to predict.[64] The difficult predictability of the risks makes the task of policy-makers to erase the threat impossible, and they are left with the task of managing the risk.[65] As Beck puts it "modern society has become a risk society in the sense that it is increasingly occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that itself has produced."[66] Indeed, risk in the risk society is all about "foreseeing and controlling the future consequences of human action, the various unintended consequences of radicalized modernization."[67]

In IR two sets of risks are usually discernible: "systemic" risks such as terrorism, ethnic cleansing, and proliferation, and "tactical" risks provoked by policy responses which depend on circumstances such as incurring civilian casualties. The present thesis focuses on the former or "systemic" risks which "arise from peculiarities of the international system aggravated by globalization."[68] In this regard, we should not understand globalization as the end of territoriality, but rather as a "process that transforms without eradicating the institutions and features of the political landscape in which it is at work."[69] In other words, what we are currently witnessing is

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[63] M. J. Williams, "(In) Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization and the Risk Society," *Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 43 no. 1: 58.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[66] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006): 332.

[67] M. J. Williams, "(In) Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization and the Risk Society," *Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 43 no. 1 (2008).

[68] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 47.

[69] Christopher Coker, *Globalization and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk* (New York: oxford University Press, 2002): 21.

the effect of the process of globalization in "global systems" such as global market or global politics.[70] Globalization marries the syntax of "global" and its derived "globalism" in "the transformation of the world."[71] "Global" is defined as contrasting with the national which understands the environment in a holistic way in which the habitat constitutes a unity.[72] "Globalism" supports the virtues of the global and is opposed to nationalism which preached the virtues of the state.[73]

The concept of "ontological security" defined as the "state of the 'being' or, in the terms of phenomenology, "being-in-the-world."[74] But it is an emotional, rather than a cognitive, phenomenon, and it is rooted in the unconscious."[75] During the pre-modern time, the "ontological security" was anchored in particular notions of space. However, with globalization the notion of "ontological security" becomes diffused and is no longer based space limited by territory which has increased the insecurity of the being or "ontological security."[76]

Therefore, the case of social media as a risk illustrates the argument that "national security" in the contemporary era is now global and confronts to new dangers now called risks. While "national" and state-centered threats continue to constitute significant security concerns, the most immediate security challenges, from international organized crime, to weapons of mass destruction, to social media, are now "deterritorialized" and global, increasing the "ontological insecurity." This period called risk society for Beck and "victory crisis" for others, is precisely called one of "crisis" given that the "national security" institutions designed historically to fight

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[70] Ibid., 21.
[71] Ibid., 19
[72] Ibid., 15
[73] Ibid., 15
[74] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 1990)
[75] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 1990): 92.
[76] Ibid.

one type of threat now operate in a world where that threat has disappeared.[77] Indeed, as one characteristic of this risk society is that "the regulatory institutions cannot keep up with the global plurality of risks proliferating."[78] Some of the proliferation risks take the form of BSE, global warming, mobile phones, and terrorism which are called "virtual risks" and are defined as "unknown unknown" of those dangers which experts cannot agree or simply do not know enough.[79]

Another camp in the critical security studies scholarship, the post-structuralist camp[80] or Critical Risk Studies,[81] argue contrary to Beck's view of the shift to a form of cosmopolitanism in which transnationalism will take place to counter risks and maintain that new risks have not necessarily moved societies towards a more democratic and cosmopolitan direction.[82] Additionally, they criticize Beck's empirical difficulty to locate a threshold between reflexivity and early modernity which renders the claim that we live in a risk society problematic.[83] Furthermore, post-structuralist scholars, as the Constructivists, claim that risks are socially constructed, however, as opposed to the Constructivist scholars who based on Becks definition of risks view them as unquantifiable, the post-structuralist scholars build on the premise that "risks are to some extend quantifiable and predictable."[84]

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[77] Geraroid O Tuathail, "Undersdtanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22 no. 2 (1999): 118.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[80] Ibid.

[81] Karen Petersen, "Risk Analysis – A field within Security Studies" *European Journal of International Relations* 18 no. 4 (2011): 4; William Clapton, "Risk in International Relations," *SAGE Publications* 25 no. 3 (2011).

[82] Claudia Ardau, Luis Lobo-Guerrero, and Rens Van Munster, "Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors' Introduction," *SAGE Publications* (2008):151.

[83] Claudia Ardau and Rens Van Munster, "Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un) Knowing the Future," *European Journal of International Relations* 13 no, 1 92 (2007): 94.

[84]Claudia Ardau, Luis Lobo-Guerrero, and Rens Van Munster, "Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors' Introduction," *SAGE Publications* (2008):148.

Additionally, instead of focusing on structural changes as the Constructivists do and argue that the "risk society is an uninsurable society"[85] constituted in the homogeneous development of the industrial modernity, risk is understood for these scholars as "a dispositive to govern social problems."[86] Hence, these scholars focus on the ways that already existent risks are being managed through governing techniques.[87] In this context, some scholars like Bigo focus on the routinized everyday practices used by governments based on Foucault's concept of governmentality in its application in the case of immigration.[88] This group of scholars are also called the Paris School who, as opposed to the Copenhagen school that view security as an "existential threat"[89] that goes beyond normal politics.[90] Other scholars marry the view of security as "exceptional practices" and that of everyday routines and practices and security professionals[91] and focus their empirical work on the risk governance, usually, in the practices of governments and companies.[92]

Regarding their view on risk, these scholars do not focus on the calculability/incalculability characteristic of risks but rather focus on "'how' presumably incalculable risks like terrorism are governed."[93] The Precautionary principle is important in this regard and its derived from environmental politics which asks to take regulatory measures even when the risk cannot be

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[85] Claudia Ardau and Rens Van Munster, "Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un) Knowing the Future," *European Journal of International Relations* 13 no, 1 (2007):92.

[86] Ibid., 97.

[87] Ibid., 94.

[88] Dider Bigo, "Security and Immigration: Toward a critique of the Governmentality of Unease," *Alternatives* 27, *Special Issue*, (2002).

[89] Barry Buzan, Ole Waver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, (Boudler: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

[90] Claudia Ardau and Rens Van Munster, "Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un) Knowing the Future," *European Journal of International Relations* 13 no, 1 92 (2007): 97.

[91] Ibid., 98.

[92] Claudia Ardau, Luis Lobo-Guerrero, and Rens Van Munster, "Security, Technologies of Risk, and the Political: Guest Editors' Introduction," *SAGE Publications* (2008)

[93] Claudia Ardau and Rens Van Munster, "Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un) Knowing the Future," *European Journal of International Relations* 13 no, 1 92 (2007): 101.

entirely scientifically proven.[94] Indeed, the environment was the first catastrophic event that was not scientifically probable or calculable.[95] The precautionary risk is one that "introduces the computation of the future its very limit, the infinity of uncertainty and potential damage."[96] Unlike insurance, therefore, the precautionary risk applies to "what is uncertain – that is , to what one can apprehend without being able to assess."[97] In regards to the expert knowledge, who in the risk society thesis create "epistemic communities"[98] and become necessary in order to manage threats, scholars in this field view experts as an insufficient and unreliable recourse for political decisions."[99]

Finally, for the Critical Realist camp,[100] also called Political Risk studies,[101] even though they acknowledge the difficulty to measure the risks they analyze and measure them, using the methods available. Therefore, according to this camp, risks are "out there"[102] and are measurable through statistics and probabilities. For the purpose of this thesis, this last camp's view on risk will not be analyzed nor implemented in the case of hybrid warfare. This is because it is based on the premise that "objects of knowledge"[103] are socially constructed and argues against the empiricism view that through statistic methodology a broad sense of reality can be captured.[104] Furthermore,

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[94] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[95] Claudia Ardau and Rens Van Munster, "Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un) Knowing the Future," *European Journal of International Relations* 13 no 1 (2007).

[96] Ibid., 101.

[97] Ibid., 102.

[98] Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination*," International Organization* 46 no. 1: (1992).

[99] Claudia Ardau and Rens Van Munster, "Governing Terrorism Through Risk: Taking Precautions, (un) Knowing the Future," *European Journal of International Relations* 13 no 1 (2007).

[100] Karen Petersen, "Risk Analysis – A field within Security Studies" *European Journal of International Relations* 18 no. 4 (2011): 4.

[101] Ibid.

[102] William Clapton, "Risk in International Relations," *SAGE Publications* 25 no. 3 (2011).

[103] Stephano Guzzini, A construction of Constructivism in International Relations, *European Journal of International Relations* 6 no. 2 (2000): 160.

[104] Ibid.

given this thesis's theoretical foundation in the risk society thesis, the critical-realist view on risk will not be accounted for on the grounds that it is precisely given the unpredictable, and socially constructed, continuously changing nature of the risk in the risk society, what renders it impossible to qualitatively analyze the characteristics of risks. It should be mentioned that the present thesis does not render the political risk camp irrelevant. However, theory ought to be the main to attain a full view of the sociological and security impact that social media entails in IR.

As stated earlier, the reason why these two views of risk are selected for the present paper is given that social media, as one of the most recent and far-reaching manifestations of the digital computing and communication revolution that has marked the beginning of the post-industrial era (Information Age),[105] constitutes as an obvious characteristic of the risk society and its characteristic of "reflexive modernity." However, considerations made by the post-structuralist scholars explained above should also be taken into consideration.

1.2. The Concepts of Risk Management and Reflexive Modernity

The concept of "reflexive modernity" examines the societal transformations that takes place within modernity.[106] In the words of Beck it refers to the "the possibility of a creative (self-) destruction for an entire epoch: that of industrial society."[107] In other words, the risk society argues against the "end of history" in which "liberal democracy may constitute the 'end point of

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[105] Jane Cordy, "The social Media Revolution: Political and Security Implications," *NATO Parliamentary Assembly,* October 2017, *https://www.nato-pa.int/download-file?filename=sites/default/files/2017-11/2017%20-%20158%20CDSDG%2017%20E%20bis%20-%20SOCIAL%20MEDIA%20REVOLUTION%20-%20CORDY%20REPORT.pdf.*

[106] Ulrich Beck, Wolfgang Bonss, and Christoph Lau, "The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme," *Theory, Culture & Society SAGE* 20, no. 2 (2003): 2.

[107] Ulrich Beck, "The Reinvention of Politics: Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernization," in *Reflexive Modernization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press,1994).

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mankind's ideological evolution' and the 'final form of human government."[108] The concept of the "end of history" is one that views history with an end which Fukuyama saw in the triumph of liberal democracy and Karl Marx with its end in the communist society. In other words, it is argued that mankind has gone through a series of phases of "consciousness" throughout history such as ancestral, slave-owning, and religious.[109] Fukuyama views those "phases" indicated by "errors and irregularities," that the previous social organizations were characterized but that ultimately collapsed such as in the case of the Soviet Union. According to Fukuyama liberal democracy seemed to be immune to those contradictions.[110]

Der Derian also mentions self-reflexivity in his virtual theory given the potential infinite reproductivity that "virtuality" has in producing an effect.[111] The reason for this self-reflexive mechanism is the result of the crisis that the Western institutions of Western modernity are experiencing. As Beck argues "more and more often we find ourselves in situations which the prevailing institutions and concepts of politicians can neither grasp nor adequately respond to."[112]

Contrary to this, the concept of modernity includes many things, but one of its components lies in the "creation of a historical society;" the formation of a society that places itself in continued change opposing itself rather than its past.[113] Modernity consists of "the end of the end of history" in which the great political dangers never finish.[114] This change started with the French Revolution

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[108] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: The Free Press A Division of Macmillan, Inc, 1992): 10.

[109] Karl Marx, *Capital*, (Progress Publishers, 1977).

[110] Ibid.

[111] James Der Derian, "Global Events, National Security, and Virtual Theory," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 30, no. 3 (2001): 687.

[112], Geraroid O Tuathail, "Understanding Critical Geopolitics: Geopolitics and Risk Society," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 22 no. 2 (1999): 118.

[113] Ulrich Beck, Wolfgang Bonss, and Christoph Lau, "The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme," *Theory, Culture & Society SAGE* 20, no. 2 (2003): 10.

[114] Ibid.

and continued with the collapse of the Eastern block after 200 years.[115] Currently, we are witnessing other revolutions such as the technological revolution, the nanotechnological revolution, the genetic revolution, and the revolution of the global terrorist threat.[116]

The change from the cinematic to the electronic is subsumed in the bigger progress from the simple to the computerized, which could constitute the technological change of our era that marks the fundamental characteristic of the informational revolution which is told to succeed the industrial revolution.[117]Indeed, "the digital technology draws us to see, hear and experience our context first-hand, rather than read about it at one remove."[118] The case of AI and "hybrid warfare" represents one of the technological revolutions of this era which state and non-states are left to manage based on "a particular relation to space and time, dominated by the future rather than by the past."[119] This change in era changes the nature of the risk and with it the social construction. Therefore, organizations like NATO alter their policies according to this construction as they depend "on the dynamics in the cognitive and physical societal spaces."[120]

An increasing number of scholars in the security field have found Beck's risk society thesis useful in order to understand the management of risks that NATO and Western's security institutions have followed. These scholars are also called the constructivists[121] given that they understand risks as the ones defined in Beck's risk society and apply the concept of risk in the

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[115] Ibid.

[116] Ibid.

[117] Sashi Kumar, "The exercise of hegemony in contemporary culture and media, and the need for acounter-hegemony initiative," *Social Scientist*. 39 (2011).

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ulrich Beck, Wolfgang Bonss, and Christoph Lau, "The Theory of Reflexive Modernization: Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme," *Theory, Culture & Society SAGE* 20, no. 2 (2003): 10.

[120] Sebastian Bay and Guna Šnore, "Protecting Elections: A Strategic Communications Approach," *NATO Strategic Communication*, June 2019, https://www.stratcomcoe.org/protecting-elections-strategic-communications-approach.

[121] William Clapton, "Risk in International Relations," *SAGE Publications* 25 no. 03, (2011).

context of "reflexive modernity." This era is characterized as one where risks can no longer "improve our knowledge of cause-effect relations and control of the world, but a process of reflection by which the foundations of modernity are questioned and revised."[122] Therefore, in this era of questioning and revision, the idea of uncertainty and anxiety is key.[123] Hence, the center of the risk consciousness lies in a future constituted by unintended and unknown consequences.[124] In this society filled by the uncertainty of unknown consequences, anxiety represents a major characteristic that pushes policymakers to take self-reflexive or proactive policies. The process of revision and questioning is what these scholars denominate as one of Global Risk Management,[125]and hence focus on the "process of reflexivity as a reaction to the destructive excess of modernity."[126]

Therefore, given their basis in Beck's thesis of the risk society, the work of constructivist scholars in the security studies is based on the idea that history and the transformation of the society plays a key role in their argumentations[127] as the risk society now represents the focus of the international system's politics which is no longer centered upon mean-ends rationality and power politics, but rather in the management of uncertainty.[128]

One of the first scholars to implement the risk society thesis from sociology to security studies was Christopher Coker whose work focused on the role that globalization played in NATO and how it

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[122] Sholmo Gringer, "Living in a Wolrd Risk Society: A reply to Mikkel V. Rasmussen," *Millennium: Journal of International Relations* 31 no. 1 (2002): 140.

[123] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

[124] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 33.

[125] Karen Petersen, "Risk Analysis – A field within Security Studies" *SAGE* (2011); William Clapton, "Risk in International Relations" *SAGE Publications* 25 no. 3 (2011).

[126] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3: 155; Sholmo Gringer, "Living in a Wolrd Risk Society: A reply to Mikkel V. Rasmussen," *Millennium: Journal of International Relations* 31 no. 1 (2002).

[127] Karen Petersen, "Risk Analysis – A field within Security Studies" *SAGE* (2011): 4.

[128] Michael J. Wlliams, "NATO, security and risk management," *Routledge* (2010).

deals with those challenges.[129] He focuses on the "security dimension" of globalization in order to examine the ways in which it produces insecurity and its managements. To this end, he places special emphasis on NATO what he views as the "most important risk community of all."[130] Later, more scholars started to implement the risk society thesis to their work.

Some scholars such as M. J. Williams have examined from a critical lens the new literature and challenges that the contribution of the risk society in IR and recommends to include in its thesis conceptions such as the use of force, international law and security cooperation in the light of the risks that confront the West.[131] Others[132] have understood the necessity to separate them, the at times, conflating understanding conceptions of "securitization" present in the Copenhagen School through the implementation of exceptional measures that surpass "normal politics" and "riskification" present in the risk society. While other scholars like Heng have successfully achieved to describe the transformation of war from a risk society perspective and argue that previous scholarly explanations for the initiation of wars such as the war in Kosovo are not sufficient arguing that those wars did not originate due to the balance of power of the Great Powers, but rather it was about managing risks, and therefore, the transformation of war provides the perfect example to explain the shift to the risk society.[133]

One of the most notable scholars in this regard, and whose critique will be used to develop the concept of 'reflexive modernity" in the case of hybrid warfare is Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen

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[129] M.J Williams, "NATO, security and risk management," Routledge (2010).

[130] Christopher Coker, *Globalization and Insecurity in the Twenty-first Century: NATO and the Management of Risk* (New York: oxford University Press, 2002).

[131] Mikel Vedby Rasmussen, "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (2010).

[132] Olaf Corry, "Securitization: "Riskification": Second-order Security and the Politics of Climate Change," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (2012).

[133] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

who uses the risk society thesis in order to explain the security environment framed in terms of "security challenges and risks"[134] in the context of Western security strategy. By using Beck's theory of risk society and modern reflexivity he explains how terrorism is regarded as an inherent risk in modern sociability given the fact that it is conducted as a consequence of the negative effects of the globalization process,[135] and argues that "reflexive" characteristic of modernity is based on "three constitutive elements of reflexive politics" which he calls "management," "presence of the future" and "boomerang effect."[136]

The management quality is used to describe how politics and policies in the reflexive modernity are no longer centered around the pursit of ends, but on how governments have to take positions in order to create new means to *manage risks*.[137] The "future" characteristic that Rasmussen uses is liked to what Beck describes in the risk society as "not temporal" given that "scenarios for the future guide politics as modern causal temporality breaks down in the face of proliferating risks."[138] Finally, he describes the "boomerang effect" as a consequence of the proliferation of other risks given one's own creations.[139] He then proceeds to explain this theory of risk society and reflexive modernity in the context of NATO in order to explain its redefinition of the concept of security and its identity after the end of the Cold War.[140]

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[134] Mikel Vedby Rasmussen "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (2001): 285.

[135] Mikel Vedby Rasmussen, "'A Parallel Globalization of Terror'," *Sage Publication* (2002): 327.

[136] Mikel Vedby Rasmussen "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (2001): 286.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Mikel Vedby Rasmussen "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (2001).

Some authors have criticized Rasmussen's application of the risk society in the case of NATO given that he conflates between the concept of "reflexivity" and "reflexive modernity."[141] In this context, "reflexivity" is defined as "the ability of all rational beings to take themselves as objects of knowledge, thus modifying their identity and behavior,"[142] whereas "reflexive modernization" "corresponds with a process of reflexivity as a reaction to the destructive excess of modernity."[143]Therefore, according to Griner the fallacy that Rasmussen makes is to explain the case of NATO's reflexivity, but without making the link to the modern social life as the cause of that reflexivity which Beck mentions in his risk society.

The "reflexive modernity" aspect of the risk society argued by Beck is also relevant given that the "dynamic of modernity" confronts societies with unprecedented types of risks, and because of this, societies are left in a situation where they need to rely on experts in order to confront or manage those risks. This idea in IR is argued in the form of "epistemic communities" which scholars argue become a source of knowledge for collective learning.[144] This is also closely related to what Beck argues that as a result of transnational risks that become structural dangers, the risk society will create transnational bodies to manage them and therefore, the world will move to a form of cosmopolitanism.[145]

The characteristics enumerated below from both scholarships on risk will be applied in the subsequent chapter in the case of hybrid warfare which constitutes interlinked notions:

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[141] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006); Sholmo Gringer, "Living in a Wolrd Risk Society: A reply to Mikkel V. Rasmussen," Millennium: Journal of International Relations 31 no. 1 (2002): 155.

[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination*," International Organization* 46 no. 1: (1992).

[145] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

(1) Risks are **socially constructed**

(2) Risks constitute new forms of **temporally and spatially de-bounded** [146] that generate **uncertainty and anxiety**

(3) Modern society has become a risk society in the sense that it is increasingly occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that itself has produced."[147]- **reflexive modernity**

This chapter has given an overview of the literature on risk placing a special emphasis in two camps. It has explained the transformation from threats to risks and later provide different points when considering risks. The following chapter will apply the notion of risk to the case of social media and AI in general. In order to accomplish this, AI in the case of social media will be explained as well as the concepts of "hybrid warfare," and "hybrid threat" in order to tie those definitions to the notion of risk and that of the risk society.

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[146] Ibid.

[147] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006): 332.

CHAPER 2: SOCIAL MEDIA - A NEW RISK?

The present chapter will apply the literature on risk discussed in the previous chapter to the case of Artificial Intelligence (AI) used in social media with the purpose of waging "hybrid warfare." In order to do this, the case of AI and social media will be explained as well as its linkage with "hybrid warfare." By portraying this case, the argument that we are currently living in the risk society described by Beck will be made. This chapter will rely heavily on Beck's theory and two streams of the literature on risk, but the counterarguments done to its main theory will also be considered.

2.1. Hybrid Warfare, Hybrid Threat and Artificial Intelligence - Social Media

So, what is Artificial Intelligence (AI)? Despite being a widely used term there is no accepted definition regarding it.[148] Instead, it is used as an "umbrella term" to refer to all the different computational techniques to improve the ability of machines to do things that require intelligence.[149] There are two ways to understand AI: one is called the "knowledge-based systems" and its aim is to predict behavior based on a set of axioms or algorithms, the other one called "machine learning" or "deep learning" uses statistical data in order to improve the decision-making performance.[150]

Social media sites like Twitter and Facebook employ the second type of AI or "deep learning" technique which is based on analyzing and creating patterns in large data sets.[151] This type of AI analyzes hashtags, words, and phrases that create topics arranged in order of

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[148] Fillipo Raso, "Artificial Intelligence & Human Rights Opportunities & Risks," *Berkman Klein Center,* September 2018: 10.
[149] Ibid.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Emily Copp, "Top 5 Social Media Trends in 2019 (And How Brands Should Adapt)," *Hootsuite,* December 2018,
   https://blog.hootsuite.com/artificial-intelligence-in-social-media/.

popularity.[152] These trending topics achieve to capture the attention of a considerably big audience in a short period of time.[153] The use of this network has allowed foreign agents of state and non-state actors to create content on the net in the form of propaganda to spread misinformation which in turn has lead to a state of anxiety and uncertainty in societies around the world. This is what is also commonly referred to as "political warfare"[154] and described by some as the "21st century conflict, more Machiavellian than military, where hacks, leaks, and fake news are taking the place of planes, bombs, and missiles."[155] This blur between politics and war by new technological means is also called hybrid warfare (HW)[156] described as " a particular mode of waging war, combining conventional and unconventional, coercive and non-coercive means, capabilities, tactics and formations in a centrally organized and orchestrated manner."[157] Some have defined HW as "a shift away from a traditional force-on-force model, to an approach which combines military and non-military tools in a deliberate and synchronized campaign to destabilize and gain political leverage over an opponent."

Indeed, "hybrid" has come to address a varied scenario such as Russia's annexation of Crimea, as well as Russia's meddling in elections around the world using fake news campaigns.[158] The NATO StratCom defines the same Russian operation in Crimea as "hybrid threat" eliminating the noun "war" from its definition and describing it as a "type of threat that combines conventional,

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[152] Jarred Prier, "Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2017).
[153] Ibid.
[154] Mark Galeotti, "Putin Is Waging Information Warfare. Here's How to Fight Back," *The New York Times*, December 2016; P. W. Peter Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).
[155] Mark Galeotti, "Putin Is Waging Information Warfare. Here's How to Fight Back," *The New York Times*, December 2016.
[156] Maria Malksoo, "Countering hybrid warfare as ontological security management: the emerging practices of the EU and NATO, "*European Security* 27 no. 3 (2018).
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid.

irregular and asymmetric activities in time and space."[159] One of the most important effects of this "hybrid threat" is "ambiguity" defined as "the quality or state of being ambiguous especially in meaning"[160] which is synonyms to Beck's "uncertainty" define as "not known beyond doubt."[161]

Given the definition of risk, the term "hybrid" in the case of "hybrid warfare" seems appropriate given that it "seek to capture the interconnected nature of vulnerabilities, the multiplicity of stakeholders in the contemporary security game (state and non-state actors, regular and irregular forces) along with the diversity and simultaneity of conventional and unconventional means used ranging from military, political, economic, diplomatic o technological modes of engagement."[162] Therefore, the term "hybrid" accounts for the "unquantifiable" as well as multiplicity of risks that could arise in the future.

Others, such as John Aquilla and David Rondfeldt prefer to use a more general terminology as "netwar" to refer to the conflict that arises in the form of information-related conflict at a grand level between nations or societies in a technological society.[163] This information conflict aims at disrupting or damaging what a target population knows or thinks it knows about itself and the world around it.[164] The situation may involve propaganda, political and cultural subversion, deception, interference in local media, diplomacy, psychological campaigns, infiltration of computer networks and databases, and efforts to promote dissident or opposition movements

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[159] Ben Heap, "Hybrid Threats: A Strategic Communications Perspective," *NATO Strategic Communication,* accessed May 2019,
https://www.stratcomcoe.org/hybrid-threats-strategic-communications-perspective.
[160] "Merriam-Webster Dictionary," accessed May 23, 2019,
https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ambiguity.
[161] [161] "Merriam-Webster Dictionary," accessed May 23, 2019,
https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/uncertainty.
[162] Maria Malksoo, "Countering hybrid warfare as ontological security management: the emerging practices of the EU and NATO, "*European Security* 27 no. 3 (2018).
[163] John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt, *Networks and Netwars* (RAND, 2001): 6.
[164] Ibid.

across computer networks.[165] These "conflicts" aim at disorienting the population rather than coerce, and this type of conflict of physiological disruption may become as important as physical destruction.[166]

The uncertainty generated by the unknown characteristics of the nature of the risks, not only created physical insecurity, but also ontological insecurity or (insecurity of the being) for the institutions.[167] Indeed, hybrid warfare "exposes collective actors to the fundamental existential questions about the continuity of their external environment as they know it and their own finitude, with related anxieties about the difficulties of concretizing unknown and indeterminate threats."[168]

If, as stated above, HW is defined as a way of waring war that uses conventional and unconventional means to do so, why is it then that the case of spreading of misinformation and "fake news" is also referred as such? In other words, where is the element of "war" in the case of HW? HW in the case of social media to spread misinformation is considered appropriate given that it could be argued that the case of social media has created a "new war-like scenario" fought by acquiring as many "likes" as possible as social media sites like Twitter and Facebook use AI that analyzes words, hashtags, and phrases to create topics sorted in order of popularity.[169] In this context the "likes" become weapons in a battlefield for attention and spread of information all which the AI of social media allows for. The danger in this regard lies in the speed at which this misinformation can travel, indeed, according to a 2011 study social media trending topic captures the attention of a large audience in a short time.[170]

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[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Maria Malksoo, "Countering hybrid warfare as ontological security management: the emerging practices of the EU and NATO, "*European Security* 27 no. 3 (2018): 378.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Ibid.

Furthermore, even though this "social media war" is not as that of contemporary war represented by bombs and missiles as well as casualties, the uncertainty feature present in the risk society where risk and uncertainty are its "hallmark"[171] now amplified by the "netwar" or "hybrid warfare" conflicts is not a new characteristic not part of traditional conflicts of war. Indeed, wars have always constituted and "generated powers initially through an account of uncertainty and contingency on the battlefield."[172] As Der Derian puts it, "netwars" or hybrid war have shifted the "practice of war that began and ended with the black box of the states to new modes of production and networks of information have created new demarcation of power and identity, reality and 'virtuality.'"[173] These new developments show how we are approaching a new moment; a "virtual revolution in military and diplomatic affairs."[174]

2.2. Risk in the case of Social Media – Application of characteristics of risk

The previous chapter has provided with a conceptual framework of the differences in terminology of "hybrid war," "net war," "hybrid threat" and has made the argument that they constitute the same risk, it has also explained the main characteristic of social media as that which spreads ambiguity or uncertainty by providing definitions This chapter will apply the elements of risk identified in the previous chapter to the case of social media:

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[171] Michael J. Wlliams, "NATO, security and risk management," Routledge (2010): 56.

[172] Tarak Barkawi, "Powers of War: Fighting, Knowledge, and Critique," *International Political Sociology* 5 no. 2, (June 2011): 127.

[173] James Der Derian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military,* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

[174] Ibid.

2.2.1 Risks are Socially constructed

Risks are socially constructed,[175] what in one culture a danger is considered a risk, it might not be real for another one. For example, climate change is a pressing issue in Europe, however, the United States of America does not view climate change with such urgency and the need to manage its outcome. Hence, we are witnessing a "'clash of risk cultures', the collision of culturally different 'risk realities.'"[176]In an increasingly connected world by globalization such as mass media[177] and social media and "shocks in one part of the planet are transmitted with extraordinary speed to the whole population of the earth."[178]

With the case of social media with 3.2 billion users[179] around the world, almost half of the population, can post content on the net and participate in the speed of misinformation.[180] Not only one participates in the speed of misinformation by posting content, but also by simply "liking" content on the net which helped by the algorithms that these tools use, can stay a "trending topic." Indeed, the risk in the risk society is more than ever "spatially de-bounded"[181] and social media is just another example of that.

The use of social media as a tool of modern warfare should not be surprising given that after 2006 with the dawn of Web 2.0 it allowed internet users to not just consume the net but also create content.[182] This also gives the opportunity to unlimited audiences to become an actor and

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[175] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); Mikel Vedby Rasmussen "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (2001).

[176] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007): 22.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

[179] "Number of social media users worldwide from 2010 to 2021" Statista, accessed May 22, 2019, https://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/.

[180] P. W. Peter Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).

[181] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

[182] Jarred Prier, "Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2017).

potentially distribute messages to an infinite number of audiences all around the world.[183] This situation makes it impossible for policy-makers to quantify and get a full view of the problem and potential dangers, leaving them with only the option to manage the risk.

2.2.2. Risks constitute new forms of temporally and spatially de-bounded that generate uncertainty and anxiety

Social media in the form of hybrid warfare is used in order to destabilize campaigns using social media and the spread of fake news.[184] Helped by its AI, Hybrid warfare in the case of social media directly affects the actors "ontological security"[185] spreading misinformation and, therefore, increasing anxiety and insecurity regarding the self-present in the risk society.

Indeed, the case of social media as hybrid war provides for a good example of the characteristic of "uncertainty and anxiety" in the risk of society as social media has contributed to deceiving and manipulating the truth helped by new technologies such as AI.[186] There are, however, other examples in which AI can manipulate the truth and in turn create anxiety. For example, AI gives the opportunity to blur reality from falsehood by altering videos making politicians say something that they did not say.[187] This use of AI in the political camp could, for example, make a politician declare war against another country. [188] The alarming aspect of this

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[183] Sanda Svetoka, "Social Media as tool of Hybrid Warfare," *NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence,* (May 2016).

[184] Ben Heap, "Hybrid Threats: A Strategic Communications Perspective," *NATO Strategic Communication,* accessed May 2019,
https://www.stratcomcoe.org/hybrid-threats-strategic-communications-perspective.

[185] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007); Mikel Vedby Rasmussen "Reflexive Security: NATO and International Risk Society," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 2 (2001).

[186] Max Read, "With Social Media Disinformation, what — and Who — Should We Be Afraid Of?" *New York Magazine*, February 2019.
http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2019/02/what-and-who-should-we-be-afraid-of-on-social-media.html.

[187] "How Artificial Intelligence is Changing Video Editing," *Technology. Org* accessed May 2019, https://www.technology.org/2017/04/18/how-artificial-intelligence-is-changing-video-editing/.

[188] John Brandon, "How AI-generated videos could be the next big thing in fake news," *Fox News*, accessed May 2019, https://www.foxnews.com/tech/how-ai-generated-videos-could-be-the-next-big-thing-in-fake-news.

possible new implementation of AI is that it is impossible to tell whether they are real or not.[189]

In this regard, social media would play a key role in spreading videos altered by AI or "fake news" as one of its qualities is the speed at which information can spread in high volumes in an environment in which all actors compete.[190] In effect, social media has become a perfect medium to create uncertainty and anxiety in societies given that anyone with access to internet can participate in producing "fake news" as well as its spread by simply "liking" content as its algorithms make sure that the content stays "trendy." In turn, once reality from falsehood is blurred on the net, this propaganda penetrates local media outlets[191] reaching mainstream news.

This situation where algorithms sort out the information in terms of popularity, has made social media a new risk in this risk society as it achieves to spread uncertainty and anxiety blurring the line between reality and falsehood. The case of the use of AI in the case of social media is one that has already been metalized as it has been illustrated by cases above, as well as those in which experts declare that AI can alter videos. Social media is not the only example where AI has created uncertainty in societies. It has also successfully shown how AI has given rise to "surveillance capitalism" defined as the audaciously way in which private experience is translated into "fungible commodities that are rapidly swept up into the exhilarating life of the market."[192] As Zuboff argues:

"While the titanic power struggles of the twentieth century were between industrial

capital and labor, the twenty-first century finds surveillance capital pitted against

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[189] Ibid.

[190] Sanda Svetoka, "Social Media as tool of Hybrid Warfare," *NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence,* (May 2016): 5.

[191] John Brandon, "How AI-generated videos could be the next big thing in fake news," *Fox News*, accessed May 2019, https://www.foxnews.com/tech/how-ai-generated-videos-could-be-the-next-big-thing-in-fake-news.

[192] Shoshana Zuboff, "Surveillance Capitalism and the Challenge of Collective Action," *New Labor Forum Sage Publications Inc*. 28 no. 1: 11.

the entirety of our societies, right down to each individual member. Instead of claiming work (or land, or wealth) for the market dynamic as industrial capitalism once did, surveillance capitalism."[193]

The examples above that represent the way AI has altered the way war, media consumption or both scenarios understood as "hybrid warfare" as well as even the economic market represent cases in which the risk-AI has been materialized. However, what about those cases in which the application of AI in other mediums that "we do not yet know"[194] or in which the application of AI in mediums that we have already witnessed becomes amplified by its further development in ways also unpredictable to us?

2.2.2.1 Can experts 'know' the "unknown unknowns"?

In this context, the expert knowledge or "epistemic communities" are considered insufficient as argued by post-structuralist scholars given that hybrid warfare is a "virtual risks" characterized as an 'unknown unknowns' which experts cannot agree or simply do not know enough.[195] This is opposed to Beck's who view experts playing "a central role in the definition of risks and therefore in risk perception"[196]as he argues that the risk society will reach a "cosmopolitan moment" not based on scientifically diagnosed globality of problems but on transnational discourse.[197] The case of AI as a risk is one that despite the fact that experts seem to agree on the fact that new risks will arise from it, simply do not agree on the way that it might affect, therefore, are incapable of predicting its outcome. Indeed, there is an "epistemic

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[193] Ibid., 12.

[194] M. J. Williams, "(In) Security Studies, Reflexive Modernization and the Risk Society," *Journal of the Nordic International Studies Association* 43 no. 1. (2008).

[195] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

[196]Sholmo Gringer, "Living in a Wolrd Risk Society: A reply to Mikkel V. Rasmussen," *Millennium: Journal of International Relations* 31 no. 1 (2002): 151.

[197] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007): 24.

community" that understands more than the general public the impact and technicalities that surround AI, but this "community" is incapable of reaching a conclusion regarding the direction that this medium will take.[198] A recent study 45 researchers and authorities in the field of AI were asked to provide their prediction regarding the possible directions that AI might take, however, they could not reach an agreement. Hence, AI constitutes what Rasmussen would constitute as a an unknow unknows. In effect, it could be argued that the current state has gone beyond the "known unknowns" of what Anthony Gidden's once labeled as ontological security of not knowing what to expect to one of "unknown unknowns"[199] where the future is seen as multiple or even infinite probabilities of what may or may not happen.[200]

2.2.3. Modern society has become a risk society in the sense that it is increasingly "occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that itself has produced."[201]- reflexive modernity

As seen the previous chapters, security challenges such as cyber operations also called "hybrid warfare" in the case of social media activities from non-state and state actors are different in nature from the dangers that we were accustomed to witness as the risk society suggests. The conventional threats that once were based on measuring the Soviet Union's capabilities and intentions during the Cold War has come to an end. During this time, the rules of the game were pretty much established.[202] As Paul Wolfowitz argued "during the Cold War our security

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[198] Dave Schools, "Elon Musk, Eric Schmidt, and Other Influencers Tense Over Artificial Intelligence and the Right Way Forward," Inc., accessed May 19, 2019, https://www.inc.com/dave-schools/experts-disagree-artificial-intelligence-may-or-may-not-be-creating-world-we-want-to-live-in.html.

[199] Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, "'It Sounds Like a Riddle': Security Studies, the War on Terror and Risk," *Millennium: Journal of International Relations* 33, no. 2 (October 2004).

[200] Yaacov Vertzberger, "Risk Taking and Decision-making: Foreign military intervention decisions," *Stanford University Press* (1998): 25.

[201] Ulrich Beck, *World at risk society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007): 332.

[202] Yee-Kuang Heng, *War as a Risk Management: Strategy and conflict in an age of globalized risks,* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 23.

environment had an appearance of predictability,"[203] today with globalization and uncertainties thinking about safety in the West, is rather about managing risks than achieving perfect security.[204] U.S. General Hoseph Dunford said that:

> "our experience in Ukraine … highlights the fact that we need to update our deterrence and response model to deal with the threat that we have today, which has been described as a hybrid threat from Russia, which combines political instruments, unconventional warfare such as cyberoperations as well as support for separatists in these countries."[205]

These chapter has provided with an overview of interlinked concepts of "hybrid warfare," "hybrid threat," AI, and social media. It has also provided examples of effects of development of AI given that it has become an "umbrella term" and the basis for the development of tools such as social media. The following chapter will focus on a more specific conceptual linkage between risk and social media by providing examples.

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[203] Mikel Vedby Rasmussen, "'A Parallel Globalization of Terror'," *Sage Publication* (2002).
[204] Ibid.
[205] Marcus Weisgerber, "Russia, Not ISIS, Greatest Threat to US, General Says," *Defense One*, July 2015, https://www.defenseone.com/politics/2015/07/russia-not-isis-greatest-threat-us-general/117733/.

CHAPTER 3: SOCIAL MEDIA AS A RISK MANAGEMENT APPROACH – THE CASE OF NATO

The previous chapters have provided an overview on Beck's risk society as well as different views on risk of scholars in the critical security field. Furthermore, it has explained the concepts of "hybrid warfare" and social media using Artificial Intelligence as an "umbrella term" and argued that they constitute new risks in Beck's risk society. This final chapter will link the literature of the "reflexive modernity" which sees this change originated from 'meta changes' of unintended to the concept of risk and apply them to the case of hybrid warfare and NATO. It will be argued that Western strategy cannot longer be understood through theories within the mean-end rationality, but rather that we are entering a society based on "risks" which absolutely no one completely understands, and which generates a multitude of future possibilities.[206] This chapter will illustrate this argument using NATO's discourse that exemplifies the shift from threats to risks, and what I consider the shift from previous risks such as terrorism to social media. Later, it will provide with some examples from the Mueller Report on Russia's misinformation campaigns against the U.S. Finally, examples of policies that are rather focused on managing future events of misinformation will be selected.

3.1. Change in Discourse in NATO – From Threats to Risks

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) an international alliance of defense founded in 1949 originally among the United States, several countries of Western Europe, and Canada was created in order to deter a possible invasion by the Soviet Union. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO has gone through considerably major modifications as it has no longer

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[206] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, (United Kingdom: Polity Press, 1990).

sought to confront conventional military capabilities[207] and has witnessed a completely different landscape given that defending its territory has become less important than creating stability in the wider world.[208] Instead of awaiting for threats to arrive, NATO has decided to "confront them at a strategic distance and via the stabilization of whole nations and societies."[209]

Since 9/11 it has shifted its security definition to unconventional dangers such as terrorism. These dangers, which given their unquantifiability, unpredictability scholars in the critical security camp call risks started with the security environment after 9/11.[210] This notion is present when looking at the U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumseld's response following a NATO ministerial in June of 2002 when he was asked to explain the new security environment to which he responded that:

> "there are no knows. There are things that we know. There are known unknowns.
> This is to say that there are things that we know we don't know. But there are also
> unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know."[211]

This phrase from the part of the U.S. Secretary of Defense, resonates with the literature on risk which argues for the proliferation of "unknown unknowns" which are different from threats as cannot be quantified as eradicated. What is new in this environment if the West was already confronted with risks such as terrorism and had, therefore, modified its response to adequate to these new risks such as terrorism? I argue that the new component of this risk of hybrid warfare is

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[207] Bowman, Jeffrey, Goodwin, Chuck, Salem, "North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO),". *Press Encyclopedia* accessed May 24, 2018.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Ibid.
[210] Mikkel Vedby Rasmussen, "'It Sounds Like a Riddle': Security Studies, the War on Terror and Risk," *Millennium: Journal of International Relations* 33, no. 2 (October 2004).
[211] Ibid.

based on first the notion that this risk constitutes a quality of modernity based on progress and technological innovation in communication.

An example of the unquantifiable characteristic as well as the multi-dimensionality of the cyber domain can be found in NATO's first post-Cold War *Strategic Concept* issued in November 1991 and updated in 1999 is worth quoting as:

> In contrast with the predominant threat of the past, the risks to Allied security that remain are multi-faceted in nature and multi-directional which makes them hard to predict and assess… a great deal of uncertainty about risks to the security of the Alliance remain.[212]

In the present era, NATO has come to understand the particular risks that arise in the cyber domain placing special emphasis on the role of "hybrid threats"[213] In the 2018 NATO summit in Brussels stated it was stated that NATO nations had "come under increasing challenge from both state and non-state actors who use hybrid activities that aim to create *ambiguity and blur the lines between peace, crisis, and conflict[214]*."[215]

Furthermore, the unquantifiability of the risks is latent in NATO's definition of risk as:

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[212] "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept," *nato.int Press Release*, last update 26 August 2010, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_23847.htm.

[213] Ben Heap, "Hybrid Threats: A Strategic Communications Perspective," *NATO Strategic Communication*, accessed May 2019, https://www.stratcomcoe.org/hybrid-threats-strategic-communications-perspective.

[214] Emphasis added

[215]"Brussels Summit Declaration," *nato.int Press Release*, issued July 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156624.htm?selectedLocale=en.

"the concept of foreign malicious influence attempts - deliberately designed, tailored and targeted to influence the decisions of voters - are very difficult to distinguish from the legitimate processes in the information environment."[216]

3.2. Challengers of the Hegemonic Project – Russia

The case of Russia and his so – called "weaponization of information,"[217] "hybrid warfare"[218] or "weaponization of social media"[219] that create an "alternative reality" through internet trolls such as social media in order to distort reality; a situation that leaves the public incapable of distinguishing reality from distortion.[220]

Russia is being successful in its information campaign given that they can tap into an existing narrative which is then amplified with a network of automatic "bot" accounts that force the social media platform algorithm to recognize the message as a trending topic.[221] Russia's narrative lies in the thesis that the United States of America is trying to rule the world and only Russia is powerful enough to stop it,[222] and its propaganda tactics are based on: dismissing the critic, distorting the facts, distracting from the main issue and dismaying the audience.[223]

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[216] Sebastian Bay and Guna Šnore, "Protecting Elections: A Strategic Communications Approach," *NATO Strategic Communication*, June 2019,
https://www.stratcomcoe.org/protecting-elections-strategic-communications-approach.

[217] Ben Nimmo. "Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia's Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It," *StopFake*.org, accessed May 21, 2019,
https://www.stopfake.org/en/anatomy-of-an-info-war-how-russia-s-propaganda-machine-works-and-how-to-counter-it/.

[218] Maria Malksoo, "Countering hybrid warfare as ontological security management: the emerging practices of the EU and NATO, "*European Security* 27 no. 3 (2018).

[219] Michael Bossetta, "The Weaponization of Social Media Spear Phishing and Cyberattacks on Democracy," *Journal of International Affairs* 71, No. 1 (2018).

[220] Ben Nimmo, "Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia's Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It."

[221] Jarred Prier, "Commanding the Trend: Social Media as Information Warfare," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 11, no. 4 (Winter 2017): 50.

[222] Ben Nimmo, "Anatomy of an Info-War: How Russia's Propaganda Machine Works, and How to Counter It."

[223] Ibid.

3.1.2.1 Examples of Russia's Misinformation Campaigns Against the West:

Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections:

Since the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, a series of conspiracy theories arose on the internet, one of them "Pizzagate" alleged that Hillary Clinton's campaign was involved in underage sex trafficking and satanic worship.[224] This conspiracy theory attracted millions of followers and caused an armed man from North Carolina to walk into a pizza restaurant to "self-investigate" allegations that pedophilia acts were taking place within the surroundings of the restaurant.[225]

Even though it is still not proved that Russia indeed took part in the production of this "fake news," some experts claim that it was indeed Russia.[226] Furthermore, the Mueller Report that details accounts of possible collusion with Russia, stating that the IRA (Internet Research Agency), an enterprise backed by Kremlin, operated accounts in the U.S. social media platforms.[227] As early as 2014, the report accounts, the IRA's U.S. operations included people specialized in social media that focused on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube.

The Mueller report continues:

"Initially, the IRA created social media accounts that pretended to be the

personal accounts of U.S. persons.45 By early 2015, the IRA began to create larger

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[224] P. W. Peter Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).

[225] Matthew Garrahan, "'Pizzagate' exposes real consequences of posting fake news," *Financial Times*, December 2016,
https://www.ft.com/content/e9ca1932-bd28-11e6-8b45.

[226] Craig Timberg, "Russian propaganda effort helped spread 'fake news' during election, experts say," The Washington Post, November 2016,
https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/economy/russian-propaganda-effort-helped-spread-fake-news-during-election-experts-say/2016/11/24/793903b6-8a40-4ca9-b712.

[227] Robert S. Mueller, "Report On The Investigation Into Russian Interference In The 2016 Presidential Election," *Volume I of II U.S. Department of Justice*: 29.

social media groups or public social media pages that claimed (falsely) to be affiliated with U.S. political and grassroots organizations. In certain cases, the IRA created accounts that mimicked real U.S. organizations. For example, one IRA-controlled Twitter account, @TEN_ GOP, purported to be connected to the Tennessee Republican Party.46 More commonly, the IRA created accounts in the names of fictitious U.S. organizations and grassroots groups and used these accounts to pose as antiimmigration groups, Tea Party activists, Black Lives Matter protestors, and other U.S. social and political activists."[228]

One of the "fake accounts" created by Russian trolls "TEN_GOP" posted as a hub for Tennessee Republicans. On election night, this post was the tenth most retweeted account across all Twitter. (P. W. Peter Singer and Emerson T. Brooking, *LikeWar* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2018).

As the report continues, the IRA controlled social media accounts that criticized Clinton even before she announced her candidacy while other social media accounts were created to support then candidates Trump and Sanders.[229]

3.3. NATO as a Risk Manager of Social Media Risk

Given the growing risk of social media, and with it the potential arousal of other "unknowns" NATO alliance through The NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence

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[228] Ibid., 29.
[229] Ibid., 23.

(NATO StratCom COE) which became functional in January 2014 and has as one of its main activities the "Weaponization of Social Media," [230] has created an strategic plan in order to specifically target and *manage* "hybrid threats" such as misinformation campaigns.[231] Furthermore, it argues that hybrid threats most commonly come from the Russia Federation.[232]

As the StratCom states:

"The awareness of these states, societies and economies of the effects and risks of the recent development in information and communications technologies, as well as their readiness to develop them, has created a sense of urgency and political ambition that has made the issue of resilience against threats of malicious influence through this very same information environment a part of government ambition."[233]

As seen above the StratCom COE have started to implement a series of "reflexive" policies in order to manage this social media-risk in order to counter attack all aspects of the cyber domain, specially the disinformation campaigns through social media. Talks among these organizations have increase in order to find a common ground to fight this new risk.[234] Indeed, the "reflexive" feature of the definition of risk in the risk society thesis sheds a light in this regard given that it is precisely the given social media as a tool to have been originated in the West (The United States) given that it is left to flighting a danger created by itself. Indeed, social media giants such as

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[230] Sanda Svetoka, "Social Media as tool of Hybrid Warfare," *NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence,* (May 2016).

[231] Ben Heap, "Hybrid Threats: A Strategic Communications Perspective," *NATO Strategic Communication,* accessed May 2019,
https://www.stratcomcoe.org/hybrid-threats-strategic-communications-perspective.

[232] Ibid.

[233]Sebastian Bay and Guna Šnore, "Protecting Elections: A Strategic Communications Approach," *NATO Strategic Communication*, June 2019,
https://www.stratcomcoe.org/protecting-elections-strategic-communications-approach: 7.

[234] NATO, "NATO and EU discuss defense against hybrid warfare," *nato.int Press Release*, Published March 2019,
https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_164603.htm.

Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter were created in the United Stated which originally were applauded in the media for its capacity to promote neoliberal values of free-speech and democratic values. These tools have on the other hand, turned against the West itself, as foreign entities are using it for the purpose of counter-hegemonic projects. Therefore, the risk society of NATO is occupied with debating, preventing and managing risks that itself has produced."[235]

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[235] Ulrich Beck, "Living in the World Risk society," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 3 (2006): 332.

Conclusion

The present thesis has provided an overview on the literature on risk and has linked it to the case of hybrid warfare and social media making the argument that they constitute a new risk. To this end, Beck's thesis of the risk society as well as virtual theory by Der Derian have been used. Furthermore, this thesis has provided an empirical example in order to illustrate the challenges that arise through this risk by a state-actor, namely Russia in the particular case of the 2016 U.S. Presidential Elections. Additionally, it has shown the "risk management" approach that NATO has followed in order to deal with social media as a risk. This thesis has shown how social media as a risk has given rise to a situation in which Russia has capitalized on this risk in order to challenge the counter-hegemon (the West). In turn, this situation constitutes the end of the "End of History" in which the risk society and its risks has threatened the neoliberal project. Finally, and being aware of the future implication in policy and research that the case of AI could have, it has also briefly analyzed its linkage to the concept of risk.

This thesis could be criticized as having a pro-western slant given that the risk is examined from a Western perspective. Further research could focus on the concept of risk from a more holistic approach in order to understand the risk society from different social constructions. Furthermore, given the limited departmental requirements of the length of the thesis, it has been impossible to conduct a more thorough examination of the concept of risk and its management approach followed by NATO. Further research could make a more exhaustive linkage between the concept of risk and management by organizations such as the NATO StratCom.

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