

*A strategic evaluation of the Italian Governments'
foreign policy performance in Libya*

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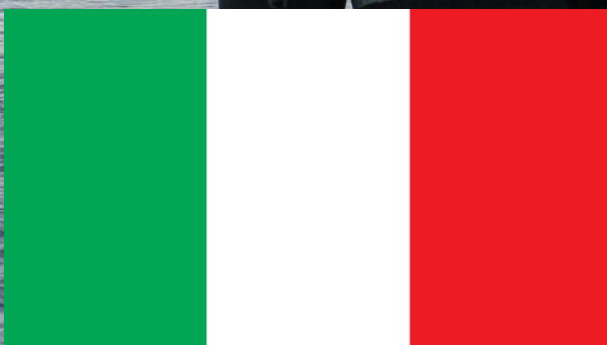
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Sebastiano Angeli



¹ Upper left: picture of the [Libyan Coast Guard](#) , Upper right: picture of [Italian PM Conte with Libyan PM Al-Serraj](#) . Bottom left: picture of [ENI oil installations in Libya](#) . Bottom right: picture of [Libyan war](#)

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes Italian foreign policy in Libya between 2014 and late 2019. It tries to understand the factors that contributed to success or failure in achieving the main strategic objectives: 1) achieving stabilization in Libya, securing energy and commercial interests and 2) opposing/controlling immigration. With this goal, the analysis focuses on assessing the Italian governments' performance during the selected time-frame (Renzi, Gentiloni, and Conte-1). This study excludes any ethical or moral considerations, and the analysis focuses purely on the appropriateness and effectiveness in achieving the strategic objectives.

The performance assessment relies on the analytical framework developed by the European Council on Foreign Relations to study European Union foreign policy. This framework consists of a "scorecard", a method that allows to link qualitative evaluations to a numerical scale; the evaluation subjects are the strategic objectives, and the criteria through which they are assessed are: resources, strategy, outcome and consequences. Therefore, the performance of each government will be evaluated on each of the strategic objectives. In turn, the strategic objectives will be assessed according to the four criteria mentioned above. Eventually, there will be an overall assessment for the government foreign policy in Libya, an overall assessment for each of its strategic objectives, and a more specific assessment on each component inside the strategic objective.

From the analysis, it emerges that the Renzi government scored "good" for the first objective and "sufficient" for the second, resulting in an overall "satisfactory" final grade. The Gentiloni government got "satisfactory" for the first, and "very good" for the second, culminating in an overall "good" foreign policy in Libya. Finally, the Conte government scored "strongly insufficient" for the first objective and "very good" for the second, for a final "satisfactory" result.

Stabilization - Due to the meddling of several foreign powers with different interests than stabilization, it was complicated to stabilize Libya. However, while Rome was a very influential actor in the early stages, Italy's lack of strategy and assertiveness after the Renzi government doomed any hopes of success. In particular, the inability to create a solid European front was determinant: Italy did not have the resources nor the diplomatic weight to seriously influence Libya's situation. Therefore, Russia and Turkey exploited the vacuum left by Europeans. Finally, the Italian position of "equidistance" chosen by the Conte government resulted in ambiguity, with consequential loss of credibility and influence.

Energy security and commercial interests - On the one hand, the Italian navy operation Mare Sicuro proved to be an efficient measure to secure critical energy infrastructures and Italian commercial interests offshore. On the other hand, Italian commercial interests on the Libyan soil were to be achieved by stabilizing the country. The failure in doing so especially impacted medium-small business, as they had to leave the country. On the contrary, ENI had the power and capabilities to maintain its productivity throughout the Libyan conflict, suffering only temporary problems.

Immigration - For reducing the number of immigrants landing in Italy, the Renzi government led colossal naval operations and argued for a redistribution system at the EU level. However, naval operations acted as a pull factor for migrants leaving from Libya, and some EU member states refused categorically to implement a redistribution system. This objective was better achieved with the unilateral and "harsher" measures taken by the Gentiloni and Conte-1 governments; the deals brokered with the local clans and with the Libyan Coast Guard led to a dramatic decrease in the number of departures. Likewise, policies "anti-NGOs" and the unilateral action to close Italian ports were highly successful: these moves determined a further reduction in the number of arrivals, deterring migrants from leaving in the first place and strong-arming some EU members to accept their share of migrants.

"If Libya were to become a failed state, it would turn into a platform specializing in the transfer across the Mediterranean of masses of desperate wretches, of chaos, of crime, and of terrorism, in other words of the poisoned fruits that always flourish in a failed state. And we would be in the front line, the first to suffer the consequences."

(Panebianco, 2011, p. 1)

1. Introduction

Ten years after the beginning of the "Arab Spring", Libya is still dominated by chaos. As several foreign powers seek to achieve their interests supporting one faction or the other, the Libyan conflict has been turned into a proxy war. The numerous attempts made by the United Nations (UN) to stabilize the Country were thwarted by the escalation of violence on the ground and by the meddling of foreign powers. Once again, European countries failed to find a common foreign policy line on Libya: France supporting General Haftar, Italy with a policy of equidistance and dialogue with both the parties (Prime Minister Al-Serraj and General Haftar), Germany somewhat disinterested and British too focused on domestic politics (Caracciolo, 2016 p. 2). This lack of unity led to the creation of a void that was filled by Russia and Turkey. The European and Italian loss of influence in Libya has raised several concerns, especially on Italian newspapers and among Italian scholars and policymakers.

Italy is one of the actors with most interests at stake in the Libyan territories. The Italians had a well-established relationship with Colonel Qaddafi, based on borders control (no immigrants to Italy) and prominent oil-and-gas contracts with Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI) - the major Italian Oil company – (Croci and Valigi, 2013 p. 45). After the colonel's fall, Italians remained in the Country, supporting the creation of an UN-recognized government that could reunify Libya and bring stabilization (Falchi, 2017 p. 1-2). However, Haftar's aggressive offensives and powerful supporters undermined the UN and Italian efforts, progressively eroding the Italian leadership role. By January 2020, Italy was relegated to the background, and its strategic objectives in Libya were severely challenged.

1.1. Research question and objectives

This thesis aims to explore whether the Italian foreign policy in Libya after Colonel Qaddafi's fall was effective in achieving the Italian's strategic objectives in the region. From the analysis of the official documents published by the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior and the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), it is clear that the main Italian strategic objectives in Libya from 2014 to 2019 were: 1) achieving stabilization in the Country, securing energy and commercial interests and 2) opposing/controlling immigration.

Italian foreign policy in Libya has been subjected to numerous critiques, and the immigration issue has exacerbated political and social divisions within the Italian electorate. This study aims to assess the Italian governments' performance on these two crucial issues. For doing this, it is necessary to exclude any moral or ethical evaluations, focusing only on the strategic objectives.

Besides evaluating the performance of Renzi, Gentiloni and Conte-1, the final goal is to understand what actions and policies contributed to the achievement of the objectives and what factors led to failure. Finally, this analysis aims to indicate to present and future Italian decision-makers what strategies and actions are most likely to lead to Italian foreign policy success.

From this, the following research question is developed:

Research Question: *"What were the factors that contributed to success or failure in relation to Italian strategic objectives in Libya between February 2014 and August 2019?"*

To answer this question, this thesis will look at the performance of three Italian governments – Renzi, Gentiloni, and Conte-1 – in pursuing and achieving the Italian strategic objectives in Libya. The research question is quickly answered in the "organization of the study" section, whereas a more thorough explanation is offered in the final chapter. For feasibility reasons, the study covers the period from 2014 to August 2019, during which there have been three different governments – Renzi (February 2014 – December 2016), Gentiloni (December 2016 – March 2018), and Conte (June 2018 – August 2019), and it does not consider events happened since the beginning of 2020. The concepts of success and failure are carefully addressed in the methodology chapter and in the appendix; in this study, they are identified not in absolute terms, but on a numerical scale that is then translated into a qualitative equivalent. The appendix is critical for establishing a proper benchmarking and keeping the evaluation as objective as possible.

1.2. Contextualization – the situation in Libya (2011 – 2020)

This section outlines the contextualization for this thesis. Because foreign policy does not happen in a vacuum, it is necessary to understand in what theatre and under what conditions the Italian governments were operating. Therefore, this section summarizes Libya's main events between 2011 and 2020 and explains the importance of Libya in terms of energy resources.

Following the fall of Qaddafi in October 2011, Libya ceased to function as a sovereign state. Since then, several actors have claimed jurisdiction over parts of the territory. In 2015 even ISIS succeeded in establishing important outposts, conquering the city of Sirte and disrupting oil production in the Country (Selwan El Khoury, 2016 p. 3). However, given that Libya was

basically a colonial creation of different territories – Tripolitania, Cyrenaica and Fezzan -, its existence as a sovereign state after the independence was possible only thanks to the powerful authoritarian regime of Qaddafi (and Bellodi, 2017 p. 1-2). With the fall of his regime, increasing tensions, different interests and radical divisions emerged. These divisions have been exacerbated by multiple factors: religion (Islamic vs seculars), tribal dynamics, interests and claims over fossil fuels reserves, and foreign powers intervention.

The revolutionary fervour of 2011 led to a political-institutional transition. While this was effective in its early stages, with pacific elections held in 2012, it failed to establish solid roots and stabilise the Country, thus precipitating in a civil war in 2014 (Colombo, 2015 p. 18). General Haftar started an offensive, "*Operation Dignity*", against the Islamists; the offensive started in Bengasi but was then extended to the rest of the Country. Later in 2014, the Islamic forces in Tripoli created a heterogenic coalition, the Libyan Alba. This coalition managed to take power in the Capital and forced the internationally recognized parliament to flee in the east of the Country, relocating in Tobruk (Toaldo, 2016b p. 1).

To reunify the country, the UN started the negotiations between the two parties to create a government of national accord (GNA). This government was finally created at the end of 2015 with the peace agreement of Skhirat. The GNA, sponsored by the UN, was soon recognized as the official government by the majority of the international community. However, the GNA did not replace the two existing governments, and in 2016 there were thus three governments in the Country (Toaldo, 2016b p. 2). It was only by April 2016, after facing opposition of the International Community, that the Islamic government in Tripoli dissolved and recognized the GNA. On the other hand, the government in Tobruk did not recognize the GNA and continued to support Haftar.

The government of Al-Serraj was weak; by the end of 2016, Haftar started to confront the GNA more directly, conquering oilfields and initiating a military offence to establish his control over the Country. Although Italy continued to show its support to the GNA, re-opening its embassy in Tripoli at the beginning of January 2017, the internal and international consensus for Haftar kept growing, mainly thanks to his military successes (Falchi, 2017 p. 2).

On the 4th of April 2019, after a relatively long ceasefire period, general Haftar launched an offensive against Tripoli, re-escalating Libya's civil war (Gaiani, 2019 p. 3). Through military operations, the general managed to extend his control over most of the former Libya. Haftar found allies in several nation-states, particularly the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt,

Russia and France, which supported the general diplomatically or with financial and military resources (Toaldo, 2017a p. 4 and Caracciolo, 2019). On the other hand, Al-Serraj, which was supported by UN, Qatar, Turkey and (initially) Italy, did not immediately find a concrete support to counter Haftar's militia, but Erdogan soon filled this void. In November 2019, the Turkish president first brokered a deal with the Libyan Prime Minister on the division of water claims in the Mediterranean Sea (featuring prominent advantages for Turkey in the oil-and-gas exploration) and then agreed to send troops, drones, military equipment and military experts to counter Haftar's Libyan National Army (LNA) (Santoro, 2019 and Caracciolo, 2019). At the beginning of 2020 Sirte too fell under the control of the LNA, but thanks to the help received from Turkey, the GNA succeeded in opposing the LNA offence on Tripoli.

These developments led to a situation that sees Putin as the main supporter of Haftar, and Erdogan as the primary supporter of Al-Serraj. The two also agreed to a ceasefire on the 8th of January 2020, thereby trying to divide Libya into spheres of influence (as they previously did in Syria) (Caracciolo, 2019).

Finally, another remarkable factor to consider is the importance of Libya in terms of energy resources. Despite the ongoing conflict, Libya is the 1st Country in Africa and the 10th in the world for oil reserves, and it also has substantial natural gas reserves, ranking 4th in Africa and 22nd in the world (ENI, 2019b, p. 5 and ENI, 2019a p. 3-5). Therefore, even though energy production dropped after the fall of Qaddafi (see the graphs below), the vast reserves make the Country still promising to foreign investors for the long-term. With these considerations in mind, several foreign powers² and multinational companies³ commit substantial investments and spend their energies and resources in Libya.

² Turkey, Russia, Egypt, France, Italy, UAE etc.

³ ENI, Total, Gazprom etc.

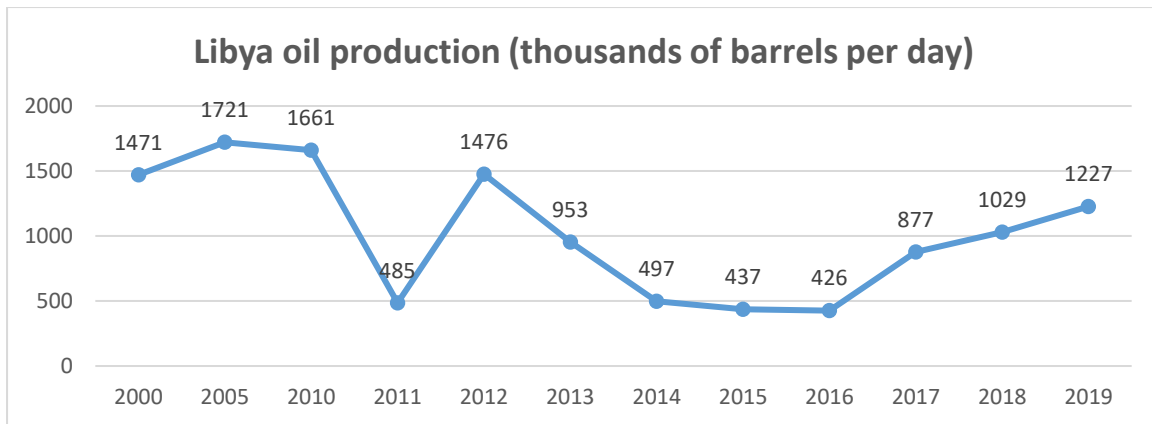


Figure 1, data source: ENI world oil review, 2019 – graph created by Thesis' Author

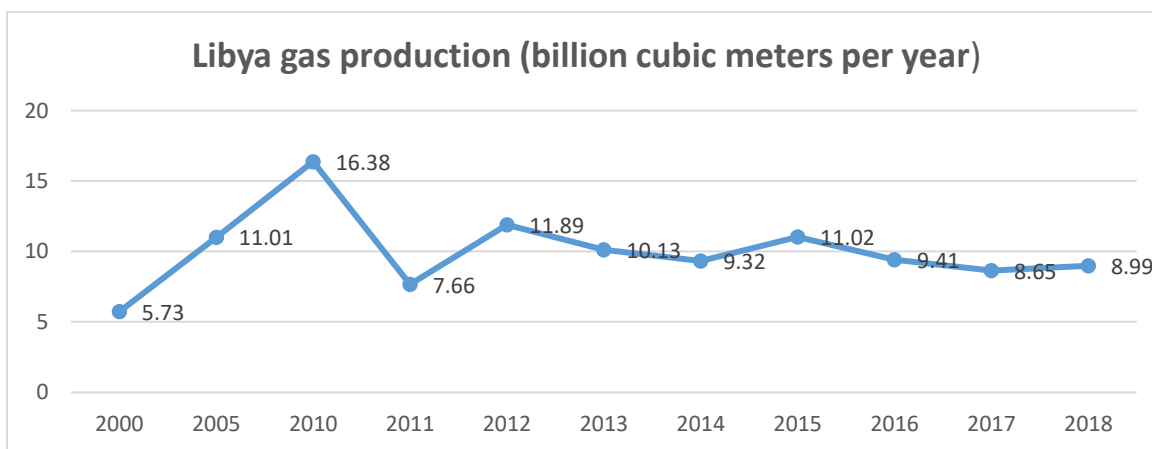


Figure 2, data source: ENI gas and renewables review 2019, - graph created by Thesis' Author

1.3. Italian strategic objectives in Libya

Identifying the Italian strategic objectives in Libya is crucial for this study because the whole research is based on it. There has to be no doubt about these objectives, so this study considered various primary and secondary sources, which supported each other.

It is essential to highlight that controlling immigration from Libya has been a primary strategic objective since the end of the Cold War (Crocì and Valigi, 2013 p. 45-51), and was actively pursued by right-wing and left-wing governments. Likewise, ensuring energy and commercial security is also a long-standing objective; due to the geographical proximity and the colonial past, there has always been a very close connection between the two countries (Ibid. p. 43-44). As a result, Italy relied on Libya for the supply of fossil fuels and the Italian energy and infrastructure companies (like ENI and Impregilo), are major players in the Maghreb in Country. Since the Libyan civil war (2011), all the Italian governments have tried to stabilize

Libya. The stabilization objective was set as a top priority by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministero Degli Affari Esteri, 2016), because on the achievement of Libyan stabilization also depends the first two objectives – controlling immigration and energy/commercial security.

To identify the Italian strategic objectives in Libya without relying only on secondary sources or common knowledge, this study has carefully analyzed the "plans of the performance" and "performance assessments" published by the Italian Government on a yearly-base.⁴ Specifically, this study examined the documents published by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI), the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) between 2014 and 2019. In line with the initial expectations and the literature on this topic, it emerged what the Italian objectives in Libya have been:

1. Stabilization of the Country and of the broader Central-Mediterranean region
2. Controlling immigration flows and oppose illegal immigration
3. Protect Italian national interests in the country, including energy and commercial security, with a focus on Italian companies operating in the area and protecting the Country-System.⁵

Let us briefly see each Ministry.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

From the analysis of the documents published by the MFA it clearly emerges that all the three objectives above were central in the plans published by the Ministry from 2014 to 2019. The Mediterranean is a crucial strategic area upon which stability depends on Italian prosperity, Italian security and Italian strategic interests. From 2016 onwards, Libya's stabilization is defined as the top priority for Italian foreign policy, clarifying that no resources nor efforts should be spared to achieve this objective. At the same time, the MFA underlines that dialogue, cooperation and inclusiveness are crucial for bringing peace to the Country, and that military actions will not be decisive without diplomacy. In all the documents, a strong emphasis was put on managing immigration flows, which the MFA aimed to tackle from various angles. Finally, great importance was also given to the protection and support of the Country-System - and therefore to the protection of key industrial and energy national actors in the area, such

⁴ These documents are available in Italian on the website "performance portal":

<https://performance.gov.it/performance>

⁵ The Country-System is to be defined as "All the institutional, political, entrepreneurial, cultural and social components that contribute to the development of the Italian nation [and contribute to the achievement of Italian national interest abroad]" (Lonardi, 2008).

as ENI (Ministero Degli Affari Esteri, 2014 p. 15, 2015 p. 10-15, 2016 p. 38-40, 2017 p. 7, 23, 2018 p. 16, 2019 p. 4, 12, 17).

Ministry of Interior (MoI)

"Strengthening the activity of prevention and opposition of illegal immigration" has been a strategic objective of the MoI since 2014. Despite the number of immigrants landed on Italian soil was significantly reduced by 2018, the performance plan of 2019 reiterated the importance of opposing and preventing illegal immigration (Ministero Dell' Interno, 2014 p. 88-93, 2015 p. 168-172, 2016 p. 169-176, 2017 p. 122, 2018 p. 79-83, 2019 p. 32-33).

Ministry of Defense (MoD)

Because of the rising extremism, the phenomenon of mass illegal immigration and Italy's energy dependence, the White Paper⁶ published by the MoD in 2015 identifies the Mediterranean stability as a vital national interest that must be pursued with all the resources available (Ministero Della Difesa, 2015 p. 26-27). Also, the documents published in 2017⁷ and 2019⁸ warn against the instability that affects the Mediterranean area, underlining that the uncontrolled migration flows and the illegal trafficking jeopardize Italian security, the freedom of trade and energy security (Ministero Della Difesa, 2017 p. 5-6).

Overall, there has been a large degree of continuity in the Ministries' strategic objectives, notwithstanding the change of government or political orientation. Likewise, the three Ministries' objectives – MFA, MoD, MoI – seem not to be conflictual but rather aligned and in synergy. To conclude, it can be argued that the objectives of the Italian governments in Libya have remained the same throughout the period (2014-2019). The identification of the three objectives can explain this as the Italian National Interest, which must be pursued "regardless the political colour of the coalition in power" (Chelotti and Johansson, 2019 p. 7).

1.4. Academic and societal relevance

This thesis aims to enrich the academic knowledge of Italian strategic studies, which is currently quite limited; there has been little research on Italian strategy, especially in the last two decades. Moreover, as Baldwin argued, there is a need for rigorous, systematic and policy-relevant evaluations of foreign policy performances (Baldwin, 2000 p. 167). With the analytical

⁶ Long-term strategic document

⁷ Documento Programmatico Pluriennale for the period 2017-2019

⁸ Documento Programmatico Pluriennale for the period 2019-2021

framework adopted in this study, the author wants to show that it is possible to evaluate foreign policy and that this methodology is a valid tool for doing it.

This study also wants to provide meaningful analytic insights on Italian governments' performance in the critical Libyan theatre. Likewise, it seeks to understand what actions had a positive impact and which a negative impact, what were the limitations and what could have been done better. Finally, it gives indications to current and future policy/decision-makers on what actions are more likely to work and which are likely to fail.

1.5. Organization of the study

The first chapter introduces the topic – Italian foreign policy in Libya - and the research question. This thesis aims to identify the factors that contributed to success and failure in pursuing Italian strategic objectives in Libya, which are: stabilizing Libya, controlling immigration, and ensuring energy security and commercial interests. The contextualization was useful to familiarize the reader with the setting of this study, and the identification of the strategic objectives was key to establish solid grounds for the analysis. Finally, this chapter highlighted the study's main contributions, such as a framework to evaluate foreign policy and insights on what actions were most effective in achieving the strategic objectives.

The second chapter tackles the literature review on Italian foreign policy, Italian strategic culture, Italian-Libyan relations and theories on foreign policy evaluations. A general overview of the first two is necessary to understand the basic principles that drive Italian foreign policy and the constraints imposed by the strategic culture. A quick description of Italian foreign policy in Libya is important to understand what kind of relationship the two countries had, how this relationship has evolved across time and its consequences for the Italian strategic objectives. Finally, analyzing past foreign policy evaluation research was the stepping stone to identify a proper analytical framework for this thesis.

The third chapter is dedicated to the outline of the analytical framework. This study embraced the model elaborated by the European Council of Foreign Relations to evaluate European foreign policy, which is based on adopting a scorecard to perform the assessment. This chapter also tackles all the challenges and limitations of this approach, providing explanations on how these challenges are overcome or circumscribed.

The first part of the fourth chapter outlines the case selection and research design. This research is based on a qualitative assessment, but it utilizes a comparative case study to enhance reliability and validity. The second part of this chapter describes the methodology, which is

divided into data collection, operationalization, grading system, and description of the components and measurement. This section is crucial because it is the skeleton of the thesis; it explains how the assessment is performed, on what criteria the evaluation is based and how it is benchmarked. The reader can also consult Appendix 1 to check how exactly points were awarded.

The fifth chapter is key to understanding what is at stake for Italy in Libya, how the Italian governments can support private business in the country and Libya's importance for Italian energy security. The findings revealed that while Italy is not heavily dependent on Libya for its energy security, ENI's commercial interests and other private business represent vital national interests. It also emerged that the best way Rome has to support Italian private business is through the country's stabilization.

Chapters six, seven and eight (Renzi, Gentiloni, Conte 1 respectively) are dedicated to the analysis of the three Italian governments on the pre-identified strategic objectives and constitute the core of this thesis. The analysis revealed that the foreign policy in Libya of the Gentiloni government was overall the better of the three. The Renzi government performed better for the stabilization of Libya but failed on the immigration issue. The Conte government achieved opposite results to Renzi: it performed very well on immigration but poorly on stabilization.

Finally, chapter nine focuses on answering the research question and providing general indications and remarks on Italian foreign policy. This study concludes that the external variables were determinant in hindering the stabilization of Libya. However, the Italian governments' lack of assertiveness, the overreliance on the UN, and the failure in establishing a united front with France and the EU, doomed any hopes in this regard. The best way of ensuring energy security and commercial interests was through the stabilization of Libya, which did not happen. Nevertheless, Italy managed to protect its national interests at sea with Operation Mare Sicuro, and ENI's prominent role for the Libyan society guaranteed its business continuity and large revenues. Contrarily to stabilization, multilateral initiatives (like naval operations) were not effective in reducing the number of immigrants landing in Italy. This was better achieved through unilateral or bilateral actions, such as agreements with the local Libyan authorities, the establishment of the Libyan Coast Guard and the closure of Italian ports to NGO vessels. To conclude, this research argues that Italian decision-makers should be more assertive in foreign policy, but they should also try to obtain the European support. Likewise,

Italian decision-makers should establish more precise strategies, orient their actions towards the goals, and avoid taking ambivalent positions.

2. Theoretical framework – literature review

This literature review is organized in four parts: the first two sections outline a general overview of Italian foreign policy, and summarize the main features of Italian Strategic Culture. These sections are crucial to understand Italian foreign policy in Libya and to properly evaluate the Italian governments' performance by also considering the Country's strategic culture. The third section describes the Italian-Libyan relationship and Italian foreign policy in Libya. This section is useful to understand the past relationship between the two countries, how this evolved and how it influences the present situation. Finally, the last part draws on the existing literature on foreign policy effectiveness/performance. This part aims to assess what theories or frameworks have been used to study foreign policy performance and explain why this study decided to follow the scorecard methodology developed by the European Council of Foreign Relations (ECFR).

2.1. Overview of Italian Foreign Policy

Italy is a middle power with limited financial, military and political resources. Because of these limitations and constraints, Rome has tried to pursue its foreign policy objectives by playing a leadership role in multilateral organizations, particularly within the UN, the EU and NATO (Croci, 2002 p. 91-92, 2003 p. 266-275). Great emphasis has been put on the supremacy of the international law and collective security (Miranda, 2011 p. 5). Three main factors can explain this activism and support for multilateral organizations: 1) the Italian desire to bolster the Country's national prestige and reputation, 2) an instrument "to count" on the international stage, and to find a seat at the negotiating table for the most critical world issues (e.g. Italy inclusion in G7), 3) the integration of those organizations' values in the Italian strategic culture (Ibid. p. 3-9).

One of the very few theatres where Italian foreign policy acted outside multilateral frameworks has been Libya. Exception made for particular occasions where Italy had to align with the EU or NATO (such as the operation against Qaddafi), the Country has always tried to cultivate a special relationship with the former colony; it did so by pursuing its national interests and a quasi-autonomous foreign policy (Ibid. p. 10-11). In particular, the Berlusconi government invested a significant amount of political capital in the strategy of rapprochement with Qaddafi, culminating successfully in the signing of the treaty of friendship (Chelotti and Johansson, 2019 p. 2, 5-6).

In order to secure the national strategic objectives (opposing immigration, energy security and good relationship with the Libyan regime) Italian leaders ignored the criticism of international organizations and NGOs regarding the several issues linked to the protection of human rights and the international law (e.g. the principle of non-refoulement) (Miranda, 2011, p. 13). This behaviour is in sharp contrast with Italy's general posture in foreign policy, which, as mentioned above, has focused on promoting the universal values of the UN to increase the Country's international prestige.

2.2. Overview of Italian Strategic Culture (ISC) after the Cold War

Italy has been reluctant to use the military tool in foreign policy. This reluctance "cannot be attributed entirely to material constraints; rather, it is the result of the country's strategic culture, which is a mixture of realpolitik and pacifist tendencies" (Rosa 2014, p. 89). Rosa defines the Italian strategic culture as an "accommodationist strategic culture".

"[it] considers the state of war to be an exception rather than a normal condition of international relations [and] interstate relations to be primarily cooperative in nature and refuses to regard military force as a legitimate instrument of foreign policy. [...] An accommodationist strategic culture manifests a strong preference for negotiation, compromise and the use of international institutions to resolve conflict (Rosa 2014, p. 93).

The pacifist attitude of the newborn Republic was also incorporated into the Constitution: Article 11 bans war as a foreign policy tool, and approves the use of force only within the framework of international organizations that are responsible for ensuring collective security and world peace (Senato Della Repubblica, 2012 p. 11). However, from the end of the Cold War, Italy has significantly increased its military activism, participating in numerous military operations led by the UN, NATO or the EU. This activism culminated with the White Paper published by the Ministry of Defense (MoD) in 2015. The White Paper foresaw a greater role played by the Italian military both abroad and on the homeland.

The White Paper argues that Italy is responsible for defending its national interests, playing an active role in international and regional security. In particular, it identifies the Euro-Mediterranean region as the most important strategic area for the national interests, and it argues that efforts and resources should be (re-)oriented to this area to pursue the goal of increasing regional security (Ministero Della Difesa, 2015 p. 28, 31-36). However, the document points out that "It is obvious that financial resources are now an unavoidable constraint and that Italy will no longer be able to respond autonomously to all future security and defence needs" (Ibid, 2015, p36). For this reason, it is essential that the Country's security

and strategic objectives are pursued within the established multilateral settings: the EU, NATO, and the UN.

To conclude, while the accommodationist feature described by Rosa is still the predominant characteristic of Italian strategic culture, in recent years there have been some small changes in this respect, with an increasing propensity to use the military force when needed. Simultaneously, the Italian strategic culture justifies military operations only when they receive the endorsement of at least one of the 3 big organizations: the UN, the EU or NATO. This self-limitation is mostly driven by Italians' willingness to adhere to the UN principles of collective security but is also explained by the Italian's lack of resources to carry out missions abroad autonomously.

2.3. Italian – Libyan relationship and Italian foreign policy in Libya

After the end of the Cold War, both Italian centre-left and centre-right coalitions worked towards the Libyan rapprochement with the West, and this resulted in a remarkable continuity of Italian foreign policy towards Libya. It is arguable that "this continuity is due to Italy's relatively clear foreign policy preferences, which have to be pursued regardless the political colour of the coalition in power, in particular on three specific issues" (Chelotti and Johansson, 2019, p.7). The issues to which Chelotti and Johansson refer to, are the same analyzed in this thesis, namely regional security, economic interdependence and immigration.

In August 2008, decades of diplomatic efforts culminated in the outstanding achievement of the "treaty of friendship" signed by Qaddafi and Prime Minister Berlusconi. This treaty consolidated the privileged and special relationship between Italy and Libya and was key to secure the Italian strategic objectives in the region. With this treaty, the Italian government agreed to pay 5 billion dollars to Libya in the next 20 years to compensate Libya for the "deep wounds" of the colonization period (Gazzini, 2009 p. 1). However, the 5 billion dollars to which Italy committed, would have come mostly in the form of infrastructural projects, contracted to Italian firms. Clearly, the latter was granted the opportunity to establish a stable relationship with the Libyans, and be also advantaged for future contracts (ibid. p. 3-5). Besides, this agreement was crucial to fight immigration from Libya; when the treaty entered into force, the number of illegal immigrants declined by 98 %, from 37,000 in 2008 to 405 in 2010 (Lombardi, 2011 p. 39).

Therefore, the revolution of 2011 undermined decades of the Italian governments' efforts to establish a good relationship with the Libyan counterpart. Understandably, the Italians were

reluctant to a western military operation against Qaddafi, which would have jeopardized the Italian commercial interests and the region's whole stability (Ibid. p. 35-36). As a consequence, the Berlusconi government at the beginning of the Libyan war maintained a neutral (and hesitant) position, with the hope that Qaddafi could bring the situation under control, but without aligning with the dictator to preserve the (more important) relationship with the European and Atlantic partners (Miranda, 2011). However, when the military operation was supported by the US and approved by the UN Security Council, the Italian government had no choice but to jump on the bandwagon: Berlusconi administration decided to participate to the military operation to show the Italian commitment to the Atlantic alliance, to ensure a seat at the table for Italy and for starting to establish relationships with the revolutionaries (Ibid. p. 42, Croci and Valigi, 2013 p. 44-49).

2.4. Evaluating governments' foreign policy performance

There is not a standard theory or framework to evaluate foreign policy. Besides, several are the challenges to consider for foreign policy evaluation, from the issue of the time-frame to the difficulty in benchmarking the author's evaluations, to the operationalization of the assessment. To overcome these challenges and outline a suitable framework, this study had to consider the strengths and weaknesses of previous research.

Baldwin (2000) outlined a framework for evaluating success in foreign policy. However, whereas this framework provides good general indications to perform foreign policy evaluations, especially on how to classify success, Baldwin does not develop a methodology that can be used to assess government's performance in foreign policy.

Slater (2017) tried to offer a new framework for foreign policy evaluation. The criteria he identified were the following: 1) degree to which objectives are met, 2) corollary strategic consequences, 3) political (in terms of political capital invested), financial and military costs, 4) availability and consideration of alternatives, 5) context, scope, and stakes. Slater's framework represents a significant step forward in the evaluation of foreign policy, but Slater fails to consider a crucial aspect: appropriateness. The latter should be understood as the bounty of the strategy implemented regardless of the achievement of the objectives. Indeed, it happens quite frequently that optimal foreign policies result in failure. For instance, the outcome can be influenced by several external variables. In this sense, the risk is to say that a government was not effective when there was not much it could have done (also in terms of foreign policy tools available), and to say it was effective when it did not have any merits. In an essay published

on Foreign Affairs, Blackwill (2019) recognized this problem and focused his whole analysis on Trump's foreign policy's appropriateness, ignoring the actual results achieved by the administration. While this might seem a bit controversial (=disregarding results in the evaluation), it is nonetheless useful to understand that effectiveness and appropriateness should be given the same weight in the evaluation of foreign policy. Finally, Slater's framework is difficult to operationalize, especially if there are space constraints like in a master thesis, and it is more suitable to analyze past rather than current foreign policy.

To sum up, whereas the Slater's framework is an inadequate tool for analyzing contemporary Italian foreign policy in Libya, the first three criteria outlined above are worthy of being included in this thesis. For the research purpose, this thesis had to compromise Blackwill's analysis on foreign policy appropriateness and Slater's more grounded foreign policy evaluation framework. This study also had to find a way to better operationalize the analysis: it was essential to find a systematic way to draw distinctions and comparisons among the Italian governments to assess their performance, benchmarking the analysis with a proper methodology. A good solution was represented by the "Scorecard methodology" developed by the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) in 2010.

3. Analytical framework

This chapter illustrates the analytical framework chosen for this thesis, and as such, constitutes the groundwork of this research. The first section explains why the ECFR is the best model for this study, while the second part defines how limitations were overcome or circumscribed. The last section is also critical because it introduces the four components on which the governments' performance is assessed, as well as the conceptualization of these components.

3.1. Choice of the framework

This thesis relies on the framework developed by the ECFR to study European Union Foreign Policy (EUIFP). From 2011 to 2016, the ECFR published annual "scorecards", with the goal to evaluate the performance of European countries in foreign policy. This framework is probably the most appropriate to evaluate a country's performance in foreign policy and so for this thesis: the balance between inputs and outputs is crucial for a fair assessment, and the measurement developed to grade each component of the foreign policy is key for internal reliability. All the evaluations are appropriately benchmarked with the scoring method, and the performance is evaluated according to the Country's objectives. This model's strength lies in its benchmarking method, and nothing is left to personal opinions. All the evaluations are supported by the scorecard, which is also a valuable tool to create a link between numerical scores and qualitative assessments. Thanks to all these features, the assessment is valid, reliable, and as objective as possible.

3.2. Limitations and solutions

One common issue of foreign policy evaluation is the causal link between policies and results: sometimes the objectives are met regardless the policies in place, and other times optimal strategies and extraordinary commitment of resources result in failure (ECFR, 2010 p. 131). To overcome this challenge, the ECFR made two choices for the scorecard. On the one hand, it did not try to sort out the reasons for European "success", nor tried to establish a co-efficient of European agency or credit. The factors that contributed to the positive/negative outcome are described, but the positive/negative score is based on the achievement of the objectives only (Ibid. p. 131-132). "In other words, [the Country is] not penalized for having been helped by others, [nor excused for unfavourable conditions]. This is why we use the word "outcome" rather than "results" or "impact" which imply a direct causality" (Ibid. p131). On the other hand, the ECFR clearly separated policies from results: the assessment of the performance on each objective "reflects an equal balance between inputs [(strategy and resources)] and outputs" (outcome and consequences) (Ibid. p132). In this way, the ECFR finds a way to overcome the

problem "effectiveness or appropriateness?" (I.e. outputs or inputs): both aspects are taken into account so that the final evaluation of the foreign policy is balanced between the actual results (which can be influenced by external variables and luck/bad fortune) and the policy's appropriateness (resources and strategy).

A problem of this method is that the time-frame is too short to see the long-term impact of certain policies.⁹ The ECFR assessed the performance yearly, whereas for this thesis, the time-frame is when the administration was in power. In both cases, it is likely that we cannot witness the effects of low-intensity but long-lasting diplomatic activity in the short-term, which instead could bring its fruits in the long run. This study acknowledges the impossibility to assess the long-term impact, and the effectiveness of the foreign policy is based only on the short/medium-term outcome. This choice will allow for a more systematic measurement of what was achieved by each government during its administration.

Finally, the factors that contributed to success/failure were subjected to systemic constraints and, therefore, no absolute guarantee for the outcome. To put it simply, in a parallel world stabilization of Libya could have been achieved regardless Italian strategy and commitment, or not achieved despite huge resources and efforts of the Italian governments. Nevertheless, the analysis of the performance and the identification of successful/negative factors provide useful insights on the effectiveness of Italian foreign policy and on Italy's ability to achieve its strategic objectives.

3.3. Components

To establish the degree of success in achieving the objectives, the government's actions and results are assessed with pre-identified components. The ECFR framework originally had four components: unity, outcome, strategy and resources. However, because this methodology was developed to study the EU, this study has slightly adapted the framework to fit this case: the criterion "unity" (which is not applicable to a single country) was replaced by the criterion used by Slater, "strategic consequences".

The framework of this research is, therefore based on the assessment of inputs and outputs. Inputs are the components "resources" and "strategy" and are evaluated according to their

⁹ A good example is given by the US support to the mujahidin during the 80ies: the American military support was a great strategy to enable the Afghan resistance against the URSS, which eventually led to the retreat of the URSS with severe implications on the bipolar competition. However, the same mujahidin who defeated the URSS, launched the terrorist attack against the twin towers 20 years later. Clearly, while in the short-term the strategy of supporting the mujahidin was extremely effective, its long-term impact had dramatic consequences for the US.

appropriateness. Outputs are the components "outcome" and "strategic consequences", which are evaluated according to the results achieved/ effects created. The performance of each administration – Renzi, Gentiloni, and Conte – will be evaluated on each of the strategic objectives – country stabilization, energy security and commercial interests, and controlling immigration –. In turn, the strategic objectives will be assessed according to the four components described below. Eventually, there will be an overall assessment for the government foreign policy in Libya, an overall assessment for each of its strategic objectives, and a more specific assessment on each component inside the strategic objective. The methodology section will explain how the assessment is performed and the criteria used for the operationalization.

1) Outcome

Following the footprints of the ECFR, this thesis will evaluate the component "outcome" only accordingly to the results achieved by each government during its ruling time. Likewise, it will not consider the causal link between the government's actions and results, but only if results were accomplished. This will not prevent the author from explaining how a good/bad outcome was achieved, for instance, by demonstrating that a good strategy of the first government led to a positive outcome for the next government.

2) Strategy

In this study, "strategy" is to be understood as the set of policies and actions that the government implement to pursue its strategic objective. By giving the same weight to "outcome" and "strategy", the assessment will be more balanced, as it will consider both what the government achieved and what it did to pursue its objective. In this sense, if the government implemented an excellent strategy but it failed because of stronger/unpredictable external variables, the judgment will not be too harsh, as it will acknowledge that the government did all what it could realistically do to pursue its objective.

3) Resources

The third component is "resources": in order to establish if the government took "all the possible measures" or "did the best it could", it is essential to take as a point of reference the resources at its disposal and their associated costs (financial, political and social).

4) Strategic consequences

The last component is "strategic consequences", which was not considered by the ECFR but was instead part of Slater G, (2017). In this research, strategic consequences are understood as the externalities created by the government's policies, which affect other objectives than the one the policy is directed. More generally speaking, it can be the case that while a particular strategy can be effective or appropriate to pursue a specific strategic objective, it could also create consequences (positive or negative) on another front, or for another strategic objective. Sometimes, the benefits outweigh the disadvantages, other times they do not. It is arguable that when evaluating a country's foreign policy, this is a criterion worth to take into consideration. As for the component "outcome", there is the limitation represented by time-frame to consider; this thesis applies to both the same criteria.

4. Research design and methodology

The first part of this chapter explains that a comparative case study is the best design for this thesis, because it allows to circumscribe limitations and enhance internal reliability and validity. The second part of this chapter describes the methodology. This is divided into data collection, operationalization, grading system, description of the components and measurement. This section is critical for understanding the thesis; the description of the components defines the criteria with which the assessment is benchmarked, while the grading system outlines how grades were assigned. The reader can also consult Appendix 1 to check how exactly points were awarded.

4.1. Case selection and research design

With this thesis, the author focuses on Libya from an Italian perspective. The choice for Libya is because the Maghreb country represents the most concerning area for Italian strategic objectives: on the outcome of the situation in the Libyan territories depend primary national interests like energy security and borders' control. Whereas the object of the analysis is Italy only, this study makes diachronic comparisons among the last three Italian governments. Thanks to this comparative case-study design, it will be possible to see how different governments performed on the same objectives, what results they achieved and how they tried to pursue the objectives. Considering that the governments' performance is assessed using qualitative data, the comparative nature of the study is also key to increase the internal reliability and validity of the study, which otherwise would be difficult to defend.

This design (case-study and qualitative data) has, of course, its limitations in terms of capability to draw generalizations; meaningful generalizations on Italian foreign policy could be created analyzing several different case studies (for this see: Cotichia and Davidson, 2019), but, due to time constraints, this would not be feasible for this master thesis. On the opposite, the limited comparative but in-depth case-study will enhance the validity of the research and its reliability. Because of the intrinsic subjective element of this study, several measures were taken to ensure reliability. First, the author made sure that the criteria used for the object of the analysis (the strategic objectives) are well-defined. Second, the measurement used for the operationalization is not only benchmarked with previous studies (ECFR scorecards), but supported with relevant and additional information where necessary (see operationalization paragraph). Third, selecting three cases (rather than one only) is critical for internal reliability. Fourth, concise but detailed explanations will support the evaluation of each element analyzed.

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Data collection

Data collection was based both on primary and on secondary sources. The former are 1) newspaper articles (mainly national but also international) of both centre-left and centre-right political orientation reporting Italian actions in Libya, 2) official documents published by the Italian Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior, the national intelligence services (AISE), and the "portal for the government performance". The latter are: 1) think-tank (Limes, IAI and ISPI) studies and reports, and 2) previous studies on Libya, on Italian foreign policy, and on Italian strategic culture.

4.2.2. Operationalization

Following the methodology developed by the ECFR, the performance evaluation will come in the form of a "scorecard". "A scorecard is transparent about the subjective nature of judgment and the heterogeneity of the material it grades and is, therefore, a good tool for appraising foreign-policy performance" (ECFR, 2010, p135). As mentioned above, the clear definition of the evaluation criteria, appropriately benchmarked with official government data, will limit the subjective element as much as possible or circumscribe it.

As explained above, the three governments' foreign policies are evaluated according to their performance in pursuing and achieving the pre-identified strategic objectives – Country's stabilization, energy security and commercial interests and opposing/controlling immigration. In turn, each objective is divided into four components – resources, strategy, outcome, consequences – and a specific grade is given to each of these components. Because Italian governments supported national companies mostly indirectly, working for the stabilization of Libya,¹⁰ if the objectives were graded individually, very similar (if not the same) scores would be assigned for "stabilization" and "energy and commercial interests". Therefore, it was more appropriate to re-group these two objectives in the analysis to have one grade instead of two.

The following section briefly explains how the scoring system works. The detailed grading description is available in appendix 1.

4.2.2.1. The grading system

The grading is the same of the one adopted by the ECFR, and it is structured as follows:

¹⁰ This point is better elaborated in the below chapter dedicated to energy and commercial interests

- ✓ Each component is given a score from 0 to 5. Two of the components – resources and strategy - measure the inputs, while the other two – outcome and strategic consequences – measure the results. Ten points are awarded for the inputs, and ten for the outputs, so that at the end, the final score is balanced between appropriateness and effectiveness of the government's actions.

- ✓ Since the components are four, the final grade for each objective will have an overall score between 0 and 20. This numerical score is then translated into an alphabetical corresponding evaluation:
 - 20/20 = A+ = Outstanding
 - 19/20 = A+
 - 18/20 = A = Excellent
 - 17/20 = A-
 - 16/20 = A- = Very good
 - 15/20 = B+
 - 14/20 = B+ = Good
 - 13/20 = B
 - 12/20 = B- = Satisfactory
 - 11/20 = B-
 - 10/20 = C+ Sufficient
 - 9/20 = C+
 - 8/20 = C = Insufficient
 - 7/20 = C-
 - 6/20 = C- = strongly insufficient
 - 5/20 = D+
 - 4/20 = D+ = Poor
 - 3/20 = D
 - 2/20 = D- = Very poor
 - 1/20 = D-
 - 0/20 = F = Failure

- ✓ The overall score of each administration is the result of the average given by its performance on the strategic objectives (e.g. 15/20 first objective, 5/20 second objective

= 20/40 total score, (20: 40 = x: 20), (x = 10. 10/20) = C+ = overall foreign policy grade is sufficient.

4.2.2.2. Description of the components and measurement

1) Resources

"The "resources" criterion measures how substantial and ambitious [the Government's actions] are" (ECFR, 2010, p139) – in other words, how strong the Government committed to this objective in terms of political, social and financial capital invested. "The score for this component is assessed not in absolute terms, but as a function of objectives and possibilities. It measures the gap between ends and means at a specific moment in time when material resources are not in infinite supply and when decision-makers have to make trade-offs between competing priorities" (Ibid).

The key question on "resources" is: Did the government devote adequate resources (in terms of political capital and tangible resources such as money, loans, troops) to back up its objective? In other words, was its policy substantial?¹¹

2) Strategy

This component measures the appropriateness of the government's policies related to the objective it is trying to pursue. As briefly described above, the influence of external variables is so that sometimes optimal policies fail, while other times (more rarely) success is achieved despite poor strategy. Also, the administration's governing period is sometimes too short to see the fruits of its policies, and it is the next administration to enjoy the results (or the failure) of the previous government's actions. For these reasons, it is worth examining also the appropriateness of the government's strategy, not considering its results.

The key question is: To what extent was the Italian government's strategy appropriate to pursue the strategic objective regardless of the results achieved?¹²

3) Outcome

¹¹ See how scores were awarded based on this question in the appendix 1

¹² Ibid.

"While "outcome" assesses results, it does not attempt to measure success per se but rather success as a function of difficulty and possibilities, or performance given the underlying difficulty of the issues, or progress in meeting the objectives in the year considered" (ECFR, 2010, p141). For example, it would be unfair and unrealistic to expect an Italian government to solve the Libyan conflict single-handedly. However, during its administration, the government could meet other partial objectives or make progress towards reaching them. At the same time, the reader must bear in mind that "this criterion does not measure the [Italian] impact or [Italy's] results, but the general outcome of the issue under consideration in the light of the initial [Italian] objectives" (Ibid). While the scorecard always tries to indicate which other factors have played a role in a positive or negative outcome, it does not assess the outcome differently based on the perceived degree of Italian agency.

The key question is: To what extent Italian objectives have been met during the administration time-period, regardless of whether the Italian Government and its ministries were responsible for that outcome?¹³

4) Strategic consequences

This component's measurement is useful to analyze the government performance more holistically, considering the externalities generated by its policies and the consequences for the other objectives. At the roots of the decision to include this in the assessment is the awareness that (foreign) policies do not happen in a vacuum; on the contrary, it is often the case that the strategic objectives are interrelated. Because it is not possible to clearly assess a specific policy's impact on a different front, the externality will be considered only when a causal relationship can be reasonably supported.

The key question is: How did the policies adopted to pursue this objective influenced 1) the overall strategic position for Italy or 2) another strategic objective?¹⁴

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

5. Findings – energy security and commercial interests

This chapter is critical to familiarize the reader with the Italian energy and commercial interests in Libya and the main actors involved. This chapter will also help answer the research question regarding what factors helped achieve energy security and commercial interests. The first part defines the Italian government's posture in relation to national private companies operating in Libya, and the relevance that Libya has for Italian energy security and commercial interests. The second part provides data to underpin the above. It is good to mention that the government contribution to Italian companies on Libyan soil was always indirect or discrete, for example through the support given by the secret services (Aliboni, 2016 p. 4 and Pelosi, 2016). Because of the difficulty accessing internal sources and substantiating these claims, this study excludes the (possible) secretive support from the governments' performance.

5.1. Key findings

The findings revealed three important facts about Italian governments' support to energy and commercial interests:

- 1) As asserted by former PM Gentiloni in 2017, ENI is a major geopolitical actor, one of the principal architects of Italian strategic interests in the world (Negri, 2017 p. 1). This geopolitical role is especially relevant in Libya, where ENI is perhaps more influential than the Italian government.¹⁵ Regardless the people who sit in Rome, the Italian Oil Company carries out its business independently; there is a tacit consent for which Italian governments do not interfere with the Company activities and "foreign policy", supporting only if strictly necessary (Liga, 2018 p. 32-33).
- 2) The Italian government did not intervene directly to protect ENI's assets and infrastructures on the mainland,¹⁶ leaving it to the Company to make security arrangements with local security providers. However, while ENI has no difficulties in protecting its facilities in Libya (relying on its social networks and hiring local militia for protection (ibid. p. 33)), it has no power to stop the civil war. Violent and prolonged conflicts are the greatest threat to the Company's interests. Therefore, the best support that the Government can give (both to ENI and smaller companies) is by diplomatic support, stabilizing the Country. For this reason, the stabilization of Libya has been the

¹⁵ The company is present in the Country since 1959 and supplies energy to the whole country, even during the Civil War (Liga, 2018 p. 32-33).

¹⁶ With the exception of the naval operation "Mare Sicuro", which protects ENI's infrastructures in the offshore of Libya and Italian fish and commercial vessels that operate in the area.

top priority of Renzi and Gentiloni foreign policy. If this was achieved, it would be possible for Italian firms of all sizes and of all sectors (energy, construction, food, clothing, etc.) to re-launch their business in Libya.

- 3) Regarding Italian energy security, it is noteworthy that while Italy is a net importer on fossil fuels, it has tried to diversify the supplies. The Libyan energy plays an important role, but while the production drop of 2011 caused damage to Italian energy security, the problems that affected Libyan production after 2012 did not have significant consequences on Italian energy security.

Nevertheless, Rome has at least two strong reasons to keep Libya close;

- 1) Libya has vast oil and gas reserves: it is the first country in Africa and 9th globally for oil reserves and the 4th African Country for gas reserves (Maronta, 2019 p. 5). Also, even though supplies from Libya have decreased, Italy is still importing about 7% of its oil and gas from Libya.
- 2) The para-governmental company¹⁷ ENI has a wide-spread presence in Libya, and the Company is also the first foreign operator in the Country (Tanchum, 2020 p. 5-6). Moreover, despite the ongoing civil conflict and its effects on the energy production and infrastructures, Libya is still the second-largest producer in ENI's portfolio (16% of ENI's total revenues) (Pistelli, 2019 p. 4-6). ENI is one of the top "firm national champions", and thus it must be protected for its economic, social and political importance. Besides ENI, several other Italian companies are operating in Libya, such as Saipem, Italgas, Snam, Salini Impregilo. All these firms are part of the so-called Country-System,¹⁸ and therefore its protection is part of Italian national interest. Finally, numerous Italian middle-small enterprises were forced to leave Libya after the civil war in 2014 started. Stabilizing the Country is vital to re-launch Italian private business on the other side of the Mediterranean (Fattorini, 2015 p. 1-3).

¹⁷ The Italian government owns 30 % shares

¹⁸ See footnote 2

5.2. Italian energy security and Italian commercial exchange with Libya

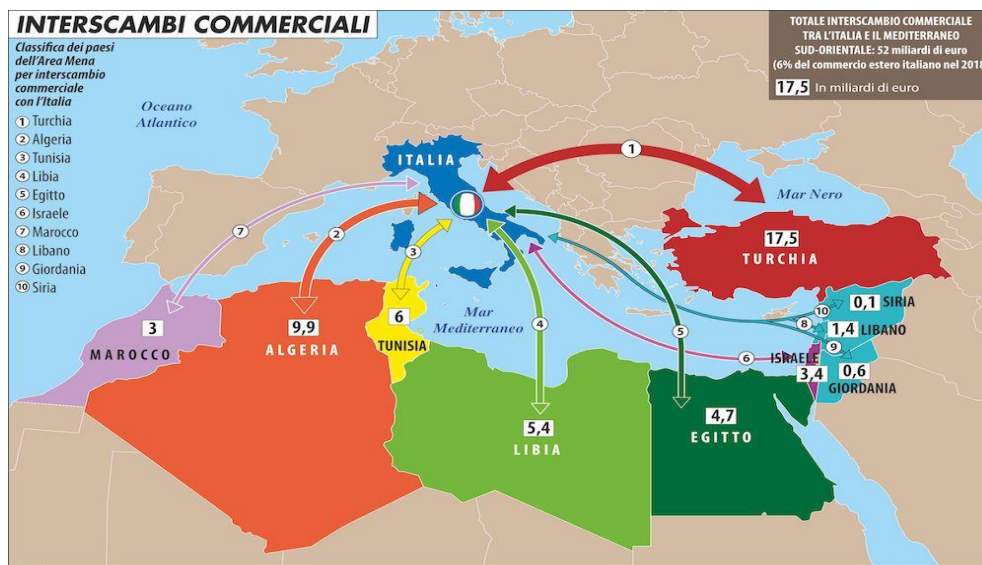


Figure 3: (Canali, 2019). This picture represents the overall commercial exchange between Italy and the MENA countries in 2018. With euros 5.4 billion, Libya ranks 4th among the Italian partners in this region

In 2011, before Qaddafi's fall, 23% of Italy's oil imports and 12% of its natural gas supplies came from Libya, which was Italy's third-largest supplier (Lombardi, 2011 p. 38). However, Italy and Libya's commercial relationship went beyond energy, as Italy was Libya's largest trading partner, being the destination of 20% of Libyan exports and the origin of 40% of Libyan imports (Ibid. p. 38). Italy had investments equal to \$ 11 billion in Libya, but the Qaddafi regime had also invested in Italy, purchasing significant shares of Unicredit, Finmeccanica, Fiat, ENI etc. To sum up, there was a stable commercial relationship between the two countries, especially (but not limited to) in the energy sector.

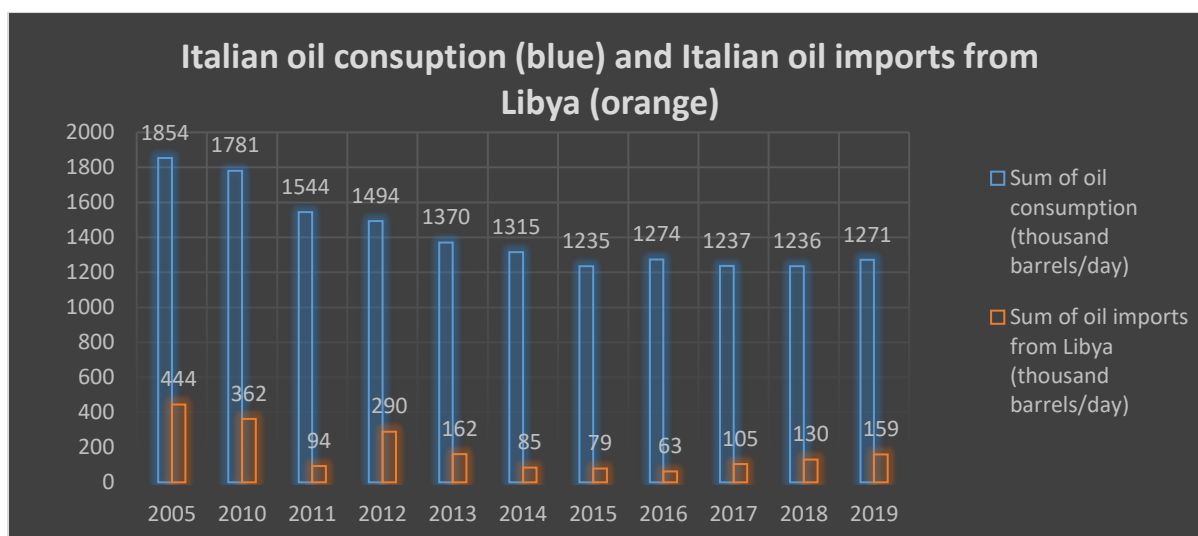


Figure 4; data source: Italian Government, Ministry of Economic Development - chart created by Thesis' author

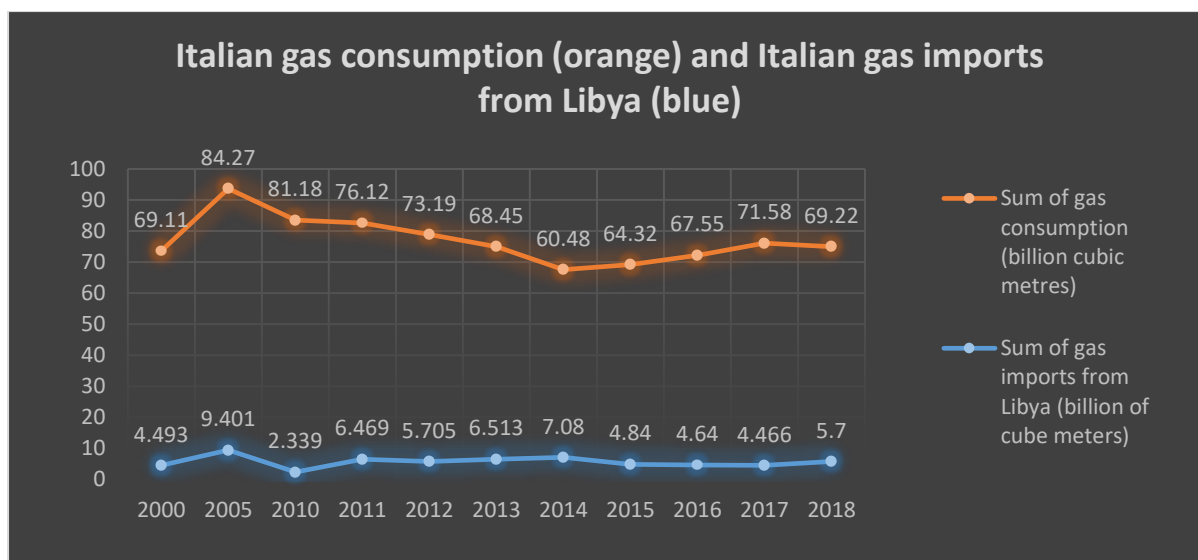


Figure 5; data source: Italian Government, Ministry of Economic Development - chart created by Thesis' author

When the revolution erupted and the war started, Italy suffered severe economic consequences; the unexpected production fall and the closure of the major gas pipeline "GreenStream"¹⁹ affected Italian energy security, while the ongoing war forced all the Italian businesses in the Country to stop their activities and leave. On the one hand, Rome immediately started to dialogue with the revolutionary forces to re-establish the commercial bonds. On the other hand, it started to diversify its energy suppliers, to be less reliant on Libya. By 2017, Italy's dependence on Libya for oil and gas (respectively 6,6% and 7,7% of the imports) had significantly decreased (Greco, 2018 p. 97).

¹⁹ GreenStream, 520km long, is the gas pipeline that connects Mellita (Li) to Gela (It). The pipeline was built in 2004 and it is owned for the 50% by ENI and for the 50% by the Libyan NOC (Pistelli, 2019). In 2018, 6% of the total Italian energy demand was satisfied through GreenStream (Ibid.).

Facts and Analysis

Chapters six, seven and eight (one for each government) analyze the Italian governments' performance in Libya. They represent the core of this thesis and are critical to answer the research question: thanks to the performance assessment, it was possible to identify the factors that contributed to success and failure in the achievement of the strategic objectives. The assessment has also allowed to understand how well each government performed (in terms of resources, strategy, outcome and consequences) on the three issues: stabilization, energy security and commercial interests and immigration. Each chapter is split into two parts, a concise first part for the facts and a more elaborated second part for the analysis. Each chapter is concluded with the government evaluation, which is expressed in numerical grades. Due to word count constraints, non-crucial events and detailed descriptions of the governments' actions had to be excluded. For the same reason, this study cannot address some external variables with adequate attention, such as the interests behind the meddling of foreign powers, or developments on the ground.

The analytical framework was key to anatomize the governments' actions and strictly analyze them according to each of the criteria (components). First and foremost, this has allowed the researcher to identify the factors that led to success and failure and, therefore, to answer the research question. To give an example, it was possible to see if a certain policy/action was not successful because of inadequate resources, poor strategy, or just because of stronger external variables. Besides, this evaluation based on components and on equal points for inputs and outputs has allowed to assess the governments' performance fairly and as objectively as possible. Finally, the scorecard methodology was critical: this has allowed to express evaluations on a numerical scale rather than in "black or white" or than in approximate qualitative evaluations that are difficult to compare.

6. Renzi government (February 2014 – December 2016)

6.1. Facts

6.1.1. Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests

Matteo Renzi, leader of the Democratic Party,²⁰ was nominated Prime Minister in February 2014. Since the beginning of the NATO intervention against Qaddafi in 2011, the Italian foreign and security establishment have been working on setting the foundations for a peaceful transition to a new regime. All the efforts made by Monti²¹ and Letta's governments²² on the Libyan front went in this direction, and Renzi too, started by giving continuity to this policies. However, with the start of the civil war in mid-2014, many of the long-term Italian efforts were thwarted. In this new scenario, the Renzi administration opted to support an international mediation process, led by the UN, and by participating in most diplomatic regional and international initiatives (Greco and Ronzitti, 2016 p. 87-91). Because of the difficulties to cooperate with Libya, the Italian government also tightened its relationships with Tunisia and Egypt to enhance collaborations to fight illegal immigration, terrorism and human trafficking (Ibid. p. 43 and 91).

6.1.2. Immigration

When Renzi became Prime Minister in 2014, the immigration issue was already a hot and debated topic among the Italian public and the Operation Mare Nostrum (launched by Letta) was criticized of being a pull-factor at the EU level (Maronta, 2017 p. 3). Meanwhile, the Dublin Regulation (2013) prevented an equal redistribution of migrants among EU member states, leaving the massive immigration burden to Italy alone (Greco and Ronzitti, 2016 p. 18, 58-59). The Italian government put a lot of pressure on the EU and its members to change this regulation, but the opposition of some states was adamant (ibid. p. 58-59).

Initially, the Renzi government tried to tackle illegal immigration relying mostly on naval operations. While these naval operations had some commonalities (rescuing migrants and thwarting the smugglers' networks), they also had significant differences, especially in terms of resources and primary goals. The first of these missions, Mare Nostrum, was a colossal²³ naval operation started by the Letta Government in 2013 to prevent the loss of lives at sea. However, numerous critiques were made against the operation, which was accused of being a

²⁰ Center-left political orientation

²¹ (November 2011 – April 2013)

²² (April 2013 – February 2014)

²³ The mission was operating on a huge area, and disposed of incredible resources (euros 9 million per month) (Marrone, Nones et al, 2015 p. 122).

"pull-factor"²⁴ in the fight against illegal immigration (Pastore, 2017 p. 6). For this reason and its unbearable costs, by the end of 2014, the Renzi Government terminated Mare Nostrum, which was replaced by the more modest European mission Triton (Ibid. p. 6).²⁵

In June 2015, the EU launched the naval military operation EunavforMed. The mission was deployed in the central-Mediterranean area, and its main objectives were: countering illegal immigration, dismantling the human traffickers' networks, preventing the further loss of lives at sea and training the Libyan Coast Guard (Ceccorulli and Coticchia, 2020 p. 178-179). Throughout its mandate, the mission was authorized to search and seize the smugglers' vessels in the high seas, but did not receive the Libyan authorities' permission to counter illegal trafficking in Libyan national waters (Petrangeli, 2019 p. 1-5).²⁶ Finally, as part of the mission, the European forces held trainings for the Libyan Coast Guard and the Libyan Navy.



Figure 6: (European Union External Action, 2016), resources and assets of EUNAVFOR MED at its deployment

²⁴ It was accused to be a pull-factor because it was believed that the operation area (very near to the Libyan coasts) and the mandate (rescuing lives at sea) could spur migrants to leave and smugglers to profit with this business.

²⁵ The operation's objective was to control migratory flows in the central Mediterranean area and to fight cross-border crime. It was launched on the 1st November 2014 and it was strengthened in 2015 and then again in 2016 (Ministero dell' Interno, 2015b p. 19-20). Mare Nostrum budget was euros 9 million per month, while Triton's was only 3 million per month (Pastore, 2017 p. 6)

²⁶ Between 1/1/2016 and 27/6/2018 Sophia saved 44,810 lives, arrested 143 smugglers and destroyed 545 boats (Cicchetti and Gambardella, 2018 p. 1).

Frustrated by the vain efforts to enforce a migrants re-distribution in the EU and the high number of arrivals despite the naval operations, in 2016 the Renzi Government ideated the "Migration Compact".²⁷ A detailed description of the plan is available at the link in the footnote, but its main features are captured in the analysis.

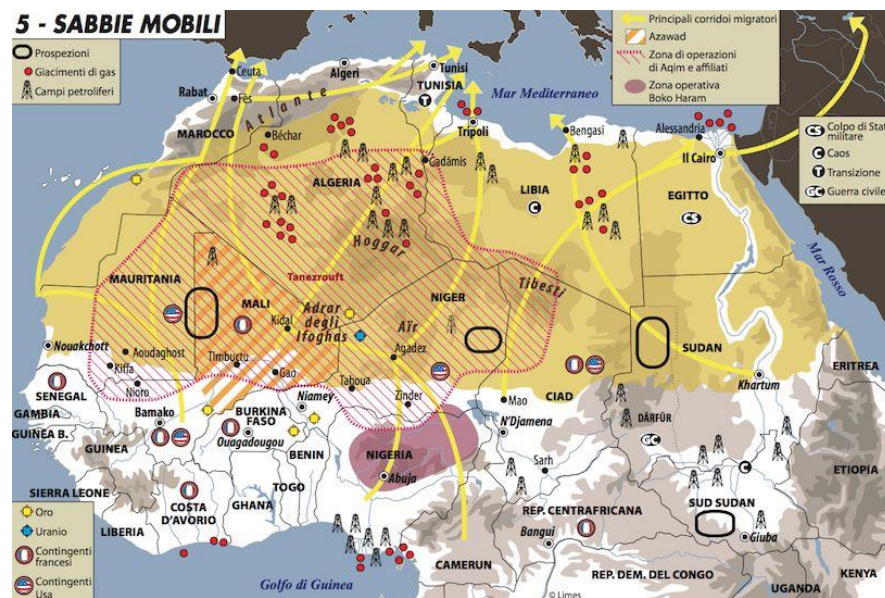


Figure 7: (Canali, 2015). The yellow arrows represent the migratory flows, the red dots the gas fields, the black towers the oil fields

6.2. Analysis

6.2.1. Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests

Since becoming PM, Matteo Renzi emphasized the importance of the Mediterranean basin, also arguing that Italy should take on the role of regional power. This foreign policy choice of re-orientation and assertiveness was also expressed in the White Book published by the MoD in 2015 (Ministero Della Difesa, 2015 p. 24-28).

The PM soon understood that stabilization of Libya was paramount for Italian's interests, as stabilizing the Country would have allowed to:

1. Avoid violent conflicts in the immediate neighbourhood and reduce the number of refugees fleeing to Italy from war-affected areas

²⁷ The whole document is available at this link: <https://fulvioattina.net/2016/12/09/the-partnership-framework-and-migration-compacts-the-state-of-the-art/>, the "migration compact" was later re-nominated "partnership framework".

2. Have a legitimate counterpart in Libya to deal with, who could have control over the Libyan territory and with whom Rome could make agreements on migrants, energy and other issues
3. Ensure Italian energy security was not affected
4. Ensure Italian companies of all sizes and sectors could operate in the Country

For the Renzi government, the stepping stone for stabilization consisted of establishing a recognized counterpart in Tripoli: this was key to ending the local conflicts and starting the reunification and stabilization process. A legitimate authority was also a sine-qua-non condition for external support and intervention (e.g. UN or foreign states). Moreover, a recognized and legitimate counterpart was needed to re-establish the commercial agreements between the two states and between Libya and Italian companies like ENI. Finally, because ENI's holdings are mostly located in Tripolitania, it was crucial for Italy to build a privileged relationship with the authority which controlled those territories.

Resources

The Government invested a massive amount of resources and political capital in establishing a stable and recognized government in Tripoli and paving the road for stabilising the country. The Italian government played a primary role in the stabilization process, and it successfully put pressure on the UN Security Council to pass a resolution against escalating violence in Libya. It also led the negotiations with the UN, organizing multiple diplomatic events. Despite recurrent rumours, Renzi did not send military troops to support Al-Serraj or to lead a peace-keeping mission: his preference was for a political solution, and he would have sent troops on the ground only after an international agreement was found (Greco and Ronzitti, 2016 p. 90-91). However, this posture was in line with Italian strategic culture and foreign policy, and as such, should not be surprising. Nevertheless, Rome launched "Operation Ippocrate": with this mission, Rome sanctioned the deployment of a field hospital and about 300 soldiers and medical operatives in Misurata for supporting the Libyan fighters against ISIS (Dessi' and Olmastroni, 2017 p. 208). The mission increased Italian visibility and testified the government's willingness to put "boots on the ground".

Because 75 % of the total commercial exchange between Italy and the Med Countries takes place by sea (Marrone and Nones, 2015 p. 34), the Italian government needed to secure its economic interests and relationships: it is with this goal that the Operation Mare Sicuro was launched in 2015. Mare Sicuro is (still active) an Italian mission designed to protect Italian

national interests, and it performs maritime surveillance tasks in the Central Mediterranean and the Strait of Sicily.²⁸ The launch of Mare Sicuro represented Italy's strong willingness to protect with all means its energy security and commercial interests in the Mediterranean Sea, including ENI's offshore installations.

Overall, it can be argued that Renzi administration devoted the most extensive possible resources imaginable in the real world, undertaking bold initiatives, with the adequate expenditure of political, economic and military capital.²⁹

Strategy

Renzi's administration pursued a well-reasoned strategy to stabilize Libya. It was a wise move to act within the international framework, under the UN's flag and with the support of the US, as this gave more credibility and negotiation power to Italy while also spending less resources than acting alone. The intense diplomatic activity was instrumental in giving Italy a leading role in the negotiation talks. Likewise, tightening the relationships with Libya's neighbours (particularly with Tunisia and Egypt) contributed to strengthening the Italian role as a regional power. Also, the plan to install a recognized counterpart in Tripoli was the right move for initiating the stabilization process and re-establishing political and commercial relationships between the two countries. Finally, while Operation Ippocrate was a strong symbol for visibility and commitment, the launching of Mare Sicuro was a bold and vigorous move to secure Italian energy and commercial interests.

On the flip-side, Italy was too reliant on the UN and its capability to stabilize Libya, which proved to be wrong. Likewise, when supporting the election of Al-Serraj, Rome failed to consider that he was probably not the best character to lead Libya's reunification: the internationally-recognized parliament in Tobruk did not legitimize the leader, but, even within Tripoli, Al-Serraj struggled to gain popular consensus. However, considering Libya's profound social and religious divisions, finding the "right candidate" for Tripoli was a tough mission. Also, because most Italian energy and commercial interests are located in the West, it was reasonable to stand for the leader of Tripolitania. Finally, while Renzi's pompous statements

²⁸ Specifically, the operation's tasks are 1) the surveillance and military protection of the national offshore platforms and infrastructures that are located in the international waters in front of the Libyan coasts, 2) the protection of the national commercial trade in the area, 3) the protection of Italian Coast-guard and SAR vessels, and 4) the opposition to illegal trafficking and terrorism (Ministero della Difesa, 2019 p. 8, 17). From 1st January 2018, the operation's tasks have been extended to include activities of support for the Libyan Coast Guard and the Libyan Navy aimed at opposing illegal immigration and human trafficking (Ibid.)

²⁹ As per the operationalization of this methodology, which can be found in the appendix.

to lead an international peace-keeping mission highlighted Italian assertiveness and commitment, the quick reverse on these allegations reduced Italian credibility.

Overall, it can be argued that the strategy adopted by the Government was appropriate to pursue the strategic objectives at stake. The government made a fair use of the resources at its disposal. Most of the policies adopted were coherent and part of a clear objective-oriented strategy. Only with the benefits of the hindsight, something could have been done differently.

Outcome

Despite the good strategy and the extraordinary amount of resources invested by Italy for the stabilization of Libya, the results were quite disappointing; few months after Renzi took office in 2014, Haftar launched Operation Dignity, de-facto starting the Libyan civil war. In 2015, the violent escalation of the conflict and the establishment of ISIS in Sirte forced Rome to close its embassy in Tripoli. However, the UN and Italy's diplomatic efforts eventually led to the peace deal signed in Skhirat and to the proclamation of Al-Serraj government in Rome. Al-Serraj's GNA settled in Tripoli in April 2016 but strived to gain consensus and support, and in August, the House of Representatives of Tobruk rejected the GNA government. In September, Gen Haftar conquered and brought under his control the oilfields in the Gulf of Sirte, re-launching Libya's oil production and increasing his power and visibility. When Renzi stepped down in December 2016, the situation in Libya had hardly improved: numerous truces and peace deals were constantly broken during the 3-years, and the division between Tripolitania and Cyrenaica was exacerbated rather than softened.

The ongoing conflicts affected ENI's oil production, whereas ENI's gas production and infrastructure did not witness remarkable incidents (Aliboni, 2016 p. 8).

Clearly, a middle power with limited resources like Italy could not tip the balance in favour of stabilization. Due to the high volatility of the Libyan situation and the multiple external variables, the Italian diplomatic efforts did not produce meaningful and long-lasting results. During the 3 years in charge, the Renzi Government did not achieve the objective, but only marginal and temporary successes, resulting in a final disappointing outcome for Italy.

Strategic consequences

The actions taken by the Renzi government to pursue the stabilization of Libya and to secure Italian energy and commercial interests did not significantly affect other Italian strategic objectives or the Italian posture in the International arena. The intense diplomatic activity

reinforced Italy's status as a regional power in the Mediterranean, but this did not translate in remarkable successes for Italy on other fronts.

Overall, the policies adopted for stabilization had no evident influence on other strategic objectives and externalities were neutral.

6.2.2. Immigration

Resources

As for the stabilization objective, the Renzi administration committed a large amount of political capital and incredible economic, diplomatic, and human resources to solve the immigration issue.

- 1) Mare Nostrum was a colossal operation for a country like Italy, and obviously, it had to be replaced by an EU mission. However, Rome decided to maintain its leading role by immediately taking the lead of the mission EUNAVFOR MED: the operational command was based in Rome, and the mission commander was the Italian admiral Enrico Credendino. The operation's flagship was the Italian aircraft-carrier Cavour, and the Italian Navy also contributed with several helicopters, submarines, frigates and drones.³⁰
- 2) The Renzi administration continuously raised its voice in the EU settings to put immigration as a top priority in the EU agenda and implement an equal migrants' re-distribution system among EU members.
- 3) With the Migration Compact, the Renzi Government undertook intense diplomatic activities with African countries to foster collaborations on the immigration issue. The plan consisted of promoting investments and collaborations with Sub-Saharan Africa countries: not only development aids, but also police training and equipment for improving borders' control (Maronta, 2017 p. 2). Clearly, these partnerships envisaged substantial economic and technical aids from Italy and the EU to the African counterparts.

Overall, it is arguable that the Italian Government devoted tremendous resources to cope with the immigration issue, with expenditure of political capital, economic, diplomatic and human

³⁰ Eventually, by 31st December 2018, Italy committed about euros 215 million to the mission (Petrangeli, 2019 p. 5).

resources. However, in certain situations, they were not quite as bold as they could have been: Renzi always acted within the multilateral framework, avoiding to take unilateral actions.

Strategy

Renzi tried to tackle the immigration issue on multiple fronts:

5. At the EU level, his administration made remarkable efforts to set the issue on the top of the EU agenda and foster a re-distribution system to overcome the Dublin regulation.
6. In the Mediterranean, he led naval operations to dismantle the smugglers' networks and to rescue migrants
7. With the "Migration Compact", Italy and the EU undertook the ambitious project to externalize borders' controls to the countries of origin and transit in exchange of development aids (Maronta, 2017 p. 2). The goal of the plan was to find short-term and long-term solutions to reduce the migratory flows to Europe (Toaldo, 2017b p. 12).

Whereas this strategy sounds holistic and well-reasoned, the persistent lack of results in reducing the number of arrivals should have rang a bell. As many critics pointed out since 2014, the naval operations at best did not help to decrease the number of arrivals, at worst exercised a pull factor in the fight against illegal immigration. Likewise, the numerous attempts to enforce a redistribution system remained unheard. Finally, while the migration compact was unlikely to bring early results, it sounded like a good plan for the long-term, undertaking the immigration issue at the roots and in a sustainable way.

Overall, the Government strategy was satisfactory at best: while Renzi's strategy was good on paper, it lacked of pragmatism and to take into account warnings and short-term results. Considering the relatively long 3-year term, Renzi could have adopted a different strategy to cope with this problem. Even when not using the benefits of the hindsight, it can be argued that the government could have made a better use of the resources available, acting differently in certain situations.

Outcome

Throughout Renzi's administration, Italy was left alone in dealing with the huge number of migrants' arrivals; Rome's persistence to set immigration as a top priority in the EU agenda, translated into naval operations to fight illegal immigration. However, despite the great efforts, Renzi did not succeed in enforcing a migrant-redistribution agreement among EU member states.

By taking the lead and committing enormous resources into numerous naval operations (first the Italian Mare Nostrum, then the European EUNAVFORMED and Triton) Italy showed its willingness to be a regional power in the Mediterranean basin and a decisive actor in tackling the immigration issue. With these naval operations, the Renzi government succeeded in arresting hundreds of smugglers, dismantling criminal networks, seizing and destroying hundreds of vessels and rescuing thousands of lives at sea. Nonetheless, these operations did not meet the objective to reduce the number of departures; the number of arrivals in Italy peaked in 2016, 1 year after Sophia was launched. To sum up, whereas naval operations were very effective in arresting the smugglers' and seizing their vessels, they did not represent a solution to reduce immigrants' arrivals in Italy. On the contrary, it was widely argued across the EU that the presence of European navy off Libya's coast was a pull-factor for both migrants and smugglers (Maronta, 2017 p. 3).

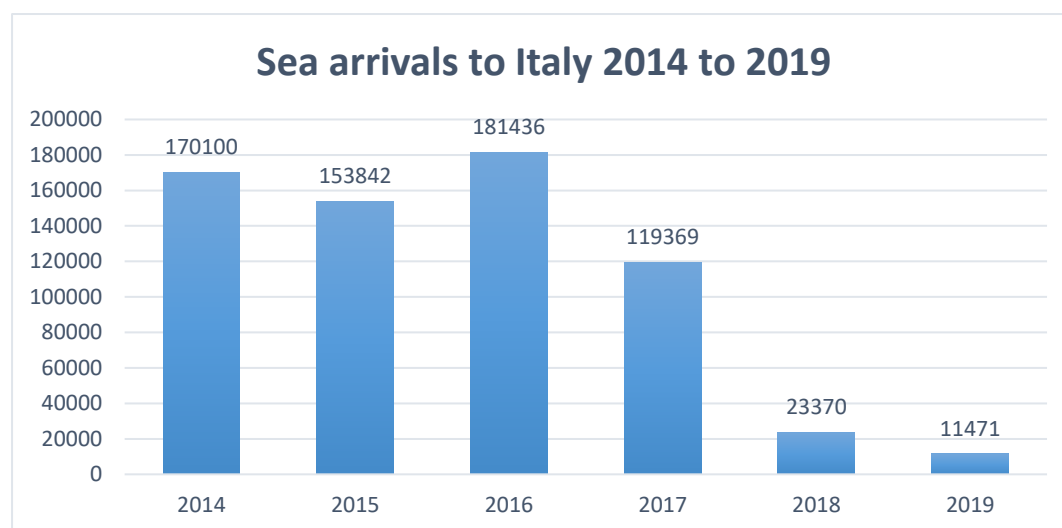


Figure 8; Data Source: Ministero Dell 'Interno, 2014 - 2019, chart created by Thesis' Author. The chart represents the number of migrants arrived to Italy between 2014 and 2019. Renzi was in charge from 2014 and stepped down in December 2016.

Finally, while the “Migration Compact” enjoyed consent and support both at the national and communitarian levels, it did not lead to quick results. The plan was a holistic approach to tackle the immigration issue both in the present and in the future, but at the same time it was very ambitious and challenging to implement: first of all, it required enormous resources from the EU member states. Secondly, the control of Libyan (and other African) borders was thwarted by the territorial fragmentation of the Country and by the connivance-nexus between authorities and the smugglers' networks (Toaldo, 2017b p. 9).

Overall, aside from marginal successes in fighting illegal immigration, the Renzi government failed to control the migratory flows and reduce the number of arrivals to Italy. The number of migrants landing on Italian shores continued to rise until half 2017, when the new Italian government implemented a different approach. Because the situation at the end of 2016 was worse than in 2014, it can be argued that the Government ultimately failed to achieve the objective. The outcome was clearly insufficient, and (almost) represented a step-back compared to the past.

Strategic consequences

While Rome's leadership in the immigration issue contributed to increase Italian prestige at the international level, the disappointing results negatively affected internal consensus. Because of the vast amount of resources devoted to the immigration issue, there was a widespread perception among the Italian public opinion that the Government was spending taxpayers' money to welcome and maintain migrants. Renzi's popularity decreased steadily, and a substantial share of voters shifted to support populist or right-wing parties.

Overall, Renzi's actions to deal with immigration not only did not end in a positive outcome, but contributed to the PM's resignation and to the decreased popularity of his party (PD). The strategic consequences are negative.

Scoring card – Renzi Government

	Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests	Immigration
Resources	5 - outstanding	4 – very good
Strategy	4 - very good	3 - satisfactory
Outcome	2 - disappointing	1 - failure
Strategic consequences	3 - neutral	2 - negative
Overall	14 – good (B +)	10 – sufficient (C+)

The Renzi government invested incredible resources and established a clear strategy to pursue the stabilization of Libya. It also played a protagonist role in the Mediterranean, assuming the leadership of EU naval operations EunavforMed and Triton. These actions were in line with the government's objectives to cut the migratory flows and fight illegal immigration. Finally, with Mare Sicuro, Italy launched an operation to protect its commercial and energy interests at

sea. The strategy adopted for stabilization was very good, while for immigration it was satisfactory. Unfortunately, the remarkable efforts and commitment were not matched by satisfactory results: the outcome for Libya's stabilization was disappointing, whereas for immigration, it was an unequivocal failure. Finally, whereas the actions taken to stabilize Libya did not produce clear externalities, the fiasco in tackling immigration contributed to Renzi's and PD's internal consensus loss.

Renzi scored very high on both issues for the inputs (9/10 for stabilization and commercial interests), (7/10 for immigration). At the same time, the outputs were disappointing in the first case (5/10) and decisively negative in the second (3/10).

Overall Renzi scored "good" for "Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests" and "sufficient" for immigration. Combining the two components, it results that the general performance of Renzi in pursuing and achieving Italian strategic objectives in Libya is: satisfactory.³¹

³¹ This is the result of this calculation: 14 (1st objective) + 10 (second objective) / $2 = 12$. $12 =$ satisfactory

7. Gentiloni government (December 2016 – March 2018)

When Renzi stepped down in December 2016, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Paolo Gentiloni was designated to take his place and to lead the government³² until the elections of March 2018.

7.1. Facts

7.1.1. Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests

Coming directly from the role of Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gentiloni was in a good position to give continuity to the intense diplomatic activity undertaken under Renzi's government; few days after taking office, Italy re-opened its embassy in Tripoli, showing its support for the GNA. Throughout 2017, the Gentiloni administration continued to commit substantial efforts on the stabilization of Libya: it pursued direct diplomacy in the Maghreb country, alongside multilateral diplomacy in international arenas, with the goal to internationalize the Libyan issue and obtain more resources and support to foster the stabilization (Felsen, 2018 p. 371). However, in July 2017 the long-standing Italian diplomatic efforts were undermined by Macron's interference: the French President took a unilateral initiative to broker a peace agreement between the two Libyan factions, inviting in Paris Al-Serraj and Haftar. With this bold move, Paris supplanted Rome as the European leader in the Libyan peace process, automatically relegating Italy to a marginal role (Ibid. p. 370-371). While the meeting did not produce any meaningful results, it changed the dynamics of the Libyan negotiations, because Gen. Haftar was put on the same level of the UN-recognized Al-Serraj (Ibid. p. 370-371). Rome was not even informed about this move, and the Italian government was comprehensibly highly irritated (Ibid.).

7.1.2. Immigration

From the very beginning, the Gentiloni government made of fighting illegal immigration one of its top priorities, and no efforts were spared to achieve this objective. In February 2017, Gentiloni and Al-Serraj signed a Memorandum of Understanding to tackle illegal immigration and reinforce border security (Palm, 2017 p. 2). According to the deal, in exchange of Libyan's commitment, Italy will support and finance the GNA to fight illegal immigration (ibid.). In April, Rome hosted a meeting with about 60 tribes' leaders to enforce cooperation on border security and terrorism (Sarzanini, 2017 p. 1). Throughout 2017, the Italian Finance Police organized trainings for law enforcement officials of Libya and other Sub-Saharan countries. In this context, Italy has also formulated a project – integrated border management (IBD) - to

³² The same center-left government, replacements underwent only at the executive level

support and empower the Libyan authorities (especially the Coast Guard) in controlling their borders.

Despite the early initiatives from April to May, the migration issue went from bad to worse, with thousands of migrants landing on Italy every night. Among Italian people, there was the perception “to be invaded”, and the political stability was highly endangered. Therefore, the Ministry of the Interior was required to find an immediate solution to curb the flows; the Minister of the Interior Marco Minniti elaborated a holistic strategy, which has been commonly called the “Minniti Compact”.

In December 2017 PM Gentiloni announced the launch of a new operation in Niger, with the deployment of 470 troops and 130 vehicles (Greco, 2018 p. 74).³³ The primary rationale of this mission was to externalize Libyan borders to curb the migratory flows before they reached Libya; Niger is a bottle-neck for migrants of West-African countries that try to reach Europe via the Central-Mediterranean route. Therefore, controlling the Nigerien borders means controlling the migratory flows from Nigeria, Guinea, Gambia, Senegal, and Ivory Coast. With this goal in mind, Italy launched a military operation in Niger: the mission’s objective was to support the Nigerien government in capacity-building for borders’ control and fight against illicit trafficking (Ceccorulli and Coticchia, 2020 p. 182-183). Finally, the Italian operation in Niger, which supported the French operation in the Sahel, was also a move to reestablish amicable relationships between the two countries (Darnis, 2017 p. 2).

7.2. Analysis

7.2.1. Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests

Gentiloni gave continuity to the policies and efforts undertaken by the Renzi government to stabilize Libya and to ensure Italian energy security and commercial interest. The new PM maintained a firm support for Al-Serraj, settling the basis for a renewed Italian-Libyan relationship. However, because of the limited power and authority of the GNA, the Italian government started to dialogue with several other Libyan stakeholders, including Haftar and the Fezzan tribes.

Resources

³³ However, because of bureaucratic problems with Niger, Italian troops were deployed only by the end of 2018, under the Yellow-Green government (Ibid.).

Despite being hurt by the French unilateral initiative, “Italy continued to play a significant diplomatic role in the Libyan conflict, supporting the UN-backed government in Libya and consistently seeking to encourage negotiations between warring factions” (Felsen, 2018, p. 372). It is with these intentions that the Italian government held various diplomatic meetings, and it started to dialogue with General Haftar, which was attended in Rome in September 2017 (Nigro, 2017 p. 1). With mission Ippocrate Italy sent soldiers and doctors to provide medical support to the troops of Misurata, which were fighting ISIS. On the 1/1/2018 Italy launched Operation MIASIT:³⁴ this mission was a rationalization of the previous Italian operations in the Country, namely Operation Ippocrate and the “Libyan part” of Operation Mare Sicuro, which consisted in training and supporting the Libyan Coast Guard. The intense diplomatic activities and the deployment of Operation MIASIT confirmed Italy’s commitment to pursue Libya’s stabilization. Likewise, the renewal of Mare Sicuro testified the government’s willingness to secure Italian national interests at sea.

However, by just giving continuity to the policies of his predecessor, Gentiloni did not take remarkable new or bold initiatives to stabilize Libya or to enhance the Italian position in the negotiations. This was instead done by Macron, who took the unilateral initiative to invite the two Libyan leaders in Paris to broker a deal. It can be argued that the Italian government could have invested more political capital, to assume a more prominent role in the Libyan negotiations, and this perhaps could have avoided the French meddling and surpass. Overall, the Government put serious resources to pursue its objective, but they were not quite as large or as bold as they could have been. In other words, not all possible resources were deployed, but the commitment was substantial.

Strategy

While supporting Al-Serraj’s GNA (recognized by the UN), Gentiloni started dialoguing with Haftar as well; thanks to the recent military offensive, the General conquered the most critical oil production zone, the Gulf of Sirte. These gains contributed to increase the General’s power and visibility, while weakening the authority of Al-Serraj (Greco, 2018 p. 134). Haftar’s power was also significantly strengthened after the endorsement received by Pres. Macron in Paris, making the General a crucial player in the Libyan chess-game. Thus, Italy had little choice but to bring Haftar on board the peace process: when he was hosted in Rome, he met top Italian

³⁴ Overall, MIASIT could count on 400 troops, 142 land vehicles and 2 aircrafts ([link](#)).

executives, amongst which Pinotti and Minniti,³⁵ who reiterated Italian's support for the UN solution and the need to find a political and diplomatic agreement for Libya, excluding the use of violence (Nigro, 2017 p. 1). To sum up, the Gentiloni government started to dialogue with Haftar, but it avoided ambiguities by maintaining a solid support for the GNA and the UN process.

The strategy adopted by the Italian government was reactive rather than planned. Italy suffered the meddling of regional powers (e.g. France) and the evolution of the situation on the ground (increased power of Haftar) without being capable of redirecting the Libyan developments as it wanted: de-escalating violence, strengthening the role of Al-Serraj and diminishing the role of Haftar. Indeed, the opposite happened. It is fair to say that the Italian government probably had fewer tools and resources at its disposal. However, it failed to understand the local and systemic developments and to formulate an adequate strategy to turn the situation in its favour.

Gentiloni stayed on Renzi's track, and Rome's reactive actions (e.g. starting dialoguing with Haftar) testified Italy's loss of control of the Libyan developments, downsizing Rome's role in the Libyan conflict. It can be argued that the Government's strategy was insufficient rather than satisfactory: as there was not a clear strategy, the policies taken were inadequate to pursue the objective. Even when not using the benefits of the hindsight, it can be argued that the government could have made a significantly better use of the resources available, acting differently in several situations.

Outcome

Thanks to the previous government's efforts, Gentiloni started his mandate well, re-opening the Italian embassy in Tripoli; being the first nation to re-open its embassy in the city, this was an outstanding diplomatic achievement (Binnie, 2017).

However, by the beginning of 2017, Al-Serraj was still trying to control Tripoli. The tensions between Tripoli and Tobruk were further exacerbated, with the two governments supporting different militia in attacking each other. Nevertheless, while the GNA struggled to gain consensus, the LNA was strengthening its foundations: Haftar finally conquered Bengasi and portrayed himself to the world as the secular leader against Islamic terrorism. Haftar's increased authority undermined the UN peace process and also changed the negotiations'

³⁵ Italian Minister of Defense (first) and Interior (second)

dynamics: Egypt, the UAE and France took the lead in the new negotiation process, with Italy confined to a marginal role (Felsen, 2018 p. 371).

In 2017 energy production in the Country bounced back, with fruitful results for ENI, while Mare Sicuro managed to keep Italian energy and commercial interests at sea secure.

Gentiloni faced the same issues of his predecessor: the meddling of foreign countries, with different agendas from Italy and the UN, hindered the peace and stabilization process, exacerbating the existing tensions. The UN's influence on the conflict was decreasing, while the weight of national external actors was increasing. The situation on the ground was also unfavourable: the GNA was struggling while the LNA was growing. Moreover, with Trump replacing Obama, the US interest for the Libyan cause was gone entirely, and Italy could not count on its powerful ally's support anymore.

During his term, Gentiloni did not achieve the objective nor positive results. However, although Italy was losing influence and control on the Libyan setting, it was still recognized as an important actor by the parties involved. Overall, the Italian diplomatic efforts did not produce meaningful and long-lasting developments, resulting in a final disappointing outcome for Italy.

Strategic consequences

As for Renzi, the Gentiloni government's actions to pursue Libya's stabilization and secure Italian energy and commercial interests did not significantly affect other Italian strategic objectives or the Italian posture in the International arena. Macron's France somewhat overshadowed Italy's influence in the Mediterranean, but Rome continued to be seen as an important actor within Europe and the Mediterranean basin. Externalities were neutral.

7.2.2. Immigration

Resources

The amount of resources invested by the Gentiloni government to fight illegal immigration and curb the migratory flows was just unparalleled; Rome made of this objective its top priority and committed with all its strength to solve the immigration issue. It suffices to say that out of euros 143,200,000 for the African Fund, 120,200,000 were assigned to initiatives to control or reduce migratory flows (Greco, 2018 p. 75).

- 1) At the EU level, the Gentiloni government continued to argue for an equal redistribution of the incoming migrants (Greco, 2018 p. 141-142). While this encountered the same

strong opposition Renzi faced, the EU supported the “Minniti Compact”. The mandates of the naval operations launched under Renzi’s government, Triton and Sophia, were renewed and strengthened.

- 2) Admirable was also the amount of resources invested in diplomatic activities: the Gentiloni government acted on multiple fronts, striking collaboration deals with the GNA, with the Libyan Tribes, and with countries of origin and transit. Finally, although no official information can be found, the Gentiloni government likely supported (financially and politically) local clans and militia to foster collaborations in curbing migrants’ departures (Raineri, 2019 p. 3-6).
- 3) With IBD and Mare Sicuro, the Italian government provided training, resources³⁶ and assistance to the Libyan Coast Guard, empowering the counterpart to perform SAR activities. Spurred by this cooperation, Al-Serraj requested technical naval support to counter illegal trafficking: the Italian Government contributed by sending a factory vessel to Tripoli, with the goal to coordinate patrolling and SAR operations and supporting Libyan naval units (Ministero Degli Affari Esteri, 2017b, p. 24). With the Code of Conduct, Rome also decided to stand against NGOs operations, putting severe constraints on NGOs’ ability to operate effectively.
- 4) The launch of the mission in Niger represented the cherry on the cake. With this move, Gentiloni confirmed Italy’s willingness to use every tool at disposal (even military on the ground) to curb the migratory flows. Obviously, the Italian troops operated in support of the Nigerien government, but this action had a very high symbolic meaning for the professionals.

Overall, it can be argued that the Italian Government devoted the largest possible resources imaginable in the real world to cope with the immigration issue, undertaking bold initiatives, with a vast expenditure of political capital, economic, diplomatic and human resources.

Strategy

Change of course

As a result of increasing difficulties and obstacles in achieving the country's stabilization and facing mounting internal pressure to block illegal immigration, the Gentiloni government

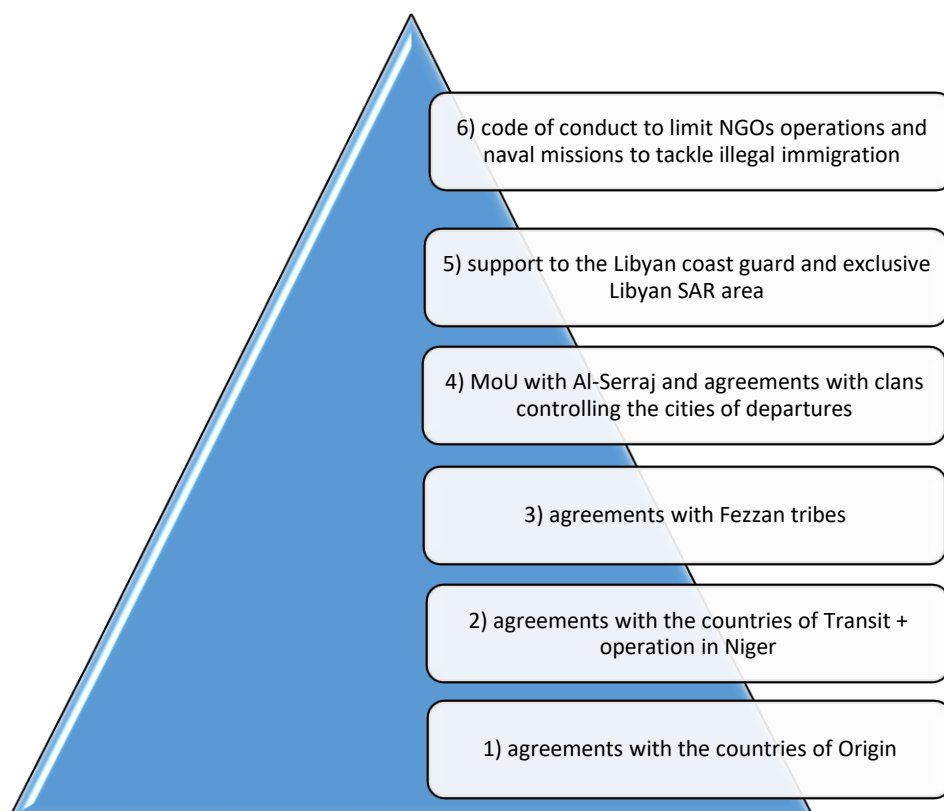
³⁶ Italy delivered to the Libyan Coast Guard 4 patrol vessels with other 6 to come upon maintenance completion.

operated a change of course with respect to his predecessor. Of course, stabilizing Libya was still the ultimate goal for Italians and Europeans alike, but this was not seen any more as a precondition to control the migratory flows. With the “Minniti Compact” different pathways were pursued to find short-term solutions to the migration issue as opposed to long-term plans for Libyan stabilization.

The “Minniti Compact” was based on three circles: 1) local, 2) maritime and 3) NGOs.

- 1) The first circle was based on collaborating with the relevant Libyan stakeholders; with the MoU signed by Al-Serraj, Minniti secured the Tripoli authorities' cooperation. However, because the GNA could not control the whole Tripolitania, Minniti had to strike a deal with the clans who controlled both the illicit trafficking and the “legal system”, in other words the smugglers' leaders and the Coast Guard (Toaldo, 2017b p. 9). With this inclusive strategy, the Minister of the Interior managed to onboard all the interested parties in following his plan to stem the migratory flows.
- 2) The second part of the plan consisted in thwarting the departures when the boats were still in Libyan waters. This was made possible by supporting and training the Libyan Coast Guard and creating a Libyan SAR area. Only the Libyan Coast Guard (and the friendly Italian government with a support function) could operate within that area.
- 3) The last part of the plan had to deal with the NGOs, accused of being in collusion with the smugglers, or at least to be counterproductive, a pull-factor in the fight against illegal immigration. Moreover, all the migrants rescued by NGOs were brought to Italy, and NGOs were also reporting the bad practices of the Libyan Coast Guard (Toaldo, 2017b p. 12). To avoid NGO's meddling and oversight, in the summer 2017 Minniti negotiated a “code of conduct” with the NGOs operating in the Mediterranean, hindering their rescue operations at sea (Ibid. p. 12). This code put severe constraints on the NGOs' activities, contributing to reduce further the migrant flows.

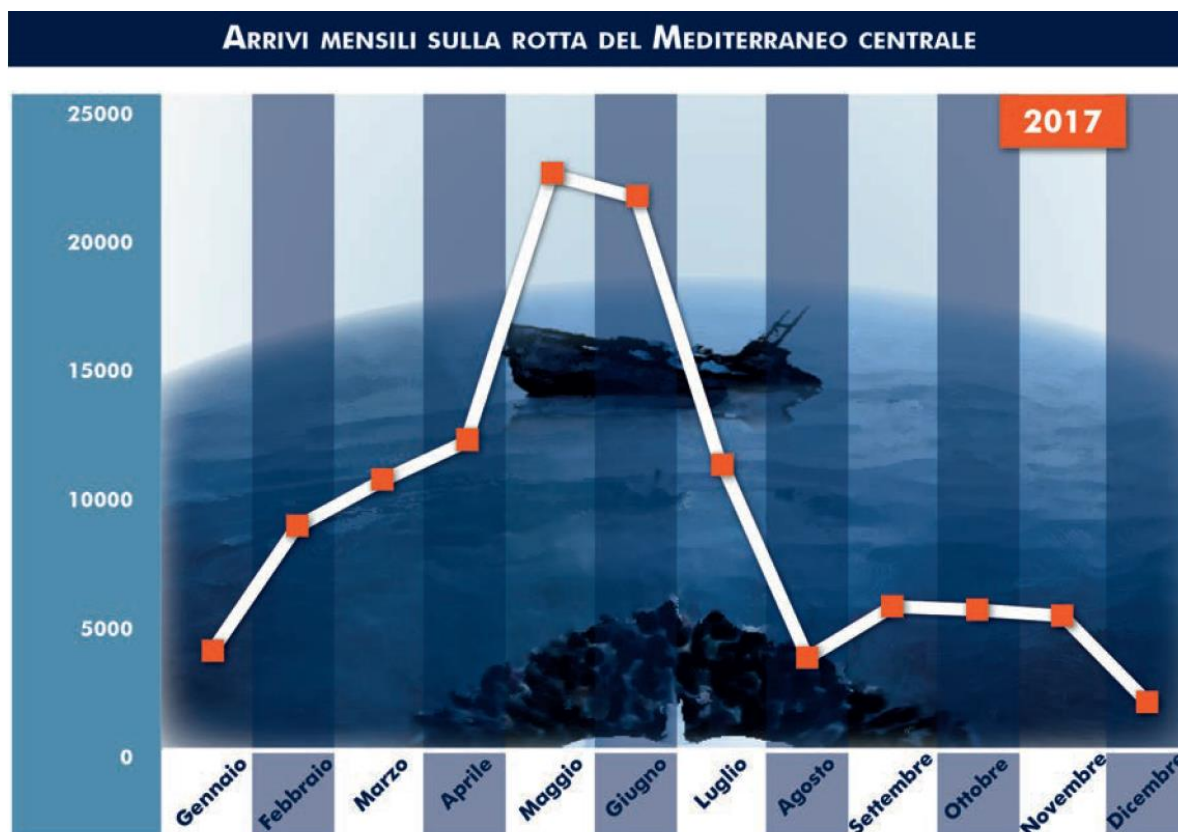
To sum up, Gentiloni adopted bolder measures than his predecessor, undertaking unilateral actions, operating in “grey areas” and facing the UN and various NGOs' criticism to achieve the objective of curbing the flows. Simultaneously, the Italian government made sure its plan was backed by the EU, avoiding to remain isolated. With the strategy adopted, Gentiloni and Minniti worked to tackle the immigration flows at all stages (from the origin to the sea-crossing) and at all levels (from the local clans to the EU Commission). The strength of the strategy lied in its resilience, in taking into account all the possible aspects and stakeholders.



Overall, it can be claimed that the Italian strategy to curb migratory flows under Gentiloni was outstanding: the actions taken were bold and resourceful to pursue the objective and all the policies adopted were coherent and part of a clear objective-oriented strategy.

Outcome

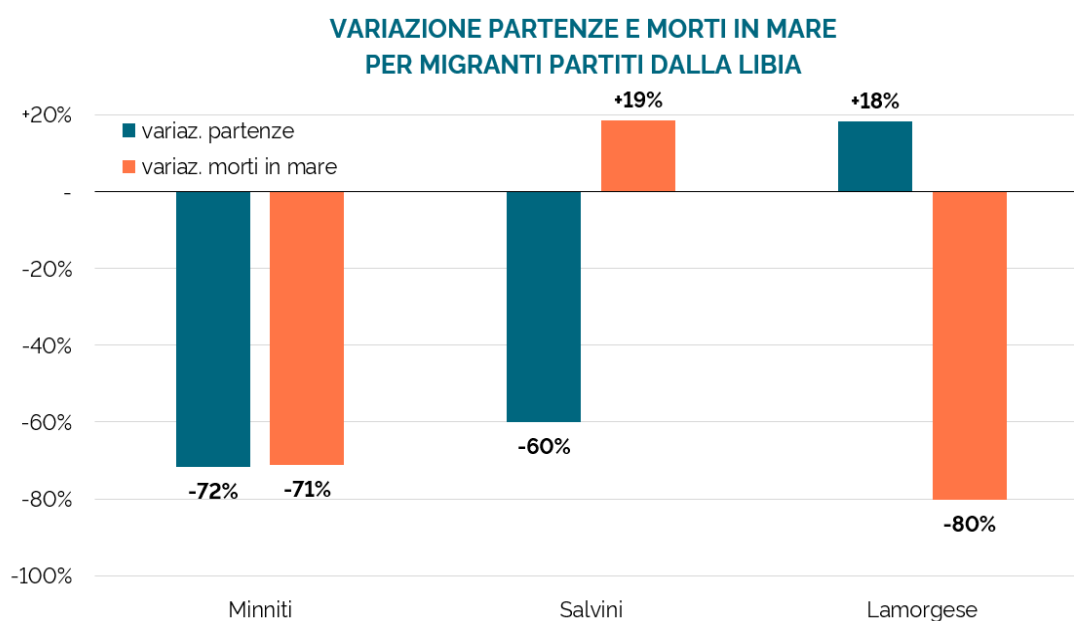
2017 was the year of change in immigration control; as clearly showed by the picture below, from July 2017 the numbers of arrivals dropped and never returned to the previous levels.



Fonte: Ministero dell'Interno

Figure 9: (Ministero dell'Interno, 2017). "Arrivals by month via the central Mediterranean route". The picture represents the number of arrivals via the Central Mediterranean route in Italy. As clearly showed, after the numbers reached their peak in May (Maggio), they dropped between June (Giugno) and July (Luglio).

The set of policies adopted by the Gentiloni government to achieve this objective was vital for the final success. In particular, congratulations are in order for: 1) being able to get Al-Serraj signing the MoU in such a difficult time, 2) getting the local clans to collaborate in fighting illegal immigration, turning them from smugglers into vigilantes, 3) passing the code of conduct to limit NGOs activities, 4) training and supporting the Libyan Coast Guard and succeeding in establishing a Libyan SAR, 5) getting the EU to back the Italian agenda.



Dati: elaborazioni ISPI su dati UNHCR, IOM e altri.

Figure 10: (Villa, 2020). “Variations of departures and deaths at sea of migrants who left Libya”. The chart represents the variations of departures and deaths at sea of migrants who left Libya, from 2017 to 2020. In blue data for departures, in orange for deaths at sea.

Overall, if we consider solely the objective to reduce the migratory flows and fight against illegal immigration, the results achieved by Gentiloni administration were a complete success. In less than six months the government found a solution for the short-medium term, and since August 2017 to date,³⁷ the number of arrivals to Italy has never touched the worrying levels of 2016 and beginning 2017.

Strategic consequences

Gentiloni government's success in curbing the migratory flows was recognized from both EU member states and Italian parties of different orientation. Likewise, the announcement of the upcoming Italian mission in Niger testified the shift to a foreign policy more focused on Italian national interests, and the willingness to be a regional power.

However, it should be noted that alongside reductions in the migratory flows, the Minniti strategy also had negative implications. Minniti had to deal with criminal leaders for establishing cooperation's agreements with the various Libyan tribes and militia, supporting groups (financially or with other means) that were involved in numerous illegal activities (human, drug, arms trafficking etc.) (Messina, 2017 p. 2, 5 and Liga, 2018 p. 25). Because of

³⁷ December 2020

this collusion with Tribes' leaders, the UN and several NGOs criticized heavily Italy and the EU. Moreover, the migrants jailed in the detention facilities were robbed, deprived of food and fundamental human rights and even tortured (Messina, 2017 p. 5, 7). To sum up, as described by Raineri (2019 p. 1), with the Minniti Compact Libyans smugglers were turned into jailers. Moreover, while human trafficking has since dropped, the smugglers re-oriented their business towards other illicit activities, such as oil, gold and drug trafficking (Ibid. p. 6-7).

Besides, empowering and legitimizing local militias involved in criminal activities could be counterproductive in the medium-long term. This strategy risks giving prominence to ambiguous actors, jeopardizing Libya's stabilization and the future Italian-Libyan relationship.

Overall, even not considering moral and ethical issues, the strategy adopted by Gentiloni government has had negative consequences. For a country that has always distinguished itself for respecting the international law, the numerous critiques received by NGOs and UN caused a reputational damage. Moreover, regarding the support given to local clans and alleged criminals, Rome could have further undermined the stabilization process. Finally, the decision to focus all the resources on the short-term success is likely to have negative implications for the future, as the root causes of immigration were not addressed.

Scoring card – Gentiloni Government

	Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests	Immigration
Resources	4 – very good	5 – outstanding
Strategy	2 - insufficient	5 - outstanding
Outcome	2 - disappointing	5 - excellent
Strategic consequences	3 - neutral	2 - negative
Overall	11 – satisfactory (B -)	17 – very good (A -)

Gentiloni gave continuity to the efforts undertaken by his predecessor for the stabilization of Libya and for securing Italian energy and commercial interests, without taking remarkable initiatives. On the opposite, he invested most of its government's energies to tackle the immigration issue. The strategy adopted for stabilization was insufficient because it failed to adapt timely to the evolving situation. Viceversa, the strategy for immigration was outstanding because it targeted the problem at all stages and all levels. The final outcomes matched the

strategies pursued: disappointing results for Libya's stabilization and excellent results for controlling immigration. Finally, whereas the actions taken to stabilize Libya did not produce clear externalities, the policies adopted to curb migratory flows affected Italian reputation.

Overall Gentiloni scored "satisfactory" for "Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests" and "very good" for immigration. Combining the two components, it results that the general performance of Gentiloni in pursuing and achieving Italian strategic objectives in Libya is: good.³⁸

³⁸ This is the result of this calculation: 11 (first objective) + 17 (second objective) / 2 = 14. 14 = good.

8. Conte government (June 2018 – August 2019)

Conte was the figure selected by the two winning parties (The League and 5-stars-movement) to lead the new “yellow-green” government.³⁹ The League’s goal was to completely curb the migratory flows, while the 5-stars movement goal was to support unemployed people. Not either of them had a clear foreign policy agenda, but they shared anti-Europeanist and anti-French feelings. Of the 58 pages of the government’s contract, only two were dedicated to foreign policy. There are only vague and generic mentions about Italian foreign policy in that document: centrality of the Mediterranean region for Italy and centrality of the national interest (Movimento 5 Stelle and Lega, 2018).

8.1. Facts

8.1.1. Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests

From the very beginning, the Conte government adopted a confrontational posture against France. Rome's new government perceived its national interests being threatened and jeopardized by French assertiveness in Libya and the Mediterranean (Aliboni, 2018 p. 1-2). Instead of pursuing collaborations like Gentiloni, the Conte government attacked the French counterpart in various occasions, re-opening the “old tensions” (ibid. p. 2). These attacks were part of the broader anti-Europeanist polemic (campaigned by both The League and the 5-stars movement) and the rapprochement strategy with the US. Indeed, in July 2018 Conte insisted and succeeded in obtaining the American support, with Trump recognizing Italy as the natural leader in the negotiations processes for Libya (Ibid. p. 2).

French and European feelings aside, the Italian government continued on the road paved by the previous administrations to foster Libya stabilization; Rome continued to support the UN peace process and the GNA, but it also started to dialogue more openly with Haftar. In autumn 2018, the Italian PM and the Minister of FA stated that Haftar was a major stakeholder and needed to be included in the peace negotiations for Libya.

8.1.2. Immigration

Under the pressure of vice-PM Salvini, the immigration issue was further politicized, and possibly put even higher on the Country’s political agenda.

Pursuing the efforts undertaken by Gentiloni administration, in June 2018 the Italian Coast Guard finalized the project for the establishment of the “Libyan maritime rescue coordination

³⁹ The League is a far-right party, the 5-stars Movement is a populist and anti-establishment party

centre (LMRCC)". Contrarily to the previous governments, the yellow-green administration opted for reductions (in terms of resources and mandate) for European naval operations. Due to the rules of engagement, all the migrants rescued by NGOs vessels, EU military vessels and Italian military vessels were brought to Italy.⁴⁰ Consequently, because of the Dublin regulation, Italy alone has had to welcome all the migrants coming from the central Mediterranean route. Determined to change these dynamics, Salvini opted for drastic measures - the closure of Italian ports to NGOs vessels and the withdrawal of the naval component of Sophia (as did the other EU partners) - to reduce further the immigrants' arrivals (Marrone, 2019 p. 1-3).

The Italian government's most sensational measure in 2018 was the closure of the Italian ports to vessels rescuing migrants. This measure was adopted for the first time on the 9th of June 2018, when Salvini refused to grant docking permission to the ship Aquarius, which was carrying 629 migrants. The Italian Minister of the Interior maintained his rigid stance and demanded European assistance in sharing the migration burden (Marrone, 2018 p. 2-3). Since then, this expedient was adopted on numerous occasions to force NGOs to disembark migrants somewhere else.

With the decree-law n° 53 of 14th June 2019 Salvini managed to translate into the national legislation his authority (as the Minister of the Interior) to limit or forbid access into Italian waters to non-military or non-governmental vessels for security reasons (Biarella, 2019 p. 1-2). This bill also authorized the Minister of the Interior to punish the transgressors who did not comply with Italian immigration laws with fines between euros 10,000 and 50,000, with the possibility of commander's arrest and seizure of the vessel (Ibid.).

8.2. Analysis

8.2.1. Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests

The yellow-green government has neglected foreign policy. This costed a high price in terms of isolation and marginality, both at the communitarian and international levels (Feroci, 2019 p. 7, 12). In particular, while Gentiloni tried and managed to repair relations with France, the yellow-green executive re-exacerbated the tensions with the Transalpine Country, creating even a diplomatic incident followed by the withdrawal of the French ambassador from Rome. This prevented any meaningful collaborations between Italy and France in Libya, resulting in

⁴⁰ The nearest place of safety

disillusions about the European capability to have an impact, and leaving a vacuum that was filled by Turkey and Russia.

Resources

The new Italian government confirmed the deployment of Mare Sicuro and MIASIT. In autumn 2018, in an effort to regain leadership on the Libyan issue, the Italian government organized a conference for Libya stabilization in Palermo. Unfortunately, due to the inadequate preparatory works, the event was not attended by several principal stakeholders, amongst which Pres. Trump, Macron, Merkel and Putin. (Varvelli, 2018, p. 1-2). Therefore, there were not the necessary preconditions to achieve meaningful developments as a result of the conference. Italy continued to support the UN peace process, and it succeeded in obtaining the American support. However, the dispute with Macron prevented the realization of a solid European front.

When Haftar launched the aggressive military offensive in April 2019, PM Conte declared that: Italy was not standing with Al-Serraj, nor with Haftar, but with the Libyan people” (Caprara, 2019). This statement confirmed Italy’s repositioning on the Libyan issue: it went from being a firm supporter of Al-Serraj (during Renzi’s government) to discrete dialogues with Haftar (during Gentiloni’s government), to a policy of equidistance between the two parties (Conte’s government). Indeed, in the aftermath of the offensive, Conte refused to give more support to Al-Serraj; the Italian PM critiqued Haftar’s use of force, but made clear that Italy had no intentions to support the GNA more decisively (Affaritalaini.it, 2019). The executive in Rome repeated that the only possible solution was political, and not military. At the same time, Italy started dialoguing with Haftar, in the vain attempt to convince the Libyan General to stop the military offensive and impose a ceasefire.

Especially throughout 2019, the Conte government invested little resources and political capital in the stabilization of Libya. Overall, the Government devoted only limited resources, which had a negative impact on its ability and likelihood to meet the objective.

Strategy

The limited amount of resources invested and the scarce attention paid to the Libyan dossier, negatively affected Italian posture in Libya. The new Italian government had no clear strategy to achieve the objective: Italy aspired to play a leadership role in the stabilization of Libya, but did not have clear ideas on how to pursue stabilization and on what to do with the recognition of its leadership. The Conte government just continued reiterating its support for the UN peace

process and a political solution, without taking additional initiatives. Receiving the American investiture of “leadership role in the stabilization of Libya” was a good first step, but it was not matched by diplomatic agreements with the other EU members, above all, France. Without European support, the US “sponsorship” became useless for Italy. Finally, Italy failed to understand what the Russians’ plans in Libya were, and the prominent role Turkey was ready to play in the vacuum left by European powers.

The Conte government started to dialogue more openly with Haftar, with the aim to protect Italian national interests in case the General would increase his authority in Libya. However, this Italian opening came after the General established a privileged relationship with other countries, namely Egypt, Russia, UAE and France. This move's main result was a consequential loss of credibility for the Italian Government, which appeared to be weak and unable to stand with its initial position (Varvelli, 2018 p. 2-3). The posture adopted by the Italian government was more defensible from a commercial and energy point of view: since the General was rapidly gaining territory in the west of the Country, Rome had to be careful not to antagonize Haftar, as this could have put in jeopardy ENI’s interests in Libya.

During Conte’s administration, Italy not only lost control but also understanding of the situation on the ground. The actions taken (or not taken) were sometimes ambiguous or counterproductive. After advocating for a leadership role, avoiding to make any moves in the aftermath of a military offensive eroded the Italian’s government credibility, favouring the rise of other (non-European) actors. Overall, the Government strategy was poor. There is no need to use the benefits of the hindsight to claim that the government often acted in the wrong way. Even not considering unforeseen or extraordinary external variables, the strategy was doomed to fail.

Outcome

During Conte’s mandate, Mare Sicuro succeeded in protecting Italian national interests offshore. ENI managed to increase its oil production in 2019, while the gas production continued the downstream trend of 2018.

In 2018, the conference of Palermo suffered the absence of major stakeholders and did not produce any meaningful results. In 2019, since the start of Haftar’s offensive in April, the Libyan conflict continued without significant truces till September. The Italian government appeals for a political solution remained unheard, and no remarkable ceasefire was imposed till the end of the yellow-green government. As a result of Italian vacillating posture, the GNA

resorted to allies willing to contribute more significantly, namely Turkey. On the other side, Haftar could already count on the support of Russia, UAE and France; therefore, as long as Italy was not taking a hard stance against the LNA, the Libyan General was fine. Italy's indecisive foreign policy resulted in a loss of influence for Rome, which was exacerbated by Italy's isolationism within Europe. In conclusion, the Italian unwillingness to invest more resources and its inability to form a united front with France and the EU resulted in a complete loss of control for European powers of the Libyan conflict. The void left by Europeans was soon filled by Russia and Turkey, which have taken over the reins of the Libyan conflict since late 2019.

By the end of the yellow-green government in September 2019, the situation in Libya had considerably worsened for Italy: after months of open war, the two warring parties made clear they will not try to find a political compromise, as the relationship between Al-Serraj and Haftar was definitely broken. Elections were absolutely off the table, and the UN peace process almost stranded. Italy's influence on Libya was dramatically reduced by the lack of a European common front, and even worsened after Conte maintained a neutral position in the aftermath of Haftar's offensive. The Italian Government completely failed to achieve the objective. The outcome was clearly insufficient and represented a step-back compared to the past. There were significant setbacks for Italians, and a sense of failure dominated.

Strategic consequences

The Italian loss of influence on the Libyan issue negatively affected Italy's reputation and perceived role of regional power in the Mediterranean. Even worse, the "policy of equidistance" led to the Turkish surpass on Italy as supporter of Al-Serraj, and to the deal brokered by Al-Serraj and Erdogan that jeopardized Italian energy interests in Tripolitania and especially in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Overall, the Italian government's strategy for the stabilization of Libya had a significant negative influence on the Country's reputation and national interests for the long-term. As a result of its actions, the government did not achieve any results on this objective and endangered other fronts. Externalities were clearly negative.

8.2.2. Immigration

Resources

Despite the number of arrivals to Italy had fallen since August 2017, under Salvini's pressure, the new government continued to treat the immigration issue as a top priority. However, the League's leader was determined to spend less financial resources and more political capital for tackling this problem:

- 1) Less emphasis was put on naval missions: the modest Themis had replaced Triton, and, by 2019, the naval component of mission Sophia was withdrawn. On the other hand, the government confirmed the military operation in Niger to tackle migratory flows at the bottle-neck.
- 2) Thanks to numerous cooperation agreements (LMRCC, IBD and Mare Sicuro), the Italian government provided training, resources and active assistance to the Libyan Coast Guard, empowering the counterpart to perform SAR activities and to manage the issue within Libyan waters. In other words, the Italian government managed to be active in the Libyan waters without being directly involved (Bagnoli, 2019 p. 5-6).
- 3) The Minister of the Interior Salvini invested a massive amount of political capital on the immigration issue: with his bold and dramatic decisions (e.g. decree-law * 53, firm opposition to NGOs, loud voice in the EU settings etc.) he stood against the critiques of the international community and other EU members, always maintaining his rigid stance.

Overall, the Conte administration devoted less financial and diplomatic resources to tackle immigration, but the amount of political capital invested (especially by Salvini) was unmatched by any previous Italian governments. The minister of the interior put his and his country's reputation at stake, undertaking bold and dramatic initiatives to achieve this objective. To conclude, it can be argued that the resources invested were outstanding.

Strategy

The Italian government tried to keep in place the various agreements established by Gentiloni and Minniti, but (exception made for mission in Niger) focused only on the last stage of the immigration issue – when migrants embark on boats. Therefore, Italy was mainly focused on supporting the Libyan Coast Guard and enabling the Libyans to conduct SAR operations in their territorial waters. This was particularly important as the Europeans could not bring the migrants back to Libya when they intercepted smugglers. On the contrary, they were forced to disembark them at the nearest “place of safety” (POS), and therefore, Italy (Bagnoli, 2019 p. 4-5). To avoid this, Salvini also insisted on withdrawing the naval component of Sophia and

limiting the operation area of Themis. Last but not least, he tried to hinder the NGOs' activities: initially, Salvini did so by announcing the closure of Italian ports and by refusing dock permissions to the coming ships, later, he passed a law-decree to turn this decision into Italian law.

Contrarily to his predecessor, the new minister of the Interior did not undertake complex strategies and intense diplomatic activities, but opted for decisive unilateral actions. Even though this meant losing European support, this strategy was functional to curb the number of arrivals to Italy in the short-term.

Overall, focusing solely on this strategic objective, the Government strategy was outstanding from an analytical point of view: the policies taken were bold and resourceful to pursue the objective. All the policies adopted were coherent and part of a clear objective-oriented strategy.

Outcome

The EU members refused consistently (from 2013 to 2019) all the numerous Italian petitions to establish re-distribution policies at the EU level and to change the Dublin Regulation, leaving Italy alone to face this colossal challenge (Marrone, 2019 p. 2). It is primarily for these reasons that the Italian government resorted to drastic measures. Thanks to these harsh measures, above all the closure of the ports and the withdrawal of the naval component of Sophia, the number of arrivals was further reduced (Marrone, 2019 p. 1-3).

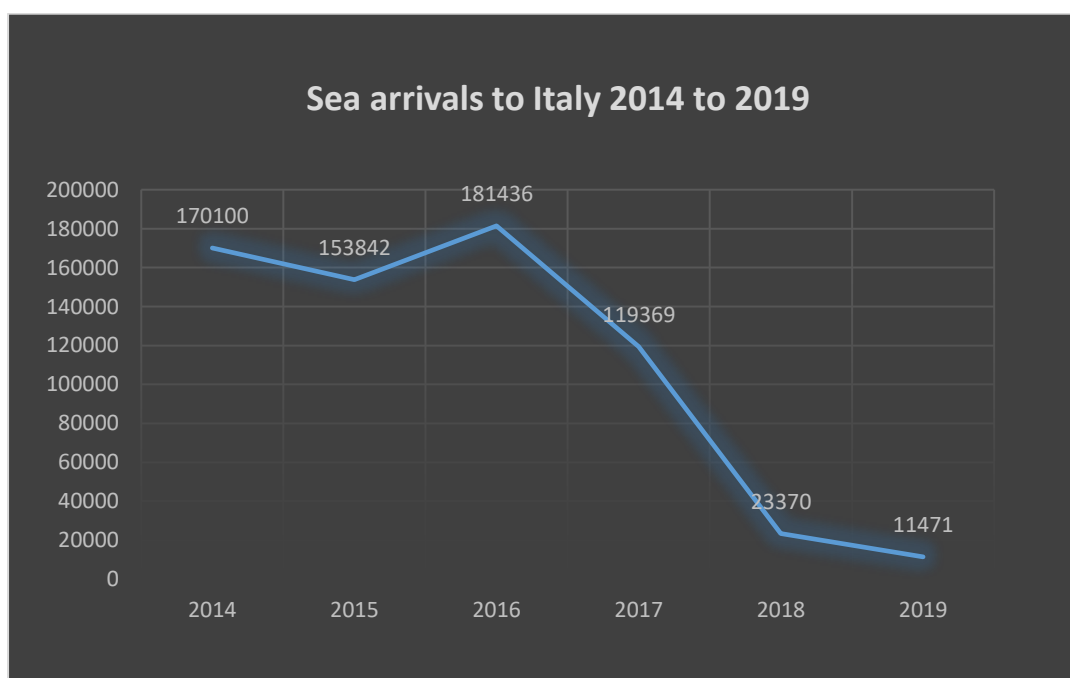
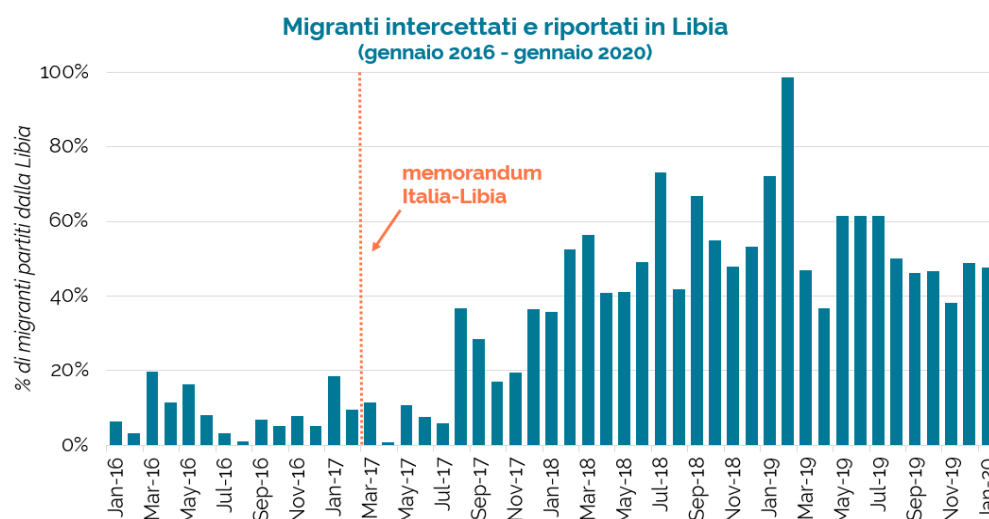


Figure 11: Source: Ministero dell' Interno 2014 – 2019. Chart created by thesis author.

Despite the goal of “controlling” migratory flows had been mostly accomplished by the Gentiloni administration (which reduced the number of departures by 72%), the new government implemented an additional 60% reduction, bringing down the numbers to pre-2011 levels.

The Conte government also succeeded in fostering and empowering the Libyan Coast Guard. The chart below represents the percentage of migrants intercepted by the Libyan authorities; it can be observed that especially from June 2018 (establishment of the new Italian government), the share of intercepted migrants was steadily above the 40%.



Dati: stime ISPI su dati UNHCR, IOM e altri.

Figure 12: (Villa, 2020). “Migrants intercepted and carried back to Libya”. The chart represents the % of migrants who were brought back to Libya after being rescued at sea.

Overall, if we consider purely the objective to reduce the migratory flows and fight against illegal immigration, the results achieved by Conte administration were highly successful; the government managed to further cut down the number of arrivals to the record level of only 11471 migrants in 2019.

Strategic consequences

Although the closure of ports proved to be efficient in the short-term, this cannot be considered a sustainable solution. As underlined already by the Migration Compact of Renzi, the migration issue is not just a temporary crisis, but a long-term challenge that must be addressed with a holistic approach (Greco and Ronzitti, 2016 p. 17, 43, 62). Because of this challenge's systemic

features, the strategy to close the ports is unlikely to work under pressure and in the long-term (Villa, 2018 p. 2). The Libyan Coast Guard and its ability to perform SAR operations have been widely criticized by the UN, governments and NGOs alike. Dropping the migration burden on the Libyan counterpart is unlikely to solve the problem, and creates profound moral, ethical and legal implications. Finally, Italy's hard stance on immigration damaged Italian reputation on the international stage.

Regarding naval operations, terminating EunavforMed was a Pyrrhic victory for Italy and the EU: withdrawing the naval component helped to reduce the number of immigrants reaching European shores, but stopped an operation that performed an outstanding job in thwarting the smugglers' networks and arresting numerous criminals. Moreover, the termination of this naval operation has also symbolized the EU's incapacity to be a credible and united power in its neighbourhood and it was for Italy a loss in international prestige (Italy was leading the mission).

Scoring card – Conte Government

	Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests	Immigration
Resources	3 – sufficient	5 – outstanding
Strategy	1 - poor	5 - outstanding
Outcome	1 - failure	5 - excellent
Strategic consequences	1 – very negative	2 - negative
Overall	6 – strongly insufficient (C -)	17 – very good (A -)

The Conte government performed very differently on the two strategic objectives. The lack of strategy and the actions taken (or not taken) for the stabilization of Libya determined a dramatic loss of influence for Italy on the issue: by the end of the yellow-green government mandate, Turkey and Russia had completely taken over the reins of the situation, filling the void left by Europeans. Moreover, the Turkish agreement with Al-Serraj can negatively affect Italian energy and commercial interests in the Mediterranean. On the other hand, the government performed as good as the Gentiloni administration in controlling and fighting illegal immigration: with a vast expenditure of political capital and bold and harsh decisions, Italy managed to reduce impressively the number of arrivals. However, these results came at the costs of reputation, as well as legal, ethical and moral issues.

Overall, Conte scored “strongly insufficient” for “Stabilization, energy security and commercial interests” and “very good” for immigration. Combining the two components, it results that Conte's general performance in pursuing and achieving Italian strategic objectives in Libya is: satisfactory.⁴¹

⁴¹ This is the result of this calculation: 6 (first objective) + 17 (second objective) / 2 = 11,5. 11,5 = satisfactory.

9. Overall analysis and conclusion

This final chapter answers the research question and provides general indications and remarks on Italian foreign policy. The analytical framework that I have used, as well as the analysis executed, are conceived to assess the performance of the Italian governments in Libya. However, evaluating the governments' actions and policies was key to understanding what factors influenced the Italian strategic objectives in Libya and answering the research question. Most importantly, the analytical framework allowed to assess the governments' performance in terms of effectiveness⁴² and appropriateness,⁴³ elaborating distinguished assessments in terms of resources, strategy, outcome and consequences. This distinction was crucial to understanding if a specific positive/negative outcome resulted from a well-designed/poor strategy and if substantial/insufficient resources backed it. The component "strategic consequences" has also allowed to identify the externalities generated by a particular policy. Therefore, it was possible to determine the points of strength and weaknesses of the governments' actions, what factors led to success/failure, and how significant was the influence of external variables.

In order to assess the performance of Italian governments in Libya, it is necessary to underline that the Libyan theatre is highly complex in nature (meddling of foreign powers, energy interests, immigration crisis etc.), that Italy has limited resources and that economic, legal and cultural factors constrain its foreign policy. For all these reasons, it must be considered that Italy has had the potential to influence the situation in Libya, but not the power to tip the balance in its favour unilaterally. A different discourse should be made for the other two strategic objectives; Italy could protect its energy security and commercial interest at sea militarily, whereas the country's stabilization best supported Italian business in Libya. ENI has had the capacity to provide for its own security, with the Italian government supporting only if necessary and behind the scenes. Regarding immigration, Italian governments had different tools and resources to tackle the issue; contrarily to the stabilization of Libya, this was a domain where unilateral actions could lead to concrete results.

9.1. Stabilization

In 2020, stabilization and reunification of Libya is still a mirage. The UN failed, and the EU never tried. France and Italy have also been relegated in second place. The conflict has turned into a proxy war, and the actors involved are not interested in re-unifying Libya: Russia and

⁴² Achievement of results

⁴³ Bounty of the policy regardless the results achieved

Turkey control the two parts of the country, and, to maximize their interests, they are willing to freeze the situation – leaving the country divided in two – rather than stabilize and proceed toward national elections.

For Italy, this objective was tough to achieve, because it was determined by strong external variables. One of the warring parties – General Haftar – had no interests in proceeding toward national elections, but only in maintaining and increasing his power over the country. Egypt, the UAE, Russia and France supported the General in various means, including financial and military support. Also, President Macron played a primary role in legitimizing Haftar on the international stage. This meddling hindered the plans of the UN and Italy, which were trying to stabilize Libya. However, UN powerlessness and Italy's lack of strategy did not help the cause, contributing to loss of influence and failure.

All three Italian governments were obsessed with receiving international recognition for a leadership role in the Libyan situation. While Renzi backed this ambition with a clear political agenda (settling a legitimized counterpart in Tripoli), Gentiloni lacked of assertiveness, and Conte did not have a clear strategy to pursue. The ambition of leadership is not compatible with the lack of strategy and assertiveness: first of all, Italian governments should have established a clear agenda and priorities, orienting their actions and policies in this direction. Secondly, they should have made sure to have the necessary resources and negotiation power to pursue the chosen strategy with some chances of success.

The lack of strategy was testified by Italian overreliance on the UN: while the Renzi government had valid reasons to fully support the UN agenda, Gentiloni and Conte should have accounted the loss of influence witnessed by the UN, pursuing back-up plans. Above all, Italy should have created a European united front for Libya's stabilization, obtaining the French and EU support; this was attempted by Gentiloni, who sought rapprochement with his French counterpart. On the contrary, the yellow-green government immediately broke the relationship with France, preventing any kind of collaborations. Likewise, the anti-Europeanism rhetoric of the new Italian government contributed to isolate Italy within the EU rather than gaining its support. To sum up, without the French and European support, Italy did not have the resources nor the diplomatic weight to seriously influence the situation in Libya. Other options, such as direct military support, were arguably too risky for Italy to be pursued unilaterally.

Last but not least, two additional factors played a negative influence for this objective. On the one hand, Italian policymakers failed to understand the real intentions of some major

stakeholders, such as Haftar, Russia or Turkey, until it was too late. Despite the developments on the ground represented clear warnings (e.g. regarding Haftar's reluctance to cease the military offensives) the Italian government continued to involve the General in peace talks. Likewise, Rome underestimated the role that Turkey and Russia were ready to play. On the other hand, Italy has suffered from a long-standing problem: the impossible desire to please everyone, which was very well described by Jean:

“Italy divides the Mediterranean into two distinct basins but is unable to dominate any of them. Italy wants to be everyone's friend. So, it is not anyone's. It seeks an agreement with Israel, but also with the Arab countries and, at the same time, with Egypt and Turkey, which are opposed in the eastern Mediterranean” (Jean, 2019, p. 12)

It is often the case that this Italian attitude translates into the inability/unwillingness to take a stand, and it follows that Italy is seen by others as a non-reliable partner. This attitude is counterproductive, and it negatively affects Italian reputation and foreign policy.

9.2. Energy security and commercial interests

Operation Mare Sicuro proved to be an efficient measure to secure critical energy infrastructures and Italian commercial interests offshore. With this mission, the Italian navy successfully protected the national interests at sea throughout the period analyzed.

Onshore, the analysis revealed that the best way to secure energy and commercial interests was by stabilizing the country. This was well understood by all three Italian governments, which set the stabilization of Libya as the top foreign policy priority. However, stabilization was not achieved and this impacted especially medium-small business, as they had to leave the country. On the contrary, ENI had the power and capabilities to maintain its productivity throughout the Libyan conflict, suffering only temporary problems. Thanks to the focus on gas, the company became the foreign largest producer in Libya, and about 20% of its revenues are still generated from this Maghreb country. ENI established good relationships with all the Libyan stakeholders, demonstrating to be a powerful geopolitical actor.

The factors that contributed to success/failure for energy security and commercial interests are the same of stabilization, with the difference that unilateral and assertive actions are more likely to bring their fruits in this realm. To give an example, the show of force conveyed with Mare Sicuro was successful in securing Italian national interests. Likewise, ENI's detailed strategy and understanding of the situation on the ground awarded the company with positive results. On the other hand, as witnessed first-hand by the Conte government, lack of attention to foreign

policy, ambiguous or hesitant posture can come at a high price: Turkey replaced Italy's role as supporter of the GNA, and Erdogan took advantage of the situation by striking a deal with Al-Serraj. This agreement has a serious potential to jeopardize Italian energy and commercial interests in the Mediterranean.

9.3. Immigration

Unilateral actions have proved to be far more effective than efforts at the EU level to achieve this objective. Naval operations were successful in fighting illegal immigration and thwarting traffickers' networks, but they were also a pull factor for migrants leaving from Libya. On the contrary, the deals brokered with the local clans and with the Libyan Coast Guard were unquestionably more effective, leading to a dramatic decrease in the number of departures. Likewise, policies "anti-NGOs" and the unilateral action to close Italian ports were highly successful: these moves determined a further reduction in the number of arrivals, deterring migrants from leaving in the first place and strong-arming some EU members to accept their share of migrants.

The yellow-green government's policies on immigration might sound quite extreme, but they were necessary to trigger cooperation at the EU level. Indeed, the numerous prayers of the previous governments and Italian bounty and submissive behavior were not rewarded by the EU counterparts: EU states consistently refused to change the Dublin Regulation or to adopt more collaborative measures on immigration until Rome started to take a harder stance. However, Italian decision-makers should be careful in using the "stick": while intransigent posture might work well if used from time to time, it cannot represent the rule when acting in a multilateral framework, as it would become counter-productive. This was experienced first-hand by the Conte-1 government; Salvini's hard-stance was effective for the immigration issue, but led to Italy's isolation within the EU and prevented any collaboration with France on the Libyan dossier.

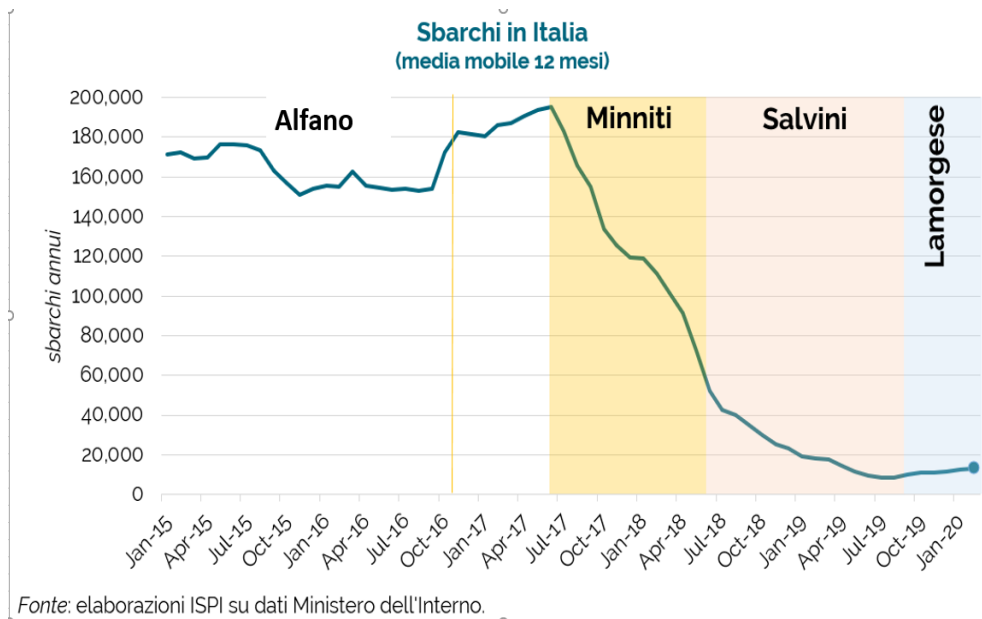


Figure 13: (Villa, 2020). "Arrivals in Italy". This picture shows the month mobile average of arrivals in Italy between January 2015 and January 2020

Once again, there is the need to reiterate that this evaluation is purely analytical, and it does not consider any ethical or moral implications. Likewise, the assessment looks at the short-medium term results, and it does not consider possible consequences that might happen in the future.

9.4. Final remarks

Italy's main problem is that it has not decided what role in foreign policy it wants to play. If Italy wants to be a universally recognized mediator for international disputes, then it might as well focus only on UN missions, avoiding to pursue its national interests abroad. On the other hand, if Rome wants to be a relevant geopolitical actor in Europe and the Mediterranean, it should start to act differently. First of all, Italian decision-makers should erase from their minds the impossible desire to please everyone. If Italy wants to be a regional power, tensions with other countries, like Egypt or Turkey, are expected. This is not to say that Rome should cultivate enemies, but to accept the possibility that temporary fractures might occur in the attempt to achieve or secure the national interest.

Sometimes, criticizing certain EU members for not cooperating or adopting provocative measures can be a good tactic, but this must be done wisely; otherwise, it leads to isolationism. The EU and NATO are vital for Italy's security, economy and values and these allegiances must be preserved at all costs. Of course, a confrontational or polemic posture can be adopted from time to time to be more assertive. Nevertheless, this should always be a short-term tactic

vs a long-term strategy of cooperation. Finally, cooperation with the EU members is critical if Italy wants to make of diplomacy the cornerstone of its foreign policy.

Because of Italian strategic culture, Rome has been reluctant to use its military and other coercive tools. However, if Italy wants to be a regional power and have a leadership role in the Mediterranean, it must be ready to take bold initiatives and to use all the tools at its disposal, especially when diplomacy is not enough. At the same time, when the choice is for unilateral actions, policymakers need first to properly evaluate possible drawbacks and backlash in light of expected gains. As witnessed by the Conte government, achievements on one front (immigration) can lead to isolationism and failures on other fronts (stabilization of Libya and reputational damage). The new government⁴⁴ is trying to repair the reputational damage, but this could come at the costs of less effective actions against illegal immigration. Italian decision-makers are called to find the best possible trade-off, keeping allies close and achieving Italian national interests.

This study has also confirmed that, notwithstanding the amount of resources devoted, the definition of a clear strategy is vital for success in Italian foreign policy. Without strategy, the possibilities to influence the final outcome are seriously affected, often subjected to external variables.

“We have the curious axiom that we cannot afford to produce strategy because we are not powerful enough. The opposite is true: the great powers can allow themselves some distractions [...]. We, who do not have their resources, are obliged to strategy. [we are obliged] to think and rethink our place in the world” (Editoriale Limes, 2017, p.1).

Overall, when looking at Italian strategic objectives in Libya, assertiveness and bold moves have brought fruits, while indecisions have had adverse effects. Italy is hardly a middle power, but it is located in a geostrategic position, and it can take advantage of it. Italy is stronger within the EU, because the Union increases Rome’s negotiation power and leverage, resources and credibility. Therefore, when playing in highly complex theatres like Libya, Italy must be able to coalesce the EU members in following its agenda. The starting point for doing this consists of pre-establishing a clear strategy for the objective and a coherent foreign policy agenda. To prevent early failures, a fair share of assertiveness is needed.

⁴⁴ Conte-2 government, an allegiance between 5-stars movement and Democratic Party

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Appendix 1

1) Resources:

Scores are awarded on the following basis:

5/5 = The Italian Government (and its ministries) devoted the largest possible resources imaginable in the real world (i.e. in the political, diplomatic, economic and budgetary context of its administration, not in absolute terms). The Government undertook bold initiatives, with the adequate expenditure of political, economic or military capital.

4/5 = The Government put serious resources to pursue its objective, but they were not quite as large or as bold as they could have been. In other words, not all possible resources were deployed, but the commitment was substantial.

3/5 = The Government devoted only limited resources, which had a negative impact on its ability and likelihood to meet the objective.

2/5 = The Government devoted insufficient resources, leading to a clear gap between objectives and resources, making it impossible for the government to meet the objective.

1/5 = The Government devoted poor resources, resulting in a yawning gap between ends and means. If there was hope to achieve the objective, that hope was based on wishful thinking.

0/5 = The Government put no resources behind its objective.

2) Strategy

Scores are awarded on the following basis:

5/5: The Government strategy is outstanding: the policies taken were bold and resourceful to pursue the objective. The government made the best possible use of the resources at its disposal. All the policies adopted were coherent and part of a clear objective-oriented strategy. Even with the benefits of the hindsight, the actions adopted by the government appear to be the most appropriate to pursue the objective. Only unforeseen or particularly strong external variables can prevent the achievement of the goal.

4/5: The Government strategy is very good: the policies taken were appropriate to pursue the objective. The government made a good use of the resources at its disposal. Most of the policies adopted were coherent and part of a clear objective-oriented strategy. The actions adopted by the government appear to be appropriate to pursue the objective, and only with

the benefits of the hindsight, something could have been done differently. Not considering unforeseen or particularly strong external variables, the strategy is likely to succeed.

3/5: The Government strategy is satisfactory: overall, the policies taken were more or less appropriate to pursue the objective. The government made a discrete use of the resources at its disposal. There is no a clear strategy, but the policies adopted were usually coherent, and functional to pursue the objective. Even when not using the benefits of the hindsight, it can be argued that the government could have made a better use of the resources available, acting differently in certain situations. Not considering unforeseen or particularly strong external variables, the strategy has the same odds to fail and succeed.

2/5: The Government strategy is insufficient: the policies taken were inadequate to pursue the objective. The government failed to use the resources at its disposal adequately. Not only there is no a clear strategy, but the policies adopted were often incoherent, and not very functional to pursue the objective. Even when not using the benefits of the hindsight, it can be argued that the government could have made a significantly better use of the resources available, acting differently in several situations. Even not considering unforeseen or particularly strong external variables, the strategy is more likely to fail than to succeed.

1/5: The Government strategy is poor: the policies taken were useless to pursue the objective. The government failed to use the resources at its disposal. There is no a clear strategy; the policies adopted were regularly incoherent and completely useless to pursue the objective. There is no need to use the benefits of the hindsight to claim that the government acted consistently in the wrong way; with the resources and options available, different actions were not only possible, but also more logic. Even not considering unforeseen or particularly strong external variables, the strategy will almost surely fail.

0/5: The Government strategy is a failure: the policies taken were not only useless, but counterproductive to pursue the objective. The government failed to use the resources at its disposal. A strategy is completely missing and the policies adopted were logically conflictual in relation to the objective. There is no need to use the benefits of the hindsight to claim that the government completely failed, by adopting counterproductive measures. Only unforeseen or particularly strong external variables could prevent the strategy to fail.

3) Outcome

Scores were awarded on the following basis:

5/5: the objective has been completely achieved and there is a clear sense of success regarding this objective. The outcome is excellent.

4/5: the objective has been mostly achieved, or there has been a great improvement compared to the recent past. Overall, the outcome is good.

3/5: the objective has been only partially achieved, or there has been a slight improvement compared to the past. Overall, the outcome is just sufficient.

2/5: the Government did not achieve the objective, but only marginal and minimal results. The situation at best maintains the status quo, and does not represent an improvement compared to the past. The outcome represents disappointing results for Italy.

1/5: the Government completely failed to achieve the objective. The outcome is clearly insufficient and represents a step-back compared to the past. There have been major setbacks for Italians, and a sense of failure dominates.

0/5: the Government drastically failed to achieve the objective. The outcome is the opposite of Italians' aims, or the situation has significantly deteriorated. A sense of uselessness or even catastrophe predominates.

4) Strategic consequences

Scores were awarded on the following basis:

5/5: the policies adopted for this objective had a significant positive influence on other strategic objectives. As a result of this strategy, not only the government improved its position on this objective, but on other fronts as well. Externalities are very positive.

4/5: the policies adopted for this objective had limited positive influence on other strategic objectives. As a result of this strategy, not only the government improved its position on this objective, but there is a slight positive impact on other fronts as well. Externalities are somewhat positive.

3/5: the policies adopted for this objective had no clear influence on other strategic objectives. Other fronts do not seem to be impacted by the strategy adopted for this objective. Externalities are neutral.

2/5: the policies adopted for this objective had a slight negative influence on other strategic objectives. As a result of this strategy, the government might have improved its position on

this objective, but other fronts witnessed a limited but visible setback. Externalities are somewhat negative. However, the benefits still outweigh the disadvantages.

1/5: the policies adopted for this objective had a significant negative influence on other strategic objectives. As a result of this strategy, the government might have improved its position on this objective, but other fronts witnessed a remarkable setback. Externalities are negative. It is not clear anymore if the benefits outweigh the disadvantages.

0/5: the policies adopted for this objective had dramatic consequences on other strategic objectives. As a result of this strategy, the government might have improved its position on this objective, but other fronts were sacrificed. Externalities are disastrous. The disadvantages clearly outweigh the benefits.