

## ACTORS ON THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCENE

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***Abstract:** States have been considered for a long period the main actors on the international scene and continue to be the stakeholders of the international relations. Nevertheless, recent developments at the political, diplomatic, economic social and military levels have set up the proper conditions to the emerge of other entities and organizations, that acts as increasingly active actors in international relations.*

*In a world of interdependences, the international stage actors tend to rethink and re-evaluate their positions, developing new ways of cooperation and collaboration aiming to reducing or eliminating the current security risks, promoting and defending democratic values and the general interests of the international community*

***Keywords:** International relations; international organizations; cooperation; NATO; UN.*

### *Introduction*

The end of the Cold War and major changes in the international system after 1989 led to major changes in the theoretical approach to international relations. In specialized environments, moved relatively quickly discussion of the theory of realism to the institutionalist theories that attempt to define new realities by the fact that the only source of stability and security in the current system is the international institutions. Realism theory could not explain and provide fully collapse alliances and expanding others, extensive cooperation between states considered rivals and the imposition of a state of relative stability in the international system.

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For this reason it imposed a redefinition of the type, place and role of actors on the stage of international relations, which led to numerous discussions and opinions, often contradictory.

The beginning of the XXI century can be defined as having an obvious character of instability and insecurity generated by the perpetuation of the conflict latent reactivation of „frozen conflicts” amid a generalized process of globalization conducted in a fast pace and with a profound influence on international relations. It manifests increasingly obvious aspiration to establish and strengthen a new international order, to introduce democratic change in the system of political, diplomatic and economic outlook. Attempts to change the relations and world order are encumbered, however, new challenges have emerged and continue to manifest ever more salient in today's world. Currently, the international security environment is a diversified and complex process of mutations, being deeply influenced by the expansion of international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal migration, scarcity of resources and the emergence or development of instability in various regions of the world.

Internationally noted that states act in political, diplomatic, legal, economic, social, informational and military to promote and defend democratic values and general interests of the international community, both individually or in cooperation with other countries and within international organizations oriented security. According to custom, political action is essential in regulating various aspects of international security in the use of armed force constituting itself as an option of last resort, but that should be considered when necessary. This is why countries develop their capacity for action, both political and military, needed to participate in joint actions in international bodies of collective security and defense and to meet different commitments abroad.

Expanding NATO and the European Union, the transformation and restructuring through which the UN and other international organizations, increasing flows of capital, goods and services and the revolution in information technology have created favorable conditions for the development of relations in the international community but also extending to threats asymmetric clearly affects international relations and the role that different actors play on the international stage. From this perspective, the main strategies and policies in this area focuses on transforming the role,

tools, mechanisms and capabilities available to these actors and accelerated change adaptation in the international security environment. This requires adequate resources and identify the most feasible methods for efficient use of them and taking and bringing the best achievements in the areas of scientific research, economic and institutional organization.

### ***State as International Relations' Actor***

International relations are defined as an academic field, a branch of political science that studies the relationship between state actors in the international system and their interactions with non-state actors (intergovernmental organizations, nongovernmental organizations, multinational corporations, etc.).<sup>1</sup> This area of study is interdisciplinary, since the most important contributions come from political science, economics, geopolitics, security studies, history, philosophy, law, etc.

Another definition of the term international relations covers all interactions within the international system and the field of study that investigates.

In some works of art, international actors „are designated as legal persons acting in the international relations”.<sup>2</sup>

Another phrase commonly used, refers to any social structure, able to act and to influence the system of international relations at regional or global scale.

International relations theory designates as the main category of actors of international relations, the State, which by its attributes, population, territory and sovereignty over both their own government, continues to hold a monopoly on international relations.

States were considered the main international actors for a long time. In terms of historical actors of international relations were, one by one: human communities; city-states of the ancient world; empires of antiquity; territorial structures of the Middle Ages and the nation state. Economic and social development has led, on the one hand, to strengthen the national state as the main actor of the international system and, on the other hand, multiplying both types of actors (companies, international organizations, individuals, etc.) and the their relationship. An increasing share of the scene of international relations, globalization, international organizations currently

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<sup>1</sup> [http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relații\\_internaționale](http://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relații_internaționale)

<sup>2</sup> Eugen Străuțiu, *Teme introductive în relațiile internaționale*, Editura Universității Lucian Blaga, Sibiu, 2007, p. 14.

assumes, whether intergovernmental (members of which are states), whether governmental (members of which are structures that do not belong member). A special category of international actors, whose weight is very difficult to assess, are transnational corporations – large companies in the economic field, working with numerous subsidiaries of the parent company in countries other than the country of residence.

Most analysts believe that the state retains a dominant position in the international system even if reconsidering traditional acceptance of sovereignty. Although there is a relatively pronounced tendency to shift the attributes of national sovereignty to international bodies or organizations, the state continues to hold the dominant role in this area.

Thus, some experts consider that social security, competitiveness and economic growth, cultural development, education, providing the raw materials etc. remain in national governments; multinationals depend on the countries of origin for the direct or indirect protection; States have, for the moment, the monopoly of the legitimate use of force to control internal disturbances or to participate in collective actions of the international response to crises.<sup>3</sup>

According to traditional acceptance, states have primarily care and welfare development companies they manage, the creation of those mechanisms to ensure the functioning of fundamental institutions internally. But the foreign policy that promotes have an impact on the work of other governments, other states and the international system they belong.

Internationally, representatives of national governments are factors makers in international and regional organizations, which strengthens the role of the state in international relations. Even supranational organizations (UN, EU, OSCE) are used by Member States to support and promote national interests.

In the current security, war against terrorism requires a strengthening of the role of the state to ensure the safety and security of its citizens. At the same time, asymmetric threats imposed a unified international response, states accounting for the role of providing the necessary capabilities and

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<sup>3</sup> Prof. univ. dr. Ioan Mircea Pașcu, lector drd. Sergiu Nicolae Vintilă, *Teoria relațiilor internaționale*, Note de curs, Școala Națională de Studii Politice și Administrative, Facultatea de Științe Politice, București, 2004, p. 10.

require different measures at military, diplomatic, political, etc. generating normality in international relations.

The existence of the state is dependent on the existence of national interest, which is the realization of state power and survival. The two approaches are similar, because the survival of a state is conditioned by the manifestation of a certain degree of power in the international arena and its ability to impose its interests or guidelines to ensure a clear place in the international community. In this context, the role of the state in the international arena is defined by complexity actions, interests, willingness and capacity it has diversity.

Some experts consider that in the last decades, the debate on the role of the state in international relations, there was an element that brings a new dimension of existence of the State, particularly the national one, namely globalization.<sup>4</sup>

Critics phenomenon promoted the idea that globalization represents a threat to the traditional state system, ie to the sovereign states possessing monopoly use of force in their territory mutually recognized. It is considered that the separation between the scope of internal and external states do not allow a legitimate intervention in the internal affairs of another state, was eliminated by globalization, which revealed the military operations since the 90s.

On the other hand, some theorists support the idea that globalization, in its effects, especially economic ones, strengthens the power of the state, the proof being that the most powerful nations continue to be dominant in the political, economic and even military in the current international order. However, recent events have shown that even the most powerful states are vulnerable and that absolute power does not guarantee security, despite high military capacity. Therefore, the theory that an international player can achieve security provided with sufficient economic power, political, military and access to information can not be applied in the new international order, where players combine conventional and unconventional weapons, for to achieve their own objectives, taking into account the threats and challenges.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> dr. Alexandra Sarcinschi, *Rolul actorilor statali în configurarea mediului internațional de securitate*, Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I” București, 2010, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup> Ionel-Nicu Sava, *Studii de securitate*, Centrul Român de Studii Regionale, București, 2005, p. 17.

Therefore, the first international actors and states tend to rethink and re-evaluate their positions in the international arena, developing new ways of cooperation and collaboration for reducing or eliminating current risks. Attitude states as actors in international relations system is influenced by the imminent risks to their own interests and determine decisions and their relationships with other actors.

### ***International Organizations in the International Relations' System***

International relations have become increasingly complex and contemporary security environment has undergone major changes. The whole world began to face a number of challenges which led both states and international organizations to rethink their security agenda and to develop new strategies so that they can assume a role on the stage of international relations, adapt to it and able to protect their interests.

If by the end of the Second World War only legitimate actors of the international political scene were considered states, end of the war marked a diversification of the categories of actors, although states have continued to occupy a dominant position in the system. Thus, they showed up or strengthened their presence intergovernmental international organizations, multinational corporations, NGOs and various other bodies oriented more or less comprehensive, but have caused major changes in the paradigm of international relations.

1975 Convention on the Representation of States in their relations with international organizations present the following definition of international intergovernmental organizations, *an association of States established by treaty, as a constituent, joint bodies and legal personality distinct from that of Member States that compose*. Some authors give broader definition, in that international organization constitutes a form of coordination of international cooperation in areas established for states to have created some permanent institutional legal framework, by a statute drawn up in agreement that provides the object and purpose organization, organs and their functions necessary to achieve the objectives.

The international organization is defined as a permanent institution, established as a legal entity formed generally (but not only) of the states, for certain purposes, with a will of its own and that is the desire of most Member States.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.rasfoiesc.com/educatie/istorie/Actorii-relatiilor-internation74.php>

Given that globalization seems fundamental and irreversible phenomenon of contemporary society, international organizations acquire an ever greater authority and a wide range of social action. It is obvious that the national states gradually gives some of the powers of national sovereignty to international organizations, particularly in crisis management and resolution of disputes that may degenara into open conflict.

In most cases, international organizations provides not only the various decisions are taken, and the mechanisms necessary to implement these decisions into action. Increased use in recent years to the United Nations, particularly its main organ for maintaining international peace and security - Security Council - proves the increased confidence of states in international organizations ability to meet the purposes for which they were created. International organizations have demonstrated the role of indispensable tools in the system of international relations, particularly in economic and social fields and in the sphere of human rights and security. One of the most obvious aspects of the role and contribution of international organizations in the dynamics of international relations, is to identify common interests and providing a framework for discussion and finding solutions to various problems facing society. In international organizations, providing a plurality of negotiations and consultations, the variety of approaches to global issues and regional solutions liberates convenient or acceptable to all participants. International organizations such serve not only as a tool for facilitating cooperation between nations, but also as a tool to raise awareness about the realities of an interdependent world, whose challenges are global. In addition, they provide the means necessary to carry out the integration and aggregation of diverse interests of states.

In principle, international intergovernmental organizations are defined not only by the fact that their members are states, but also the permanent character of the activity and institutionalized procedures they use. Intergovernmental organizations shall meet on a fairly regular and specific procedures for decision making, have a body that directs the current work, have a seat and a budget set by Member States. However, they do not have direct access to material resources that you can use states.

International intergovernmental organizations include size and different power states, with capacities of political, economic, technological, military and other different. Differences between countries participating in

an international influence, to some extent, international cooperation and working methods. However, institutional forms of decision making, acceptable and accepted by all participants, allowing a close and effective cooperation between the Member States of the organization and establish courses of action that is satisfactory to all parties.

It is estimated that the process of establishing and strengthening international organizations imperatives resulted from the application of scientific and technical discoveries, increasing economic interdependence in the context of globalization and the emergence of asymmetric challenges which the international community could not cope than approaches and global efforts.

Literature opinion that intergovernmental organizations will still maintain importance as long as the states will exist because they are important by the very fact that there are associations formed by states, are invested with a certain authority and serve to promote the interests of members.

Appearance, proliferation, development and diversification of international intergovernmental organizations, was determined by three important factors.

The first factor was the need to prevent war and international rules regulating its behavior. These regulations have become necessary given that risk triggering major conflicts worldwide, which otherwise spent with him and downgrading World War. In this sense, just prevent another world war and peacekeeping were the primary purpose of the establishment of the United Nations.

A second factor for the emergence of international organizations took into account the growing interdependence of nations in the development process. These interdependencies lead to the need for cooperation among states in ways that allow free association, taking into account the common interests and the particular interests of members. The industrial revolution and developments in science have reduced distances between nations and intensified international contacts, which could be achieved through coordination of international organizations, which in turn could facilitate cooperation between states in many areas. Globalization has emphasized the interdependence between states in various plans and came to confirm the role of international organizations in the current system of international relations.

The third factor, with a decisive influence in the evolution of international organizations in recent decades, it is the combined effect of the new challenges faced by the international society whose global proportions



may be subject only to the overall treatment. These are: population growth, poverty, access to resources, control of environmental deterioration, the fight against terrorism, use of outer space. Although it can not be concluded that the international community's efforts to meet these challenges have resulted in finding the most appropriate solutions, the combination of these efforts in international organizations can not be ignored. International organizations fulfill such a useful feature in channeling a portion of the relations of interdependence between states and ensuring adequate means to enhance cooperation between nations. They work on the principle of voluntary cooperation, as institutions to identify and implement actions that serve the international community.

International organizations can provide the framework and means to mediate or resolve conflicts and formulate policies on matters affecting international relations. This shows the importance and role of international organizations in addressing issues of the contemporary world particularly complex.

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is defined as the entity that are not under the supervision of the government and not part of any business.<sup>7</sup>

NGO activities are conducted primarily in the states, but take a transnational dimension, both through the connections they establish with other groups in other countries and by their interference with various state organizations. However, NGOs are embedded in an international framework by developing relationships with international intergovernmental organizations. NGOs are recognized as actors of international relations only in the context of their actions lead to negative impact on the international stage. Practice shows that there are few NGOs that have a significant impact on international life among them are Amnesty International, Medecins sans Frontieres, Greenpeace, etc. However, the activities of these organizations tend to become especially significant when operating in environments with major visibility.

Factors that have led to the emergence and development of these organizations are political and diplomatic nature (NGO representation in the various international bodies), academic (civil society debates on topics most diverse) and technical (Internet, communications systems, information technology etc.).

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<sup>7</sup> Raluca-Miga Beşteliu, *Organizații internaționale interguvernamentale*, Editura All Beck, București, 2000, p. 37.

Regardless of the level at which the (national or international) NGOs propose well-defined goals, aiming to directly or indirectly influence decisions of state actors or international organizations. As remedies these organizations use demonstrations, seminars or scientific meetings or other media, attracting to its cause of political leaders, opinion leaders and decision makers. At the same time, are involved in a number of processes and policies that take place on the international stage, interacting with states or international organizations. In some cases, in order to strengthen the power of influence and role on the international stage, provides expertise, data and information in different areas (environmental protection, human rights, etc.) support various humanitarian projects, participate with qualified personnel post-conflict actions in different parts of the world or the processes of promoting and consolidating democratic principles and values.

Experts noted that NGOs play an increasingly active role in relation to the major problems of contemporary society, such as combating underdevelopment, poverty and disease and the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, to preserve peace and collective security.<sup>8</sup>

Often, NGOs interact or associate with international organizations to achieve a common goal. They exert their influence through lobbying at various levels, representing the World Conference, facilitations regional or global international organizations and participation in establishing channels of communication between citizens and legitimate representatives of states. The ultimate goal of these organizations is to integrate and coordinate all the resources necessary to achieve their goals.

Some authors emphasize that the stage of international relations have emerged and continues to exist a category of false NGOs funded by states with totalitarian rule or by groups with minority interests. They develop various activities being incorporated as elements of logistics support, membership recruitment, fundraising for organized crime or terrorist organizations etc.<sup>9</sup>

Although their share is not significant, in some cases, these false organizations can have a major impact on international life, just the resources and the means at their disposal and methods, which often are

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<sup>8</sup> Leroy Bennett, James Oliver, *International Organizations – Principles and Issues*, Editura Prentice Hall, London, 1977, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Teodor Frunzeti, *Dinamici globale și actori non-statali*, Lumea Militară nr. 3, 2005.

outside or to limit international law.

Multinational or transnational corporations have started to play an increasingly active, claiming the status of international actors. In general international corporate activity is felt by the pressures they carry on states to achieve various economic interests. By branches they hold outside the country of origin, corporations can influence the economic, social and even political one in countries of origin and in those who have moved part of the investment. The division of labor within the global corporation, often with the aim of avoiding the negative impact of trade barriers, transnational corporations at a time can have the tools to influence international relations usually oneself.

Ethnic or religious minorities began to gain an important role in international life amid a challenging economic environment and the proliferation of international and cross-border crime. The existence of territorial claims from both states and non-state actors of skidding religious and ethnic disputes, is the possibility of external pressures and access to technology and military equipment, provided these minorities an opportunity to try to impose on stage international as an actor to be taken into account. The intersection of conflicting interests of different actors on different levels state, political and ideological considerations, provides an important minority of room that could be used as instruments of pressure, which can generate tensions or lead to reactivation of historical disputes with an impact on international relations. Although not yet a significant influence, ethnic and religious minorities must be heard and understood in order to prevent activation of latent conflicts.

Terrorist organizations although not recognized legitimate actors of the international scene have an influence increasingly important in international relations, especially in recent decades. Increasing the number of terrorist organizations, objectives and countries concerned and amplification techniques used violence, concluding that these organizations tend to claim, increasingly stronger, a distinct place in the sphere of international relations.

If at first actions of terrorist groups aimed at government targets, diplomatic and military, in recent years there has been a shift towards more easy targets (urban, sights or religious, trains, banks, etc.), especially as they have a strong symbolic, are widely publicized and provides maximum visibility. By such actions, terrorist organizations are trying to determine national or international public opinion to put pressure on decision makers

in the respective States in order to accept applications for their organization. The transition was made towards these targets given that some governments of underdeveloped countries have a low authority, the population is poor and endemic corruption, the conditions for facilitating access to weapons and illegal funding. In this way the terrorist organizations are trying to impose certain claims and even influence the course of international relations.

Along with terrorist organizations, there are other types of organizations with similar structures but which can not be considered terrorist organizations such as the South American drug cartels and guerrilla movements. And they tend, more and more, to make its presence felt on the international scene, having purposes which are outside the rule of law.

### **Conclusions**

States obviously play the most important role in international relations and the international system is the set of relations between the states, structured according to certain rules and patterns of interaction. However, the current system states are strongly constrained and influenced by other non-state actors. Although states remain the dominant entities, international organizations play an increasingly important in this system, their most important function is to provide the means of cooperation between states in areas where they have common interests.

In international relations is seen more strongly as globalization process in which countries and people living in an integrated global system allows non-profit organizations, multination corporations, of influencing individuals, to gain predominant aspect of interest of nation states.

The position of national state as central actor of international system becomes one of the most controversial topics of international relations theory.

This is due to objective factors is showing more and more presence on the world stage: the multiplication of sources of authority and power; diminishing the capacity of states to control the national economies as a result of globalization; expanded access to information; the trend towards decentralization and strengthening the role of local/regional authorities; increased dependence on external natural resources.

All these factors influence the position of domination of states in the system of international relations and allow diversification of non-state actors who tend to be driving force in exercise of power and international influence.



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