

Non-State Actors in Conflicts

Non-State Actors in Conflicts:

*Conspiracies, Myths,
and Practices*

Edited by

Banu Baybars Hawks

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CHAPTER ONE

NON-STATE ACTORS IN CONFLICTS: CONSPIRACIES, MYTHS, AND PRACTICES

BANU BAYBARS HAWKS
AND SARPHAN UZUNOĞLU

Introduction

WikiLeaks, the Islamic State (IS), the Democratic Unity Party (PYD) and many other such entities have proven to be a game changer. The most recent conflicts that have occurred around the world have once again demonstrated that states are no longer alone in global affairs and that non-state actors have the capacity to influence not only national but also international politics. Since their impacts are now globally recognized, it has become necessary to define the role of non-state actors and elaborate on how they reshape global affairs.

Non-state actors are generally defined as entities that participate in or act upon international relations, and such actors have sufficient power to wield influence and cause changes even though they do not belong to established state institutions. The concept of non-state actors includes international organizations, corporations, non-governmental organizations, de facto regimes, trade associations, transnational corporations, terrorist groups, and transnational criminal organizations (Wagner 2009).

Most studies about non-state actors that were carried out in the twentieth century and early 2000s focused on organizations that were humanitarian in nature or dealt with economic issues (see Josselin and Wallace 2001; Risse-Kappen 1995). Actors working on human rights have been of particular interest for scholars.

From the issue of statehood to the digital identities of non-state actors, there are numerous engaging topics that can be discussed in terms of non-state actors. But more controversial and popular themes emerge when it comes to the function of non-state actors, such as how non-state actors

become involved in conflicts and how their actions have been globally portrayed. This is a critical issue because such actors have been depicted in controversial ways by various media organizations and they have been the subject of debates in international politics.

Defining Non-State Actors

Wagner's definition of non-state actors which was mentioned above is quite effective in terms of defining non-state actors through their functions, as most of the time the main agenda of such organizations is to wield influence and bring about changes. But the true reason why these actors are so important is that they are not directly linked to states and they hold to an independent position by means of which they pursue aims that can affect vital state interests (Pearlman & Cunningham 2011).

In order to avoid confusion regarding the general concept of non-state actors, such a definition should be bolstered by definitions of related terms which can also be taken up as sub-categories of non-state actors. In other words, there are various groups which can be defined as sub-categories of non-state actors. Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) primarily include sovereign states or other intergovernmental organizations, and they are also known as international organizations. Some well-known examples of IGOs are the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the World Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank. Non-state actors and states have various reasons for wanting to be involved with such actors including political, cultural, economic, and military interests. For instance, while NATO could be defined as a military alliance that provides member states with the advantage of collective defense capabilities, the World Trade Organization seeks to arbitrate disputes that arise among trading partners. Another sub-category is transnational actors, which include transnational/multinational corporations (Hagel 2009). While such corporations are active in multiple countries, their headquarters are usually located in one particular country (Rodman 1998). They are established mostly for financial reasons and deal with issues like productivity, labor, and entering new markets. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are also types of non-state actors. Organizations like Amnesty International and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) are examples of nongovernmental actors that conduct research and carry out activities in their fields of interest (Jochnik 1999). Dealing with a range of issues such as religion and gender, advocacy organizations are active worldwide. There are also political groups which advocate violence, some of which are defined as armed non-state actors (ANSAs). They are of

particular importance for this book as most of the articles here are related to those actors and the roles they play in conflicts. For the most part they are not under state control and they are involved in internal and trans-border conflicts. Not only states but also other non-state actors such as NGOs and intergovernmental organizations are quite interested in the actions of such actors. While these groups often provide informal and generally illiberal systems of governance in addition to carrying out criminal, insurgent, or ideologically extremist acts, portrayals of and approaches to them have become a critical point of debate for states and non-state actors alike (Briscoe 2013).

Considering all these groups, which can be broadly defined as non-state actors, there are a number of pertinent topics that need to be reconsidered in terms of their roles in international and national politics.

The Functions and Legitimacy of Non-state Actors

As discussed above, non-state actors deal with various issues such as security, international cooperation, economic empowerment, and boosting trade, while also contributing to matters related to the information society, global health, and the environment. While they promote certain values and norms, their roles have also come under scrutiny as subjects of conspiracy theories and myths.

Especially in emerging democracies and democracies in decline, populist discourses (regardless of whether they are right-wing or left-wing) about non-state actors have become increasingly popular and they are often the basis of conspiracy theories used by parties in power as well as the opposition. As regards armed non-state actors, this issue becomes critical, as sometimes such organizations are accused of conspiring against sovereign governments and states which cooperate with other states or other non-state actors which are not armed or violent.

The demonization of non-state actors by sovereign political actors has led to problems of legitimacy for some global non-state actors and limited their functions. An interesting case regarding the positioning of non-state actors in conspiracy theories can be observed in Russia. A law called “On Amendments to the Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Regarding the Regulation of the Activities of Non-profit Organizations Performing the Functions of a Foreign Agent” basically requires that non-profit organizations which receive foreign funding and engage in “political activities” register and declare themselves to be foreign agents. This law has been repeatedly criticized by intellectuals and the representatives of non-state organizations because of the use of the term “foreign agent,”

which is believed to have strong associations with the Cold War era, and that impacts the self-identification of such non-governmental actors (Óney 2011). This demonization of non-state actors is not limited, however, to the Russian government. Legislation proposed by the Hungarian government which is due to be voted on in parliament in June of 2017 would require that NGOs receiving more than 24,000 euro a year from foreign sources re-register as civic organizations that are funded from abroad; they would also be required to use that terminology for all public platforms and media appearances, as well as publish a list of their foreign donors.¹

The role of non-state actors in international financial conflicts has also come under scholarly scrutiny. The roles of the European Union, European Commission, and the International Money Fund in the handling of Greece's debt crisis, and the demonization of the European Union in the context of Brexit through conspiracy theories and practices of post-truth politics, also demonstrate that non-state actors are quite influential in the politics of liberal democracies as well. In addition to non-violent and unarmed non-state actors, violent or armed non-state actors also set the agenda for international politics, especially in regional conflicts such as the crises in Syria, Iraq, and Nigeria. From ISIS to the Free Syrian Army, many armed non-state actors are recognized by various governments while some of them are accused of being satellites of states who have interests in other states' internal affairs.

The Study of Non-state Actors

As can be seen above, conspiracies and myths regarding non-state actors are widespread and they are effectively used by politicians and governments for political propaganda. However, their roles and functions cannot be merely relegated to the status of conspiracies, and they should not only be discussed in terms of their status as satellites of more powerful actors or states. The concept of non-state actors is quite broad, and terrorizing the term may bolster the discourses and practices of authoritarian states and xenophobic populists, thereby prompting the emergence of new illiberal democracies around the world. By adopting an approach that deals with the issue in a nuanced way, this book brings together studies about the functions of non-state actors around the world with a focus on conspiracies, myths, and violence.

¹ "Hungarian civil society victimized by Orban government," <http://www.dw.com/en/hungarian-civil-society-victimized-by-orban-government/a-39088538>

Chapter Contents

The chapters in this volume explore many of the questions that have arisen regarding non-state actors. As a result of the increase in the number of non-state actors around the world, new approaches are needed so that they can be studied in all their complexity. *Non-State Actors in Conflicts: Conspiracies, Myths, and Practices* offers case studies across an array of geographies while also proposing theoretical and conceptual explanations for the issues that have arisen in recent times. This book is divided into three parts, the first of which is “Theoretical Approaches to the Role of Non-state Actors in Global Politics.”

Part I

This part begins with a study by Walid Salem titled “NSAs and the Possibility for Transnational Politics,” which is about the role and function of non-state actors in global politics. Salem discusses traditional and emerging non-state actors and their impacts on transnational politics in the fields of human rights, green politics and the environment, human and collective security, and political advocacy. While his chapter aims to examine the international and global roles of non-violent NSAs, Salem also focuses on theoretical perspectives on various non-state actors.

In the chapter titled “The Terror Continuum: Aims, Motivations, and Methods in ‘Non-State’ and ‘State’ Terrorism,” Liam Harte discusses non-state and state terrorism. Starting with a discussion of what terrorism is and how it is perceived in political science theory, Harte explores various perspectives on terrorism through actors’ corporate identities. By looking at terrorist organizations’ motives and methods, Harte proposes a novel approach to state terrorism (regime terror) and non-state terrorism through the use of both contemporary and historical cases.

In the chapter “Re-conceptualizing ‘Post-truth’: Macro And Micro Conceptions of Emotional Reality In Politics,” Akın Ünver focuses on the term “post-truth,” a term that became quite popular in 2016, through a theoretical perspective with reference to the conspiracies and myths surrounding non-state actors. From Brexit to the presidency of Donald J. Trump in the US, Ünver discusses the efficiency of political uses of terms like post-truth and fake news, and his chapter suggests how we can approach such phenomena through the perspective of emotional reality.

Part II

Titled “Non-state Actors in Global Politics: Case Studies,” Part II includes chapters which are primarily case studies from around the world.

In the fifth chapter, “The Rise of Islamic Non-state Actors: Historical Trends and Current Outlook,” Banu Baybars-Hawks examines the emergence of radical Islamists as effective non-state actors through the historical background of such movements and their current role and position in global politics. Focusing on the history and approaches of armed non-state actors, Baybars-Hawks proposes that radical Islamism is far from being a homogenous movement.

In the chapter “Syrian Warlords,” Aşkın İnci Sökmen Alaca focuses on popular debates regarding warlords who, according to the author, became increasingly powerful as the result of state breakdowns and hence they often operate in “failed states.” By taking up the roles of such actors in terms of legitimacy in the areas in which they seize power, the chapter questions crucial issues such as how these actors emerge and what kind of leadership structures they utilize.

In the seventh chapter, Mohid Iftikhar discusses the impact of the existence of armed non-state actors on foreign investments. Titled “The Impact of Terrorism on Foreign Direct Investment in Pakistan: An Asymmetric Warfare Perspective,” this chapter identifies the types and history of terrorism in Pakistan. Iftikhar examines the negative impacts of the existence of armed non-state actors in Pakistan through financial data as well as data about acts of terrorism in the country.

In the chapter “Public Opinion, Media and Policymaking in the Republic Of Kosovo,” Dren Gërguri takes a unique approach to the role of non-state actors in national politics. Positioning non-state actors as a positive influence on the road to democratic progress, Gërguri proposes the application of new policies regarding the promotion of civil society and therefore non-state actors in Kosovo as a way to make the government more transparent and the media more effective. The chapter also offers ways to overcome the problems Kosovo is facing regarding a number of crucial issues such as weak economic growth, high unemployment rates, and widespread corruption.

Part III

The third part of the book, which is titled “Mediatization Strategies and the Portrayal of Non-State Actors,” focuses on the relationship between media, art, and non-state actors and how they instrumentalize art and

media for their own ends.

In the ninth chapter, “The EU’s Fight against the ‘Islamic State on Digital Platforms,’” Armağan Gözkaman studies the responses of one non-state actor to another. By looking at the responses of the European Union to the challenges posed by the Islamic State, Gözkaman proposes that there are three prominent factors involved: a common understanding of the threat, the removal of terror-related content from new media platforms, and counter-propaganda activities.

In his chapter titled “The Mediatized Birth of an Armed Non-State Actor in Turkey’s Metropolises,” Sarphan Uzunoğlu examines the mediatization of local non-state actors’ actions in the metropolises of Turkey through the lens of the conceptual approach proposed by Andreas Hepp. Focusing on accounts related to the YDG-H (Patriotist Revolutionary Youth Movement) on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, Uzunoğlu questions the rising popularity of this non-state actor which has been demonized and denounced by the state and security forces.

Bilge Narin and Bahar Ayaz also examine the issue of the mediatization of a non-state actor in new media. In their chapter “Tweeting for Jihad: Turkish Isis Supporters on Twitter,” Narin and Ayaz discuss how ISIS supporters in Turkey use Twitter to spread their message and communicate with each other. Through a categorization of the types of communication used among ISIS supporters, Narin and Ayaz’s study examines the uncontrollable or uncontrolled use of social media by armed non-state actors and how such communications are carried out through the use of a unique terminology.

In their chapter “Burundi’s Refugee Problem and Refugees International in the Press,” Himmet Hülür and Bahar Ayaz study the refugee problem in Burundi in various forms of media. The aim of their study is to examine how refugees, specifically Burundian refugees, are portrayed in a number of newspapers since the portrayal of refugees has an impact on how the issue is handled.

In the thirteenth and final chapter of the book, Itr Toksöz discusses how artwork and art are utilized by terrorists. “Uses of Art and Artwork by Terrorist Organizations” focuses on uses of art in a negative manner for violent purposes. Taking into account how terrorist organizations have used art in songs, poetry, and graphic designs for flags and posters, Toksöz focuses on five major ways that art has been used: art to create fear, art as a target, art for relief, art for cash, and art for propaganda.

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PART I.

**THEORETICAL APPROACHES
TO THE ROLE OF NON-STATE ACTORS
IN GLOBAL POLITICS**

CHAPTER TWO

NSAs AND THE POSSIBILITY FOR TRANSNATIONAL POLITICS

WALID SALEM

Introduction

If international relations exist between states, “transnational relations” are those that exist between intrastate actors (organizations and individuals) both internationally and globally. Transnational relations organizations include economic entities such as multi-national corporations (MLCs) and various non-state actors (NSAs). Some of the latter engage in violence, such as global terror organizations, and some are non-violent, such as international NGOs and epistemic communities (Kappen 1999, pp. 3-4), but many kinds of NSAs lobby internationally and globally for a broad agenda including the issues of human rights, green politics and the environment, human security and collective security, and political advocacy.

There are also newly emerging NSAs consisting of international, transnational, and global individual/citizen networks which organize and take action through new virtual social media, and while some are known, others are anonymous. Some of these are non-violent while others use social media networks to promote, plan, and train for violence, as well as engage in acts of terror, crimes, piracy, human trafficking, pornography, and money laundering; as such, they are related to what cyber realists call the “dark side of internet freedom” (Morozov 2012).

This paper aims to explore the international and global roles of nonviolent NSAs and how those roles are perceived within the framework of international relations theories. A vast amount of research about violent NSAs has been carried out in the context of security studies about global terror.

The common point between organizational NSAs and virtual individualistic NSAs is that both create transnational and global platforms for citizens

and INGO activism. They also have either transnational or global agendas, or a combination of both.

These two kinds of NSAs differ in that the former has a structure with offices, addresses, staff, and a hierarchy, while the latter lack such a structure and are virtual. The former is led and organized by a so-called “middle level elite” or “shadow elite” at the civil society level (Hanafi 2004, p. 233), while the latter is individualistic, creating a new type of elite that gets its popularity through the number of “likes” it receives. Lastly, the former creates a transnational and global public sphere so that people can participate, while the latter create such spheres virtually.

Both, however, exist in the sphere of social media as a result of the growing use of the first kind of NSAs to promote certain agendas. In this sense, the former is gradually losing ground to the latter, reflecting the transformation that is taking place internationally and globally in civil society activism as citizens direct activism without a need for a mediator. If in this sense global citizenship, which promotes an open, equal, and participatory world, is the ultimate goal of democratic politics, then a question arises: What will it become if new social media have already started moving in that direction and how do the various international relations theories respond to such a question?

This paper starts with definitions of NSAs and a discussion of the roles they play in the domestic and international spheres. It then goes on to briefly review the positions of the various IR theories regarding the roles of NSAs both internationally and globally. The paper concludes with a discussion about the roles of NSAs and the possibility of the emergence of transnational citizen politics that will transcend states’ internationally monopolized relations.

The Importance of NSAs and Their Roles

NSAs are defined by the Oxford dictionary as “any individual or organization that plays a distinguished political role that is not allied with a specific country.” Such a definition creates a parallel between states and NSAs lacking cooperation or integration between the two structures. In contrast, the Dutch Research Institute Clingendael defines NSAs as “groups, movements, and individuals that are not part of the state structure” (Clingendael.nl). In this way, NSAs are not part of the state but cooperation and integration between states and NSAs are possible. In practice, state-NSA relations can take one of three tracks. Some NSAs might decide to work separately from the state, and such work can take the form of opposition to the state and its policies. They can also be the voice

of the state's ruling classes or political elites (as happens in many despotic countries where NSAs are like SAs which are affiliated with and loyal to the political regime). The third group of NSAs works in an "integrative way" with states, as noted by Salem (Salem 1999). Such an approach includes working together with the state on agreed upon issues while working separately on issues for which there is no common ground and the NSA wants to lobby the state for certain causes (Salem 1999).

That is the situation domestically in terms of the "public sphere," as Habermas referred to it. When the public sphere is narrow or nonexistent under dictatorships, NSAs will either be banned or established by the state as a tool to promote the ideology of the ruling regime and convince the people of its legitimacy. On the other hand, when the state is ruled by a democratic government, the public sphere is broad enough for the actions of integrative models and the opposition model mentioned above.

So far this analysis has held to the realist theory approach in which NSAs can play a role domestically (in terms of the loyal, the oppositional, and the integrative), but what are the roles of NSAs at the international and transnational levels? To what extent does the public sphere at those levels act as a space for the participation and actions of other actors aside from states? Realists tend to narrow the international public sphere to states, arguing that even if NSAs exist internationally, they do not have any influence on international politics, which is a space for the unitary decisions and actions of states. Other theories may not coincide with that idea, but all theories fall short when it comes to the analysis of the role of NSAs in the absence of a state, as in the case of Palestine. Indeed, how can they even be called a "non-state" when there is no state existing on the ground?

At this point it will be useful to ask: What exactly are the roles of NSAs in the international arena? Before going on to what the theories say in that regard, I will first try to develop a quasi "ideal type" or a schematic description of the roles played by NSAs internationally and globally in a comparative way that takes into account their domestic roles.

There are some NSAs that only work domestically, while others work internationally. The latter includes two types: the first are NSAs that act internationally to lobby for a certain state's agenda or lobby for a certain region's interests, while the second type are those that work on international or transnational agendas. The first includes those working internationally, such as those working on the issue of Palestine and the WANA Institute, which works internationally on West Asian and North African issues. This paper does not deal with that group but with the second one, which includes organizations such as Green Peace, the

International Crisis Group, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Oxfam, Article 19, Academics at Risk, Doctors without Borders, and others that plan and act internationally and transnationally. Aside from those, there are others that plan and act globally. They interact with international NSAs in two areas. The first are INSAs that have a global agenda such as Doctors without Borders and Green Peace which also “plan globally but act locally” as Paterson argues (in Burchill 1996). The second are those that work with global and international NSAs (INSAs) through cyberspace (new social media) and focus on a combination of global and international agendas.

In other words, new social media opened up a space for the development of a common global agenda and individual global citizens’ influence on that agenda. But does realism consider this to be a threat to the state’s monopoly over the making of international relations? That is a question to be answered later.

In comparison, as regards the three NSA national models (loyal, oppositional, and integrative), INSAs and GNSAs (global NSAs) can take on an oppositional or integrative role as regards international and global politics. For Marxism and post-colonialism, INSAs and GNSAs are tools of the global capitalist system (Marxism) or Western tools used to promote Western dominance over former colonies (post-colonialism). In this sense, the Marxist and post-colonialist approaches see such NSAs as being loyal to those who are powerful in the international/global system in order to maintain dominance over the powerless.

Before further discussing the various theoretical approaches to INSAs and GNSAs, a schematic comparison between the domestic and international/global roles of NSAs will be useful. Domestically, the non-violent NSAs of civil society organizations play the role of broadening the public sphere (Habermas). They act against political despotism (Ferguson), limit state dominance over civil society (Thomas Penn), prevent the emergence of modern despotism (Alexis de Tocqueville), and mediate between the individual and the state (Montesquieu). For Hegel, they act as a space of competition between individuals’ conflicting interests and thus they need to be ruled by the state for the public good. For Marx, they serve as a market as a basis for the state on the one hand and are in conflict with it on the other hand, which leads to alienation. For Gramsci, they represent a space for ideological conflict which is part of the superstructure that is inclusive also of the church, schools, trade unions, and communist parties which try to obtain hegemony over them and thus move from the war of maneuvering to the war of positioning (Salem 1999). Lastly, for Goldstein and Keohane they present ideas that draw a road map for action, influence

the strategic interactions of the group positively or negatively, or develop an institution's set of ideas and norms (Goldstein and Keohane 1993).

In brief, all of these thinkers—despite their different theoretical approaches—see the civil society aspect of NSAs as broadening the public sphere, limiting despotism, and mediating between the individual and the state. They also work for change either by promoting ideas within the structure of existing power relations or working to change the existing structure.

In order to do so, organizations work to raise awareness, build up capacity, increase citizen participation, provide services, monitor state policies, lobby the government, contribute to local development, promote access to informational resources, encourage and build citizenship, and recruit people for their interests (such as interest groups). They also work for broader national and social agendas such as promoting national culture or engaging in identity-building activities and national non-violent collective events.

At the domestic level, such NSAs include civil society organizations (CSOs), community-based organizations (CBOs) which are mostly informal compared to more formal CSOs, and grassroots organizations, including social and citizen movements supporting environmental and gender issues. Besides these, there are also new leaderless citizen movements and citizen initiatives which are launched in cyberspace.

In comparison, INSAs and GNSAs act to broaden the newly emerging international, global, and transnational public space. They raise awareness about international and global issues, promote solidarity, and encourage world citizens to become increasingly involved with global issues by interning internationally or taking part in protests and other types of non-violent resistance. Such organizations play a role in the formation of the international agenda and they develop new ideas, visions, and approaches; they also help spread universal values and support human rights while campaigning for the global ecological movement and human development worldwide.

The key similarities between NSAs domestically, internationally, transnationally, and globally are based on one factor, which is the aim to democratize politics and make them participatory through strong citizen involvement and broadening the public sphere for participation domestically, internationally, and globally. The differences that exist among them concern domestic, international, transnational, and global issues. For example, domestic NSAs might be able to provide services that their international and global counterparts cannot. Domestic NSAs work for local development and lobbying for local issues, while international

and global NSAs work for global development and lobbying for global and international issues.

As regards the balance between NSAs, INSAs, and GNSAs, it can be said that three major changes took place after the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. The first of these was a dramatic increase in the number of INSAs and GNSAs as well as the extent of work they undertook internationally and globally. For instance, Kappen calculated that there were 7,000 INGOs in 1997 (Kappen 1999, 3). Secondly, international and global NSAs transformed their work internationally and globally through a solidarity approach with third world countries and supported their rights for self-determination and development via a new agenda of professionalism that is in line with the funding of projects. In this process, the technical expert replaced the militant activist. The latter organized solidarity activities, while the former is project-oriented (Hanafi 2006, 17). Thirdly, a hierarchal relationship was established between INSAs in the North and their partner organizations in the South, a relationship in which the former has the power of financial resources that are used to impose their prioritized agenda on the latter, demanding that they make structural adjustments to adapt to donors' approaches and procedures (Nakhleh 2014 and 2011). The result was the creation of a globalized elite of NGOs in the South that has been linked with the global elite and its agenda without becoming part of it (Hanafi 2004, 234).

But what do the various IR theories say about these questions concerning the roles of NSAs internationally and globally? And what are the differences between their roles domestically on the one hand and internationally and globally on the other hand, and what about the hierarchal relations that exist between the NSAs of the North and those of the South? The following section takes up those questions.

IR Theories and the Roles of NSAs

This review will include the approaches to NSAs proposed by realism, neorealism, cyber-realism, international liberalism, cyber liberalism, constructivism, critical theory, and post-colonialism.

According to realism, there are other actors in the international arena besides states. E. H. Carr, for instance, maintained that religion, class, and ethnic groups play roles in that regard. He argued that states can disintegrate and that their sovereignty can undergo changes. Morgenthau also claimed that the functions of the state can vary in different times and places, and that larger units of governance might replace states in the future (Burchill 1996).

Although Carr and Morgenthau did not discuss the roles of NSAs, they consider the domestic to be the driver of international politics and in their view states are actors that are subject to change. These two viewpoints would make it possible for them to think positively about the roles NSAs could play in international politics. It could be argued that their perspective is state-centered because they see politics as being based on a balance of power and interests. Carr also claimed that larger units of governance might replace the state.

Neorealism (or structural realism, as it is also called) can be seen as a reductionist theory of international relations that does not posit any roles for NSAs. One aspect of reductionism concerns how it sees states as unitary actors at the international level, as if there are no other actors. Another aspect concerns its view that power and interests are the driving factors of state actions, as if there are no other influences such as values. Yet another is about how it places priority on security (understood mainly as the physical security of the state) as the driving factor behind state politics above and beyond economics, human security, or ethics. Fourthly and lastly it is reductionist in the sense that it focuses on power and interests in international relations which are ruled only by the structure of the international system. In this way, the roles of domestic factors that might drive states to focus on other issues and interests when they engage in international relations are minimized.

Such a reductionist approach leaves no room for NSAs in international relations. In this regard, Kenneth Waltz claimed that NSAs are only capable and influential at the level of the governing unit but cannot be part of an international system that is based on power (mainly hard power) and interests. He maintained that in best case scenarios NSAs might be able to influence the environment of the decision-making process more than the decisions themselves (Arts 2000, 518).

Such doubt about the extent of the power wielded by NSAs is not only inherent to neo-realism, as it is also posited regarding the international arena. In addition to the positive sides of the functions of NSAs domestically and internationally, the literature includes other negative aspects of NSA activism, such as their tendency to compete and work in parallel rather than coordinate their work. The literature also discusses their micro approach which, it is argued, makes them incapable of developing macro visions and processes. Other weaknesses that are argued to exist include their dependence on government funding and their inability to get correct information about domestic and international political issues, which results in ineffective lobby campaigns that are based on incorrect or partial information. Aside from their tendency to

appease donors so they can secure funding, the claim has been made that they are incapable of sustaining programs after funding stops (and sometimes cannot sustain their own institutions). In addition, it is argued that their technical apolitical approach makes them ineffective for the political agenda of states and the international system (see for instance Nakhleh 2004 and 2011; Hanafi 2004 and 2006; Salem 1999).

Neo-realism focuses on these weaknesses in terms of how NSAs function, while ignoring more crucial issues which concern the role of NSAs in broadening the public sphere, democratization, and popular participation both domestically and internationally. To be specific, neo-realism sees INSAs as part of the power of hegemonic states which is used to dominate other states. In this sense, INSAs are not independent from states but they are tools of the latter employed to promote hegemony. Such a neo-realist position regarding INSAs may appear to be close to that of Marxism and post-colonialism, but the latter differ by looking at how INSAs of the North exist vis-à-vis solidarity movements with the South. In other words, Marxists and post-colonialists do not put all INSAs in the same basket regardless of their ideological differences in the way that neorealism does.

Cyberactivism and Cyber Realism

Similar to how neo-realism focuses on negative aspects of INSA activism, cyber realism tends to dwell on the darker sides of the use of cyberspace. Cyberspace created a new sphere of operations for NSAs, INSAs, and GNSAs, including both violent and the nonviolent ones, and new fields of both cyber terrorism and cyber activism have emerged. They opened up a space for the development of new loose networks of individuals that are issue-oriented rather than organizationally driven, such as “Occupy Wall Street.” Via online platforms they organize sit-ins, demonstrations, and other protests, like the mass demonstrations that toppled Ben Ali and Mubarak in Tunisia and Egypt, respectively, in 2011. Democracy scholar Larry Diamond had already referred to cyberspace as a “liberation technology” before the Arab revolutions erupted (Diamond 2010).

Cyberspace has transformed NSA activism. It has gone from being carried out mainly by NGOs and small hierarchal and institutionally organized citizen and social movements to more loosely organized entities that are temporary, changeable, and leaderless, and once they have achieved their goals, they often dissolve.

Another development took place with the emergence of new types of NSA activism such as Hacktivism, which is “the nonviolent use of illegal and legally ambiguous digital tools in the pursuit of political ends” (Baybars-Hawks 2015, 4). WikiLeaks is an example of this kind of activism, and it aims to promote the rights of people in gaining access to information. Anonymous hacking attacks are another means of protest which seek to disrupt the functioning of exploitative companies and undemocratic states, as well as to protest certain policies, prevent military action, and protest the results of military attacks.

In this regard it should be noted that there is a difference between Hacktivism and cyberwars between states in which one state, for example, uses hacking to prevent or delay the development of new military technologies. It should also be noted that there are disagreements among hackers about where to draw the line between Hacktivism and cyber terrorism. For example, there are white hat hackers who stress that all hacking activities should be peaceful and avoid destruction, while black hat hackers do not shy from causing damage (*ibid.*, 5). Cyber realists tend to focus on cyber terrorism rather than cyber activism, which they refer to as “the dark side of internet freedom” (Morosov, 2011). Cyber-realists deal with the power relations that exist in cyberspace in terms of how states continue to have the upper hand because they seek to control what can be published by issuing laws, making policies, and instituting procedures. In addition, states may attempt to block the release of material they consider to be a security threat. Cyber-realism also focuses on the idea that cyberspace will promote fragmentation in the world agenda rather than broadening democratic participation, and it deals with the fact that cyberspace can be used to coordinate crimes, terrorist acts, and corruption. In short, in cyber-realism cyberspace is a space that is marked by warfare, terrorism, and fragmentation.

International Liberalism and the Roles of NSAs

One particular liberal wrote in 1859 that true liberty would not be achieved until humanity reaches the point where everyone has an equal say in world politics and enjoys full equality in decision making (John Stuart Mill 1859). By itself that is an imagining of a world without borders that is open to all citizens, a world in which international relations between states would be replaced by transnational relations between equal citizens.

All the liberal thought that came before and after John Stuart Mill was mainly about how to reach that point—that is, how to open up the world for all citizens. Initially, liberals tended to see the state as an obstacle to

both individual and economic development. On the individual level, liberalism held to the belief that even democratic states play a restrictive role regarding human rights. In that system of belief, the way to prevent such a situation is to create a liberal democratic state that will not have the right to narrow the “protected area” of the rights of individuals, groups, and civil society. That involves taking on the task of “the fair distribution of economic and social benefits and burdens in a way that will not contradict the necessity of the market economy” (Zeidani 1994, 43-44).

Such a liberal approach leaves a lot of space at both the domestic and the international levels for individuals, civil society, free markets, and free trade. According to this approach, the liberal democratic state should not control society but be more of a coordinator of the actions of the various sub-units of society. Internationally, such a state would seek cooperation with other states to avoid anarchy and it would allow its citizens to act freely economically, socially, and politically at the global level.

By taking up such an approach, liberal internationalism saw the increase in the number of INSAs at the end of the Cold War as a signal of the victory of its ideas (Russet 2013). In this sense, that boom was a signal of the weakening of the sovereignty of states, which prompted the growth of universal values and universal connections. The result was seen as a form of complex interdependencies that include multiple channels and transnational agendas concerning multiple issues in multiple dimensions (Keohane and Nye in Viotte and Kaupi 1999, 307-318).

Liberal internationalism also believes in multiple sources of power (state authorities and NSAs) and multiple kinds of power (soft and hard power). For them, INSAs represent a type of soft power which, in their view, is more important than hard power because it helps promote the agendas of global reform, liberalization, peace, democracy, and development.

Liberal internationalism’s point of departure is human agency as the driving factor for domestic and international politics, and it is thus about freedom of choice and freedom of association. The latter includes the right to organize and act within the framework of NSAs, both domestically and internationally. Lastly, liberal internationalism also focuses on the importance of emergent international institutions in the shift to the post-state era, and that includes the UN and the international networks of INSAs and NSAs.

Cyber Liberalism

While cyber realism focuses on the dark side of cyberspace, cyber liberals celebrate cyberspace as a means to promote the role of the actors involved (individuals and groups) by increasing participation, broadening

the public sphere by creating a form of global citizenship, and encouraging people to access information. The result is argued to be a more liberal democracy at the international level brought about by urging states ruled by dictatorships to embrace democracy and by promoting global governance. In short, cyberspace accelerates the collapse of states' sovereignty and encourages the emergence of citizen governance, not virtually but as a rehearsal for future practices (Clingedael 2012).

Other IR Approaches to NSAs

In this section I provide a brief overview of some other IR theoretical approaches to NSAs' roles in the international arena. Marxism sees INSAs as being flawed by an internal contradiction in that such organizations support the global capitalist system and work to promote its agenda and sustain its exploitation globally, while other agencies struggle against the continuation of that domination. Within a world capitalist system (Wallerstein), dominance is used by organizations which are instruments in the hands of capitalism for its own ends (Burchill 1996).

Gramsci departed from classical Marxism by seeing NSAs not as automatically representing the dominant class at the national level. Instead, he sees NSAs as agents interested in convening and raising awareness more than as forces of coercion, so in that view what they promote is the hegemony of the dominating class, which includes the creation of public consent to its rule (Auyoubi 1995, 5-8). Furthermore, Gramsci proposes the idea of creating a historical block for change that could include forces from the North and the South, as Craig Murphy suggested following Gramsci (Viotte and Kaupi 1999, 147). Cox also applied the Gramscian approach in the international arena, and following the logic of Cox one can conclude by saying that there are two types of INSAs: the first works on problem-solving within the existing system of power relations and the second is part of the forces that work for global change together with national, socialist, and cultural movements (Burchill 1996, 133). Cox thus breaks with the purely economic classical Marxist approach by adding national, socialist, and cultural components to Gramsci's initial analysis.

Critical theory agrees with the Gramscian-Marxist approach about the multidimensional factors of analysis and sees the roles of INSAs accordingly, but it also assigns another role to INSAs which is about promoting those ethics that hold humanity together (Linklater in Burchill 1996).

Constructivism looks to the international social system, seeing it as