

This introductory chapter attempts to make a theoretical contribution and frame the role of Non-State Actors (NSAs) in International Relations (IR) discipline as an under-examined subject-matter. The study situates its argument within the current debate of the increasing power of NSAs in international relations (ir) and what this means for the theory. Building on previous work, it offers a conceptualisation of the non-state entities and provides the ground for the book's rationale. In specific, the chapter offers a definition as to what non-state actors are based on a systematic and coherent analysis and creates a typology (of the nature) of NSAs. A table on NSAs' *modus operandi* illustrates why this is important but not a criterion of distinction among them. Considering the continuum of NSAs, the mainstream literature has mainly separated them according to cases in point. Even though different types of NSAs have been analysed separately, a frame that brings them together is lacking. Therefore, the chapter's primary objective is to classify them as actors on their own right and justify their existence as intrinsic part of the IR's ontology. Keywords Non-state actors (NSAs) • Typology • Ontology • Theory-building •

Institutions • Irregular militaries and militia groups • Fundamentalist groups • Ethnic groups • "States-to-be" Introduction This comprehensive study, which has evolved from my previous writings, is intended to provide a foundation for future analyses by responding to current debates around framing the role of Non-State Actors (NSAs) within the International Relations (IR) discipline and addressing their broader status. The study presents a range of methodological and epistemological approaches to NSAs by considering them as an integral part of the ontology of IR, along with the material and ideational structures (Gofas & Hay, 2008: 36).² Even though the debate (Summers & Gough, 2018³; Heffes et al., 2019⁴) on NSAs has been well-informed (Weenink, 2001), a broad and consistent framework is lacking. This is because various NSAs have occasionally been analysed in IR as separate and individual actors in their own right. Given scholarly claims that "there seems to be no uniform definition of what constitutes a NSA nor an agreed upon methodology on how to identify or classify them" (Heffes et al., 2019), the formation of a broad typology is therefore clearly needed. To date, scholarly work has explained the rise of NSAs mainly through examples (Saban & Yesiltas, 2018: 27),⁵ and by aligning NSAs with a specific type, as will be further explained. To varying degrees, the discussion usually involves intergovernmental organisations (IGOs); international non-governmental organisations (e.g. INGOs or NGOs); multinational corporations (MNCs) and enterprises (MNEs, e.g. Facebook, GlaxoSmithKline, Exxon Mobil), cities, diasporas, think-tanks, digital communities, quasi-states, social media platforms, liberation and social (Borońska-Hryniewiecka, 2011: 74) movements, pressure groups, private security firms and mercenary armies, the new diplomats (Kelley, 2010: 302), civil society organisations (CSOs), rebels, IS (Islamic State), WikiLeaks, Hezbollah (Thomas, 2017; Arasli, 2011),⁶ financial market actors, armed groups (e.g. para-military organisations, non-state armies and militias), and many others. Given their infinite variety, NSAs are usually understood through an approach that is characterised by example-based divisions: this not only limits theory-building but also risks either omitting existing kinds of NSAs or failing to include emerging categories. A four-fold rationale explains the importance of the conceptualisation of NSAs within IR. First and foremost, practical needs call for simplification in

1 Conceptualising Non-State Actors in International Relations 3

approaching them, on account of their multi-faceted complications. Second, their ability to influence the behaviour of state entities (Charountaki, 2011: 9) in a different way requires clarification as to their identity and their involvement in both state and non-state interactions. Third, NSAs are traditionally perceived through the lens of state interests or identified with institutions (mainly those of an economic orientation). There are scholars who “believe deeply in the importance of such actors as representatives of the state’s interests” (Higgott et al., 2000: 5). However, any form of interdependence⁷ is very much related to both state and non-state entities. Thus, the criterion of dependency for deciding upon their classification appears precarious in a globalised international relations system. Finally, NSAs constitute one component of the evolution of the international system that continues to inform the nature of IR. Even though the literature represents them mostly as a challenge (Valbjørn & Bank, 2012: 17),⁸ especially in relation to the primacy of the state (Kelley, 2010: 286),⁹ they are approached in the present work as part of IR whose role, as agents of power and change, can vary from case to case. For these reasons, I argue that they are not new actors, and that is why it is necessary to consider their changing roles, although their prominence has been understood and accounted for only recently. Therefore, the complexities and perceptions of NSAs together necessitate a more comprehensive approach to their categorisation. Scholarly efforts towards a broader understanding of NSAs “on a longer-term basis, considering a wide range of non-state actor activities” (Smits & Wright, 2012: 20), and the fact that there have already been attempts to reach a more solid conceptualisation of specific types—for instance, armed non-state actors (Saban & Yesiltas, 2018) in hybrid warfare (Rauta, 2020: 881–882)¹⁰—demonstrate why a broader conceptualisation is required. The contribution of this introductory chapter lies in its novel approach to the ontology of non-state entities in setting out a comprehensive typology of currently existing NSAs. Classification of NSAs offered in this work privileges their nature (by implying a set of specific characteristics)—although their modus operandi is of considerable importance it can be shared—and consists of (a) institutions; (b) irregular militaries and militia groups; (c) fundamentalist groups; (d) ethnic groups; and (e) “states-to-be” (Charountaki, 2020). These categories though are not entirely mutually exclusive. Taking into account the Kurds as an example to illustrate the difference between the categories: when considered as “the Kurds”, this is an ethnic group, the “peshmerga” is an irregular military, and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI) is the “state-to-be”. 4 M. Charountaki Given the diversity within each of these five categories, further analysis is required; therefore, each chapter that follows engages, in turn, with each type. This is suggested as a way of remedying the a priori approaching of NSAs through examples alone. On this basis, this edited volume, which brings together a range of perspectives, combines both theoretical and empirical analysis, with each chapter also shedding light on representative examples found within each of the categories but without the examples being the starting point of the analysis. Institutions, as structured entities, can vary in orientation, regardless of how their mechanisms and order keep them structured. Irregular militaries and militia groups, for instance, can include all those fighting forces and armed groups (along with the companies that can provide them) in a hybrid form in which there is a range of state and non-state involvement. Fundamentalist groups may differ in their priorities, but they are identified by radical extremism in their discourse and operation. Ethnic groups are normally

those with a nationalist agenda; they pursue political objectives, such as national (liberation) movements which are dominant in this category. Finally, “states-to-be”, often a more consolidated iteration of ethnic groups, and whose status does not necessarily lead to a position of independence, are the fifth category: they aspire to a role equal to that of state entities in the international realm and, as such, appear, after the states, to be the most important NSAs for the ontology of IR. The present chapter therefore begins with a broader interrogation of NSAs and discusses further the implications that NSAs bring to bear upon IR. The typology, set out in this chapter, constitutes the book’s main structure, with the following chapters divided among different types of NSAs, each supported by representative examples.

The Agency of NSAs: Towards a Definition NSAs as Entities in their Own Right Despite the growing “power” of NSAs (Buzan et al., 1998: 387)¹¹ as part of the ontology of International Relations, they remain relatively under-examined. Here the term “power” (Walker & Ludwig, 2017) connotes a concoction of attributes related to both its kind, i.e., an alternative to the impact, dynamism, and influence, as distinct from authority (Saeed, 2018)¹² and also its agency. NSAs are thus agents 1

Conceptualising Non-State Actors in International Relations 5 of power and this power can be multi-dimensional (Buzan et al., 1998: 388).¹³ As far as the agents of power are concerned —whether state or non-state (Buzan & Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2009: 19)—this multiplicity extends beyond any kind of soft (economic, cultural/ethnic), smart, sharp, or hard power. Beyond the notion of power as a state monopoly, or its “capabilities [and] resources” (Wohlforth, 1993: 4), this introductory chapter invokes the role of power in the competition between state and non-state entities, as well as that between non-state entities. Here the focus is on moving from a singular understanding of NSAs (through the above-mentioned approach of identifying examples before employing a generic scope of analysis) towards a multi-dimensional consideration and analysis both of the role of NSAs on equal terms with states and of their position as essential constituents of the IR ontology. The power of NSAs is also evident through international and regional developments that have led to the increasing attention that non-state entities—rather than individuals—have attracted. This is an opportunity to explain briefly why this typology excludes individuals and units (for instance, leaders) from an understanding of the NSA. The unit level has already been explored within Foreign-Policy Analysis (FPA) and/or neo-classical realism in a broader sense. In the international realm, representation normally occurs through collectives that claim to wield their power. International law has, only recently, attempted to find ways to satisfy demands for an expansion of its approach to include the protection of collectives—beyond its traditional focus on individuals. Incidents linked primarily to such urgent calls are expressed by the broader populations and include war crimes committed by the Islamic State (IS). Moreover, the agency of the NSAs is also related to their ability to exert influence on states’ foreign policies, and to be influenced by state actors or structures (Charountaki, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c: 2, 3, 10). They can also act as agents of foreign-policy making (Charountaki, 2019) and thus as decision-makers, depending on their status. This is particularly the case with the “states-to-be”, whose interactions are directly linked to FPA and its various levels of analysis encompassing the unit, the state and the international. “States-to-be” are able to design and/or exert foreign policy, and here foreign policy is perceived “as the end product [of a process] ... [that] constitutes response(s) to the activities of other actors in the international relations

system [and these actions] ... may stem from states or non-state entities” (Charountaki, 2011: 74; Charountaki, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c: 10). In this sense, the type of a “state-to-be” is a case of a non-state actor that can inform the state level of FPA since, as Chapter Six demonstrates further, this can also be expanded to include the non-state level. NSAs can also act as facilitators of foreign policy (Charountaki, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c) as it is the case with the type of irregular armies and militias. As already noted, the literature that highlights NSAs offers various definitions directly related to the range of existing perceptions. Amongst these, common ground can be identified: understanding is based primarily on examples (German & Karagiannis, 2016: 1). Such examples include Walter, who focuses on transnational MNC corporations with lobbying roles; Dalacoura, Madeley, and Haynes (2011: 63–64, 70) who look at Islamist movements as transnational non-state actors; whilst Taylor brings in the role of transnational ethnic groups (Charountaki, 2011: 10). Similarly, Halliday recognises five types of non-state actors that include NGOs such as Amnesty International, business groups, and religious entities, as well as political and criminal organisations (Halliday, 2001: 21, 26). On the other hand, Wagner classifies NSAs into two broad categories: “one being international organizations or formations of states as well as sub-state actors” (Wagner, 2009).¹⁴ Hawks, for instance, discusses the functions of non-state actors (Hawks, 2018: 4) whilst according to Pearlman and Cunningham (2011: 3) an NSA is “an organized political actor not directly connected to the state but pursuing aims that affect vital state interest”. Scholarly work has commonly focused on NGOs and transnational organisations, and violence (Hawks, 2018: 1, 4, 10). Prominent also is the role of militant groups associated with political Islam. Thus, there are different kinds, such as Sufi-jihadists, Shiite jihadists, MB (Muslim Brotherhood)-jihadists, and others. It is not uncommon to see references to “violent non-state groups [with an] emphasis on Salafi-jihadist groups [seen through] the lenses of strategic culture” (Last, 2020), as well as armed NSAs (Heffes et al., 2019) or “private actors”, in relation to their interactions with the state (Coleman, 2001: 94). Scholarly focus on the role of violent NSAs (Williams, 2008) stands out in the literature, but the division of NSAs based on the criterion of violence poses limitations. This is the case because the term encompasses a variety of expressions and actors as potential agents of violence, be they states or individuals. This raises the question as to why violence constitutes a distinct measure according to which the categorisation of NSAs occurs. In the same context, Berge argues that violence “refers to a behaviour that is subjective; it depends on the observer whether an action is qualified as such, or not” (Berge, 2016: 17). The group’s subsequent division into economic (e.g. private security companies, para-military units, organised crime, warlords) and political imperatives (e.g. secessionist/de facto states, political parties, guerrillas, terrorists) (Ezrow, 2017) is also puzzling, since both categories can and do have a mixture of objectives. NSAs are variously defined as “those organizations or groups that are not affiliated with national governments including social movements, international or regional non-governmental organizations and multinational corporations” (Stienstra, 1994: 1). Halliday (2001: 36) defines as non-state actors, entities that are “non-state” and partly independent from the states, but which nevertheless influence them. Reinalda’s contribution—in the form of one of the very few core textbooks on non-state actors—recognises dominant institutions, in addition to the role that religiously-oriented fundamentalist groups play in international politics (Reinalda, 2011: 3, 4). A typology of armed

non-state actors in hybrid warfare (namely proxy, auxiliary, surrogate, and affiliated forces) responds to the clarification of the role of non-state violent actors in civil war in general, and in hybrid warfare in particular (Rauta, 2020: 870). Thus far the literature has focused mainly on a typology of non-state armed actors in the evolution of a conflict through a “demarcation ... between 1 Conceptualising Non-State Actors in International Relations 7 those actors acting on behalf of a state and those acting in conjunction with a state’s armed forces” (German & Karagiannis, 2016: 1). In another scholarly framework, armed non-state actors are analysed and compared according to the criteria of autonomy, representation, and influence (Berge, 2016: 18). Baumann and Stengel in fact adopt a typology based upon territorial scope and legal status (Berge, 2016: 15). However, variables of such types seem to fall under the same critique that follows the sub-trans connotations or the domestic/external. Even so, the chapter argues that NSAs are not so much a matter of space as of performance. Based on my own understanding of the term, and building on previous work, I offer a revised formulation encompassing collectives which: (a) are not organised into a state; (and/or) (b) [can be] characterised by the display of state attributes; (and/or) (c) consist of a group of individuals with common goals who are able to interact in the international realm. Therefore, their identity can vary: they can (i) belong to a state (or a group of states), with an understanding of state institutions; (ii) they can be independent; (iii) they might be non-governmental organisations, or (iv) branches of groups under a leading group; or else (d) are identified by a degree of international recognition. They can be economic, religious, or socio-political actors, all exerting political influence (Charountaki, 2011: 8, 9). NSAs are thus collectives that are identified by a non-state status, a specific nature (that can often combine more characteristics), and shared objectives whilst their mode of operation can vary as the table below demonstrates. 8 M.

Charountaki Conceptual Clarification Fundamental to the analysis of NSAs is the distinctions between the prefixes “non-” and “trans-” (Charountaki, 2011: 11, 15 ; Layton, 2015: 191); and “sub-” and “supra-” (German & Karagiannis, 2016: 2) that have been imported (Dunne et al., 2013a, 2013b: 419) 16 from social sciences (Charountaki, 2011: 10). 17 Even though the assertion that NSAs “have been largely overlooked” is generally agreed, differentiating them into “sub-state and non-state”, including the prefixes “trans-” (Brenner, 2017: 127) 18 or “supra-” (based on domestic or international operation/s) appears precarious, given the destabilisation of national, economic, and other boundaries resulting from the impact of globalisation (Salem, 2018: 12). 19 Within this context, and despite its regional location, an entity can develop multi-dimensional activities beyond geographical boundaries. Thus, the kinds of operation(s) undertaken by these entities will matter more than their location. The former also reflects the nature of their established and evolving interests. Prefixes such as “trans-” and “supra-” (state) seem problematic, given that they often connote a cross-border activity that transcends the geographical boundaries; on the other hand, “sub-” (state) simply indicates those that appear active in the domestic sphere. “Sub-” is used also to con- note the subjection of NSAs to the state, sublimating notions of autonomy or a sense of self-determination. However, prefixes that are generally used to describe NSAs seem confusing, given modern forms of governance as well as the evolving definition of “state” or “sovereignty”. Instead, the levels of operation and the expansion of the activities of NSAs can vary, regardless of their location, given that non-state entities (Valbjørn & Bank, 2012: 17) 20 can operate at

an international level, or at least beyond the level of the (nation) state and vice versa. Similarly, a conceptual understanding of NSAs in a holistic manner, in accordance with and framed by states' boundaries, is challenging since it perpetuates limited interpretations of 1 Conceptualising Non-State Actors in International Relations 9 non-state entities. Understanding NSAs solely through the lens of the state rather than as an ontological reality in co-existence with the states is challenging. NSAs are thus understood as the "other" actor—one that shares the nature and characteristics of collectivity—rather than the state actors which, along with the structures, constitute the ontology of IR. In this sense, scholarly claims about including the individual in the category of NSAs fail to meet the criterion of collectivity (i.e. presenting the individual as the main point of reference) which is required for fruitful academic analysis (German & Karagiannis, 2016: 1).²¹ In addition, the unit level of analysis (within FPA) already identifies the role of the individual (Heffes et al., 2019) and suggests how it can be studied; the same can be argued about the neo-classical realism's school of thought. Therefore, there is a distinction between individuals and the NSAs (regardless of the context of their operation) (Madeley & Haynes, 2011: 63–64),²² since those group(s) of units that differ in nature are even able to compete, *mutatis mutandis*, with state actors, as is the case with "states-to-be".

The Role of NSAs in IR: A Critique According to Mearsheimer and Walt, "given how little we know, and how little we know about how to learn more, overinvesting in any particular (IR) approach seems unwise" (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2013: 449). This premise acquires greater importance when considering the role of NSAs in IR vis-à-vis the infrequent attention paid by the mainstream literature to such an actor. As part of the ontology of international relations, NSAs are becoming increasingly important, along with their ability to affect and interact with state entities (Charountaki, 2011: 253). They have been somewhat overlooked by the literature, either because of an over-emphasis on traditional state-centric or structural approaches within the discipline (and the consequent failure in the analysis to accommodate other actors as an integral part), or because of other methodological matters. Broadly speaking, whilst various epistemological approaches include the role of NSAs within their ambit, this often occurs in a sporadic and fragmented manner. Overall, IR theories have been overtaken by realities on the ground. NSAs have thus evolved into a matter of contestation that begins with definition (whether one is referring to the human, the state, or the non-state), and extends to their limited consideration within the parameters of the IR schools. Whilst existing schools of thought refer to the role of institutions²³ (Dunne et al., 2013a, 2013b: 135) (such as 10 M. Charountaki variants of liberalism), mainstream theories (or their developments) are primarily state-centric and structural (either material or ideational). Even though exceptional cases, such as the English school, appear to shed light on non-state entities, the analysis does not seem to go far enough in covering NSAs adequately. The argument in favour of a social ontology, where international society is the primary object of analysis, complicates an understanding of the non-state even further. Thus, "international society is the realm of the governmental and the official" that can also include "the dimension of non-state actors" (Clark, 2007: 8). "The centrality of the state is undisputable" (Halliday, 2009: 8) in most assumptions made within the discipline, including those of the English school. As Buzan and Gonzalez-Pelaez suggest, even when there is an understanding of "the relationship between the interstate and non-state domains", this is framed as "interstate" and it is not specific

(Buzan & Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2009:30). The English school is mentioned separately and specifically as an example of one whose generic references to the dividing of the world society into non-state organisations has not been sufficiently elucidated or developed. The reference to “world society”, as one that includes the global population, individuals, and non-state organisations, “remains seriously underspecified” (Buzan, 2001: 477). Thus, the attempt of the English school to encapsulate almost everything in this proposition of world society—i.e., the perception of the global political system as encompassing “states and also regions, institutions, NGOs, transnational and subnational groups, individuals and the wider community of human kind” (Dunne et al., 2013a, 2013b: 135)—seems quite problematic when the distinct role of NSAs is considered. Further, it appears too broad and simultaneously contradictory to include both “organisations” and individuals. Such expansive approaches, evident also in terms such as “the international society”, divide the international relations system into strata that betray a structural approach. At the same time, the attempt to divide relations according to structures (states to states; between non-state collective actors; and among individual human beings) does not allow for a holistic approach, but instead leads to the English school’s structural classification of the world (Jackson et al., 2006: 163)²⁴ that would enable examination of interactions (at least between the first two). However, there is a lack of empirical evidence and examples—especially at the regional level—to test theses in practice, in addition to perceptions of the ideational structures as (primarily) shared (Jackson et al., 2006: 116).²⁵ Such inter-subjective premises complicate even further the understanding of how and why IR’s ontology differs, and the problem of the non-state actor remains. Buzan argues that “the English school has not given any consideration to the regional level, there are precedents neither for how to define what would constitute a regional international society nor for how to relate to it to international society at global level”

1 Conceptualising Non-State Actors in International Relations 11 (Buzan & Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2009: 43). He also notes “...a serious shortage of guidance on what primary institutions look like in the non-state domains and how these might look in relation to those in the interstate domains” (ibid). Yet what is lacking here is an examination that compares how these two concepts may enhance empirical enquiries into international relations outside the international society of states (Pella, 2013: 69). This might be traced back to the origins of the school—the fact that world society had not been established or analysed to the same extent as the international system or society—and that “rather than ‘operationalizing’ concepts and formulating ‘testable’ hypotheses, the emphasis [was placed] upon contending concepts” (Dunne et al., 2013a, 2013b: 138). Thus, the English school has concentrated mostly on “primary institutions in [this] interstate domain” as it perceives this interaction (Buzan & Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2009: 25, 26, 32).²⁶ But again, and based on the existing critical approaches, in referring to a “society” within which NSAs operate “it is not clear that there is any sort of society in this domain” (Buzan & Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2009: 235). On the other hand, “there is [also] a serious shortage of guidance on what primary institutions look like in the non-state domains and how these might relate to those in the interstate domains” (Buzan & Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2009: 43). “[H]ow international society relates to world society” (Dunne et al., 2013a, 2013b: 138) also appears somewhat puzzling for the IR discipline, whereas the use of the term “society” in the sense of the community is too broad. Thus, the structural approach of the English school—focusing as it

does on the triptych state–society— can neither encompass nor adequately explain the range of NSAs identified and categorised here. Similarly, for Marxism or any other meta–theory, “NSAs are tools of the [state] employed to promote hegemony” (Buzan & Gonzalez–Pelaez, 2009: 17). Furthermore, constructivism’s over–emphasis on ideational structures—like the English school—privileges the role of agents, and thus we end up with either structure– or agent–oriented theories that do not account for the approach pursued in this chapter—that is, an attempt to ascribe to NSAs a role as agents of action in their own right. The attention of constructivists towards the role of “norms, values, institutions, ideas, identities, and cultural contexts” in a “social analysis” is indicative of the scope of a study that offers a sociological perspective of IR (Baldwin, 2016: 153). World society can be perceived as both groups/individuals together and transnational and interhuman societies. The division into societies – i.e. “states in ‘inter– state society’, non–state collective actors in ‘transnational society’, and individuals in ‘interhuman society’” (Pella, 2013: 68)—implies a perception of NSAs that is not about collectives operating at different levels, as is argued for in the present work. As Pella suggests, “whilst scholars sometimes attribute agency to states as a form of shorthand, they believe that the real agents in international society are the diplomats and leaders who think and act on behalf of the state and its institutions” (in Dunne & Charountaki et al., 2013a, 2013b: 137). The role of the foreign–policy maker, though, has been accounted for at the unit level of analysis or, broadly speaking, by the neo–classical realist theory. Such actors are presented by the English school as part of systemic, social, and international structures on the basis that “these three types provide clarity with respect to the sources of agency”, which hampers interpretations of actors that do not fit within such a framework. Attempts to clarify the concept of the non– state as the realm “of the individual ... the non–official group or movement and the translational network of non–governmental agents” (Clark, 2007: 7–8) is inherently problematic. The “non–state” is perceived de facto through the role of states given, for instance, that “international society legitimacy principles come to be reformulated to take account of the norms emanating from world society” and that “world society... is inclusive of international society [that is, the non–state social world]” (Clark, 2007: 11–22). The fact that the concept of world society “can address questions such as what ideologies are in competition in the non–state world? What is it that leads to the triumph of one ideology over others?” (Dunne et al., 2013a, 2013b: 135) implies that there is an emphasis on the (ideational) structures within its scope. So, a focal point could be “how various non–state actors have introduced normative principles that were then implemented by the states of international society” (Pella, 2013:66).²⁷ If theory “constitutes guidance and a set of principles on which any independent analysis should be based” it should consider both the material and ideational structures that constitute IR, and state and non–state interactions. Such an approach “allows the scholar to reach various conclusions for phenomena—i.e., the constituents of specific case studies – through the adoption of the necessary methodological tools according to the space and period under scrutiny” (Charountaki, 2011: 246). This approach also justifies scholarly claims for the need to broaden the empirical spectrum so that it (Buzan, 2001: 485)²⁸ unravels elements that can be used towards the establishment of a grand theory. The lack of theorisation pertaining to NSAs and the absence of empirical references that address their role in IR’s ontology further reinforce the importance of this volume for introducing more holistic approaches to

the IR discipline. “Holistic” implies a multi-dimensional inter-relationship not only between agent and structure but also between theory and practice, which includes an empirical understanding of the concept of NSAs. It also implies the need for the focus on the role—both direct and indirect—of non-state actors in IR, without an a priori favouring of either actor (Charountaki, 2011: 254). Thus, even though the English school, which can be traced back in the 1950s and 1960s (and is known in the US context as rationalism),