

NON-STATE ACTORS IN WORLD POLITICS: A CHALLENGE TO NATION-STATES?

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Abstract

In international politics, the discussion has always essentially focused on the sovereignty of nation-states. Nation-states are widely viewed as the only important actors in world politics. However, nation-states are by no means the only politically and economically significant actors in world politics. In the post-World War II era, non-state actors were recognized as having an important impact on world politics. This paper critically examines the ways in which and the extent to which the emergence of non-state actors such as Multinational Corporations, Transnational Advocacy Networks, Transnational Diaspora Communities, and Violent Non-State Actors in world politics affects the relevance of nation-states who were initially regarded as the sole actor in world politics from the realist perspective. The complex interdependence theory is adopted as the framework of analysis. This study uses qualitative research method of analysis, and lean only on secondary data. The findings show that the state-centric image of world politics is both inaccurate and potentially damaging for the analysis of world politics. A state-centric focus, no matter its level of sophistication, can limit the ability of both academics and policymakers to describe, explain, and manage the complexity of the world arena. Non-state actors are making their contributions, both positively and negatively, to the state system.

Keywords: Non-State Actors, World Politics, State-Centric, Complex Interdependence.

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Introduction

How the activities of non-state actors are undermining the continued relevance of nation-states in world politics cannot be glossed over. World politics has to do with ‘who gets what, when, and how in the international arena. The ‘who’ can encompass individuals, groups, large organizations, and nation-states, but it cannot be confined to any one type of political force. The ‘what’ can include the dramatic episodes of war and peace, territorial conquest, and national security. But it also extends equally to vital areas of economic activity, and other social processes with inescapably international content. The ‘how’ may imply violence, destruction, and terror, but can also extend to processes of negotiation, collaboration, and technical or routine administration (Hocking and Smith, 1995: 2). On the other hand, non-State actors are organizations and individuals that participate in world politics even though they are not affiliated with, directed by, or funded through the government of states. Some examples of non-State actors are Multinational Corporations, Transnational Advocacy Networks, Transnational Diaspora Communities, and Violent Non-State Actors.

Moreover, such a perspective on world politics reflects a further conviction that in the contemporary era, it makes little sense to talk of world politics as a process that is carried on solely by specialized elites or experts, acting on behalf of nation-states. World politics is an essential area of study for those who are interested in finding out how their world works. Nowadays, it is increasingly difficult to escape the influence of the broader international arena. The essence of world politics as an academic field of study is the pursuit of knowledge and understanding which can provide insights into real-world problems. However, when world politics is discussed by politicians, lawyers, diplomats, journalists, and academics, it is usually in terms of the diplomatic interactions between states. The activities of non-state actors in world politics are not seen as relevant and worthy of emphasis. This view of world politics is termed a state-centric view. A state-centric view of world politics emphasizes

the ability of governments both to represent the broad interests of their citizens and equally to control the actions of groups within the nation-state (Nau, 2016: 45). In other words, state action according to the state-centric view is an action taken by those acting in the name of the state. This assertion reflects the idea that governments can in some way bring together and control the needs and actions of their citizens.

Moreover, one of the most prominent features of world politics in the second half of the twentieth century is the significant increase in numbers and importance of non-state actors. Traditionally in world politics, power and authority are considered to rest with nation-states (Bieler, Higgott, and Underhill, 2011: 2-3). Nation-states are embedded in an interdependent world where non-state actors are consequential. Principal actors in world politics are nation-states, but they are not the only actors. Non-state actors have managed to break through the barrier of invisibility. As a result, the impact of non-state actors on world politics cannot be overemphasized. Non-state actors are changing the face of world politics today as they seek to reshape the global agenda. Non-state actors are involved in almost every important issue in the world. Nation-states cannot insulate their population from the flow of ideas that shape human tastes and values.

Meanwhile, processes of globalization are transforming world politics from activity primarily involving nation-states to one characterized by transnational relations between different types of politically significant actors which are connected by potentially global communications (Keohane, and Nye, 2011: 5-8). The revolution in the means of communications has brought the world closer, and it is easier and cheaper to reach faraway places. People, money, news, and consumption patterns, among others, move faster than ever across the globe. This context has also contributed to an increase in the participation of non-state actors in issues of global governance, and they have been able to exercise influence in the elaboration and implementation of state foreign policies. Moreover, the globalized presence of non-state actors makes a mockery of sovereignty as

exclusive territorial control. Nation-states find it increasingly difficult to channel or control the impact of developments in the international arena on their national societies as claimed by the realist scholars. In these conditions, it becomes very difficult to maintain the idea of an 'impermeable' state possessing sovereignty and being able to act as a 'gatekeeper' between the national and international domains. It would be equally mistaken to exaggerate the state's power as a determinant of the world's fate and dismiss the expanding role of non-state actors in shaping world politics.

The rise of non-state actors raises the question of whether the nature of world politics is fundamentally changing. Non-state actors are actors which are at least in principle autonomous from the structure and machinery of the state. Some of these actors are primarily transnational in organizations, with global objectives. That is to say, they operate on a cross-border basis, pursue the same set of goals everywhere, and address a global audience (Wallace, and Josselin, 2001: 3). This does not mean that their national affiliates, subsidiaries or chapters, have no autonomy, but they possess a clear overall image. Some non-state actors merely participate in transnational coalitions or networks while retaining their primarily domestic outlook. Yet their influence on world politics may nevertheless be considerable. The American Trade Union Federation, for example, was the single largest source of finance behind the mass demonstration organized against the launch of a millennium round of trade talks in December 1999 (Wallace, and Josselin, 2001: 20). Non-state actors work to influence policy outcomes through regular cross-border activities.

Furthermore, the rise of these trans-nationally organized non-state actors and their growing involvement in world politics challenges the assumptions of traditional approaches to world politics, which assume that nation-states are the only important actors in world politics (Waltz, 2010: 6). The proliferation of non-state actors has recently led some observers of world politics to conclude that nation-states are declining in importance and that non-state actors are gaining status and influence. The communications revolution has transformed the ability of non-state actors to develop and maintain

transnational contacts at lower costs. Moreover, the erosion of the power of nation-states by non-state actors has recently called into question the primacy of nation-states in world politics. Non-state actors have succeeded in shaping and re-shaping world politics beyond what one could easily imagine. Therefore, any meaningful interpretation of world politics must take the significance of non-state actors, operating trans-nationally into account.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretically, given the growing relevance of the non-state actors, the complex interdependence theory is here adopted for critical analysis of the issue. Complex interdependence theory emerged in response to realist theory, and it rejects realist narrow focus on the State. This theory was pioneered by the work of two erudite scholars, Joseph Nye and Robert Keohane. In their famous book titled *Power and Interdependence*, published in 1977, they argued that world politics is not necessarily a competitive arena that is exclusively dominated by nation-states. These scholars were of the view that the role of the nation-state in world politics is being undermined by the emergence of non-state actors, such as multinational corporations, transnational advocacy networks, violent non-state actors, religious groups, transnational diaspora communities, and so on.

To realists, world politics is a struggle for power that is dominated by organized violence. Second, nation-states are dominant actors and coherent units. Third, force is an effective instrument in states policy and it is usable. Realists also believe that there is a hierarchy of issues in world politics and that security issues are the topmost. According to complex interdependence theory, world politics is more complex than the one presented by realists. Hence, this theory believes that world politics encompasses a wide array of actors. This focus on multiple actors is sometimes referred to as pluralism. Pluralism is a focus on a multiplicity of actors within the international system. In addition, while realists see a single important actor (the state), a single goal (security), and a single driving force (power), complex interdependence theory on the other hand sees multiple

actors, diverse goals, and a variety of driving forces. Complex interdependence theory does not see security dominating all other goals as claimed by the realists. As a result of this, this theory argued that clear hierarchy does not exist and what is topmost is situational, for example, the conflict between America and China is economic (trade disputes). This theory does not see force as an instrument of foreign policy that is always effective, for example, America and Vietnam. Sometimes, diplomatic isolation, economic sanctions, and even negotiations can prove more effective. In line with this analysis, complex interdependence theory presents a picture of the world that is at variance with the one painted by realists.

Multinational Corporations and World Politics

Before the second half of the nineteenth century, world politics has largely been a chronicle of interactions among sovereign, territorial states. Today, however, world politics is also being shaped by non-state actors that transcend national boundaries. Diverse in scope and purpose, these non-state actors push their agendas and increasingly exert international influence. One of the first non-state actors to gain widespread notice was multinational corporations (D'Anieri, 2010:49-50). Multinational corporations have grown dramatically in scope and influence since World War II (Kegley, and Raymond, 2010:164). One of the aims of this paper is to explore the implications of change in world politics with particular reference to the example of multinational corporations, a phenomenon whose growth and activity have received great attention in recent years from both academic commentators and policymakers. Multinational corporations are companies based in one state with affiliate branches or subsidiaries operating in other states (Goldstein, and Pevehouse, 2012:341).

In other words, multinational corporations could be described as 'oligopolistic corporations in which ownership, management, production, and sales activities extend over several national jurisdictions' (Gilpin, R., 2001:45). Multinational corporations deserve special treatment because they are different from other non-

state actors and organizations in their nature, size, and degree of impact on world politics. The proliferation and the changing nature of multinational corporations have had important effects on the 'landscape' of world politics because of their growing importance in economic and political affairs, and also because of the complex pattern of interactions between them and other actors, especially nation-states and international organizations (Bennett, and Oliver, 2002:277).

One simple measure of the impact of multinational corporations is the enormity of the resources controlled by them. Due to their financial strength and global reach, multinational corporations are considered to be a threat to the power of nation-states. The term 'resources' here implies not merely the raw financial strength which multinational corporations can muster, which in itself considered, but it also refers to the mobility and flexibility with which multinational corporations can operate across national boundaries as a result of their non-territorial nature. Their ability to make decisions on many issues over which national political leaders have little control appears to be eroding state sovereignty, the international system's major organizing principle (Kegley, and Raymond, 2010:166). Moreover, as independent actors in the international arena, multinational corporations are increasingly powerful. The annual earnings of some of the companies rival the economic output of midsize states and dwarf most of the smaller ones (Rourke, 2008:2). Dozens of industrial multinational corporations have annual sales of tens of billions of dollars each (hundreds of billions of dollars for the top corporations such as Exxon Mobil, and Wal-Mart).

Typically, Exxon Mobil was the world's largest multinational corporation in 2005, with revenues of \$377 billion. It had \$208 billion in assets and 84,000 employees. These numbers give Exxon Mobil an 'economy' the size of Sweden's. Indeed, Exxon Mobil's Gross Corporate Product (GCP) is larger than the Gross National Product (GNP) of all but sixteen of the world's countries. The immense wealth of the largest multinational corporations gives them considerable influence in world politics (Navaretti, and Venables,

2006:18). As a key player in the world's energy supply, Exxon Mobil wields considerable influence on policy in that area. For example, critics charge that Exxon Mobil has been a leader in the campaign to block or limit restrictions on the use of fossil fuels as part of the effort to slow or reverse global warming. Two prominent critics of such practice, US Senators Olympia Snowe and Jay Rockefeller wrote to the head of Exxon Mobil, accusing the corporation of supporting supposedly scientific groups who 'are producing very questionable data' that denies the reality of global warming (Rourke, 2008:383).

Furthermore, examples of interference by multinational corporations in the internal politics of Third World countries were available and widely publicized. For decades, the United Fruit Company was able to extract from several Central American governments legislations and policies that were extremely favourable to its profitability. With the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) at the helm, the United Fruit Company played a role in the overthrow of the Arbenz regime in Guatemala in 1954, just as British Petroleum and CIA were implicated in the overthrow of the Mossadegh government in Iran in 1953 (Viotti, and Kauppi, 2008:12). In the early 1970s, the International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) first tried to prevent the election of Salvador Allende, a Marxist, as president of Chile, and later was instrumental in his overthrow. Also, in November 1995, Shell Oil, which produced almost half of Nigeria's crude oil, refused to speak out against a brutal Nigerian military government when it arrested and executed human rights and environmental activists who protested Shell's activities in their homeland. Shell has been accused of complicity with the Nigerian government in the death of activists protesting environmental abuses of the company (Kaarbo, and Ray, 2011:408).

From the foregoing, it becomes apparent that multinational corporations constitute a challenge to the fabric of the state system and the political primacy of the state. The significance of the evolution of multinational corporations in relation to the powers and jurisdictions of nation-states is potentially far-reaching since it rests on a series of challenges to precisely those qualities which lie

at the centre of statehood, that is, control of territory, control of the economy, and control of the affiliations of the citizens.

Transnational Diaspora Communities and World Politics

One of the non-state actors that exert considerable influence on world politics is diasporas. The role of the media and modern means of communications in mobilizing and facilitating diaspora politics cannot be underestimated. The time-space compression, the World Wide Web, and direct access to the homeland's newspapers and television reduce the efforts required to keep up with events elsewhere in the diaspora or the homeland. Indeed, one of the striking features of an area with a high concentration of Turkish immigrants in Germany or the Netherland is the availability of the main Turkish newspapers in every newsagent and the parabolic reflectors on every roof, which beam the news and perspectives of the homeland right into the living room of the immigrants (Wallace, and Josselin, 2001:222).

Diasporas are transnational per definition. Their emotive, social, economic, and not least political cross-border networks with their homeland or with other segments of the diaspora, constitute one of their main resources for political influence. Diasporas draw considerable strength and viability from the increase in trans-state economic, social, and political links, and themselves contribute to the intensification of these processes by their activities. Diasporas enter the international scene as actors in their own right as they seek to intervene in the political affairs of their homeland, or when the homeland seeks to gain economic and political support from its citizens abroad or to provide them with economic or political support in their adopted countries. In these instances, the diaspora becomes a linkage group between its host country and its homeland. The various forms of diaspora politics introduce the politics of their homeland into their host country and provide an external dimension to the politics of their homeland acting as a resource for political counterparts (Smith, 1991:8).

However, situations revolving around the active political agency of diaspora are as complex as the multitude of interests of the political actors involved. The diaspora may attempt to influence events in the homeland directly, by economic and political means. Here, the effects of trans-state links on intrastate conflict are essential. For instance, the 1911 revolution in China was primarily financed by overseas Chinese (Esman, 1986:132). Croats in Germany were known to have smuggled weapons to support Croat dissidents in former Yugoslavia. Factions of the Irish diaspora in the United States supported the Irish Republican Army (IRA) financially. Economic assistance from the diaspora Jewish community to Zionist settlements in Palestine and later Israel also illustrates this dimension. Some of these examples are closely linked to instances in which diasporas act as state-initiators. The history of the re-establishment of the state of Israel may be the classic of its kind, but it is not the only such example. It was the Czech diaspora that initiated the establishment of Czechoslovakia after the First World War (Akzim, 1964:248). The diaspora may draw upon its resources to influence the host-country government to pursue a particular policy towards its homeland. To that end, most diasporas employ multilevel strategies drawing upon both confrontational and institutional means (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2000:17). On the other hand, there are confrontational strategies such as demonstrations, mass meetings, fly posting, slogan writing in public places, hunger strikes, and even violent and terrorist activities.

Furthermore, there are forms of institutional participation where diaspora organizes panel discussions and information campaigns or try to gain good contacts and position within a political institution, such as a trade union, a political party, or a national or international nongovernmental organization (NGO), to lobby on homeland political issues (Languerre, 2006:15). However, examples of this sort of domestic influence on foreign policy are numerous. For instance, they include the successful attempt by the Greek diaspora in the United States to induce Congress to place an embargo on military assistance to Turkey, in protest against Turkey's invasion and partition of Cyprus (Constas, and Platians, 1993:11), the attempt of the African diaspora in the United States to take effective measure

against South Africa due to its racists' policies (Leanne, 1995:25-26), and not least, the success of the Jewish diaspora in the United States in committing its government to extensive military, diplomatic and economic support for Israel.

State institutions are by no means the only target for diaspora political ideology. In particular, diasporas who oppose a state which has strong allies in their host states, or simply is too powerful for other states to meddle with, may turn to international organizations such as the United Nations, Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Council and the like. The continuous lobbying by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) for the recognition of Palestine as a member of the United Nations is a classic example. Another example is the Tibetans, who have advanced their story of persecution and discrimination by the Chinese in international forums rather than their host state, India. Only more resourceful diaspora organizations manage to lobby international organizations at a more professional level on their own. Therefore, the so-called trans-state advocacy networks of NGOs are very valuable (Keck, and Sikkink, 1998:45). Co-opting of NGOs at both the national and international level is a much sought-after strategy for the diaspora since such organizations facilitate contact with levels of policy-making which are otherwise difficult to gain access to, for a diaspora organization.

Homeland governments often display an interest in retaining and evoking loyalty among their nationals living abroad, to mobilize their diaspora in support of their own goals. The incentive to do so may be economic. For instance, to secure hard currency in the form of remittances, or as in the case of Turkey by requesting donations for the Army via satellite-transmitted television (Ostergaard-Nielson, 1995:391). It may also be political, as in the case of the Imperial Germany government's attempt to mobilize the large and influential German community in the United States to prevent the United States from entering the First World War on the side of the Allies (Wallace, and Josselin, 2001:226). The case of Israel's mobilizations of the United States Jewish community today includes both dimensions.

Transnational Advocacy Networks and World Politics

Among the many different non-state actors, transnational advocacy networks have begun to play a role of growing importance in world politics, and in particular countries (D'Anieri, 2010:357). Transnational advocacy networks are significant transnationally and domestically. By building new links among actors in civil societies, and international organizations, they multiply the channels of access to the international system. In such issue areas as the environment and human rights, they also make international resources available to new actors in domestic political and social struggles. A transnational advocacy network includes those relevant actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and service (Boissevain, and Mitchel, 1973:23). Such networks are most prevalent in issue areas characterized by high-value content and informational uncertainty.

At the core of the relationship is information exchange. What is novel in these networks is the ability of non-traditional international actors to mobilize information strategically to help create new issues and categories and to persuade, pressure, and gain leverage over much more powerful organizations and governments. Activists in networks try not only to influence policy outcomes but to transform the terms and nature of the debate. Transnational advocacy networks that span state borders are not traditionally powerful players in world politics. However, by mobilizing information in support of a cause, they can change the nature of international policy and practice (Rosenau, 1990:12). Advocates of principled causes, ideas, and values like human rights or the environment do not work alone. Nor are they limited by national boundaries. The last several decades have witnessed significant growth in the number of loose coalitions or networks of advocates building bridges across borders to bring about social change. These advocacy networks have changed the face of international policy-making and practice.

Transnational advocacy networks do not rely on traditional bases of power like a military or economic muscle. In the traditional sense of 'power' within the international arena, advocacy networks are relatively 'weak' players. However, these groups have become increasingly influential. They have become major players in the field of world politics. The larger approach of a transnational advocacy group has not been to simply force their way into world politics as usual. Rather, they have sought to change the way the game is played in world politics. They reshape the terms of international debate. They redefine and sometimes create the issues that gain international attention (Florini, 2000:118). Before the involvement of transnational advocacy networks, the game of world politics was one where the field was well defined, the terms were known and where the rules were set, all favouring the largest and most muscular players. The bulk of what transnational advocacy networks do might be termed persuasion or socialization, but neither process is devoid of conflict. Persuasion and socialization often involve not just reasoning with opponents, but also bringing pressure, arm-twisting, and sanctions. Audie Klotz's work on norms and apartheid discusses coercion, incentive, and legitimation effects that are often part of a socialization process (Klotz, 1999:152-164).

Tactics that networks use in their efforts at persuasion, socialization, and pressure include information, politics, or the ability to quickly and credibly generate politically useable information and move it to where it will have the most impact. Symbolic politics, or the ability to propagate symbols, actions, or stories that make sense of a situation for an audience that is frequently far away. Leveraging politics, or the ability to call upon powerful actors to affect a situation where weaker members of a network are unlikely to have influence. And accountability politics, or the effort to hold powerful actors to their previously stated policies or principles (Cott, 1995:29-51). However, a single campaign may contain many of these elements simultaneously. For example, Human Rights Watch, through its network of monitors, often gathers more reliable reporting on human rights practices than either governments or the private news media can provide. Therefore, both governments and the news

media rely on Human Rights Watch reports (D'Anieri, 2010:357).

The human rights network disseminated information about human rights abuses in Argentina in the period 1976-1983. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo marched in circles in the central square in Buenos Aires wearing white handkerchiefs to draw symbolic attention to the plight of their missing children. The network also tried to use both material and moral leverage against the Argentine regime, by pressuring the United States and other governments to cut off military and economic aid, and by efforts to get the United Nations and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to condemn Argentina's human rights abuses. Transnational advocacy networks play a crucial role in setting international agenda, as emphasized particularly by constructivist international politics theory (Mingst, and Toft, 2013:12-13). It is very difficult, of course, for transnational advocacy networks to compel reluctant governments. But many times, transnational advocacy networks raise an issue before it becomes one of importance to governments. Network's members actively seek ways to bring issues to the public agenda by framing them in innovative ways and by seeking hospitable venues.

Thus, by raising issues first and defining agendas, norms, and standards, transnational advocacy networks can influence the behaviour of international organizations and States. In the 1970s and 1980s, many states decided for the first time that the promotion of human rights in other countries was a legitimate foreign policy goal and an authentic expression of national interest. The decision came in part from interaction with an emerging global human rights network (Becker, 2012:45). Moreover, many transnational advocacy networks do not merely advocate, they equally act. Organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Doctors Without Borders provide many kinds of aid directly to people around the world. Especially in poor countries where governments are incapable of providing for certain needs, these organizations play a role complementary to that of governments and help millions of people. In the delivery of aid around the world, transnational aid organizations can often accomplish tasks that even the most

powerful government cannot. For example, in conflict-prone areas, where the presence of foreign government personnel might provoke violence, governments rely heavily on transnational aid organizations to deliver all sorts of aid. Aid organizations are often perceived as more neutral, and thus less threatening than states or international organizations.

Violent Non-State Actors and World Politics

Violent Non-State Actors (VNSAs) are another non-state actor that impacts significantly world politics. Violent non-state actors are non-state armed groups that resort to organized violence as a tool to achieve their goals (Mulaj, 2010:3). Despite being small groups and inferior to their adversaries in terms of equipment, training, and often doctrine, violent non-state actors are likely to continue and even increase their asymmetric operations to achieve political objectives and influence. Also, because the security environment of the twenty-first century is set to be characterized by the influence and power of non-state armed groups, and because the latter is central to the understanding of regional and world politics, analysis of the nature of these actors ought to be taken more seriously. Violent non-state actors are not a new phenomenon in world politics. The operations of some such actors already pose a threat to Western interests before the fateful day of September 11, 2001. Given that our era is being defined by a US-led war on terrorism, understanding violent non-state actors is crucial to ensure that sound policy responses are devised and implemented.

Although non-state actors primarily in socioeconomic stances have received extensive coverage in political science literature, violent non-state actors have only recently received sustained interest among academic and policy circles (Thomas, and Kiser, 2013:3). The increasing operations of violent non-state actors challenge the concept of the legitimate use of force vested so far solely in sovereign nation-states. Whereas in principle, violent non-state actors may operate in the context of interstate conflict, in recent times they have

been more often than not a central feature of civil war and intrastate conflict which reflect the non-Westphalian features of contemporary armed conflict. While wars between states are characterized as formal wars, violent non-state actors are involved in ‘informal wars where at least one of the antagonists is a non-state entity (Metz, 2000:48). Violent non-state actors’ involvement in informal wars is also an example of what K.J. Holsti has termed wars of the third kind, characterized by the absence of fixed territorial boundaries, elaborate institutionalized military rituals, major fronts, and open military campaigns (Holsti, 1996:36). Violent non-state actors’ relations to the state are crucial in comprehending their actions. Violent non-state actors’ operations can be understood as a response to state policies or as a reflection of a state’s efforts to co-opt these actors in its policies. Violent non-state actors often seek a state of their own while opposing a given state. Even when they operate in a context of state failure, fragmentation, and/or collapse, violent non-state actors’ political power is closely linked to their ability to use, or threaten the use of violence.

Violent non-state actors frequently operate in states confronting a crisis, which are incapable of providing services and delivering public goods, including security in all their territory. In Afghanistan, Colombia, Sudan, Lebanon, and Sri Lanka, although the government provides basic services and delivers public goods in the main cities, it is ineffective in the periphery of the country. In the latter areas, the government shares its sovereignty with violent non-state actors, a condition known also as ‘fragmented sovereignty’ that is complemented by a ‘system of violence’ in which state and non-state actors interact, coexist, cooperate, or conflict tacitly and implicitly. When such a system of violence is consolidated, it acquires its dynamic and political economy which allows its prolongation. The latter impairs the state’s distributive and coercive capabilities as well as the performance of state institutions, enabling violent non-state actors to penetrate such institutions and find safe havens and launching grounds (Mulaj, 2010:7).

Furthermore, violent non-state actors such as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the Irish Republican Army (IRA), and Hezbollah are organized distinct from the state and in opposition to it, and they often demand a state of their own. They are actively engaged in a process of state-building through setting up parallel civil administrations within the territory under their control, and/or through military means, that is, armed struggles. It deserves emphasizing, nonetheless, that violence used by violent non-state actors to oppose the state and win legitimacy for their political cause imposes costs on the state. Indeed, violent non-state actors seek to impose as large a cost as possible on the state to break its resistance threshold. The repercussions of violent non-state actors' violence on the state are not only physical but also economic, political, and psychological. The more protracted the violence, the larger the cost it imposes on the state.

Violent non-state actors - state relations, nevertheless are not uniform. Just as some violent non-state actors exist as distinct from and in violent opposition to the state, others exist in a dynamic relationship with the state. In Afghanistan, for instance, a weak state exists in juxtaposition to powerful sub-national actors of which the Taliban are one of the most prominent. While the state in Afghanistan may have a central authority, that authority, and the functioning of the state, can be at the mercy of numerous internal sub-actors, and external actors that can manipulate various sub-actors (tribes) for their purposes. Some violent non-state actors not only coexist with the state but are co-opted by it. They are integral to the existence of state power in so far as they form part of state efforts to exercise power at a distance, a strategy which, of course, reflects the state's administrative weakness. This is the present picture in many countries in Africa, most notably Sudan. The central government in Khartoum cannot control distant parts of the country directly through security services or local administrative apparatuses, not only because it lacks the financial means but also because government control is controversial among local people who resent external interference in their local communities. In these circumstances, the government uses non-state actors as proxies to exercise control over the periphery

of the country. It is in this respect that violent non-state actors in Sudan have become central to the exercise of state power.

The relocation of authority from the state to non-state actors is also acute in Somalia. Here, the prolonged collapse of the central government has resulted in a context where non-state actors have been the most significant form of political organization, with violence, or the threat of violence, the main currency of power. A wide gamut of violent non-state actors has acquired significant importance in contemporary world politics, in so far as such actors contest the legitimacy of state monopolization of organized violence more than ever before (Mandel, 2013:47).

Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that states are not the only preponderant actors in world politics in the contemporary period. The intensification of globalization and the empowerment of non-state actors have broadened the range of actors which impact daily on the events of international and national politics. Non-state actors are now as important as the state. Whether they are multinational corporations, diaspora communities, transnational advocacy networks, violent non-state actors, they play an increasingly important role in world politics. Transnational advocacy networks pressure government to change human rights practices, multinational corporations compel states to adopt a law that suits their businesses. Others like diaspora communities influence events in the homeland directly by economic and political means and at the same time influence the host-country government to pursue a particular policy towards its homeland. Lastly, violent non-state actors are undermining state security and sovereignty. To reduce or eliminate their violent influence on the state, both the stick and carrot measures must be applied and seek after the general good of the people.

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