

Hybrid War: Theory and Ethics

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Terrorist attacks against the United States and some European states, and the war against terrorism characterised the end of the 20th century from the perspective of international relations. In harmony with this, military theoretical and ethical research aimed at terrorism, insurgency war in general and counterterrorism in this period. Some years later, however, at the beginning of the 21st century, some further questions joined these problems, like the theoretical and ethical issues of hybrid war. This essay deals with the theoretical and philosophical features of hybrid war in order to develop an ethical theory for it.

Keywords: hybrid war, just war theory, cold war

Introduction

One significant military ethical approach to analyse the phenomena of war is just war theory. This ethical theory includes several formal categories, which have been developing from the Middle Ages on, and a content which is specified by the features of the age, the society and the nature of war. The features of a particular form of war have particular relevance to the ethical content of the ethical theory of that war. This is because any ethical theory is logically permitted to articulate such prescriptions and values that are possible to be respected and honoured for the people addressed by the theory. As the philosophical slogan says, ‘ought implies can’, so an agent has an obligation to perform a certain action only if it is possible for him or her to perform it. So, although at first sight one can hold an ethical theory which prohibits any killing, injuring and even harming in war, this sort of ethical theory is not valid, because the concept of war includes killing, hurting and harming the enemies by definition. In sum, the nature of a specific sort of war has impacts on the content of the ethical theory of that sort of war.

In this way, others previously made attempts to extend or interpret just war theory to nuclear war, low intensity war, peacekeeping, proxy war and cyberattack. Concerning nuclear strategy, James P. Sterba argued for a just nuclear strategy despite the worries based on the disproportionate and indiscriminate nature of nuclear strategies. He claimed that: “Under present conditions, it is morally justified to possess a survivable nuclear force in order to be able to quickly threaten or bluff nuclear retaliation should conditions

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change for the worse.”² In connection to low intensity war, James Turner Johnson claimed it had a relevance contrary to the ‘world’s policemen’ counterargument. As Johnson put it: “In the post-Cold War world, however, there is a greater possibility of achieving substantial international agreement on the kind of activities that warrant an unconventional response, extending, if necessary, to the use of force across national borders. [...] We may be able to attack systematic human rights violations, State-sponsored terrorism, regional aggression, and the global traffic in narcotics – not as a lonely paladin – but with the approval and support of the community of nations.”³ Tony Pfaff demanded in regard to peacekeeping: “What has been suggested is that as an area of operations transitions from a state of nature to a state of peace, what it means morally to apply force also changes. This means when such a distinction can be made, soldiers are afforded a powerful and practical conceptual tool for resolving the inherent conflict between the due care they owe civilians and the due risk they are obligated to take to achieve their objectives.”⁴ Pfaff also noted in connection to proxy war that: “While the bi-polar Cold War world certainly had its fair share of proxy wars, the emerging polyarchic order proliferates not only the number and kind of actors that can serve as benefactors and proxies, but most importantly, it increases the need for such relationships. [...] Thus proxy relationships can make apparently just wars more likely and messier. Given that the purpose of the Just War Tradition is to prevent war or limit the suffering it causes, the proxy relationship risks undermining that tradition even as it conforms to it.”⁵ Regarding cyberattack, Steven P. Lee analysed the new cyber technologies’ impact on just war theory and claimed: “Cyber war is not a new kind of war, in the sense that it requires different moral rules about how it is fought. A similar judgment seems appropriate for the criteria of *jus ad bellum*, with one important exception. For the entire *ad bellum* criteria save one, the difficulties we have considered that arise when they are applied to cyberattacks are not sufficient to find that the technology threatens to make just war theory irrelevant. The one exception is the criterion of last resort.”⁶ Finally, David Whetham articulated the same position in general terms in connection with cyberattack which is supposed to be not war from the classical point of view: “To assume that the Just War Tradition cannot apply because the situation is not war as we understand it is to confuse what the purpose of the tradition is in the first place. While historically the moral reasoning invoked was applied casuistically to war (hence resulting in and evolving into what we call today the ‘Just War Tradition’), that reasoning contained in the tradition could be (and often was) applied in a variety of other situations as well where one is seeking to do something that is, under normal circumstances, prohibited, i.e., deliberately cause harm to others.”⁷

In a similar vein, this essay presents an extended or interpreted form of just war theory. It extends the theory from direct war to hybrid war by interpreting its ethical categories to hybrid war. The ground of the extension and interpretation is military philosophy of hybrid war, and hence that philosophical question: ‘What is the definition of hybrid war?’

² STERBA 1987: 169.

³ JOHNSON 1995: 168.

⁴ PFAFF 2000: 23.

⁵ PFAFF 2017: 350–351.

⁶ LEE 2014: 117.

⁷ WHETHAM 2016b: 62.

Theory of hybrid war

In one of his articles, George R. Lucas, Jr. attempted to uncover the moral rules of cyber war by examining some historical examples of cyberattacks and developing the definition of the effected moral rules.⁸ In this essay, I follow a similar method, because I strive to define the rules of hybrid war by examining the concept and theoretical definition of hybrid war. For this reason, in what follows, I first develop a philosophical theory of hybrid war, and then I conclude with the ethics of hybrid war based on this theory.

Defining the hybrid form of war

Several research directions characterise the examination of hybrid war from the perspective of military philosophy at the beginning of the 21st century.⁹ Hybrid war, according to some researchers, is not really a new phenomenon, but it has already occurred previously in the military history,¹⁰ perhaps already in the works of Sun Tzu.¹¹ From this perspective hybrid war was and is a combination of the direct warfare of regular forces with the indirect warfare of irregular and other types of forces. What is new in the contemporary form of hybrid war is that while these different forces were deployed at the same time and separately in the past, nowadays their application is more integrated. Frank G. Hoffman defines hybrid war in this spirit: “Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, criminal disorder.”¹²

Besides the military historical aspects of hybrid war, one should pay attention to the recent history of hybrid warfare. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, terrorist organisations, counterterrorist agencies and military units of the Western states attained serious success with their asymmetric tactic. The success of this tactic was the consequence of its autonomous and indirect nature, that it was not joint direct tactics. For the reason of its successfulness, after the war on terror, states applied the same or similar indirect forms of hybrid aggression (meaning: violence) against other states. Hence hybrid warfare became an indirect, autonomous and symmetrical conflict between states.

Further, the applied means and methods of hybrid war, like social destabilisation, informational attack, espionage, targeted attack against individuals and objects are non-military or at least non-traditionally military means. Because of the nature of these means and methods, waging hybrid war appeared as the primary ability to manage a conflict with another state without waging direct war. From this perspective, hybrid war is very similar to the other types of indirect wars of the 20th and 21st centuries, like the low intensity

⁸ LUCAS 2015: 252–256.

⁹ WITHER 2016: 74–77.

¹⁰ MURRAY–MANSOOR 2012.

¹¹ WITHER 2016: 74.

¹² HOFFMAN 2007: 8.

war and the fourth-generation war of the U.S., the unrestricted war of China and the Gerasimov's doctrine of Russia.¹³

Hence there are similarities and differences between hybrid war and the other types of indirect wars. One of the main similarities was already mentioned, another is that states attempt to satisfy their interest by deception in hybrid war and in all other forms of indirect wars.¹⁴ In contrast to direct war, which is in general an open conflict between states (like field battles), indirect conflict applies violence secretly, deceiving the enemy. Hence, small wars of the 17th to 19th centuries, light infantry wars from the Second World War, and guerrilla wars of the second half of the 20th century all focused mainly on indirect tactics like deception, surprise and ambush. Hybrid war is just a 21st century form of indirect wars.

The difference between hybrid war and other types of indirect wars can be identified in the applied means and tactics. First, states in a hybrid war apply potentially any means and tactics to satisfy their interest, as Hoffman put it, hybrid wars “incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare”.¹⁵ On the other hand, states in a hybrid war strive to involve such means and methods, which were not (essential) parts of direct and indirect wars of the past. Some of these means and methods, such as deploying national secret services, launching informational attack and the application of autonomous weapon systems, have greater significance.¹⁶

Hence, hybrid war can be defined as one form of indirect wars in which states are in conflict with each other by applying non-military or non-traditionally military means and methods. The nature of the aim of hybrid war is the implication of this definition. Because of the deceptive means and methods applied in hybrid war, the aim of hybrid war has relatively low significance, which is not worth starting a direct war to reach it. This aim, however, is the satisfaction of some state interest, which in case of hybrid war, should be attained by the deception of the enemy. The deception-based means and methods and the relatively low significant aims of hybrid war limit the level and intensity of the applied aggression. In hybrid war the applied aggression is at a low level.

Hybrid aggression or hybrid war?

One can draw a clear distinction between direct and hybrid wars if we suppose that the analysis of the nature of hybrid war given above is correct and that in direct war there is a very serious cause (the *casus belli*) and a satisfiable state interest, which can be attained mainly by the mutually and clearly undertaken victorious field battle. At the same time, however, we generally understand the expression ‘war’ as direct war, so it seems to be a meaningful question whether ‘hybrid aggression can be considered war at all or just a form of aggression’.

¹³ WITHER 2016: 77–79; BILBAN–GRININGER 2020: 211–237.

¹⁴ For deception see JOHNSON 1995: 166–167.

¹⁵ HOFFMAN 2007: 8.

¹⁶ BODA 2022: 100–106.

According to Carl von Clausewitz (direct) war is necessarily a state-organised and violent phenomenon which has its own logic. War is so prone to escalating and developing extremely, since it is waged by deploying the most effective weapons of the army of the state, by mobilising all the resources of the state, and by aiming at fully destroying the army of the enemy state.¹⁷ Although hybrid war is a conflict between states, it is not a violent phenomenon in the Clausewitzian sense. This is because in hybrid war, states do not seek to fully destroy the army of the enemy state, they do not mobilise all their resources, and do not apply the most useful means and methods to satisfy state interest. Quite the contrary, hybrid war was led to reach low significant aims, and it adapts the suitable means and methods to this sort of aims. For this reason, hybrid conflict is a different form of aggression in which the applied aggression is less intensive than in direct war. This implies that one can call hybrid conflict ‘war’ only in a loose sense, but it is worth bearing in mind that it differs fundamentally from direct war.

Can hybrid war still be considered a war? Why? What is the common nature of direct war and hybrid war, by which both forms of aggressions can be called ‘war’? According to Clausewitz, all wars in military history were so violent that they were potentially devastating enterprises in order to enforce the will of the state. Because this definition has two parts, the (extreme) violence part and the enforcing part, therefore, we can call this definition the violence-based definition of war after its first part.

The definition of hybrid war does not meet the violence part, but it fits the enforcing part. However, one can give a new definition of war that will suit direct conflict and hybrid conflict as well, grounding it on the enforcing part of Clausewitz’s definition. According to Christopher J. Finlay, the new definition of war includes references to three intentions of the offensive state and to the realisation of these intentions. The first intention implies that state interests should be achieved by violence; according to the second intention, the interests of the attacked state should be harmed proportionally to the satisfaction of the interests of the offensive state; and finally, the third intention includes applying the proper means to cause harm to the attacked state and to satisfy the interests of the offensive state.¹⁸ According to this definition, war is the realisation of the political will if the realisation intentionally includes harming the interests of another state by harming and even destroying those defensive mechanisms of the attacked state, which serve to protect its state interests. This definition can be called the intention-based definition of war, which wholly lacks reference to the potentially destructive nature of (direct) war. From the perspective of the intention-based definition, direct war is one in which ..., for example, the attacker captures a previously disputed territory by destroying the army of the attacked state; and hybrid war is one in which, for example, the attacker intervenes in the political elections of the attacked state by cyberattacks.

¹⁷ CLAUSEWITZ 2007: 13–44.

¹⁸ FINLAY 2018: 367–372.

Hybrid war: between positive peace and direct war

Due to the relatively low intensity aggression applied in hybrid war, it is not a form of direct war, but it is not a clear form of peace either, because at peace states are not in conflict.¹⁹ This feature of hybrid war can be understood in two ways. According to the first, the concept of hybrid war is philosophically vague, which means that whether a state is at peace or at war cannot be told from the objective (outsider) point of view. This question can be decided only by the state involved. For the reason of the involvement of the state, however, its decision is not objective but influenced by its interests.²⁰ The decision of the state is itself constitutive in answering the question whether the state is at war or peace.

The other approach claims that the in-between condition of hybrid war is clearly definable. I take this second stance, and I contend that hybrid war is very similar to the cold war of the second half of the 20th century.

During the cold war, states conflicted with each other, partly via their national security services.²¹ In cold war the services' activity was the continuation of the political will of the two great powers by other means, for the purpose of getting the satisfaction of the interests of one great power by harming the interests of the other great power. In cold war, at the same time, two other characteristic types of aggression appeared, proxy war and potential nuclear war (deterrence).²² Proxy wars were conflicts between the allies of the great powers, potential nuclear war in turn was conflict mainly between the great powers. In cold war international relations bipolarised between the United States of America and the Soviet Union. International relations at the beginning of the 21st century, however, are featured by multipolarity (and not bipolarity) in which proxy wars have less significance, and nuclear war plays an even more negligible role. There have been some proxy wars, like the war in Syria and in Yemen, and perhaps the one in Ukraine, but – at least before the Ukrainian war – proxy war was not the main form of hostilities between the U.S., Russia, China and the European Union. For this reason, I believe hybrid war is similar to cold war with respect to the role played by the national security services.

This is proved by the name of cold war and its middle position between peace and direct (hot) war. This position was the consequence of the main forms of conflicts of cold war, the conflicts of the security services, proxy wars and nuclear deterrence. The application of such means, which features these forms of conflict did not reach the threshold of direct war because the intensity of aggression of these forms of conflict is too low. Similarly, in hybrid war national security services have outstanding significance. According to several authors, one paradigmatic form of hybrid conflict, information attack is nothing but “sabotage, espionage, and subversion”,²³ which is a “new form of cover political action”.²⁴ With respect to another important means of hybrid war, the application

¹⁹ RID 2013: 9-10; WHETHAM 2016a: 85–86.

²⁰ ALMÄNG 2019: 196.

²¹ BLUM 2003; CALLANAN 2010.

²² MOLLOY 2001.

²³ RID 2013: xiv.

²⁴ MILLER 2016: 228.

of an autonomous weapon system, one author notes that they “reinforced that which cover operations began: the possibility of endless war, temporally and spatially”²⁵ in the neither friendly, nor hostile states.

Besides the similarity between hybrid war and cold war (applying security services), there are differences between them in terms of applying proxy war and nuclear deterrence. This difference implies that hybrid war should be understood as being closer to peace than cold war and direct war, and it can be called ‘hot peace’. There are at least two types of peace, positive and negative.²⁶ In positive peace the interests of the different states are in harmony, hence they are not in conflict either in their actions, or in their intentions. Instead, they cooperate with each other, and they put the abilities of their security services transparent to each other.²⁷ Contrary to this, negative or hot peace, implies conflicts of interests of the states and thus their intentions, which, however, do not necessary lead to direct conflict on the level of their actions. This excludes direct and proxy wars as forms of enforcement of state interests in hot peace. Conflicts on the level of intentions permit the application of only covert and deceptive operations. Since in negative peace security services do not have a guaranteed possibility to observe the abilities of the services of the other states, this sort of peace intensifies the activity of security services.

In sum, the different sorts of conflicts between the states can be presented on a spectrum with direct war and positive peace at the two extreme ends, and cold war and hot peace in-between. Cold war is closer to direct war, hot peace is closer to positive peace. Hybrid war is the characteristic conflict of hot peace.

The ethics of hybrid war

The concept of hybrid war can be defined as a politically determined, low intensity and deception-based use of aggression. These features are essential not only in themselves, in the philosophical theory of hybrid war, but also in connection to its ethics. To outline the ethics of hybrid war I briefly present the categories of just war theory and their application to direct war, then I develop the just hybrid war theory by comparing hybrid and direct war ethics.

Just (direct) war theory

I take the just war theory as the abbreviation of the just direct war theory. Although there is no consensus on the details of the just war theory, but I think one can find a common ground for presenting the main categories and their content without scrutinising them. I take Helen Frowe’s book *The Ethics of War and Peace. An Introduction* as one that presents the common ground.²⁸

²⁵ STEELE–HEINZE 2014: 103.

²⁶ BODA 2020: 72.

²⁷ BITTON 2014: 1021–1027.

²⁸ FROWE 2011.

Just war theory consists of several rules. Whether these rules are respected or disrespected defines the justice and injustice of war. Some of the rules are deontological rules, like rule of just cause, legitimate authority, right intention, public declaration and discrimination. Some others are consequentialist rules: like the rule of last resort, reasonable chance of success and proportionality. All these rules are relevant and should be respected in the just war theory.

In direct war, conventional weapons (like armoured vehicles and warplanes) are deployed in field battles and operations, and the level of the applied aggression and the harm caused is high. The character of direct war has a restricting impact on the possible just causes of such wars. Just causes of direct war include the violation of the state rights like the right for political sovereignty (the autonomous working of the internal political institutions) and the right for territorial sovereignty. The aim of just war is to protect these rights and to prevent their violation. These two state rights are analogous with two rights of human individuals (the rights for productive agency and private property),²⁹ and exactly for a reason they can be called rights.³⁰

Just direct war is a war of self-defence. Starting self-defence war is just if the state protects their rights against an actual violation of these rights, or if there is no actual attack on the rights but another state threatens the rights with an imminent attack on the rights (potential right violation). The latter form of self-defence is pre-emptive attack, which is an offensive operation from a military perspective but is a defensive form of war from an ethical point of view. A just pre-emptive attack is different from a preventive attack, which is unjust. In case of preventive attack no threat and potential right violation occurs and hence the aim of the attack is not to protect rights, but to prevent the threat itself from coming into existence. For example, if a neighbouring state is in a hostile mood, has weapons capable of causing serious harm, and its army is mobilised, then the threatened state can use its force justly and pre-emptively against it. However, if the neighbouring state does not have these weapons but is constantly attempting to develop them, then a preventive war against it can only be deemed unjust. In the latter case, the occurrence of the threat is basically uncertain because the successful development of these weapons cannot be ascertained. Hence, the preventive intense use of aggression is unjust as a protection against a basically uncertain threat.

In the just war theory, legitimate authority belongs to one of the particular and high-level state institutions, like parliament. This institution is entitled to judge the situation and start the war. The rule of right intention prescribes that the entitled institution should listen to moral facts of the violations of the state rights only and not to the pure interests of the state in its decision about whether to start a war. The role of public declaration in the just war theory is to restrict state interests. The entitled institution can justify its decision to the citizens and other states about starting the war and can offer motivation to soldiers and citizens of the state to fight and remain steadfast by publicly declaring the just cause of the war.

²⁹ GEWIRTH 1996: 106–213.

³⁰ WALZER 1992: 58.

After judging the violations of state right(s), the entitled institution should examine the violation of rights and other morally relevant facts of the war. Some of these are future consequences. First, what needs to be considered is whether the violation of right can be avoided or eliminated with more peaceful means than direct war. Apart from nuclear war, any other means counts as more peaceful, such as diplomatic or economic sanctions, or the deployment of national security services. Respecting this point of view is to respect the rule of last resort, which claims to honour peace as long as possible. If the entitled institution finds that more peaceful means cannot be applied, then it should consider whether the aim of just war can be achieved by direct war. Respecting this point of view is to respect the rule of reasonable chance of success. Its function is to rule out self-sacrificing wars and sacrificing the lives of soldiers and citizens. Finally, if there is a reasonable chance to win the direct war and protect the rights of the state, then the entitled institution should consider whether the expected measure of the harm of the whole war is in proportion with the aim of the war, with the protection of the state rights. In calculating the measure of the harm, it should take into account the harm suffered by both warring parties. This approach concerns the rule of proportionality, which proposes the sparing of human life on both sides.

If the result of the whole consideration is a decision to start the war, then the rule of discrimination plays a part during the war. It discriminates those people who are morally permitted to be targeted and killed in war from those who are not, and by this at the same time, define who can take part in war. In the just war theory, the ground of discrimination is whether an action of a person presents an actual or possible threat to the state rights and so whether one should protect state rights against them. In direct war, in principle, professional soldiers have moral permission to take part in war and to target and kill anybody who presents a threat to the rights of the state. Also, they are the ones who are morally permitted to be targeted and killed in case of war.

The just hybrid war theory

The theory of just war and its elements serve as a starting point in the development of the just hybrid war theory. The elements of just war theory should be changed inasmuch as direct war differs from hybrid war. I approached this problem in a former article by applying the categories of just war theory to the application of the specific means of hybrid war, like the deployment of national security services, informational attack, or the deployment of autonomous weapon systems.³¹ Now, in this article, I focus on the definitional traits of hybrid war and with the help of those, I change just war theory. The definitional traits of hybrid war consist of its political nature, its deceptive nature and the low intensity of its applied aggression.

The level of the applied aggression and the harm caused is much lower in hybrid war than in direct war, hence the range of just causes of hybrid war is much broader than that of direct war. The just causes of hybrid war include the violation of three forms of state

³¹ BODA 2022: 95–108.

sovereignty: the violation of territorial sovereignty, the violation of broadly understood political sovereignty including the violation of the strategic and economic interests of the state, and finally the violation of cultural sovereignty.³² These forms of state sovereignties are not analogous with individual rights, so they cannot be called state rights, only state interests.

These state interests cannot be satisfied by a clearly offensive operation but by self-defensive hybrid war only. Self-defence should be understood broadly including actual protection against actual injury of state interests, pre-emptive protection against possible injury and even preventive protection against possible threat.

Preventive self-defence is more offensive than actual self-defence or pre-emptive self-defence, but it is still not an obviously offensive war. The paradigm of obviously offensive war is when one state attacks a neutral other state with the intention of conquest. Contrary to this, if there is a long-standing quasi-hostile relationship between two states, then it can be presupposed without clear evidence that one state makes an attempt to injure the interest of the other state. This presupposed injury, in turn, serves as a just cause for a just preventive hybrid war. Preventive hybrid war in this sense is also a just war of self-defence.

Just causes and just methods of self-defence multiply in just hybrid war theory, but this does not turn hybrid war into an obviously offensive war. Hybrid war is a sort of self-defensive war, which is situated between obviously self-defensive war (like actual self-defence) and offensive (conquering) wars from a theoretical point of view. The reason for the extension of just causes and methods for self-defending state interest in hybrid war is the low intensity nature of hybrid aggression.

The second deontological rule of just hybrid war theory is the rule of legitimate authority (the first one was the rule of just cause). Legitimate authority can be interpreted in two ways here. The first sense is the same as was in the just war theory: the entitlement for starting a war. The entitlement for starting a hybrid war belongs to state institutions, but presumably to higher- and lower-level institutions as well. The second sense of legitimate authority is accountability, which is typical of direct war but not of a hybrid one. Accountability is about showing oneself as belonging to one or the other warring party in order that others can observe who is responsible for the deeds done. Because of the deceptive nature of hybrid war, the accountability sense of legitimate authority does not feature in hybrid war.

The rule of right intention is equally important in just direct and hybrid war theories, but for different reasons. In just direct war the function of right intention is to restrict state interest, but in just hybrid war, its role is to constrain private interests of the entitled state officeholders. Finally, the rule of public declaration does not have any role in just hybrid war. The change in the content of both rules is due to the deceptive nature of hybrid war.

The second set of rules is consequentialist in nature. These rules have weight in the consideration of legitimate authority of just direct war, however, they have little relevance or no relevance at all in just hybrid war. The rules of last resort, the reasonable chance of

³² These types of state interests stem from outstanding theoreticians of state sovereignty like Jean Bodin (territorial sovereignty), Thomas Hobbes (civic, economic and strategic sovereignty) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (cultural sovereignty).

success and proportionality lose their significance due to the low intensity and deceptive nature of hybrid war. Because of its low intensity, hybrid war should not be a last resort, but it is listed among the more peaceful methods. If we take intelligence as part of hybrid war, as I think we should, then hybrid war is not the last resort but the first one in managing a conflict. The low intensity nature of hybrid war combined with its deceptive nature are the reasons why the rules of reasonable chance of success and proportionality are not taken so seriously. Situations in hybrid conflicts are not so transparent and hence only a certain level of probability of success is valid. The unsuccessful missions, in turn, do not mean an excessive loss, and they are not recognised by the public. All in all, consequentialist rules do not play a significant role in just hybrid war.

Finally, I come to the last rule, the rule of discrimination. In just hybrid war legitimate authority to cause harm to the enemy belongs not only to professional soldiers, but also to many different people in harmony with the compound nature of hybrid war. So, the agents of national security services are responsible for lone missions and general organisation of the whole hybrid war, the information technology team is responsible for informational and propaganda attacks, and to a certain degree, the manipulated people are responsible for causing harm as well. They all present a threat to state interests, so they are all liable to be targeted and attacked. The basic concept of discrimination here is threat, like in the case of just war theory, but the scope of people who present (this) threat is extended.

Summary and conclusion

In general, philosophical explanations are the most general and most abstract explanations, and this is true for the analysis of war given by military philosophy and military ethics. This essay attempted to give an analysis of war from the perspective of military philosophy. It distinguished between direct and indirect war, as well as hybrid war as one form of indirect wars and took hybrid war as a separate and characteristic phenomenon of conflict between states at the beginning of the 21st century. The main distinguishing features of hybrid war are that it is a conflict between states (political nature), it proposes political aims by covered actions and deceptions (deceptive nature), and finally it is aggression on a low level of intensity, which causes only low-level harm (low intensity nature).

The just hybrid war theory can be developed partly by building on these features and partly by comparing direct war with hybrid war. Based on this, I made the necessary changes in the just war theory to outline a just hybrid war theory. The considerable differences of the just hybrid war theory are the total lack of the rules of the accountability version of legitimate authority, public declaration and last resort. Minor divergencies of the just hybrid war theory are the extension of the range of just causes including just methods, and the extension of the range of people who are morally permitted to be targeted and killed. The reason for all these changes is the low intensity and deceptive nature of hybrid war. On the whole, just hybrid war theory is morally more permissible than just war theory, which is an implication of the conceptual definition of hybrid war.

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