

# THE 'RETREAT OF THE STATE' AND THE CONSOLIDATION OF NON-STATE ACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: A THEORETICAL ASSESSMENT

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**Abstract.** *The second half of the 20th century saw the emergence of an unprecedented number of non-state entities, varying from conventional intergovernmental organizations, to nongovernmental organizations, multinational companies and other transnational forces challenging the centuries old dominant position detained by the state on the international scene. Demystifying these new categories of actors has also created some hardship for the IR scholars, who found it really difficult to fit them within the existent scholarly literature elaborated around the state-centric approach promoted by the realist paradigm. Accordingly, the current study wishes to explore the rise of non-state actors from a theoretical perspective, departing from the presumption that their appearance refutes the state-centric vision promoted by the realist/neorealist scholarship and can be more efficiently addressed by implementing the liberal pluralist or the constructivist approach.*

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