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Hybrid axis of evil. Policing of organised crime and state threats in global ports

Since the Russia-Ukraine conflict, particular concerns exist about disruption of energy supplies and transportation systems, including global ports, such as the Port of Rotterdam (Ornstein, 2022). While threats to critical infrastructures are not new (e.g. attacked ports during WWII), the contemporary situation is different: (digital) technology plays a key role in hybrid warfare, making the potential fallout for ports even bigger. The Netherlands has key global ports, including the Port of Rotterdam and North Sea Canal Area. These ports handle shipping and are important for energy distribution (NCTV, 2017). An attack on these ports could lead to a 'serious social disruption' for the Netherlands (NCTV, 2017, p. 1), and Europe more broadly. Especially the Port of Rotterdam has concerns due to more sanctions against Russia (Port of Rotterdam, 2022), and subsequently asks for a 'digital anti-aircraft defence' to fend off possible Russian cyberattacks in the port of Rotterdam (Ornstein, 2022). However, it remains unclear whether (cyber)attacks on ports can be attributed to other state actors, as well as that it remains unclear what really counts as an act of hybrid war and what role European maritime ports play in hybrid warfare. Hence, port policing should focus on a hybrid warfare scenario, next to the well-embedded tackling of organised crime; but is it status quo? This paper aims to dig into this question, using ethnographic data gathered between April 2022 and March 2023 in the Dutch ports of Rotterdam and the North Sea Canal Area/Port of Amsterdam. Moreover, this paper shall focus on the hybridized policing of organized crime and state/hybrid threats in the global port environments. There will be a focus as well on what hybridized policing as a topic implies for the interdisciplinary cross-pollination of criminology and security studies.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?

Criminology and public administration

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?

Yes, I have included all required information (see below).

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?

No

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