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Abstract

Why do states commit to deploying troops in peacekeeping missions? What factors shape policymakers' choice to get involved in such missions? What accounts for a state's earmarking military forces to PSO (Peace Support Operations), a notoriously risky and costly activity? Do states contribute personnel out of a desire to support the cosmopolitan values embodied in PSO, or out of self-interested behaviour? Are there different reasons accounting for the involvement of small and medium powers? Are those decisions based on normative, rule-based motivations, or rather on instrumental calculations of national interest?

During the Cold War period, Portugal was absent from UN (United Nations) peacekeeping operations (PKO), while Italy had a discreet involvement in some UN operations and in multinational coalitions of different shapes. However, since the end of the Cold War, both countries have reviewed their peacekeeping policy, and have shown a stronger commitment to UN operations and, increasingly, to NATO and to European Union (EU) Peace Support Operations. The end of the Cold War opened up new policy options for decision-makers in Lisbon and Rome, who were determined to be more active in that area. They purposefully developed a reputation as security providers, building, along the process, a distinct external- and self-identity, as natural "peace-makers". In the act, they upgraded their rank and, thus, their influence.

This paper argues that the rationale for pursuing PSO is not much different in the case of a small state like Portugal, as compared to a medium-state like Italy. Furthermore, Italy and Portugal may make instrumental use of PSOs to gain international visibility, but they have internalised the cosmopolitan rules that prevail in multilateral settings, acting - as regards PSO - primarily out of normative concerns.

Keywords:

Peace Support Operations, peacekeeping, Italy, Portugal, small states, medium-sized states.

Introduction: Theoretical Background*

PSO are a crisis response, and encompass contingency operations undertaken to respond to conflicts, humanitarian crises, and emergencies. Under PSO, states engage in organised multinational efforts, and involve mainly military personnel – but also a broad range of civilians, such as police forces, NGOs, civilian officials, and agencies -, to contain conflicts, and then rebuild and facilitate the transition to legitimate governance.[1] Most PSOs are authorised by the UN Security Council (UNSC), but a number of important intergovernmental organisations also engage in peacekeeping, including NATO and European bodies, such as the European Union.

In the wake of the Cold War's end, UN missions have become the hallmark of the "forces for good" (Elliot and Cheeseman 2004), engaged in the defence of cosmopolitan values. National military forces have been increasingly converted to "defend distant strangers against tyranny and the abuse of human rights" (Elliot 2004: 12). Military forces have shifted from traditional, state-based militaries, to become "transnational militaries" (Cheeseman 2008: 35), engaged in humanitarian and cosmopolitan operations (Cheeseman 2008: 42). The shift of focus from defence of a national territory towards international power projection, corresponds to the evolution of modern military organisations of the Cold War period to a "postmodern" stage, with militaries more engaged in non-traditional rather than in fighting missions, and in international military operations authorised by supra-national entities (such as the United Nations) (Moskos, Williams, and Segal 2000: 2).

According their respective means, Lisbon and Rome have made a great effort to offer sizeable contributions to PSO. They have invested in the creation of an image of peace-builders, to establish a distinct identity in their external relations. They have engaged large number of soldiers and increased their defence budgets to accommodate the ever-increasing number of operations sponsored by the UN, the EU, and NATO. That commitment has been maintained even when financial constraints have affected the sustainability of operations. Why do states go to such great lengths to protect the lives of strangers? Do they engage in such risky undertakings out of normative concerns, or is there a prevailing instrumental logic of gains to be reaped? Can Italy and Portugal make instrumental use of PSOs to gain international visibility, and be examples of the promotion of human rights?

For the prevailing IR (International Relations) theory, Realism, individual states are imagined to strive to ensure their security and achieve foreign policy goals, such as accruing their power, and neutralising external competitors and threats. States are supposed to act rationally, and, above all, to use all available resources to maximise the attainment of national goals (March and Olsen 1998, 944). As Kydd put it: "The fundamental assumption behind realism, is that states can be usefully thought of as unitary rational actors acting strategically under anarchy" (Kydd 1997: 120).

Neorealists assume that statesmen will choose the foreign policy course that is most likely to maximise security benefits, and minimise security risks in an anarchic international system (Elman

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* This paper builds partly on two former articles by the author: "A Small State's Search for Relevance: Peace Missions as Foreign Policy", International Peacekeeping 21 (3), 2014, 390-405; "Portugal: An Instrumental Approach to Peace Support Operations", Journal of Contemporary European Studies, 2014, 1-22.

1 For reasons of conceptual rigour and methodological consistence, I will use the concept of Peace Support Operations, which is a more comprehensive concept, instead of the traditional (UN) peacekeeping concept. This concept is also more in line with the nature of EU and NATO operations, with which Portugal and Italy have been increasingly involved. That is because, strictly speaking, according to the UN Capstone Doctrine, peacekeeping is a 'technique designed to preserve the peace, however fragile, where fighting has been halted, and to assist in implementing agreements achieved by the peacemakers' (DPKO 2008: 18). Peacekeeping has also been used as a generic term, as for example within the UN itself. In the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, PKO embrace a broad spectrum of activities to maintain international peace and security. UN peacekeeping has come to increasingly resemble PSO of other organisations, as the UN also resorts to enforcement measures and to the use of force (Findlay 2002).

1995: 172). Thus, the overriding national interest is to protect the state's integrity. The general content of state interests is determined deductively (Weldes 1996: 277) in reference to the structure of the international system, that is, the distribution of capabilities or the number of rivals (Waltz 1979: 134).

The rational choice theory concurs with Realism, in that states act on the basis of their perceived interests (logic of instrumentality). They are self-interested maximisers pursuing personal preferences, and calculating individual expected utility. Actions aim at making one's own preferences prevail, as other states will be developing simultaneous competitive efforts to maximise their own objectives. In the long run, a state's action based on an exclusively calculative, consequential approach may undermine the international normative environment (March and Olsen 1998: 949). Rational actors are "individualists, their intentions and preferences are not built on intersubjective understandings, common cultures or life worlds, but exist as private knowledge" (Müller 2004: 399).

Building on the work of constructivist theorists, and on the theory of appropriateness as regards the behaviour of political institutions, I argue that global culture has shaped the nature of Italy and Portugal's foreign policy, particularly regarding PSO. These arguments are based on the constructivist synthesis (Bellamy 2005), which follows from the convergence between the English School of IR and Constructivism (Bellamy 2005: 2). Followers of the English School of IR defend that ideas, rather than simply material capabilities, shape the conduct of international politics. International social rules legitimise and bolster states' authority, by complying with the prevailing international ethos. This argument should also resonate with students of constructivist IR theory, who contend that cultural/social/normative environments shape the basic nature or "identity" of states, and that, from interaction, the latter can *internalise* the same representations, and are able to learn from one another. Constructivists explain that they would want to participate in peacekeeping in order to show their adherence to the right principles of the international community, thus arguing that peacekeeping increases regime legitimacy.

Within constructivist theory, the conventional constructivism strand is particularly apt to explain the adoption of a rule-based behaviour, due to its focus on norms and identity. Conventional constructivism examines the role of norms and identity in shaping international political outcomes (Hopf 1998). As Katzenstein et al. have highlighted, constructivists focus on social ontology, that is, "they emphasize how ideational or normative structures constitute agents and their interests" (Katzenstein et al. 1999: 171-200). What this means in particular is that states live in a context of normative meaning, where intersubjective understandings of the material world shape states' interests, identity and behaviour.

Constructivism holds the view that international actors are embedded in a structure that is both material and normative (containing both resources and rules). Constructivists agree with realists on the point that states are aware of their interests and their power. "[B]ut what state interests are and become, and the meaning and purpose of power, take shape within – and are constituted by – a normative structure that emerges and evolves due to the actions and interactions of state and non-state actors" (Adler and Barnett 1998: 5).

Jarrett Jobe argued that the involvement of states in UN peacekeeping operations can best be described from a knowledge-based, or constructivist perspective. This framework explains states' involvement in peacekeeping by looking into their history of interaction with the international system and their perceived role (Jobe 2007: 5). The knowledge-based approach is premised on Alexander Wendt's IR theory of Constructivism. Particular emphasis is put on organisation, and on the development of identities and interests that states develop through social-political interaction, especially within international organisations (IOs) (Jobe 2007: 5-6). Specifically, it says that states may internalise many international norms, thus leading them to abet international regimes (Griffith 2009: 11; Chen 2009). Institutions are sources of collective identities and values, which influence other collective or individual actors. Interactions and/or the process of socialisation can change identities and thus form collective identities and interests (Wendt 1994). A main contribution of

Constructivism is unpacking the emergence of new ideas that can be adopted by actors and can become mainstream (Jackson and Sørensen 2007: 162).

Finnemore and Sikkink have shown how norm acceptance follows from a process of socialisation among states, especially within IOs, involving diplomatic and public pressure, as well as material incentives or "sticks" (1998: 901-04). IOs can act as norm socialisation agents by fostering "like-mindedness" among elites. Barnett and Finnemore (1999: 710-715) explained that IOs can influence the creation and acceptance of norms through their ability to classify events and issues, to assign meanings and legitimacy to specific ideas, and especially through "proselytising" work, on the part of officials, to persuade member states to adopt and adhere to new normative standards. At this stage, socialisation may also promote a common understanding of the meaning of the norm, and consensus on its applicability. This process also requires learning and emulation.

Several studies have suggested that IOs may play a crucial role in the institutionalisation and acceptance of global norms (Karns and Mingst 1987: 462). Finnemore and Sikkink have expounded the mechanisms of norm internalisation, where norms are so widely accepted that they are embedded by actors in a way "that makes conformance with the norm almost automatic" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 904). An internalised norm will become the basis for state policy, and for judging the legitimacy of one's own and others' actions. Within international organisations, "norm-setting resolutions can determine the parameters of specific issues in ways that either present opportunities for governments to act or limit their freedom to respond" (Karns and Mingst 1987: 462).

IOs, especially those within the UN universe, have been "transmission belts" seeking to mould states' behaviour based on particular international ethics (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Risse and Sikkink 1999). Thus, international norms stimulate states to engage in peacekeeping in order to gain external legitimacy, because the UN is seen as embodying the moral values of international society. Borrowing from Joseph Nye's phrase (Nye 1990b), by becoming leaders in peacekeeping, states can increase their soft power.

In line with Constructivism, the logic of appropriateness[2] says human behaviour involves cognitive and ethical dimensions, despite the prevailing tendency to calculate the consequences and expected utility of a certain course of action (March and Olsen 1989 2011: 690). Human and political action is not only the net sum of calculating individual expected utility, but also the result of a particular conception of a state's self-identity and of what is seen as virtuous, or corresponding to the institutionalised practices of a community: "Political actors are constituted both by their interests, by which they evaluate their expected consequences, and by the rules embedded in their identities and political institutions" (March and Olsen 1998: 952).

The tendency to develop "internalized prescriptions of what is socially defined as normal, true, right, or good" is quite recurrent and old (March and Olsen 2011: 690). In certain circumstances, the rules of appropriateness may overpower the logic of consequentiality and redefine self-interest (March and Olsen 2011: 702). March and Olsen have shown that the logic of consequential calculation or rules are not mutually exclusive, as norm-oriented strategic action is "compatible with an instrumentally rational logic of action" (Risse 2000:4). Often, there is not a single dominant behavioural logic determining the outcome, but they intertwine in subtle, complementary ways (March and Olsen 2011: 491; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 914). Risse argued that "principled and causal beliefs can enter the utility functions of actors, affect cost-benefit calculations, and influence the strategic interactions themselves" (2000: 4).

Actually, there may be a developmental, or evolutionary relation between consequential action and a rule-based one (March and Olsen 1998: 953). When they socialise, actors may start bargaining on positions based on interest, but they may "develop rules in the course of interaction. These rules will

[2] As opposed to the logic of rationally calculated expected consequences.

guide their interactions in the long term" (Müller 2004: 403). With experience, rules can eventually "supplant and constrain instrumental-calculative action in a given situation" (March and Olsen 1998: 953). By inter-acting in multilateral settings, states start out on an instrumental strategy, "but develop identities and rules as a result of their experience, thus shifting increasingly toward rule-based action, which they then pass on to subsequent actors" (March and Olsen 1998: 953).

Portugal and Italy's increasingly positive attitude toward PSO can be explained by using the constructivist norm change theory. Specifically, the contention is that elites have internalised many international norms heralded by international organisations, thus leading them to increase their support towards UN peacekeeping, and PSO in general. The multilateral context has influenced and shaped the values and priorities of decision-makers in those countries, leading them to adopt a norm-based behaviour.

Small and Medium Powers

Small Powers

International relations scholars have ventured various schemes that provide a grid for classifying small and medium states: the inclusion and appropriate weightings of such factors as military power, population size, wealth (aggregate and per capita), and other material[3] and non-material assets (including "prestige" or "influence").

Bangladesh, a quite populated and poor developing nation, is the world's largest donor of troops to the U.N. peacekeeping forces. Actually, it has been topping the list of UN troop donors for 26 years (Palet 2015). Small states have contributed generously with troops, police and military observers to UN missions.[4] In the ranking of the military and police contributions to UN operations, 7 of the countries listed in the top ten positions are small, poor states: Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Nepal, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Rwanda. In the first twenty positions, all other countries are medium powers, with the noticeable exception of China, a latecomer to PKO. It is a well-known fact that Western great powers have sharply reduced their commitment to UN PKO, ever since the mid-1990s, in the wake of the traumatic failures in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda (Bellamy and Williams 2009). They prefer to act outside the scope of the UN framework, in hybrid missions under national command or within exclusively Western commands related either to a pivotal state, or an organisation, such as the EU or NATO (Bellamy and Williams, 2009, 49). What has also emerged, as regards UN operations, is that Western countries have, in the last two decades, participated symbolically to Blue Helmets' peace operations, with only token contributions (Bellamy e Williams 2013: 55 and ff.; Coleman 2013).

In recent years, more interests have arisen on analysing the role of small states in international security. The end of the Cold War has determined the ending of several constraints determined by superpower constrictions, widening the possibilities for a more active contribution by small states. Small states are no longer dependent on the security umbrella provided by great powers. From consumers, they have become security producers (Steinmetz and Wivel 2010: 8). They actively contribute to international security, for instance, by donning troops to UN missions. Thus, it is worthwhile striving to explore the growing body of arguments to which this paper modestly hopes to contribute: "As small states more actively seek to gain influence over international affairs, we need to

[3] Starting with Realist theory, which has posited a combination of seven elements: population, territory, resources, economic capability, military strength, political stability, and competence (Waltz 1979: 131).

[4] More recent works that discuss smaller states' interest in PKO are: Beswick (2010); Heng (2012); Ko (2015); Leira (2013).

know more about how and why they do it if we are to understand international relations" (Steinmetz and Wivel 2010: 8)

The problem with the small state concept is that IR scholars have not come up with a generally accepted definition, as even a quantitative ranking is hard to determine (Hänggi 1998: 82, Baehr 1975). In looking for the lowest common denominator as a departing point, population is most often used as an objective key indicator on smallness[5] (Väyrynen 1971: 92-93). Moving beyond only a population classification, a state's geographic area and its economic capacity, such as provided by the Gross National Product, are well-established indicators. However, the fact remains that small states form too broad a category for purposes of accurate analysis, so narrow definitions can be arbitrary and incomplete.[6] The definition of small or medium states cannot be based solely on parameters or tangible "hard facts" - usually military and economic -, because a number of different parameters can be combined and factored in different ways, and even include other less tangible outliers.[7]

However, the fact that one cannot nail down those parameters in an exact way does not mean one can rule out the use of the phrase (Hänggi 1998: 82). Ditching the venture of identifying absolute categorisations, a more inclusive classification can be more useful to capture the different nuances within the small state category. Small states are often defined by their position within the international system. A state's status in the system is relational (Raska 2016: 11), and must be measured in comparative terms: a more granular analysis can bring out strengths in different issue areas. Vital argues that a small state is "small" in relation to a greater power it is interacting with (Vital 2006), while Handel states that what matters is a state's relative strength (Handel 1981: 10).

According to Keohane, small states are those that are "system ineffectual", that is, they are unable to influence: a small power is a state whose leaders consider that it can never - acting alone or in a small group - make a significant impact on the system" (1969: 296).[8] Steinmetz and Wivel define them as "the weak part in an asymmetric relationship" and, additionally, states which are prisoners of a specific "power configuration and its institutional expression, no matter what their specific relation to it is" (Steinmetz and Wivel 2010: 7). In other words: they are unable to have an influence, and to change the policy-making conditions in their geographic area; they are highly sensitive and have lesser autonomy with respect to their environment; they are more vulnerable to pressure, have a reduced ability for pursuing a policy of their own, and are subject to a tighter connection between domestic and external affairs (Wiber 1987: 393; Vital 2006: 77; Goetschel 1998: 16). Robert Rothstein defines a small state as "a state which recognises that it cannot obtain security primarily by use of its own capabilities, and that it must rely fundamentally on the aid of other states, institutions, processes, or developments to do so; the Small Power's belief in its inability to rely on its own means must also be recognised by the other states involved in international politics" (Rothstein, 1969: 29.). They see themselves as weak states within the international system, and require the security of outside

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5 To convolute things further, the notion of small state can refer to different types of states: micro states, small states in the developed world, and small states in the third world (Steinmetz and Wivel 2010: 5-6). Although briefly discussing it, the theoretical debate on how to define a small state is not the focal point of the arguments that will be presented here (Väyrynen 1971: 92-93). In Europe, there is a minimal consensus on the size of small states regarding their population. The population-based definition of small states coincides with David Vital's often quoted proposal to set an upper limit for small states at a population of 10-15 million for developed states (1967: 8); see also, Vital 2006: *81; Steinmetz and Wivel* in *Steinmetz, and Wivel (eds)* 2010: *6; Hey (2003:* 4). Portuguese population was estimated at 10.4 million people in 2015.

6 Clarke and Payne define a small state as one with a population under 1 million people, while East considers small states as those with a population under 23.7 million people.

7 There are huge disparities on other counts: small gas and oil exporting countries, such as Qatar, Bahrain, and Norway cannot compare with poor, *small states, such as* Equatorial Guinea or Cape Verde.

8 Quoting T*hucydides* in the fifth century BC: "The strong do what they have the power to do, and the weak accept what they have to accept" (quoted in Wivel, Bailes, and Archer 2014: 3), and Hugh White: "small powers just take what happens" (quoted in Scott 2013: 112).

providers. However, this definition includes many large or medium-sized states that do not have complete military self-reliance or, at least, have this ingrained perception.

Small states either do exhibit, or are expected to exhibit, a number of behaviours in the conduct of their foreign and security policies. Scholars studying foreign policy agree that small states traditionally try to minimize costs, and to pool their resources, in order to achieve greater influence in conducting foreign policy by initiating joint actions and using multiple-actor fora (East 1973: 565, 576; Neumann and Carvalho 2015: 8).

Most small states share other traits: they rely on bargaining processes and institutions, thus they must maximise their "bargaining power". They usually employ diplomatic and economic foreign policy instruments, as opposed to military instruments: mediation, bridge-building, or other non-coercive processes (Rothstein 1968: 26). They emphasise internationalist principles, international law, and other "morally minded" and international ideals (Goetschel 1998: 25-6; Hey 2003: 109, 116). Similarly, Hey found that small states try to enter multinational agreements and to join multinational institutions whenever possible, as they can thus protect and promote their interests. In fact, smaller states have a natural interest in strengthening multilateralism, because it reduces the asymmetric relationship with great powers, precludes aggressive impulses by them (Balslev 1998: 116), binding the behaviour of strong states, and limiting their ability to coerce smaller ones (Schia and Sending 2015: 76).[9]

Regarding international norms, small states are particularly motivated to uphold the very norms set by internationalist bodies, which major powers have created in the past within the framework of the UN. Although they cannot aspire to be norm formulators in the most power-driven areas, they often play "important roles as transmitters or in getting processes starting and moving" (Schmidl 2001: 85). "Multilateral settings put a premium on behavior that is in keeping with a commitment to the furtherance and expansion of the rules established by multilateral cooperation and organizations" (Schia and Sending 2015: 73).

Indeed, small states frequently act as norm entrepreneurs, influencing world politics (Neumann and Carvalho 2015; Petrova 2007: 4; Neumann and Gstöhl 2006: 8). Over the last two decades, the study of small states' role on the development of new international norms has attracted increasing interest (Petrova 2007). Some - mostly Nordic authors - have explained how small states have engaged in successful activities for the development of new international norms, an activity that has earned them prestige and "social power". Scandinavian countries are particularly active in international fora as norm entrepreneurs, a "strategic action" driven by long-standing national traditions of peace and cooperation, but also a purposeful strategy to gain recognition: "This reputation is consciously cultivated and deepened as a cornerstone of Scandinavian diplomatic relations" (Ingebritsen 2006: 275). As Donnelly has perceptively remarked: "reputation may also have instrumental value in the pursuit of power or gain" (2000: 66).

Small states play a leading role in strengthening appropriate international standards. Swedish foreign policy elites had a major role in the process of an emerging conflict prevention norm (Björkdahl 2002). Norway has earned the reputation of a "human rights superpower" (Egeland 1988), or "humanitarian superpower" (Petrova 2007: 30), with a long tradition on peace-making and conflict mediation;[10] and as a front-runner in climate change, and sustainable development regimes. It has intentionally invested in the development of "a distinctive identity that would both make it visible on the international scene, and distinguish it from its European neighbors" (Petrova 2007: 4). Equally, Denmark is in the lead in areas such as peacekeeping and aid policy (Archer 2014: 103). The Nordic states' activist and internationalist foreign policy on a range of constructive and morally-minded issues

[9] Due to their institutionalising and legitimising role, multilateral arenas can be used by small powers to unmask great powers' hypocrisy, and to challenge them to abide by the rules not to risk delegitimization (Schia and Sending 2015: 76).

[10] Such as the 1993 Oslo Accords between Israel and the Palestinians.

has arguably conferred upon them - at times and on those issues -, the leverage of a middle power status. The clout earned in specific issue areas, is an *"*issue-specific structural power" (Habeeb 1989: 129-149).

This interpretation of power may call for a re-examination of the definition of power (Long 2016). Diverse understandings of power are called for, in order "to focus on how states exercise influence in ways that do not conform to strictly economic and military capabilities" (Ingebritsen 2006: 27). Military and economic power are the usual benchmarks for assessing a state's position on the international system. However, power can be understood in different ways. Are small states really "fragile creatures in the rough sea of international relations?" (Goetschel 1998: 13).

In contrast to hard power, there is the concept of soft power, to render the idea of how a small state uses involvement in PKO to generate, not hard, but soft power. According to Joseph Nye *(*Nye 1990a*; Nye 2004)*, soft power is "the ability to achieve goals through attraction rather than through coercion" (Keohane and Nye, 1998: 86.). It is a way of exerting influence through economic and cultural means, rather than through military ends, or 'hard power" (Nye 1990: 153-71). The soft power of a given country "rests primarily on three sources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority)" (Nye 2004: 11). Axworthy elaborates on this point by saying that "'soft power' relies on diplomatic resources, persuasion, information capacity, and creative use of selective military tools, rather than coercive force to promote a country's interests or project its influence on the world stage" (Axworthy 2001: 9). Soft power can enhance a small state's ability to be an effective capacity builder, and is a more viable option for the pursuit of its own interests. Involvement in UN peacekeeping contributes towards small states' soft power.

Middle Powers

In many respects, middle power categorisation is also a matter of contention due to the undetermined nature of power status, which, as seen before, does not rest squarely on material capabilities. In relational terms, "[M]iddle powers have enough weight to influence what happens around them so as to protect their interests. They can negotiate with great powers, not simply obey them" (White, quoted in Scott 2013: 112). Although this is a consistent departure point, it cannot account for the diversity of middle powers, and the way their importance varies over time depending on the particular international configurations.

Middle powers have a lot in common with small powers in the use of their skills and soft power. Indeed, Neack unambiguously states that "middle powers are identified most often by their international behaviour" (Neack 2000: [2]). Many of those, such as Canada, are keen on being perceived as order-committed states, upholding and safeguarding normative internationalism, embracing commitments towards peace and security, and promoting respect for human rights and democracy, upon which the international order is based (Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal 1993: 19). Middle power internationalism also derives from self-interest: middle powers are keener on the preservation of international norms and principles, because they can immediately benefit from an orderly international system (Neack 2000: [3]; Karns and Mingst 1987, 462).

They uphold notions of "good international citizenship" (Behringer 2005: 307). Middle powers show a preference for working through multilateral institutions and processes (Ungerer 2007: 539). They tend to place great emphasis on the United Nations as a global-setting agenda arena (Cooper 1997), and to act in compliance with international organisations set norms (Karns and Mingst 1987: 462). They display "a commitment to promoting international legal norms and a pro-active use of diplomatic, military and economic measures to achieve selected political outcomes" (Ungerer 2007:539). A typical method is coalition-building, with like-minded countries mediating and serving as "go-betweens" (Scott 2013: 113; Neack 2000: [2]).

Middle powers can lay claim to "issue-specific structural power": Canada's traditional comparative advantage in the business of peacekeeping or its "middle power diplomacy'" (Neack 2000: [2]), which, in some cases, is distinctly "normative" (Scott 2013: 111, 113). Middle powers have been leading the human security agenda, a trend that contradicts the realist view of middle powers as mere followers of great power leadership on global security issues (Behringer 2005). Canada is proud of its "normative middle Power diplomacy", which is a source of political clout (Scott 2013: 111). Sweden has invested on its "moral superpower" reputation as norm entrepreneur, peacekeeper, and aid donor (Björkdahl 2002: 74).

Robert Keohane holds that "a middle power is a state whose leaders consider that it cannot act alone effectively, but may be able to have a systematic impact in a small group or through an international institution; a small power is a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system (1969: 296).

Regarding the Italian case, political scientist, Carlo Maria Santoro's definition of its middle power status is: "A middle power is a country that is fully aware of its subordinated status in the international system… Which has learned quickly to give up many of the ambitions that were the hallmark of its nationalist past… It is constantly trying to assert its status and to prevent any encroaching from other middle-powers…" (Quoted in Nuti 2011: 27. See also, Osti 2014: 330; Romano 1993, Varsori: 1998, 171 and ff.; Romano 1993: 126 and ff.; Miller 1992).

However, as seen previously, any definition of a state's status must be relational, that is, it *depends* upon its *regional* context, in other words, upon its position regarding its neighbours (Jesse and Dreyer 2016: 9; Wivel and Oest, 2010). Wivel and Oest have posited that middle powers are states that are weak "in an asymmetric relationship at the global level, but are strong [states] at the regional and sub-regional levels" (Wivel and Oest 2010: 434). This distinction is particularly useful within the European regional context, where Italy measures itself against its peers and rivals. One can, for instance, distinguish the "big three" - UK, France, and Germany - from middle powers such as Italy. However, Italy has a tendency to measure itself against Spain as a rival/peer middle southern European power (Ignazi, Giacomello, and Coticchia 2012: 221).

A different, but complementary take on the broader enquiry into what constitutes a middle power, is how a state thinks of itself, and is seen by others as being "medium". Indeed, a state's status may also be considered as a "perceptual problem" (Amstrup 1976: 166), or as "merely a frame of mind, a subjective condition which pervades the mind-set of the actor, thus moulding horizons and agendas for action and perception" (Baldacchino quoted in Dumienski 2014: 11). Status is also a matter of self- and others' perception: it is a social construction (Giacomello and Verbeek 2011: 13), an intersubjective topic, because it depends on the systemic role that elites see their country playing.

Thus, a state's status also follows from its self-perception, "weighed against the expectations other states have regarding the role of the state in question" (Giacomelli and Verbeek 2011: 16). A situation of relative power results from objective conditions, namely, power deficit, but also from self-perception and feedback from the environment, which makes the state conscious of its weakness or relative power (Goetschel 2006: 17). This is particularly the case of Italy, a country which is a relative latecomer to the European scene, and whose position has fluctuated ever since its unification, and that has grappled to define an established sense of identity.

Case Study: Portugal and Italy's Participation in PSO

Portugal

In 2016, on average, Portugal had 1,832 soldiers deployed outside its national territory (Ministério da Defesa 2016: 1). These missions take place within the framework of international organisations to which Portugal belongs, and to which it is keen to demonstrate its commitment. According to priorities established during the last governments, Portugal has been involved in all major international military operations and crisis management missions of the UN, NATO, and the EU (Teixeira 2009: 21). Due to the worsening of the economic and financial crisis since 2011, severe budgetary constraints have began to affect Portuguese involvement, and although with token contributions, it still remained engaged in missions within those three organisations.

Portuguese involvement in peacekeeping missions has recorded a notorious leap forward since the mid-1990s. Overall, since the 1990s, Portugal has committed over 36,000 troops, who were involved in peace missions in over 30 different theatres of operations, covering all the world continents (Estado-Maior 2017). The sheer number of forces deployed, as well as the diversity of locations where they have been spread, reflects the ambition and the effort made by the Portuguese governments in the last 25 years.

Portuguese involvement in peacekeeping missions became a new dimension of its foreign policy in the post-cold War era. Portugal engaged in demanding PSOs in former Portuguese colonies, and in the Balkans. However, in truth, it was during the Cold War that Portugal debuted in international missions, with just a small mission of military observers in Lebanon, as part of UNOGIL (UN Observer Group in Lebanon).

Involvement in peace missions was a quite radical departure from Portugal's non-interventionism in international conflicts in the 20th century. That position was related to Lisbon's stance in World War I, when it adopted a neutrality and non-interventionism policy regarding the European scene. This stance was anchored on the principles of non-intervention, respect for state sovereignty, and belief in the principle of neutrality, a cardinal principle inherited by Salazar's dictatorial 50-years regime, which was kept throughout World War II in order to keep the country aloof from the conflict.

Another major reason precluding external military involvements was because, since the early 1960s, the Portuguese Armed Forces were engaged in three colonial wars in Africa, which absorbed the energies of the country for 14 years (1961-1975). The Portuguese attempted to sustain three separate, but simultaneous campaigns, significantly distant from each other, and from the metropolis.

In the post-Revolution period, the national defence priorities laid mainly in the maintenance of transatlantic relations, and in rebuilding ties with its former African colonies. The dominant paradigm shared by political and military circles was that of an "exclusivist Atlanticism", that is, attachment to NATO and unremitting loyalty to the United States. In fact, Portugal was, in 1949, a founding member of NATO. Attachment to the Alliance and to Washington became the strategic pillars of Portuguese foreign and defence policies. After the Revolution, and until the early 1990s, an attitude of isolation prevailed, especially among the military, mixed with alienation towards Europe, or with an attitude of "cooperative" neutrality, at best. In 1977, with the new regime, Portugal applied to the European Communities, which it joined only in 1986, after a long and difficult path.

The awkward Portuguese attitude towards international conflicts came up quite clearly during the Gulf War in 1991. When the conflict began, the Portuguese position was clearly aligned with the coalition, but from a military point of view - as stated by the then Foreign Minister -, Portugal was a "non-belligerent" state (Vasconcelos 1999). Portugal provided facilities in the Azores and in the mainland, but was not part of the military coalition involved in the Gulf, a political decision that had

considerable costs (Espírito 2006). Portugal was clearly unable to engage in military activity, but was stimulated into serious discussion about a defence identity via the West European Union (WEU). However, by this time, a transformation in the attitude of the Portuguese military was already in the pipeline. Once the consolidation of the new Portuguese democratic regime was achieved and political-military relations were normalised, the military found a new rationale for involvement in post-Cold War missions.

A new strategic environment

Portuguese participation in PSO is the result of the changing security environment with the end of the Cold War, especially with the proliferation of a new set of risks and threats. Portuguese national defence policy largely reflects the awareness of a constrained international environment, with new issues of concern, such as organised crime, terrorism, Islamist extremism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, environmental risks, humanitarian disasters, and pandemics. Portuguese official documents also highlight the emergence of failed states, violent conflicts and civil wars, which have become a threat to European security and stability (AR und.).

This new environment has shaped the emergence of a new security narrative. Portuguese politicians acknowledged that the concept of security, particularly in the new era, assumed a broader meaning (Teixeira 2008: 2, 3; 2009: 56) that goes far beyond the protection of one's national borders against military threats; a vision that was evidenced, at the international level, in the successive revisions of NATO's Strategic Concept and the EU Security Strategy (Conceito 2013: 21-22).

A state's security now comprises interests beyond those traditionally considered as vital, and sometimes materialised far away from the state's territorial basis. This is what some authors have referred to as the increasing interdependence between internal and external aspects of security or, in other words, the external dimensions of internal security (Bigo 2006; Eriksson and Rhinard 2009, Presidência 2013: 279). In the new official security narrative, two important consequences follow from this: firstly, the new concept of security goes beyond the traditional concern of a state being immune to external threats. Secondly, security is no longer exclusively that of states: what it is now at stake, is also the security of people. The Portuguese government has adopted the framework of "human security", as the theoretical underpinning of its security and policy concerns (Teixeira 2008: 3).

The last major implication is that it requires an adaptation of traditional instruments, in order to be able to respond to new risks and threats. In the security and defence realms, "[I]t is a notion of security sustained in the projection of stability onto the regional borders, in support of nation-building of economically and politically sustainable states, based on the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights; it is sustainable security in promoting sustainable development and improving the living conditions of populations, that is, human security" (Teixeira 2008: 3).

As Portuguese authorities commonly state, the security concept must be flexible, which requires from states a new kind of understanding of their role in the international community. The response will have to rely mainly on international cooperation: it is thus a framework of cooperative security, "because it is based on cooperation between states, as the sole response to risks and threats to international security" (Teixeira 2008: 3; República Portuguesa 2013: 21 and ff.).

An aspect underlined by those documents, is the multiplicity of "borders" that characterise modern Portugal (Resolução 2003: 283). Portuguese statesmen have stated that "the guarantee of national security is increasingly promoted beyond our traditional boundaries, [that is, beyond] the traditional geographical boundaries of states" (Teixeira 2008, 15). The implication is that Portugal must "take up its responsibilities for international stabilisation, not only within the framework of NATO and the European Union, and in contiguous geographical regions, but also well beyond the area defined as traditional" (Teixeira 2008, 6).

Thus, in the early 1990s, despite the heated debate on whether or not to intervene in the Balkans, Portuguese officials began to recognise that, on account of Portugal's membership to the EU and to NATO, its security border no longer coincided with its geographical outer rim. Portugal's strategic interests – while still focusing on the Atlantic – henceforth also included Europe and its southern fringe, thus making the Balkans an area of interest to Portugal (Vasconcelos 2000: 22; Teixeira 1999).

Portuguese defence has thus been called upon to provide the conceptual framework and the operational means to shoulder this broad concept of security within flexible borders (Rodrigues 2009, 15) through a mix of various components. The answer to the new challenges, and the new security rationale, was the definition of a new legitimacy for international intervention. Such legitimacy would derive from a new way of ensuring an effective contribution towards international peace and stability, in the wake of the end of the Cold War. A major line of the official discourse was the statement that Portugal must be a "producer of international security"; that it must shoulder its international responsibilities, and provide a sizeable contribution to international peace and stability (Duque 1998, Freire 2007: 90; Teixeira 2009: 118, 219; República Portuguesa 2013: 35). Becoming a producer of security would provide the "credibility" stamp (see Vitorino 1996), and enhance its international prestige.

The Legitimising Framework

The Portuguese military doctrine reflects the country's "internationalist" orientation, namely by focusing on international peace missions. With its externally oriented doctrine, the Portuguese military share the political understanding that PSO missions are favourable to the pursuit of the national interest. This understanding has been inscribed into the main documents that outline the aims of military forces. The fourth amendment to the 1975 Constitution, introduced in 1997, highlights the commitment to military intervention in a variety of missions, regardless of the region of the globe. The latest National Defence Law provides that - among the range of attributions of the armed forces -, one of the foremost is "to take part in international military missions… including humanitarian and peace missions conducted by international organisations to which Portugal is a party" (Law No. 31-A/2009). The Strategic Concept of National Defence, reviewed in 2013, reflects the growing importance of the involvement of Portugal within the context of multinational operations, fulfilling its international commitments and as part of its collective responsibility (República Portuguesa 2013: 35), namely within the framework of the UN, NATO, and the EU (República Portuguesa 2013: 30, 37).

National legislation recognises that the armed forces are one of the instruments for asserting Portugal's national foreign policy, and validates the rationale to endow them with the military capabilities required to carry out their new tasks. Former Minister of Defence, Teixeira, stated that "National Defence and the Armed Forces are not only one of the fundamental pillars of state sovereignty, but have increasingly become an irreplaceable instrument of our external policy, whilst international presence of the State" (Teixeira 2008: 2).

In fact, the emerging debate in Portugal on the need for a more active role of the military, took into account several legal changes, as the demise of compulsory military service, political pressure for downsizing its personnel, and the change in the deployment of military forces. They are deployed, not so much within the context of classical warfare, but more so, in peacekeeping operations or in armed conflicts, along phenomena of asymmetric insurgencies and terrorist actions.

Deciding to Intervene

The changes occurring in the external environment prompted a redefinition of foreign policy and national defence, in accordance with awareness of the new geo-strategic context of threats and risks. Portugal, which had not intervened in any conflict in Europe since World War I, was moved by the new situation to change its traditional defence paradigm, underpinned on Atlanticism and Africanism.

At the end of the Cold War, Portugal embarked in international missions with a very modest mission of 25 military observers and civilians within the scope of UNTAG (UN Transition Assistance Group to Namibia), to supervise the electoral process. It also took part in a EU mission contributing with military observers to the European Communities for Yugoslavia Monitoring Mission (ECMM-YU).

In the 1990s, the Portuguese armed forces were more substantially involved in several theatres of conflict, namely in former African colonies - Angola, and Mozambique -, in former Yugoslavia, and in East-Timor. The first major mission in Africa was in Angola. The Portuguese government strongly pushed for both a peace process between the ruling party and the opposition, culminating in the Bicesse Agreement in 1991, and in the holding of free elections in 1992.

Between 1991 and 1992, Portugal took part in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission II (UNAVEM II). This mission (May 1991-February 1995) was established with the mandate of verifying the arrangements agreed by the Angolan parties for monitoring the ceasefire and supervising the development of the political and electoral process in Angola. This mission helped draw practical knowledge that would then become relevant for the preparation of future military observers.

With the resumption of violent conflicts, after the ill-fated elections of September 1992, peace had to be renegotiated. The agreement was achieved only in November 1995, with the signing of the Lusaka Protocol. The UN immediately set up a new peacekeeping operation - UNAVEM III (1995-1997) -, to which Portugal contributed, namely with a Signal Company (101 elements), and a Logistics Company (205 elements). With this mission, Portugal tried to take a central position within the realm of Portuguese-speaking countries, in the wake of a hasty and frustrating decolonisation process that left a quite bitter legacy. It should be noted that the Portuguese participation in the UNAVEM missions, and the takeover MONUA (UN Mission of Observers in Angola, July 1997-February 1999) involved a total of 838 troops (Viana 2002: 311).

Portugal would then return to Africa for a second important intervention in another former Portuguese colony, Mozambique. It began its formal involvement in the late 1990s within the context of the peace process, incorporating the Joint Verification Commission (COMIVE) with a military representation for overseeing the partial withdrawal of Zimbabwean troops (Viana 2002: 311). When the General Peace Agreement was signed, in October 1992, Portugal took part, simultaneously, in the political and military process (1993-1994), and in the UN peacekeeping force UNOMOZ (UN Operation in Mozambique). This was the first mission, after World War II, to where Portugal deployed its first Signal Battalion abroad (Viana 2002: 312).

Portugal's involvement in PSO entered a new stage with the operations in the Balkans. When, in January 1992, Portugal held the Presidency of the European Community, it developed a more consistent stance in European political and defence affairs, especially when faced with the need to deal with ethnic violence in former Yugoslavia, which threatened the stability of the continent. When, following the 1995 Dayton Accords, NATO launched Operation Joint Endeavour and IFOR (Implementation Force), the possibility of a Portuguese intervention in Bosnia was brought up. There was a heated internal debate, with arguments put forward against such involvement. The objections against, focused on Portuguese traditional strategic thinking, which claimed that Portugal had no traditional or historical relations with the Balkans. Bosnia, the Balkans, and the European theatre, in general, were not areas of strategic interest to Portugal. It was argued that Portugal had nothing to gain from its involvement in a mission in Bosnia. Furthermore, due to its limited resources, it should engage in areas of strategic interest, particularly in Africa (Teixeira 1999).

The 1994 amendment to the National Strategic Concept already disclosed the new security vision and concerns related to adapting the armed forces to deployment in peacekeeping or peace-building missions.

In January 1996, Portugal sent a contingent involving about 1,000 personnel to Bosnia (Viana, 2002, 314): in proportional terms, this placed Portugal among the top contributors to IFOR. In

December 1996, NATO initiated the Operation Joint Guard with the SFOR (Stabilisation Force) Multinational Force, to which Portugal contributed with a battalion-size unit, albeit with a smaller force. Portugal has uninterruptedly contributed towards security in Bosnia and Herzegovina with almost 8,000 personnel (Ministério da Defesa 2016: 1). It is relevant to point out the Portuguese effort not only in material terms, but, particularly, in human terms: it ranked seventh among 34 participating countries (Teixeira 2009: 23).

As stated earlier, the IFOR operation came to mark a redirection of the Portuguese defence policy regarding Europe, as it jettisoned the neutrality and non-intervention policy, and adopted an active role in the defence of peace on the European continent (Vasconcelos 2000: 19-20; 1999: 7; 2001: 103; Carrilho, Maria 1999). The Portuguese government presented three main reasons to uphold this resolve: the need to preserve Portugal's credibility as a partner to the European project, its solidarity towards the victims of the conflict in former Yugoslavia, and defence of the national interest (Vitorino 1998; 1996).

Its active involvement in IFOR (later SFOR from 1996 to 2004) was an important milestone in Portugal's international position. Arguably, Portugal's significant participation in IFOR strengthened its position in NATO, offering it a kind of high profile status, and increasing its bargaining power (Vitorino 1996: 87–96; Freire 2007).

The decision to join IFOR also generated a momentum for modernising Portugal's armed forces. It established a clear line between a conservative view on the role and structure of the armed forces, rooted in homeland defence, and a vision for transforming and modernising the military, based on the projection of forces beyond borders, and in joint and combined operations. This shift in the centre of gravity of Portuguese national defence policy would unfold gradually, pushing for the abolition of conscription, and a paradigm shift relating to priorities for equipment and new capabilities, training, and on military force doctrine.

When, in 1999, following NATO's air campaign against Serbia, Belgrade withdrew its forces from Kosovo, the Alliance set up a military mission there - the KFOR (Kosovo Force). The decision to participate in KFOR was much less consensual than the one in Bosnia (Vasconcelos 1999; Carreiras 2007, 14). The mission's legitimacy was challenged because it was seen as infringing Serbia's sovereignty and unsanctioned by the UNSC. There was widespread dissatisfaction with the deployment of national troops, with protests staged in several Portuguese cities, and heated debates in Parliament and in the Media. This scenario of disapproval conditioned the government's record on the matter, which, unable to invoke the national interest, decided to seek the legitimacy of the intervention with an internationalist discourse, appealing to the fulfilment of commitments taken up with European partners, the seriousness of the humanitarian situation, and the abuse of human rights. The government contributed to Operation Allied Force with its Air Force. Portuguese F-16s performed only combat air patrol, and escorted offensive aircrafts over Yugoslav territory.[11]

The means involved in this mission were greatly responsible for the positive assessment on the way in which the Portuguese forces responded to the requirements of the mission. This led Portugal to assign a significant presence to the National Defence Force in Kosovo, in 2005: an Army battalion in Pristina, which integrated the Kosovo Security Force (KFOR), and constituted a KFOR Tactical Reserve.

In January 2000, Portugal began a new stage in its peacekeeping ventures, which steeply raised its contribution to peacekeeping operations. The theatre was the former colony of East Timor, a territory taken over by Indonesia in 1975. UN-brokered talks between Indonesia and Portugal culminated in a May 1999 agreement, which paved the way for a popular consultation on the status of the territory.

[11] The Portuguese detachment, the 201st Squadron at the Monte Real Air Base, was the first unit of the Portuguese armed forces to enter a military offensive since the end of the colonial wars in Africa (Cordeiro 2005: 192-193).

The August 1999 ballot, in which 78 per cent of East Timorese voted for independence, was followed by a wave of violence unleashed by pro-Indonesian militias. With Portuguese public opinion united behind the East Timorese cause, Portuguese officials used international fora to raise international support for a UN peacekeeping force.

As expected, Portugal's most significant involvement in any UN peacekeeping mission occurred within UNTAET (UN Transitional Administration in East Timor). The Portuguese battalions acting from January 2000 until June 2004 under UNTAET and, then, under UNMISET (UN Mission of Support in East Timor), deployed, at its maximum strength, 900 military, gradually reducing the number as the mission winded down. To this figure, one must also add the military assigned to the Central Command Sector of East Timor.

The largest deployment of Portuguese military forces abroad was in 2000/2001, with the simultaneous involvement of military units in three operations: SFOR/Bosnia, KFOR/Kosovo, and UNTAET in East-Timor. Portugal was then among the countries contributing the largest numbers of troops: by then, Portugal ranked 10th among top troop-contributing countries to the UN. It should be noted that Portugal still had other less significant participations in the observation and supervision of electoral processes implemented by the United Nations, European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) missions and operations (especially Operation "Althea" in Bosnia and Herzegovina); EU and UN police and security sector reform (SSR) missions; plus an array of military missions in which it was involved, ranging from humanitarian and rescue tasks, to crisis management to react to specific contingencies. Another major participation was in UNIFIL II in Lebanon, from March 2006 until July 2012 with 1,576 elements, featuring an engineering company. After that, Portuguese involvement in UN-led peacekeeping missions has remained limited to token contributions. Portugal was also engaged in demonstrating its commitment to NATO's mission in Afghanistan (International Security Assistance Force/ISAF), particularly during the period from 2005 to 2013.

Currently, the largest share of operations is allocated to the NATO mission in Kosovo, and to the EU operation in the Mediterranean (FRONTEX - Operation Triton). In the last few years, the priority missions of the Portuguese armed forces have been an answer to requests from NATO, with around 4,500 troops involved since 2012. In comparison, involvement in UN missions has significantly decreased. Since 2012, with the withdrawal from Lebanon/UNIFIL, Portugal contributed with only 397 personnel, notably to MINUSMA in Mali, and to MINUSCA, in the Central African Republic (DGPDN 2016). There is also a symbolic contribution towards EU missions, totalling 847 personnel: mainly devoted to the maritime ATALANTA mission to control migrant smuggling across the Mediterranean, and the external EU border (628), and to the FRONTEX (298) anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia (DGPDN 2016).

Italy

Between 1950 and 1989, Italian armed forces deployed to twelve UN peacekeeping missions in Asia, Africa, Middle East, and Europe, playing a low-profile role (Pastori 2011: 184).[12]

In order to understand Italy's limited involvement in PSO during the Cold War period, one must consider the consequences of the Second World War: it undermined the sense of national identity which, in fact, had never consolidated ever since the 1861 *Unificazione* (in the wake of the unification,

[12] It was also involved in other peacekeeping and security missions, namely in multinational forces, such as the one that intervened in Lebanon from 1982 to 1984; the Multinational Force and Observers operation sent to patrol the Gulf of Aqaba and Straits of Tiran, to supervise the implementation of the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement; the naval force sent to the Gulf of Suez to carry out a large-scale mine-sweeping mission in coordination with French and British units; the Italian naval group deployed in the Persian Gulf to monitor local maritime activity, protect mercantile traffic, and to perform other mine-sweeping tasks during the last period of the Iran-Iraq war (Paoletti 2008: 196-7, Pastori 2011: 189).

as Massimo d'Azeglio, a Risorgimento leader, presciently mused: "having made Italy, we must now make Italians").[13] Italian foreign policy was for long conditioned by the outcome of the conflict from which it emerged in shambles: the September 1943 armistice between Italy and the Allied powers left a damaging imprint on the national psyche, creating the long-lasting trauma of defeat. Italy remained the "smallest of the major European powers" and the "largest of the minor" (Jean 2011). Definitely, it was no longer a great European power. It had also lost the ability to carry out the "policy of the decisive weight", theorized during the Fascist period, which posited a role for Rome in European politics as arbiter or pendulum. Italy remained a medium regional power, with a regional status, but an uncertain international standing.

For a country that had tried to assert itself in the European concert of states since its late inception in the 19th century, the humiliation and sense of impotence dented - for a long time to come - the sense of self-esteem. Rome was thus induced to strive to shed the trappings of defeat, and to rehabilitate its image. It hankered for a post-war comeback to the realm of "high" international politics, and a place amongst the great powers, or, at the very least, to recover a status of parity with European mid-weights (Nuti 2011: 27, 30; Vigezzi 1992).

Throughout the post-war period, the prevalent foreign policy orientation of the dominant political force in Italy - centre-right - drew together existing strands of pacifism, neutralism, and Third-Worldism. Since the very early days of the Republic, Rome sided with Atlantic and European alliances, but this choice was opposed by large sections of public opinion, which was pacifist and left-leaning. The socialist and communist parties were formidable political forces. The Italian "Partito Comunista Italiano", in particular, became the most vocal advocate of Italian interests against perceived subservience to Washington (Brogi 2002b: 11-12). They relied on pacifist rhetoric to resist foreign actions, and outright military interventions. For a long time to come, the pacifist and anti-militarist culture shaped Italy's post-war identity, opposing any military involvements.

Article 11 of the Constitution also restricted the country's ability to take part in armed conflicts that were not based on legitimate defence. In practice, when political forces agree, by using the face-saving formula of "peace missions", that article has been interpreted in a flexible way, to allow Rome to deploy its troops abroad when there is a legitimising mandate by the UN Security Council (Davidson 2011a: 147).

In terms of operations during the Cold War period, special mention must be made to the multinational military missions in Lebanon. The first stint took place in 1982 amid a bloody civil war, especially in the wake of Israel's invasion. It was aimed at providing cover to the withdrawal of the Organisation of Liberation of Palestine's personnel that was due to leave Beirut, as well as upholding government control over the territory. Italy's involvement under the MNF (Multinational Force in Lebanon), with over 1,000 troops, was hastily arranged, but largely successful due to the absence of casualties, and the short duration of the operation. A more substantial experience was provided by the second stage of the operation, from late September until early March 1984. The mission put together more than 8,000 personnel. It took placed during a dramatic period marred by the massacres in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Chatila, and by the deadly suicide attacks against US and French barracks. The violence that hit the American and French contrasted with the sole Italian Marine death toll. It was a turning point for Italian operations abroad, crucial in two respects (Pastori 2011: 186,): "it assessed the evolution of the Italian armed forces towards new responsibilities beyond national boundaries, as well as its more consistent integration into the NATO structure; and, second, all political parties in Parliament approved the action" (Ignazi, Giacomello, and Coticchia 2012: 42).

This mission raised the self-confidence of the military, due to the way it discharged its role in a highly volatile environment, remaining immune from the surrounding violence. It became the model for subsequent Italian international involvement in the years to come, creating the image imprinted in

[13] "Fatta l'Italia, dobbiamo fare gli italiani".

public opinion and Italian military culture of a "special Italian approach" (Jean 2011),[14] and the illusion of a "zero-death toll" (Pastori 2011: 193).

Only with the end of the Cold War did the traditional reluctance towards using the military instrument somehow fizzle out (Ignazi, Giacomello, and Coticchia 2012). With the demise of the blocs scheme, the constraints of the bipolar international environment ceased. There was an acute realisation that a new set of risks and threats warranted strategies for a more comprehensive approach to security, which offered a broader toolkit for facing the new multifarious and unpredictable concerns.

As regards Italy's domestic constraints, there was also the narrowing down of the ideological divide between the ruling Christian Democrats, and the Socialists. It concerned, in particular, the contentious issue of Rome's participation in the Atlantic Alliance. The Socialists evolved into supporting membership of NATO and closer European integration, and sought closer cooperation with the leading Christian Democratic party. As far as the Communist party is concerned, only by the end of the 1970s, would it endorse Italy's membership of NATO and integration into Western Europe. A bipartisan consensus allowed them to accept the goals of a post-Cold War, which revamped Italian foreign policy. It was the case of the "new" peaceful functions of the armed forces (Davidson 2011a: 146, 147), proposed in the 1991 "new defence model", adopted in the wake of the first Gulf War. The document stressed the size and nature of the new security challenges ahead, and called for power projection of its military forces, in order to bolster Italy's capacity to project stability in areas and regions critical to its security, within the framework of humanitarian and PSO (Coticchia and Moro 2015: 5; Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2013: 42-43). There was a growing willingness to retool the military for a range of new and diverse roles, lumped under the heading "PSO", such as humanitarian, disaster relief efforts, and peacekeeping duties.

A More Activist Foreign Policy

In the early 1990s - following the end of the Cold War - Italian foreign policy changed dramatically, forcing policymakers to urgently answer the issue of redefinition of the strategic objectives, geopolitical priorities, and working methods of Rome's diplomacy. In fact, in the post-bipolar world, Italy's vulnerability increased considerably, not only because of the geographical proximity of the country to the two major "arcs of crisis" – stretching from the Balkans, through the Caucasus, until the former Soviet Central Asia; and that of the North African coast, through the Middle East, reaching down to the Persian Gulf and East Africa. Because of its geographical location, Italy is particularly vulnerable to some of the new post-Cold War threats. The Italian territory - astride the central Mediterranean - is, to some extent, the closest and most porous, and hence the easiest point of access to Europe by migrants and refuge claimants - a fact that soon became evident in the late 1990s with the collapse of Albania.

Simultaneously, Rome also fell short of the advantageous position assured by bipolarity, and of the certainty of being able to count on, at any time, the assistance and coverage of its major allies, with the United States in the lead. There was the realisation that, because of its ability to ride freely on US security guarantees, Italy had not invested enough on its defence. During the Cold War, Italy lived under the security umbrella provided by its participation in NATO's collective defence system, and by the binding guarantee of mutual security provided for in article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty (Pastori 2011: 189). It lived on a peculiar "geopolitical rent", resting primarily on its central geographical position, and on the rights accorded to the US to use the military bases and infrastructure on Italian territory (Coralluzzo 2012: 2).

It quickly downed on Italian policymakers that the country needed to become credible, with a stabilizing role: in other words, it had to become a "producer of security" instead of just a "consumer"

[14] The perception of "Italiani Brava gente" (Foradori and Rosa 2007: 88; Jean 2011).

(Croci 2003: 268-9). Accordingly, Rome should be ready to intervene, either in order to defend and promote its national interests, or to avoid potentially dangerous spill-overs of regional instability. It should take up the responsibilities corresponding to its status as a regional power, with an interest and stake in the affairs of neighbouring regions. Thus, in the early 1990s, Italian post-war foreign and security policy came to be characterised by a "new activism," especially in regions close to its borders (Mediterranean and the Balkans) (Ratti 2011: 132), and with a greater ease in using its military force (Brighi 2013: 145). Rome's military presence increasingly evolved into a tool to assert the Italian international role, especially aimed at enhancing and promoting the Italian role within the wider Mediterranean basin. It thus upgraded its military contribution to peace-related operations, taking up responsibilities in the governance of regional crises (Balossi-Restelli 2015: 225).

Actually, ever since the beginning of the 1990s, Italy has been involved in all major UN and multinational peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations, some of which have required significant military efforts, and involved significant risks. Deployment in missions abroad inevitably fostered the process of transformation of the armed forces, especially the army (Pastori 2011: 193), which evolved from a territorial defence and conscription model, towards a professional army based on voluntary recruitment. It adapted to the demanding requirements of high-standard, projectable missions, in support of international contingencies.

Indeed, by the end of the decade, Italy had become the third largest contributor of troops and personnel - after the US and the UK - to peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations, under the aegis of the UN or entrusted by the Security Council to regional organisations, or so-called "coalitions of the willing". The end of the Cold War led to a strengthening of Italian support to the UN (Ratti 2011). Since 1995 and until the early 2010s, for instance, Italy had an average of 8,000 - 9,000 personnel in peacekeeping operations under the aegis of the UN, NATO, and the EU (Missiroli 2007: 153; Coticchia and Moro 2015, 8). Italy is also among the ten largest contributors to the UN regular (3,74 per cent of the total), and peacekeeping budget (UN Peacekeeping).[15]

The military intervention against Iraq in January 1991 (Desert Storm), was the first enforcement operation of the new international era conducted under the aegis of the UN Security Council. *Italy* was in an awkward position: it did not want to be left outside and lose face with its American ally, but, domestically, there was widespread opposition due to the openly belligerent nature of the intervention. Eventually, a face-saving solution was found: Rome provided military aircrafts for bombing missions, plus a naval group to the coalition air forces. The government described it as an "international policing operation", which expression was used because the Constitution forbids resorting to war (Coralluzzo 2000). It chose to present Italy's controversial involvement in Iraq in terms of its security obligations, under the new European foreign and security policy (Davidson 2011: 149). The intervention did enhance Italy's profile, but the loss of one Tornado fighter, with the crew taken prisoner by the Iraqi security forces, raised misgivings at home (Pastori 2011: 192). The events in the *Gulf* lead to serious thinking on Italy's military structure and defence forces. A modernisation program was already in place several years before the war, but Desert Storm clearly highlighted that the country needed to upgrade its international military efforts.

Italy's determination to take a higher profile in common security endeavours, led it into participating in the humanitarian mission in Somalia, under the UNITAF (Unified Task Force), as it was launched in late 1992 - an initiative of the outgoing President Bush, and a test case for the new UN doctrine on peacekeeping outlined in *An Agenda for Peace*. Rome's decision to get involved was understood as "evidence of the old Italian foreign policy vice of *Presenzialismo*" - the need to have visibility (Croci 2003, 268). Rome considered it vital to take part, as involvement in the operation was seen as determining who the players in the new international era would be (Davidson 2011a: 150;

[15] In the early 2000s, Italy was the fifth largest contributor to the UN peacekeeping budget: an average of over €62 million per year between 1997 and 2000 (Croci 2003: 269)

Croci 2003: 268). The rationale for involvement was also based on Italy's colonial presence in Somalia previously to the war.

It was the first time after the war that land troops were employed. The relevance of the mission was also warranted by the fact that the Italian contingent was the third biggest one, after those of the US and Pakistan. It was a major involvement in terms of the military deployed, and of the risks incurred due to the volatility of Somali theatre: Italy lost there its first soldiers after the end of World War II (Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2012: 103; Davidson 2011a: 150).

The mission was marred by issues related to the predominant approach to be adopted. Italians stressed humanitarian aims and the need to engage with the parties on the ground, while the US and other participating countries increasingly leaned towards a confrontational approach with the warring militias. Rome advocated a soft-power approach, the so-called "special Italian approach" (Pastori 2011: 193), which "reflects the holistic and multidimensional approach to security issues that defines its security culture" (Foradori and Rosa 2010: 69, 81).

The rather public dispute that ensued over the overall aims and conduct of the mission, led the Italian government to demand greater representation in the *UNOSOM* II headquarters, and in planning and supervising the operations (Croci 2003: 269). UNOSOM II, established in March 1993, and with authority to take enforcement measures, quickly derailed into "mission creep", producing a high death toll and many casualties. After the death of three Italian soldiers in July 1993, the *Italian* press became more critical of UNOSOM II, and, politicians were asked to explain to the public opinion the real risks of taking part in multilateral operations (Ratti 2011: 131). The experience in Somalia bore out that it was no longer a "humanitarian" mission, but a quite "robust" military operation, with high risk of involvement in combat actions. The perils in which the mission was mired caused a severe blow to the then predominant "Lebanese approach", and put an end to the illusion of a zero-death toll participation (Pastori 2011: 193).

In those years, besides the hazardous mission in Somalia, Italy joined the UNTAC mission in Cambodia (October 1992), ONUMOZ in Mozambique (December 1992), the OSCE Spillover Monitor Mission in Skopje (September 1993), and the OSCE LTM to Moldova (April 1993), Bosnia and Herzegovina (December 1995) and Croatia (July 1996). The Italian Navy was involved in a demanding coastal patrolling and embargo enforcement activity since July 1992, under WEU (operations "Maritime Monitor" and "Maritime Guard"), NATO (operations "Sharp Vigilance" and "Sharp Fence"), and NATO-WEU aegis until October 1996 (Pastori 2011: 192).

Geographic proximity and a broader interest on stability in the Balkan area made of Italy a first line country in crisis management in former Yugoslavia with UNMIBH in Bosnia-Herzegovina (December 1995). Together with NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR), from 1995 to 2004, Italy had a substantial involvement in the operations that took place in the territory of former Yugoslavia, in the aftermath of the Dayton agreement, between late 1995 and early 1996, and, at a later stage in Kosovo, after NATO's military intervention in 1999. In both cases, Italian intervention was depicted as "traditional" stabilising missions conducted within the framework of broader international NATO- or EU-led coalitions. Both for its length and its material implications, former Yugoslavia absorbed most of the Italian military effort in the 1990s. That experience was critical in reorganising the Italian armed forces: it cut into the debate that led in 2002 to the adoption of the so-called "Nuovo modello di Difesa" - "New Defence Model" (Pastori 2011: 193). It enabled Italian armed forces to develop an effective operational capability for external projection, ranging from strictly humanitarian operations to more demanding ones, involving multinational peacekeeping and peace enforcement roles (Carati 2013: 2).

In December 1997, in the wake of the crumbling of Albanian's financial system and the swelling unrest against the regime, Italy took the lead in setting up a "coalition of the willing'', and in putting together a military-humanitarian mission, named "Alba", which was sanctioned, a posteriori, by the UN Security Council (Croci 2008: 146, Sciortino 1998). It was not the first time Italy deployed a

mission to that country: in 1991, in response to the two main immigration waves into Italy, as well as following the requests by the Albanian government, *Italy* launched a paramilitary operation on humanitarian grounds ("Pellicano") to bring in and distribute supplies to Albania (Ratti 2011: 131).[16]

Italy remained intensively involved in the long-lasting crisis in the Balkans. By the end of 1997, as Albania was slipping into anarchy, tens of thousands of Albanians took to the sea trying to cross into Italy. Fear of a massive refugee crisis, was the main driving force for Rome's decision to intervene (Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2012: 110). Rome launched Operation Alba, with limited contributions by half a dozen southern European countries, and with very little international support - despite its requests in all existing fora at the time. The Western European Union - the defence arm of the EU at the time - could not be activated as requested by Rome, because of opposing views between European countries regarding the urgency to intervene (Greco 1998: 204-205). Eventually, the operation was politically supported by the EU and the OSCE. The UN sluggishly granted it legitimacy by framing it as a humanitarian operation under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. As the leading nation, Italy took by far most of the risks and costs (Menotti 2007: 440), engaging more than 3,000 soldiers and substantial military equipment, as well as a complex logistics apparatus (Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2012: 113). Although lacking the respective institutional umbrella, it actually became the first operation conducted exclusively by European forces (Menotti 2007: 440).

Rome remained engaged in that region. After bringing the war in Bosnia to an end, a new flashpoint erupted in Kosovo. Serbians were behind a repressive campaign against Albanians, and refused to withdraw security forces from Kosovo. With the failure of the early 1999 peace plan negotiated at Rambouillet - which would provide greater autonomy for Kosovo within Yugoslavia, and a NATO-led force to implement the agreement -, the Alliance started preparing for air strikes against Serbia.

In Rome, Massimo D'Alema, a former Communist Party member heading the centre-left government, was sceptical about the use of force. The leftist parties, and large segments of public opinion, were uneasy with an intervention with unclear aims, and so close to Italian territory. However, D'Alema was able to muster sufficient domestic support for Italy's involvement in NATO's military operation, which lacked explicit UNSC endorsement. Significant members of the governing coalition abstained in the Senate. Italy eventually took part in the bombing campaign. It provided military bases, and the indispensable logistics support to carry out these operations; but conducted limited air sorties in defence of NATO planes and troops, and no offensive operations against Serbia. Italy's endorsement of NATO's military offensive was prompted out of national interest and foreign policy rationale: it was the most exposed country to potential outflows of refugees, and had a direct stake on the stability of its Balkan neighbourhood; it wanted to be a key participant in strategic decisions made by the Alliance, but was also keen on being seen as a reliable US ally, capable of shouldering its tasks (Davidson 2011b: 161; Nuti 2005: 192).

In the post-9/11, Italian presence in Afghanistan dates back to 2002, with the deployment of ISAF under a UN mandate. Italian involvement in the post-war phase of Iraqi Freedom was presented as essentially humanitarian and, also, founded on a Security Council resolution.

The size of the contingent significantly increased over time, and by the end of 2010 it reached about 3,800 men. Italy assumed the ISAF command from August 2005 till May 2006 (ISAF VIII), and has been in charge, for ten years now, of the Regional Command West (RCW), located in Herat, currently renamed Train Advise and Assist Command (TAAC). It also held the Herat Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) until 2014, when ISAF was concluded. ISAF has proven the most lethal of all PSOs: between 2002 and 2014, 53 servicemen died on that theatre (Marrone, Tessari, and De Simone 2014: 28). Italy has deployed 950 troops to the NATO-led ensuing mission (called Resolute

[16] The operation (1991-93), launched with a solely humanitarian purpose, remains to this day as the only example of a unilateral Italian mission conducted abroad, with no international support framework.

Support), launched in January 2015, to train, advise, and assist the Afghan security forces and institutions (Ministero della Difesa 2017).

As regards the use of force, a stark contrast with the precedent of Kosovo emerged when it came to the 2003 intervention against Iraq: the centre-right government of Silvio Berlusconi, a very close ally of President G. W. Bush, found itself on a difficult spot: it decided not to contribute directly to the intervention, although subscribing to many of the claims laid against the Saddam Hussein regime by Washington (Chelotti and Pizzimenti 2011: 74). There was strong popular opposition, and huge rallies were held in protest to an intervention that was seen as illegitimate. Italy would only get involved after the end of the military operations, within an operation code-named Antica Babilonia. Italy's mission was portrayed as ''non belligerent'', and of humanitarian assistance (Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2013: 139). It was a balancing act for a government that could not escape the duty of supporting an ally when it needed, but without infringing the basic tenet of not getting involved in armed conflicts that are not based on a situation of legitimate defence (Nuti 2005: 195).

Italy's involvement in the post-conflict phase of operation Iraqi Freedom, aimed at ensuring the security of Iraq in its transition to self-government. On the one hand, Rome was concerned with assuring its action was within the UN's multilateral framework, while supporting the Anglo-American military intervention. Considering the traditional preference for a multilateral approach, the decision to get involved created a discontinuity in terms of Italian foreign policy (Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2013: 139).

The government also struggled to emphasize the humanitarian aspect of the intervention. It provided a misleading character to the nature the mission would inevitably assume. Emphasising the peaceful rather than war fighting dimensions of the operations has proved crucial to making them palatable to the opposition (Ignazi, Giacomelli and Coticchia 2012: 41).[17] Italian politicians across the political spectrum, from left to right, have systematically downplayed the military dimension of the operations, namely by highlighting their humanitarian side (Bull and Rhodes 2009: 253).

The domestic debate on what was seen by many as the outcome of US unilateralism polarised Italian domestic politics so deeply that, in ensuing years, the Iraqi operation hampered the chances of wide and sustained bipartisan support to other missions,[18] including ISAF in Afghanistan, despite the mantle of legitimacy conferred to the latter by the UN (Menotti 2007: 442). Furthermore, the tragic death of 18 Italian soldiers in the suicide attack on the Italian military police headquarters in *Nasiriya*, Iraq, on November 12 2003, shocked Italian public opinion, plummeting public support for the intervention.

In summer 2006, in the aftermath of the ''summer war'' between Hezbollah militants and Israeli forces, Italy took on a leading role in southern Lebanon. It volunteered to providing the bulk – alongside a French contingent – of 2,500 troops for an ''enhanced'' UNIFIL (II) operation to upgrade the symbolic UN presence (Menotti 2007: 440). That amounted to 20% of the overall military strength, enabling an Italian general to take command of the force in early 2007 (Walston 2010: 128). It was a decision of the centre-left government, presided by Romano Prodi, eager to revive Italy's multilateralist vocation within the corporate framework of the United Nations. This happened at the same time that Prodi - complying with an electoral campaign pledge -, decided to pull out its troops from Iraq, a move planned to take place until the end of the year. The unexpected willingness to offer a strong contingent as a more robust interposition force in Lebanon, responded to the American

[17] Gen. Jean considers that the fact that Italian decision-makers chose to mask risky operations as "peace" or "humanitarian," is "semantic contortionism" (Jean 2011).

[18] The political dialectic between centre-right and centre-left has - with the notable exception of Iraq -, not failed to provide broad support to international crisis management and peace missions (Missiroli 2007: 153). That opposition has not hindered the approval of any missions, but affected the ways, the rules of recruitment, and the approach to the Italian role (Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2012).

request for greater involvement in military operations (with Afghanistan in mind), and helped receive praise from Washington. Simultaneously, the government presented a respectable rationale by justifying the mission in terms of restoring peace in the area, and reviving the principle of multilateralism. In line with the Italian left focus on multilateral frameworks, the mission was able to figure out a role for the UN, as well as for Europe (Brighi 2007: 134). By accomplishing the squaring of the circle, it benefited from the support of the centre-right coalition, which largely voted in favour of the mission.

The operation in Lebanon remains to this day the most demanding in terms of number of personnel deployed: 1,400 troops stationed within the 11,000-strong UNIFIL mission (Marrone and Camporini 2016: 5).

Iraq and Afghanistan called for radically distinct capabilities, as compared to the previous experiences. Those missions marked the transition from a PKO model, to a counter-insurgency one, with the risk of involvement in high intensity combats in counter-terror operations (Carati 2013: 2; Pastori 2011: 184). Iraq and Afghanistan operations required new capabilities and concept development, training, force organisation, support arrangements and structures. (Pastori 2011, 184; Ignazi, Giacomello and Coticchia 2012: 155).

Under the Renzi government (February 2014 to December 2016), the approval of the 2015 White Paper clearly defined the Euro-Mediterranean region as a "priority" sphere of action for national interventions.[19] This marked a departure from the prevailing approach, which did not define a geographical scale of priorities (Marrone 2015). Indeed, criticism levelled at the Italian policy of external interventions, frequently points out the difficulty in reconciling the pursuit of global commitments with more high-priority goals in the Italian neighbourhood - essentially meaning the Mediterranean basin -, as well as the urgency in reorienting the allocation of its scarce resources to regional interests, which rank higher in terms of security concerns (Menotti 2007: 435).

Following the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), Rome is actively involved in the military operations of the American-led international coalition in Iraq against the Islamic State. International intervention, which began in August 2014, has followed a request by the Iraqi government, and the approval of the UN in respect of Resolutions 2170 of August 15 2014, and 2178 of September 27 2014. Rome is involved in a host of actions, but not in the bombings. Under the umbrella of the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve, Italy has launched "Prima Parthica", which, so far, has become its most costly mission abroad (Tirinnanzi 2015). Italy sent a total of 700 personnel – instructors, military advisors, and special forces from each of the armed forces, including 90 Carabinieri (Marrone e Camporini 2016: 5) – to provide training to the Iraqi army and police, and to Kurdish peshmergas. It also has staff level activities within the multinational coalition in Kuwait, and Iraq (Baghdad and Erbil). Rome's contingent includes a battalion of 450 elite soldiers whose job is to safeguard the strategic Mosul Dam, where an Italian engineering firm is undertaking critical repairs. It also includes approximately 260 personnel in support of missions that include air-to-air refuelling and aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (McInnis 2016: 9).

In 2010, Italy had on average 8,000 troops employed in 33 missions in 21 countries (Coticchia and Giacomello 2011: 140). After 2011, the overall number of Italian military personnel deployed abroad dropped significantly: from 9,000 in 2012, to under 5,000 in 2013 (Coticchia and Moro 2015: 8). Still, Italy remained the fourth largest contributor to missions under NATO and EU guidance, and the ninth largest contributor to operations run by the UN (Balossi-Restelli 2013: 261; Martino 2015: 103). By November 2016, Italy was engaged in 28 operations in 19 countries, with approximately 6,750 personnel, holding some high-level command positions in multinational contingents (Marrone and

[19] The defined region includes the EU countries, the Balkans, the Black Sea region, the Mediterranean portion of the Middle East, and the Maghreb.

Camporini 2016: 5). Its most important missions are: Iraq (1,400), Kosovo (550 units), and the Horn of Africa (110), where it headed up the EUTM Somalia mission (Marrone and Camporini 2016: 5).

The outbreak of the migration crisis has contributed to refocusing Italy on the Mediterranean, where it is now substantially committed in a number of missions to rescue imperilled migrants at sea, counter people smugglers, and fight against IS-affiliated groups in Libya: Mare Sicuro (850), SOFIA (680), and IPPOCRATE (Libya, 300) (Marrone and Camporini 2016: 5).

Involvement in PSO: Pursuing Interests or Values?

In the post-Revolution period, the need to integrate the broader international society, led Portugal to consider its involvement in cosmopolitan PSO. As a small state, Portugal considers it critical to be present in all core groups that count: "the shortest way and the most effective strategy to overcome geographic isolation, is to win political centrality" (Teixeira, 2005). Similarly, Rome has striven to make its presence known and its voice heard, partly as a reaction to Italy's relentless self-perception of its underrated status, and the aspiration to assert itself as a middle power. In fact, Italian foreign policy can be seen as "a never-ending effort to find a role in the international arena, while overcoming structural weaknesses" (Ignazi, Giacomelli and Coticchia 2012: 40).

Italy and Portugal's PSO policies are the result of their governments' overall foreign policy direction. Deploying to PSO and humanitarian missions has become a lodestar of both countries' foreign policy, with positive results on the position and visibility of both. A number of interrelated factors seam to motivate the new, proactive approach of Rome and Lisbon's championing of peacekeeping. In this sense, the rationale for their interventionism is similar, despite their difference in status.

Portugal and Italy's involvement in PSOs has been partially motivated by a reactive posture that seeks to avoid marginalisation in international affairs, through active participation in the inner circles of NATO and the EU, and in UN's cosmopolitan and value-based interventionism. Not being at the forefront of PSO, participation was not an option if they wanted to assure a place of some relevance for themselves in the post-Cold War world. Both believed that they stood to benefit greatly from new post–Cold War missions established for projecting stability in areas sometimes beyond their own immediate security needs. The UN "revival" of early 1990s strengthened a general preference for multilateralism, also seen as the most legitimate body to undertake military operations. In Italy's case, the multilateral argument was a way to overcome the resistance of some domestic political forces against a more active foreign policy.

The desire to be seen as full, legitimate members of the international community, led them to increase their participation in multilateral fora and international organisations. By sending personnel to UN operations, and later on, to EU and NATO as well, they could prove their commitment towards the UN, as well as towards the norms it embodies, such as multilateralism, human rights, and international peace and security. Adherence to the high-minded values of the international society, in particular, for the orderly maintenance of the international system, is commonly seen as translating into state's prestige and high international status.

Security concerns do strike a sensitive chord with Rome. Italy is embedded in a troubled neighbourhood, stretching from the Western Balkans to the southern and Eastern Mediterranean, not to mention the "Greater Middle East". Rome is unable to protect itself on its own, as far as the risks from those regions are concerned. It has preferred to adopt an institutionalised and multilateral approach, in order to deal with security matters in its neighbourhood. Italian defence policy is very demanding, by virtue of its placement in the central Mediterranean, and the sheer size and complexity of the security risks to which it is exposed, ranging from migration to terrorism.

Both countries also wished to improve their status within the Euro-Atlantic community, increasing their positional value as much as possible in the eyes of the US protector. Bolstering involvement in international operations became essential to demonstrate those countries' worth to the US hegemonic partner. In the wake of the post-9/11, the option of not backing US operations was seen as strongly detrimental to both countries. As reliable allies, Lisbon and Rome are supposed to answer the call for intervention, and to show to be steadfast and active NATO allies. Italy's involvement in Iraq in 1991 was considered a test case of loyalty. In order to be palatable to public opinion, Lisbon and Rome's decision to selectively join the 1999 Kosovo intervention, required a "humanitarian" justification, but remained a shaky balancing act. Protests against the 2003 intervention were an embarrassment both for Lisbon and Rome, as they could not escape the duty of somehow being involved.

National involvement in peace missions is synonymous with recognition and international visibility. This discourse has undoubtedly become ingrained in the national defence policy of both countries. The armed forces are meant to contribute significantly to increase the country's visibility at international level, to strengthen its bargaining power and political leverage. UN led peacekeeping operations are considered an important statement of the global dimension of foreign policy. Policy-makers see it as reinforcing international legitimacy and bolstering the countries' international profile. Deploying troops to distant theatres has become a way of demonstrating to be "good" or "cosmopolitan-minded" states (Lawler 2005: 56) There is a concern with building reputation, which in turn conveys a duty to uphold and protect the international system. As other analysts have confirmed regarding other states in search of international legitimacy, such as China, the pursuit of PKO may result from the need to project the image of a "responsible stakeholder" (Griffith 2009: 10).

Involvement in PSO has become a form of "soft power" for countries that want to bolster their status (Ignazi, Giacomelli and Coticchia, 2012: 48). Peace operations are generally understood as providing "global public goods", such as peace, security, and human rights. By showing how they follow the liberal-democratic norms of the international community, states use peacekeeping to gain external legitimacy and increase their leverage in international organisations (Kocks 2007: 16-17).

In that sense, PSO is a "status seeking" activity pursued mostly by small states. However, the rationale pursued by Lisbon and Rome regarding their willingness to deploy to PSO is similar: being able to offer inter-operable troops and capabilities that are in demand - especially with an urgent nature, and on a short notice - to operations, has become a stock-in-trade way of reinforcing a state's credibility (Græger 2015, 93). In the process of accruing states' international image, armed forces have become "forces-for-status",[20] enabling those countries to pursue certain foreign policy goals. Status - as a form of soft power - has an instrumental value, not only a token value. It can improve the prospects of one's access to certain power arenas, it can yield diplomatic influence, and, in the case of military missions, it can increase the chances of playing a part in the political processes at work (Donnelly 2000: 50, 66; Schia and Sending 2015: 78-79; Neumann and Carvalho 2015).

Arguably, there is a logic of utility maximisation present in the reasoning of Portugal and Italy: to see their role recognised. Projecting military power is a means to pursue national interests. Involvement in peace endeavours is presumed to raise the countries' profile in the international community at large, as well as in the smaller circles of NATO and the EU; and to see their contribution rewarded. Italy's active contribution to PSOs has allowed it to obtain recognition, as well as important positions in the planning and running of operations or in the permanent organisational set-ups in international organisations.[21] Rome's contribution to international security is portrayed as an

[20] Playing on the term "forces for good" (2004).

[21] Thanks to Rome's effort to assure continuity to the Air Policing mission over the Baltic Republics, for the first time an Italian general was appointed commander of the Joint Force Command of Brunssum, one of NATO's most coveted military posts (Marrone and Camporini 2016: 7).

asset for being elected to a non-permanent seat on the Security Council (Caffarena 2007: 162).[22] Italy also has a long-standing aspiration to permanent membership in that organism. It has striven to shape the debate regarding the Council composition in that direction, and has forwarded the argument that mission involvement should feature among the top selection criteria (Marrone at al., 2014: 24).

Portugal has tried to convert the reputation gained from its contributions into influence and participation, with the aim of strengthening its position within the decision-making structures of international organisations, namely by obtaining a larger national representation in their organisational structure, and successful applications to managerial positions in international institutions. Decision-makers in Lisbon believe that PSO involvement has been instrumental for Portugal's election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in 1997-98, and, again, in 2011-12, and for the nomination of António Guterres as UN High Commissioner in 2005 (until 2015), and as Secretary-General in late 2016.

Conclusions

A number of interrelated factors appear to motivate the new, proactive approach of Rome and Lisbon's leadership to peacekeeping and crisis-management operations. This paper argues that this particular understanding of Italian and Portuguese national interest has not simply emerged from an objective assessment of calculated benefits. The pro-norm behaviour does not exclude that rules are also followed irrespective of expected benefits. As March and Olsen have shown, states may undergo a developmental, or evolutionary trajectory learning curve. By socialising in the multilateral world, in the course of interaction, they develop rules that will guide their behaviour.

Even the pursuit of these self-interest goals is dependent on a prior acceptance of the validity and value of such institutions in the eyes of policy-makers. Portugal and Italy's increasingly positive attitude towards PSO can thus be explained by using constructivist norm change theory, and the logic of appropriateness. This paper draws on constructivist literature to argue that calculations of the national interest by Italian and Portuguese policy-makers are predicated on an a priori mainstreaming of particular values and beliefs, about international security embodied in the doctrine and practices of organisations, such as the UN.

It is contended here that partly as a result of internalising international cosmopolitan values, the security subjectivities of Portuguese and Italian policy-makers have been transformed. In the post-Cold War era, Portuguese and Italian decision-makers have been socialised into alternative security subjectivities, which have led them to rearticulate their conceptions of the national interest and readjust their foreign policy priorities. By working through international institutions, not least the UN, and aligning foreign policy with the norms promoted by such bodies, foreign policy practitioners were able to portray Portugal and Italy's mission as being more legitimate, because in line with the broader interests of the international community. This is because international institutions, as social environments, create the necessary conditions for moulding diplomats' ideas and worldviews. Thus, Lisbon and Rome have internalised "good" international norms, legitimising their actions by conforming to them, and by shaping their multilateral activity accordingly.

[22] Italy's election as non-permanent member for the 2007-2008 period occurred after volunteering to strengthen UNIFIL.

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