EU Non-Intentional Geopolitics and The "Europeisation" of Strategic - Operative Functions: Mare Nostrum and Triton Missions as a Test of EU Political Capability

AB'nin Kasıtsız Jeopolitiği ve Stratejik - Operasyonel İşlevlerin "Avrupalılaştırılması": AB Siyasi Yeteneğinin Testi Olarak Mare Nostrum ve Triton Misyonları

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ÖZET

Avrupa bütünleşmesi farklı bağlamlarda, II.Dünya Savaşı'ndan sonra, olası gerilimlere karşıt olarak, ama aynı zamanda yüzyıllar içinde farklı türetilmiş idealistler tarafından geliştirilen bir projenin gerçekleştirilmesi olarak başladı. Ana amacı, genellikle farklı komşu idari alanları çaresiz ama anlamsız savaşlarda birbirleriyle savaşmaya götüren rekabetlerin üstesinden gelmek olacaktır. Kıtanın periyodik olarak maruz kaldığı, yönetilmesi gereken bu tür gerilimler, stratejik ve jeopolitik ölçekte AB için entegrasyonda daha ileri bir adımın zorluğunu, yani aniden ortaya çıkabilecek farklı risklerle yüzleşebilecek bazı operatif cihazların oluşturulmasını gerektirmektedir. Son zamanlarda güvenlik ve aynı zamanda insani ve daha geniş sivil çıkarımlar göz önünde bulundurularak yeni bir şekilde karşı karşıya kalınması gereken kitlesel göç meselesidir.

ABSTRACT

European integration started in different contexts, after the World War II, as an answer to contingent tensions, but also as the realization of a project elaborated in the centuries by idealists of different derivation. Its main aim would be that of overcoming rivalries that often brought the different contiguous counties to fighting each other in desperate but non-sense wars. Such kind of tensions, the continent is periodically exposed to, need to be managed, requiring for the EU the challenge of a further step in the integration, namely the formation of some operative device, capable of facing the different risks, that may appear suddenly at strategic and geo-political scale. It is the case, recently, of mass immigration, that need to be faced with in a new way, considering security, but also human and wider civil implications.

1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of the European integration emerged after the World War II either as geo-strategic answer to renewed political tensions (connected essentially to the emergence of the bipolar fracture), or as long-term result of pan-Europeist movements, which gave continuity to a tradition elaborated by authors such as Altiero Spinelli, with the Manifesto di Ventotene, 1944, and by precursors such Kant, Mazzini and others in earlier centuries.

In essence, a vision aiming at overcoming a situation of fragmentation that many times in history resulted in the continent's countries states fighting each other. A situation induced by the same European natural and human geography, extraordinary complex, exposed to external influences, and representing through centuries an obstacle to the imposition of any centralistic power or hegemony on the whole continent.

Such territorial configuration may be considered as the main cause for the formation of particularisms, rivalries and border differentials; at the same time, it is the basis for an extraordinary cultural and economic richness, since diversities, by themselves, self-aliment common growth possibilities, for specialised economies, experiences, mobility and exchanges in any sense.

Finally, it is the starting point for the development of an idea of integration (or eventually of unification), that has to be considered a geo-political programme, unique in history at this scale, of a bottom-up process of foundation of a political multi-national unit.

2. EUROPEANISATION IN THE WIDER CONTEXT

Immediately after it started, after the World War II, in times of emergence of the bipolar fracture, the European Union (EU) integration process melted with other trends that affected the so-called 'late modern' era, and that were all connected to some extent to the events characterising the 2nd half of the 19th century and the correspondent nation-state geo-philosophy evolution.

Further circumstances characterising this period, and influencing the EU initiative, were connected with the evolution (and the supposed overcome) of modernism at different scales (internal and international, economic and social); from the geo-political point of view it is possible to mention de-colonisation consequences and the arising and the consequent crisis of developmentalism, of the Third World issue, of 'non-aligned' movements and others.

Finally, the EU integration process 'survived' the collapse of the bipolar scenario and combined with the diffusion of a globalisation culture, and with the spread out of a neo-liberal ideology (sometimes defined as 'third wave' of democratisation), elaborating a new ideology based on the assumptions of the 'governance turn', namely, the spread of a defined governance pattern at an international level (Kohler-Koch and Rittberger, 2006:33).

In this continuously transforming context, EU integration – as originally theorised – would suddenly change its significances, with the further steps of inside integration (among the member states) and (towards outside) enlargement processes prospecting a controversial scenario, different from what perceived at the beginning.

Today, after it reached a certain dimension, the European project would maybe need a critical revision: the (post Brexit) EU-27 (from the original six founders who signed the Treaty of Rome, 1957) is something structurally different from what it originally was. But, before talking of a reset, it is necessary to raise some points considering that, until now, some aspects of EU integration have been undoubtedly successful, especially as regards;

    (a) political development, resulting in many states of Central-Eastern and Southern Europe in escaping dictatorship and anchoring in democracy thanks to European ideals and furthermore prospecting an institutional frame for continental endemic contentiousness, which characterised a great deal of the European history.

    (b) establishing of a wider space for the economy, benefiting commerce, market and supply functions for regulating migration lines, for the elaboration of a common policy for regional interventions, with the aim of harmonising the whole area and improving cohesion among member states.

    (c) unification of currencies, bank and financial policies once limited by 'mediaeval' administrative barriers, opening the door to developing synergies.

(d)   the individual heavy and typically indebted (late-modern) nation states, which would probably already go bankrupt without a 'central' control at the supranational level, risking then a destabilising domino effect (and the regression to an anti-democratic situation).

Such effects became progressively visible, allowing the advancement of integration until what it has been defined as a geo-political threshold, namely, when "*the pooling of sovereignty has reached its limits*" (Diez vd., 2011:127).

3. THE STRATEGY OF INTEGRATION: A FUNCTIONAL LOGIC, FROM 'NON-POLITICAL' TO 'POLITICAL'

During its evolution, the integration process has overcome several thresholds, in a way considered irreversible by some scholars. Since from the beginning, it has been inspired by (a bottom up) functionalist logic, regarding at first basic and territorial functions, usually characterised by low symbolical intensity and impact on the identitarian/national aspects of each country.

It is the case of agricultural (Common Agricultural Policy) and industrial production, of natural resources and raw material policies (with the establishment of ECSC and Euratom), of commerce and freedom of establishment (with the European Economic Communities), and then with the planning of infrastructures, and with social, structural and regional policies, then progressively extending the action on economic and financial aspects. This probably – intentionally or not – with the aim of

(a)   Creating a territorial structural framework in order to make further advancement in integration possible on the ground of a deterministic-pragmatic premise that the material integration would consequently induce the ideological integration.

(b)   Avoiding the expected reactions when a new political unit is formed (in a zero sum game, as usually the geo-political scenario is perceived), both at the intra and international level.

The first part of such process, that would pursue the integration of the 'material' dimensions, may be considered – although with controversial effects – successful, with the unification of the mentioned territorial functions, and furtherly of many economic and social-cultural functions. The second part (the integration of functions pertaining to the essence of a state sovereignty, the so-called 'high politics' functions), supposedly the crucial step for any political integration, seems to be more difficult.

4. THE POLITICAL / STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

In fact, the political/strategic functions seem to be rather more difficult to integrate; this for a set of material and ideological issues: as the European geo-history demonstrated, the formation of a state usually does coincide with a 'shock', a dramatic event, such as war or revolution, or possibly – as today - a post pandemics (since, as said, in a zero-sum game any change in the status quo is perceived as a threat).

Furthermore, such functions are difficult to integrate because they are hard to be politically delegated and devolved – and virtually impossible to be democratically controlled – as usual for such critical functions, whose aim is essentially facing a strategic (lethal, systemic and unpredictable) risk. In fact, such functions deal with the use of (potentially unlimited) force, and they are usually managed on the basis of an extremely short command chain, leaving eventually a margin of arbitrariness for the 'commander in chief', who usually disposes of a power to be considered (as in many situations it actually is) irreversible.

This is a theory that has been in many ways criticised following the evolution of the political theory in the civic sense (Habermas, Bobbio). In fact, it reflects a primordial idea of the political functioning (rather than a civic approach), considering the strategic forces as those making the essence of a state (something metaphysically and organically integrated in a whole); a theory that traces back to such authors as Machiavelli and Hobbes, then originating Schmitt's decisionism and influencing Ratzel and Kjellen organicism.

Functions that, therefore, cannot, in principle, be democratised: neither 'proceduralised' or articulated in roles and in phases, nor delegated or attributed on a reciprocity basis, or shared with other powers in any way – this neither in the intra-nation scenario, nor in the inter-national one, like that represented today by the EU-integration. It is difficult to conceive the possibility to rationally and peacefully give up a 'piece' of such

absolute power (defined as "sovereignty") to a super-governmental organisation on the basis of just a rational negotiation and when it happens, it is in essence a fake result.

Usually –in history– the formation of a new effective power does coincide with the consolidation of the exclusive possession (monopoly) of the political-strategic tools: The state who wants to be recognised as sovereign has to demonstrate its ability to exert its control on such tools; a demonstration that would essentially take place as said during systemic crisis with the establishment of a state of emergency. Therefore, the process of the formation of a state entity is not final unless it has evolved, beside the basic functions, the key strategic functions.

Such situation brought in modern times (approximately from 17th century to the 2nd half of 20th century) the consolidation of a central state paradigm (opposed to medieval particularisms and universalisms), which is usually assumed as the exclusive player by 'classical' geopoliticians. A paradigm that today is challenged by new paradigms defined in many ways as a post-modern step, governance turn, neo-cosmopolitanism and globalisation ideologies, and furthermore de-territorialisation and de-nationalisation processes, and even functionalist international integration.

Without going too much into detail – whether such processes have to be considered something consistent, either a psycho-technological bias or a fictive social construction – it is evident that the EU-integration project stands just in this transition. Just in this period, after having consolidated (and aggregated) many basic levels, it is facing the 'last' question of integration: strategic functions, usually considered the key factor of political effectiveness.

5. NEW POLITICAL / STRATEGIC FUNCTIONS AND THE NEW SCENARIO

This is indeed an issue that rises some doubts, since in modern times rapid transformations affect the same definition of strategic functions. These no longer coincide exclusively with the usual definitions of military security and defence (passive and active, internal and external) and the principles of national and international representation (as stated in classical geopolitical theory).

This is a fact that makes it necessary to rework the principle of 'strategic risk,' which on the basis of literature relates to the functions addressing risk factors mainly characterised by (a) lethality at the whole system scale; (b) unpredictability, i.e. a sudden and unexpected event, at scale time = 0 and (c) uncontrollability, risks difficult to be controlled with forces and technologies available, under the routine of government; therefore, risks that foreshadow the possibility of a 'war' and of a destructive fight, which requires the mobilisation of resources of any kind, eventually under the state of exception (Bailes and Thorhallsson, 2013).

These are definitions that, in the current context, undergo continuous re-codifications, eventually including sectors that are not customarily considered 'strategic', but which, at some point, require an approach of this type. It is the case in a 'borderless', de-structured and post-Fordist world, of issues involving fragmentation and delocalisation effects, flow of capitals and of business activities, and volatile financial markets, potentially exerting a destructive systemic impact (*and it is the case evidently of health's matter, epidemics and similar contamination scenarios induced by globalist evolution, that will be presumably the main argument of the next future geopolitical speculation*).

It is the case of processes and changes, which, as we see in some cases, may provoke the emptying of entire economic and human systems; so also for migrations (both in and out) that, when becoming a mass phenomenon, are likely to overwhelm entire systems (*especially when they affect small states like Malta or Cyprus*). So, in general, for issues affecting the mobility of people, commodities and information in an environment of information and communication technology (ICT) and the 'transport revolution' (which, in fact, predisposes to unpredictable mobility, out of the control of any government) may determine potentially lethal impacts at systemic scale. This is obviously true for transported material dangerous in itself, e.g. toxic materials, ammunition, explosives, weapons of mass destruction, 'dirty bombs' and easily concealable armaments. The same can be said for the relevant knowledge, information and innovation of any kind of -technological, scientific, and organisational- that may suddenly disrupt consolidated scenarios, with user-friendly methods spreading out, giving the possibility to political revolutionary outsiders to play some role. In fact such outsiders are potentially ubiquitous, and could easily hide and dematerialize – like cyber-terrorists, gangsters and organised crime.

This is the case as well of the diffusion of ICT, *'social media'* and further accessible technology, which have proved to be decisive for disturbing some scenario. It happened with contemporary rebellions like '*coloured revolutions*' in East Europe and '*Arab springs*' making possible a sudden aggregation of a mass of population able to challenge the political institutions through a '*street revolution*' (*namely, unplanned and unforeseeable spontaneous rebellions*).

It is clear that the definition of strategic risk undergoes changes depending on time, paradigms and available social and communication technology.[1] The task of providing a strategic service assumes a margin of freedom for operators who have to be prepared to take decisions in a changeable scenario, in which, e.g., it may be necessary to negotiate with dictators neglecting human rights, with local cruel 'war lords' or with irresponsible and deterritorialised corporations who profit by polluting the environment with impunity and destroy entire ecosystems – or even secretly dealing with corrupt brokers, acting on markets lacking transparency, and undertaking negotiations with guerrilla leaders and bloodthirsty terrorists; or even making critical decisions and acting quickly to prevent natural or human disasters in conditions of uncertainty, without having adequate information or instructions.[2]

6. INTEGRATIONS ALREADY REALISED

Some political functions have already been, de facto or de jure, unified on a supra-national level, either in the framework of EU or in a wider context represented by UN, NATO or a plethora of specialised international organisations, that, even when founded as inter-governmental, tend to exert a supranational effect.

This is the case with law-enforcement functions (countering terrorism, organised crime, smuggling and illegal trafficking), which are 'per se' dealing on an international scale and whose Europeanisation and internationalisation is in general considered essential for operators and even desirable by the population at large.

It is also the case with some aspects of administration of justice, of public order and of territorial protection and administration, considered to have low impact on the symbols of national identity, for which the supra-national coordination is generally welcomed: this considering the immediate perception of everyday security as 'common good' without the intermediation of more complex symbolic apparatuses as with military functions traditionally connected to 'national' symbolism. And it is the case with freedom of establishment of business activities and of any type of intra-European migration and of the abolition of customs barriers, tariffs and border controls (*whereas, obviously, if the person knows in advance where and how he will be controlled, i.e. at the border post, the same control can presumably be useless*). And it is the case of European legal proceedings (e.g. arrest warrant) which makes it possible for justice to 'jump' over the intra-national administrative barriers concerning extradition (as determined by measures in force since 2002).

It is also the case, regarding armed forces, with 'procurement' of arms industry and scientific research, closely related to the overall situation of the economy, which can be organised in such a way as to create economies of scale both mutually between the various sectors of the defence industry and in a 'dual' civil-military production regime. Furthermore, it is the case with infrastructures at continental scale, prospecting a powerful incentive for concrete and social integration: a framework of pan-European corridors, of inter-modal hubs, land bridges and nodal points with the aim of reducing distances and costs.

Finally, it is obviously the case with issues involving epidemic-sanitary and environmental factors, which in a 'borderless' world may suddenly rise to a catastrophic dimension. Such elements are characterised by dynamics and thresholds sometimes not so apparent, with problems that can emerge suddenly causing damage at a very large scale (e.g. the effects of resources exploiting, soil consumption, overfishing, pollution), which consequently may cause environmental exhaustion and desertification, and then – on the social level – conflicts, epidemics, mass migrations and tensions of any type.

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1 Therefore signifying a "[s]hift from <negotization> to international technical management" (Diez vd., 2011:122).

2 Generally, the discussion on the 'limit' of the integration concerns the possibility of continuing or not the process, assuming an ultimate goal of 'unification' – a process that until now, in the history of half a century, was held on the basis of a logic that has been defined as 'pragmatic' or 'functionalist', that then first of all concerned basic and territorial variants, then extended to the aspects directly constituent of sovereignty (i.e. the strategic functions), which typically means the essence of state power (according to a definition that has been consolidated in the centuries of modernity).

7. LIMITS OF FUNCTIONAL INTEGRATION

The application of a functionalist logic means the change and the reversion of a praxis, in essence the inversion of the centralisation process (top down), which has been the basis for the formation, during the centuries, of the European continental states with a few exceptions.

It means a process that signifies at first the unification (in the context of convergent systems, adhering to a similar geo-philosophical values platform) of some sectors, key ones but relatively easy to manage, with low symbolical implications on the identity-sensitive level, easy to rationalise and measure with performance accountability techniques.

It means a process that realises itself by the completion of the path initiated in the period of MEC and European Economic Community, by the construction of an open market and of a 'freedom of movement' workforce space, finally leading to the unification of economic policies, for states that have a budget, even for the functions of defence and security (even when indirectly), centrally coordinated.

This process is realised for many functions but without involving directly, or stopping just before involving, the 'high politics' functions. This circumstance raises a new question, namely whether to proceed further in some ways (possibly looking for a new impetus, with a referendum, using the popular will, or changing the constitutions), to find a point of balance and consolidate the status quo, or to stop and dilute the path of integration; or eventually just ignoring the issue and leaving the situation to evolve spontaneously.

Opinions on this subject diverge. According to several authors, at this point, the inertia towards further integration phases (thus exceeding the threshold of 'high politics') would be virtually impossible to block. It would go at the cost of causing systemic crisis, with economic and financial downturns, market and supply-chains fragmentation (compromising production and companies activity), 'welfare' and social security policies (which are typical long-term public functions, relying on state stability), collapse, prefiguring the dissolution of the EU itself and possibly the crisis of the individual public apparatuses, which supposedly would not be able to ensure their stability without the support of an EU-like super-governmental framework.

This would be a collapse, of course, followed by the need to restart from scratch a path of reconstruction of an intra-national, as well as intra- and inter-European framework – a possibility, at this point, unthinkable.[3] Now, as it is usual to say, the single-state budgets are drafted in Brussels, as well as the public debt, which is, in fact, refinanced and supported by institutions who are far from state sovereignty (*investment banks, volatile financial institutions, multinational companies, pension and investment funds, and, of course, other states*) in a context of 'governance', which therefore cannot be controlled even by the most powerful governments.

This is an integration that now mainly concerns the ability of the individual nation states to manage their resources or the ability to build trust with respect to their solvency – a situation that constitutes an asymmetry (*between the economy and the political levels, between the European and the nation state levels*) that cannot last long and that, sooner or later, will have to somehow resolve itself.[4] This raises the question of a strategy to deal with the resistance to integration deriving from;

(a) Individual state elites, often engaged in what appear to be mainly 'rear-guard battles' in defence of special positions.

(b) 'Euro-Sceptical' parties, lobbies, organised minorities and in general some mobilised components of a certain population (albeit sometimes in a virtual manner, considering the spread of social media).

(c) Public opinion and the population in its organic 'whole', which turns out to be sometimes extremely sensitive to identity issues (sometimes manifesting instinctive reactions), which would then have to 'get used' to the idea that certain sectors of 'high politics' may be transferred to international institutions.

(d) International arena players that are usually rather conservative, considering any new entry bound to provoke a geo-strategic and military disbalance.

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3   It is the case of inseparably integrated infrastructures that cannot be arranged just for single parts; such process is similar to what happened in the 19th century with the construction of a railway system and with industrialisation that pulled behind them the formation of territorially compact nation states (Gellner, 1997). Something like this would happen today but on a wider scale, with the tensions induced by the globalisation that brings the individual states to unify in supra-state organisations at a continental scale.

4   Underlining Bull's expectation that the European integration will either lead to a European state or fail (see: Diez vd., 2011; Bull, 1977,1982).

8. INTENTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR INTEGRATION IN THE MILITARY AND STRATEGIC SECTORS

According to some literature, a step by step integration can be applied to military strategic affairs too. For instance, in some areas the integration road map may be implemented as a test, aiming at extending the successful pattern to other sectors. The most suited "fronts" and "battlefields" to be tested are those that can reduce negative reactions among the public opinion.

External EU borders surveillance, especially aero-maritime borders and overseas military missions produce a weaker impact on national sensibility. Internal feedback results harder to manage when it deals with the territory and the symbols of belonging connected. This possibility means, first of all, the involvement of projecting forces such marine and aerospace ones, who tend to view their own range of action as unlimited considering the scale of the risks and corresponding interventions.[5]

In addition to the usual functions of surveillance of coast and sky-sea borders, some non-typical military activities must be considered, such as the prevention of piracy or terrorism, the control of migration routes, the prevention of exploiting environmental resources and sanitary-ecological security functions. These activities concern the whole global ecosystem, in which risk factors can spread unpredictably to an extremely wide scale. "*A supranational approach may prove beneficial*" (Germond, 2011:578; Final Report, 2013:9), especially in the marine area, as a driving element for subsequent integrations in matter of strategic forces (*namely the original core for the formation of a permanent effective force*).

Furthermore, such topics can be applied to new "environments", which foresees in fact new battlefronts, e.g. cybernetics, nanotechnology, nuclear non-conventional technology (e.g. "dirty bombs") and bio-genetics. And, finally, to borderline techniques such as the influence on personalities (*a very relevant issue in present times characterized by suicide bombing and political-terrorists activities, such as warfare conducted by mercenaries and even "foreign fighters"*). A joint initiative could yield benefits in all these areas: new potential battlefields, fragmented and uncontrollable, demonstrated to be the extreme demanding and expensive for the individual state security budget, even for the relatively bigger ones, with unique possibly exception of the US survived superpower.

Indeed, the increasing diffusion of innovative ways of carrying on/preventing war means as well as decreasing tendency in collecting capabilities within the EU institutions that the individual state cannot neither support nor implement. Taking in consideration the typical fungibility characterizing the strategic forces (namely any kind of weapon, lethal and non-lethal, for selective or mass destruction) the process would mean as well as the tendency, eventually not intentional and non-conscious, of producing strategic-political power or just of appearing to do so.

9. THE LIMIT OF THE INTEGRATION "PER PHASE" (GRADUAL)

The experience seems to show that integration process is proceeding relatively quickly for functions that could be de-composed into sequences of decisions and recurring actions, then suitable of a certain "proceduralization". Generally, these functions are standardized, sometimes even "fordistically", and the single segments of the chain are measurable in their operability. This results an essential fact in today complex systems, assuming that the function of the control is one of the most difficult and costly.

On the contrary, the proceduralize process results difficult and even impossible to be carried out beyond a certain threshold for functions not suitable of standardization (or functional segmentation). For example several functions of "high politics", usually defined as strategic,[6] that the modern state tends to centralize and manage politically (namely, arbitrarily).

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5 Considering also the tendency of preferring military interventions from the sky (or in the cybersphere), namely avoiding the use of terrain troops in a direct engagement, and the correspondent 'collateral effects' (*a frequent cause of reproduction and self-alimenting of conflicts, the so-called 'inside effects'*) and causalities, which furthermore usually decrease the legitimacy of a certain intervention (Jelen, 2012; Jelen and Zilli, 2015).

6 As already mentioned, functions such as foreign representation and international politics, macro-economic measures like national currency regulation and Keynesians investments, and then furtherly surveillance and protection of territory and population, and, in a capitalistic economy, the control of bank-financial leverage; to these it is possible to add, considering the ICT recent innovations, the

It seems to be clear that any consolidation at a super-national level for these functions can be realized only in a context of a "trade-off" between the national statehood or the (presumed) European one (or other types of statehood, i.e. NATO, UNO etc.). This according to a logic which provides that the strategic-political decision, being "absolute" and not "decomposable", cannot be neither shared nor divided between two or more institutions, and sometimes nor even suitable of being regulated in the frame of the state of law, or controlled in any way.

This refers to intervention in international conflicts, where sudden and unpredictable changes that may characterize a certain scenario must be considered. So, it results necessary to provide the intervention forces with tactical self-government to allow them making urgent decisions in the absence of reliable information's too.

Self-government should be provided also for ethically critical procedures such as mass population control, potentially violations of individual rights, establishment of state of war or state of emergency, application of techniques of physical and psychological coercion for convicted terrorists or gangster. In addiction for preventive interventions e.g., to prevent attacks by terrorist groups to key targets.

These functions can hardly be integrated in a broader pattern, without the loss of autonomy by the "sovereign player": it seems to be a matter of chain of command, by definition very short (as well as of hierarchical organizations, usually very narrow) and impossible to break down in a set of automatic, recurring and predictable decisions, as the "international governance" paradigm would assume.[7]

Actually, the strategic functions must be organized to be activated in very immediate times, otherwise they risk to lose capacity. This in contrast to what happens with other functions (administration, economy etc.), which can be articulated within different levels (states, regions, decentralized institutions or supragovernment), as well as quite easily be planned in phases and stages of control.

It is about finding a way to solve this problem. It is the challenge for Europe today, and in general for pluralistic and politically advanced societies, whose commitment is the creation of efficient and reliable codes for international collaboration.

10. THE SITUATION AFTER THE SUBSCRIPTION TEU OF LISBON

Strategic functions are sometimes "tout court" assimilated and confused with those of military security, which by definition are among the most important - and almost instinctive - between the human functions (*that is because they face risks of a violent attack, manifesting by the time of immediacy, and that can result in a systemic lethality*).

Since the beginning, individuals and groups have learned to organize themselves and unite to face the risks that affect the whole community. The functions of security have appeared as intrinsically linked to those of control and command, representing an essential condition for the survival of a whole group (*individuals, but also institutions, culture, values and economic instruments*). In modernity times the sovereign power has been build up on this paradigm and centralizing the security functions: a tendency that has been increasingly challenged by the civil society institutions, which claims for a democratic "button up" control (*e.g. in XIX Ct. Western Europe with the request for a "constitution"*: Habermas, 2002) and even for the security functions.

This trend, that in the past have involved essentially the intra-national societies, has spread today – in the wave of a neo-liberal and globalized development – to the international arena configuring a "convergence" trend among different systems (Blasutig, 2001). In this tendency the EU issue may be considered either a "model to be follow" or "unicum" (Jelen, 2012).

Indeed, similar trends of integration are emerging in many or even in all areas of the world having similar geographical features (i.e. macro-regional scenarios, territorially circumscribed markets, industrial-energetic supply integrated chains, origin-destination migration routes and socio-cultural affinities). In such areas, neighbour countries usually have to opt between the sharing of projects for the institutionalization of multi-lateral dialogue (or "tout court" of unification), or the persistence of potentially insoluble conflict situations.

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management of social communication and mass media, as well as theoretical and applied scientific research connected directly or indirectly to these fields; see also Kaunert vd., 2012:477.

7 But at this point the theories differ, depending on whether we consider a primordialist-organicistic theory, that assumes the power as something monolithic and indivisible, a functional-civic paradigm or a "realistic" approach; Schmitt, 1972.

However, in no place the process has gone beyond this point, that means beyond the limit of the reorganization of the functions of the force and of the strategic security in a super-governmental centre: a fact that for the geography and history of the politics seems to be an exception.

Nevertheless, according to most part of the literature, the question of the unification, namely the establishment of a super-government coordination for these functions, remains a necessary issue to deal with: otherwise, the several single states would undergo the risk of losing capacity and becoming obsolete compared to the evolution of the wider reality.

This is the main question in nowadays EU debate, even if non-officially mentioned or just understated. Accordingly, in the framework of relations between political actors established by the Treaty on European Union (TEU), it appears not always consistent, neither innovative and effective regarding this urgent issue.

The situation remains fluid, and it is difficult to understand what impact the Lisbon "round" will have on the geo-political EU practice. In particular considering that the Commission has been attributed the role of promoting the general interest of the Union (article 17, c.1), a diplomatic formula perhaps too vague to delineate the functions of a real "European government".

A formula that means the Commission itself can play a greater role in any context, considering the popular legitimacy obtained with the elections of May 2014, and the "trust" that the Parliament must grant to it, according to the legislation. For strategic military functions the matter is more complex. In fact, according to art.42, c.7 of the same Treaty (which includes the mutual assistance clause and is aimed at increasing the ability of common defence, especially considering terrorist and organized crime threats), the EU delegates functions of collective security to NATO. This concerns EU and NATO member countries, thus leaving unchanged the policy for the six EU members that are not members of NATO too (Austria, Sweden, Finland, Ireland, Cipro e Malta).

Rather, it seems the TEU avoids the issue by establishing a device based on governance theory assumptions, therefore namely avoiding any possibility of accumulation of centralist power. The risk is a situation which may prove not to be sufficient for what regards strategic functions. Perhaps, it suggests a situation of "game" between powers left to spontaneous interaction until a practice and a more defined scheme will prevail. This effect is probably deliberately pursued and functional to a concept of "governance" (checks and balances, segregation of duties) characterized by power relations based on open procedures and functional dynamics, rather than on acts imposed "from above".

11. THE EUROPEAN UNCONFESSABLE TABOO

Such approaches present controversial aspects in strategic ("high politics") functions issues. As already mentioned, such functions are difficult to be de- and re-composed in procedures, especially among different institutions (as expected by a mechanism of "governance"). The risk is to create dangerous power vacuums or overlapping or duplication between powers.

Actually, referring to the devolution of such functions, it may occur that, to any function may correspond the risk (actually the taboo) that the new institutions would be forced to fight each other, or act against their own citizens, or against some armed authority that would continue to exist at the local level. It is really not a remote hypothesis, considering European history as well as the unpredictable evolutions that may affect such crisis – like the recent ones in Balkan areas and in Eastern Ukraine.

Moreover, considering the uncertain status that some "European" state continue to have (*divided Cyprus, Bosnia H. and Kosovo, as well as further areas like Transnistria, Crimea and Nagorno Karabakh*); the proximity with crisis areas in Middle East, Mediterranean south bank and Caucasus; the diffusion of autonomist, secessionist and separatist movements all over Europe (which indeed until now failed to thrive in Western Europe), as well as the constant risk of populist and negationist waves that may spread out like a virus even in a culturally advanced country.

12. REACTIONS, EXPECTATIONS AND UNINTENTIONAL IMPACTS

The dynamic of integration, when recognized as effective, began to stir any kind of reaction, at any scale, both outside and inside, both positive and negative, and it soon began to configure even a benchmark for international relations practices. Indeed, it appeared as the demonstration that new geopolitics is possible, that the unification of convergent human systems is not just an utopia, and that a planned multi-lateral integration may work as an alternative option to a conflictual attitude.

The production of standards for economic and social areas (the step below official politics) began soon to emerge as a reference for many other countries. A reference not just for those who applied for memberships to the point that the "Acquis Communitaire becomes international law" (Diez vd., 2011:127), a kind of new rule-source for the global politics, in so far the EU itself begins to set standards even from the geopolitical point of view.

13. EXTERNAL ENLARGEMENT AND INTERNAL INTEGRATION

As mentioned before, this process occurs on two levels. The EU integration emerges as a result of a combination of internal integration and external enlargement, creating new scenarios both in the international and in the domestic context. Two paths that according to the interpretation, manifest themselves as complementary or mutually exclusive depending on whether we assume that the "enlargement" translates itself in an opportunity or a weakening effect inside the EU.

Such trend does not yet seem to be stabilized, and today is outlining a contradiction between different geopolitical "vocations" and between the same countries joining the EU. In particular, the tendency to expand to the south-east, possibly involving major countries like Ukraine, Turkey, countries of the Balkans and South Caucasus, can mean the risk of a dilution or an unburden in terms of internal consistency.

That is because the EU, originally, aimed to build its role and its legitimacy (rather than as a political unit in expansion) as a key factor of international mediation between East and West, North and South, continental areas and maritime domains (in Mackinderesque sense, between "heartland" and "rimland") and in general between various world cultures. A role that comes from the same geography of Europe as an Eurasian appendix and as a "bridge" between large landmasses, whose "national" territories would tend to correspond to that extending across the continent, from the Atlantic to Urals and the Caucasus, from the North Sea to the Mediterranean. A geography that works as a driving force for the European ideal, that considers unification as almost inevitable, that assumes the shape of the continent itself to lead to enlargement, with the political, economic and cultural boundaries that would ultimately "follow", sooner or later, in law or in fact, the geographical ones.

14. ENLARGEMENT AND EXPANSION SCENARIO

Actually, beyond intentions, the phenomenon seems to assume spontaneously a wider dimension. A trend that, sometimes, may be perceived as neo-expansionist from the outside, considering that the global political scenario assumes as a matter of course conservative attitudes.[8] In such a scenario is difficult to understand a phenomenon without precedents as the European Union results to be: a *de facto* disarmed super power.

In fact the stages of the enlargement and of internal integration induce changes in geopolitics, creating new "fait accompli". The effect that the transformation induces in a wider context needs to be watch since any change of scenery, even unintentional, will cause reactions that will require to be somehow normalized. This is necessary especially with regard to "wider" European space, whereas the various enlargements inevitably create new border areas, new belts of exclusion and indifference, in which all kinds of tensions arise.

A process combining within the much wider borderless context that means mobility acceleration and expectations for local societies to absorb ideas and values through vulnerable frontiers. Actually, migrations and movements are transforming themselves in a kind of commuting on an inter-continental scale with many different effects that can affect;

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8   On the ground of a safeguard principle: the governments that have to assume with regard to a particular population securety interests, considering the problems any variation in geopolitical elements has provoked in the past, e.g. borderlines changes, territorial gains, expansion in the influence sphere etc.

a) The tensions characterizing the southern Mediterranean bank and, on a different scale, the whole Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa, with various problems reflecting eventually to North Africa. For instance, the risk of mass migrations, that may be eventually exploited by organized crime coercively using masses of migrants as a destabilizing device or as a geopolitical blackmail.

b) The challenge of democratization that North Africa and Middle East countries are facing: processes in contradiction with "rentier states" politics (leveraging on the hydrocarbon, inducing eventually authoritarianism), or also with social-cultural elements, possibly reflecting long term de-colonization consequences[9]. This area settles a "semi-peripheral" Wallersteinian belt, where wars and revolutions seem to be constantly renewed. As a consequence, many countries need to start again the process of institutionalization after a certain number of failures in the post-colonial era (*considering nationalist and socialist revolutions, anti-capitalist and Third World movements, and further ideologies that spread in this epoch*). Of course, it is impossible to state that the underway processes in Europe are the direct cause of the outbreak of the "Arab Spring" and of the collapse of dictatorial regimes, which have destabilized the entire Mediterranean south bank area. However, it is clear that the EU externally appears as a compact geopolitical entity (even if paradoxically based on open society principles), that can have an impact on local societies by imitation and emulation, which may propagate on more dimensions in political life.

c) Several post communist states and Russia in particular, to which the presence of the pan-European institutions at its borders appears as the demonstration of a failure in a process of post- and de-Sovietization (*both in terms of geopolitics, and in terms of experiment in democracy and economy*). Indeed, in this period Russia experiences a sudden inversion of the trend and is subject to an attraction effect – for capitals and assets, both, private and corporate – induced by the Western European countries, and incentivized as well by the persistent weakness of Russian institutions (*since supposedly uncapable of a true post-soviet liberal evolution*). In this context the European "spirit" shows itself at different levels: as a factor of political attraction for countries traditionally placed in the Russian backyard (former USSR), and as a factor of imitation for still fragile societies. This situation has consequences at different scales for populations that are accustomed to a tradition of authoritarianism and possibly more vulnerable to manipulation (*e.g. to the suggestions of a renewed imperialist policy*). An expected reaction for such "locked" ("closed") systems that fail to produce a corresponding social evolution and are unable to digest the diversifications induced by the growth. A reaction that at a certain point can be lead to release outside the tensions accumulated internally for the failure in the transition from dictatorship to an open society and an efficient economy.

d) Furthermore we can see it in the so called "BRICS"[10] or "MINT"[11] or whatever countries usually located in the same Wallersteinian semi-periphery that are at the end of an only quantitative growth itinerary (not in terms of "human" or social capital), and after having "clashed" with their limits, may recover a sort of neo-imperialist or Westphalia-like politics. Policies based on "frustration" could lead to the destabilization of macro-regional and continental scenarios (e.g., South-East Asia, Latin America, Central Africa, Middle East).

In fact, these are "closed" societies (*that perceive the neo-liberal culture either as intrusive and pervasive*), with economics usually based on raw exploitation of raw material resources (*oil and other hydrocarbons, agrarian soil, water, minerals, etc.*), that tend to elaborate "organicist" politics, and therefore to react instinctively to contextual transformations.

It is also a matter of perception and manipulation, but it is clear that the "enlargement" of Europe can be perceived as a threat especially by closed political and social units. That the economy and culture of the "global" force in a way to open up, and that are thus subjected to hardly tolerable stress. States and systems that - possibly a coincidence - are often located right on the edge of the European continent, characterized by the "organicist" attitudes, trending to react to the changes induced by the wider contextual changes. A scenario that brings geopolitics far back in evolutionary history, in a primordial-Ratzelian scenario.

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9   Such processes may prove to be dangerous, especially for weak democracies of northern African Arab countries, like Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Morocco
10   Russia, Brasil, India, China and South Africa
11   Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Turkey

In fact, in such a context, the construction of a supranational and super-governmental institution proves to be a difficult task: it means the creation of an institutionalization mechanism functioning in a post Westphalia scenario, in which no more influence spheres, no more hidden diplomacy and no more privileged position are (ethically) tolerated and where the context forces the local elites to face a cosmopolite civil society.[12]

15. BORDERS MANAGEMENT: A CASE STUDY FOR TESTING EU STRATEGIC CAPABILITY

Borders management, in his national and European dual nature, always had a big impact on EU policy makers.[13] Measures to fulfil this task have taken the shape of 1) integration of surveillance systems between member states, 2) coordination between agencies dealing with migration and surveillance of borders and 3) creation of the agency called FRONTEX[14].

Illegal mass immigration is not a new topic for legislators and decision makers.[15] As a matter of fact, the European legal system started dealing with illegal immigration in 1999 by the Treaty of Amsterdam. The role of domestic and international legislators (of national, community and international law) is crucial to help managing the issue.

The EU's migration policy is not based on rejection. On the contrary, its main goal is to ensure a flow of legal migration (namely linked to work possibilities) while preventing illegal migration. Unfortunately, the latter is a growing phenomenon, mainly due to the instability arising from globalization and post-Cold War new scenarios involving low intensity conflicts (with bi/multi players), new niches of poverty, a rising number of failing states, international terrorism networks, and a widespread economic distress.

Since the last 10 years, countries like Italy, Spain, Greece and Malta have been exposed to a rise in migration flows by sea. As a result, there has been a reinforcement in patrolling the borders and in control measures.[16] Surveillance of maritime areas is not an easy task, despite the sovereignty granted to coastal states (that means that EU Member states bare full responsibility for surveillance and external border control) over their territorial sea, allowing them (save the right of innocent passage) the right to prevent the passage of ships transporting illegal immigrants through their territorial waters. This is easy to say, less easy to put into practice. The increasing flow of people defying the sea hoping for a better future in a European country is a key factor that made more difficult the maritime control on borders.

16. THE GEOGRAPHICAL FRAMEWORK AND OPERATION MARE NOSTRUM

The Mediterranean Sea has always been an important crossroad for trade between Europe, North Africa, Middle and Far East and, at the same time, it is a significant transit area for migrants coming from places with high levels of instability. The geographical position of Italy at the centre of its basin makes it the main terminal for the so called central Mediterranean route of migration. As a consequence, Italian authorities are forced in a constant situation of alert and surveillance.

Since 2011, as a result of the political turmoil linked to the so called Arab Spring, there has been an increase in the migration flows departing from North Africa. The deterioration of security conditions in the region, especially in Tunisia, Libya and Egypt, increased the flourishing of human trafficking transiting in an area already crossed by relevant migration routes towards Europe (AA.VV., 2012:17-18). Thousands of people

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12   In fact, the affirmation of de-territorialization, de-nationalization and globalization processes may be difficult to sustain for such countries, which may be not yet ready for such changes and such a scale jump. Such process means massive (*electronic, therefore instantaneous and irreversible*) propagation of values and behavioral patterns through porous borders, in societies characterized by different and incompatible material background (*e.g. whose economy is based on monoculture of hydrocarbons, on rigid schema of redistributions and of rent positions, and on the continuity between state-politics and society*), threaten by the new ubiquitous and volatile economies. In fact many "brics" cannot assimilate such models, since their economy stand on a kind of "oriental despotism" based on resources and power monopoly: what in western countries is perceived as a routine governance question (the adaptation to porous borders), in Russia and in further semi-peripheral countries may appear as the risk for a disaster.

13   Article 62 (2a) of the Treaty establishing the European Community provides the legal basis of EU action regarding border control.

14   Frontex is the European Border and Coast Guard Agency. From 2004 it supports the EU Member States anch Schengen associates countries in protecting the external borders of the EU's area of free movement (https://frontex.europa.eu)

15   "*According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the number of refugees worldwide has passed 50 million for the first time since the end of the Second World War*" (Brady, 2014).

16   Immigration by sea was stimulated also as a reaction to the wire fences erected in different circumstances, e.g. along the post Jugoslavian borders and along the Greek and Bulgarian borders with Turkey.

leaving Sub-Saharan Africa, Maghreb, and more recently coming from Syria, the Middle East and Afghanistan aim at escaping from wars, poverty and despair crossing the strait that divides the African continent from Europe.

Italy has always been a primary destination for transit flows due to the geographical proximity between the island of Lampedusa and the coasts of Tunisia and Libya (*which are about a hundred kilometres or 60 marine miles away from it*), but also quite near to Sicilian, Calabrian and Apulian coasts. Since a long time the Italian Navy have been rescuing old boats calling for help or shipwrecking while crossing the Sicilian strait. The crossing is dangerous due to the very bad state of repair of the boats and the overload of passengers. Also the adverse weather conditions often cause shipwrecks.

Rescue and humanitarian assistance have been provided several times even outside the Italian Search and Rescue (SAR) area. As a result of the deterioration of the political situation in North Africa and of the increase of the boats leaving its coasts, Italian government required the European Commission a greater involvement of the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU (Frontex). Moreover, the request included the proposal for sharing both the financial burden and the responsibility to give hospitality to refugees, asylum seekers and irregular migrants between the member states (AA.VV., 2012:32).

As a result, Frontex launched operation Hermes on February 2011 a European initiative of cooperation for the joint patrolling of the EU's southern maritime borders. Its mission was to patrol the borders, increase their security and contrast irregular migration from the southern bank of the Mediterranean. Afterwards, in June 2013, started operation Aegean to control the migratory route from Turkey and Egypt to the coasts of Apulia and Calabria via Greece (Servizio Studi Del Senato, 2015).

Nevertheless, the radical change in the management of migration across the Mediterranean took place as a result of the tragedy that had happened on the 3rd of October, 2013, when 366 died in a shipwreck near the shores of Lampedusa. This episode led the Italian authorities to start a humanitarian operation, called Mare Nostrum, just 15 days after the tragedy. One of the aims of the mission was to reinforce the national device for controlling and patrolling the Sicilian strait (Fanuli, 2014) adding its activity to the ongoing operations Hermes and Aeneas. The main purpose of Mare Nostrum was to fight illegal actions related to human trafficking, to enhance safety of life at sea and to act as an advanced healthcare filter (Pasta, 2014). Furthermore, the beginning of operation Mare Nostrum led up to the overcoming of a long-lasting dispute between Italy and Malta about the international responsibility linked to rescue operations at sea (AA.VV., 2014).

The peculiarity of the mission was the dualism of the goals: on one hand, the humanitarian aspect, on the other hand, the military goal to catch the boat drivers. It is important to underline that the activities of Mare Nostrum went beyond the EU's borders up to the territorial waters of Libya. It should also be pointed out that the personnel on the Navy ships carried out also other planned activities such as the implementation of healthcare prevention protocols, including a screening of the migrants before allowing them to be brought to primary reception centres (AA.VV., 2015).

Despite the request to join operation Mare Nostrum made by the Italian Defence Minister to the EU states, only Slovenia replied (Ministero Della Difesa, 2013). The country sent a ship and its crew, including two of the medical staff, for nearly two months from December 2013 to the end of January 2014. The Slovenian ship "Triglav 11" patrolled an area of 30 by 30 nautical miles near the eastern coast of Sicily (Ambasciata Slovena Di Roma, 2014).

To highlight the details of the mission, it is important to mention the personnel and the means employed in operation Mare Nostrum. Most of them belonged to the Navy and acted in synergy with the Air Force, Carabinieri, Guardia di Finanza, the Port Authorities, the Army and the Police. Furthermore, personnel belonging to the Scientific Police were boarded to identify migrants; cultural mediators to bare criminal organizations linked to human beings trafficking and, finally, members of the Red Cross and a medical equip to provide first aid assistance.

Referring to the means, the website of the Ministry of Defence provides a detailed list of ships placed in Sicilian Strait to join SAR operations (Ministero Della Difesa, 2015): one naval amphibious unit equipped with long-range helicopters, hospital and first aid abilities; two naval units "Fregata" class both equipped with an helicopter; two naval units "Patrol Boat" class with helicopter arrangement; one naval unit "Moto Trasporto Costiero" for logistic support; one maritime patrol aircraft belonging to the Airforce; one aircraft equipped with optical instruments, infrared and radar search area; two navy helicopters equipped with optical instruments,

infrared and radar search area; one unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) belonging to the Airforce used for maritime surveillance; and the coastal radar network and Navy Automatic Identification System (AIS). It is important to highlight the use of drones (Predator) that can identify the boats while leaving the port and allow their interception as soon as they cross the territorial waters.

Such a deployment of means heavily affected the public budget. The estimate expenditure was about 9.3 million Euros a month (Fanuli, 2014) and all costs had been covered by the budget of the Ministry of Defence. The European External Borders Fund[17] contributed 1.8 million Euros (Servizio Studi Del Senato, 2015) and no extra funds were allocated by Italy. Therefore, since the start of its semestral EU presidency in July 2014, Italy had been searching for and "exit strategy", in economical and operational terms, from the overwhelming Operation Mare Nostrum.[18] At the same time, Italy and France and other EU members were asking Frontex for more budget funds, promoting 'Frontex Plus' operation (Times of Malta, 2014).

As Italy could not manage this amount of expenditure for a long time, the European Union answered the requests of the Country with operation Triton. This operation, led by Frontex and started on November 1st, 2014, was substantially different by Mare Nostrum in the aims (see next paragraph).

In December 2014, the Chief of Staff of the Navy notified to the Human Rights Commission of the Italian Senate the results of a year of SAR operations during Mare Nostrum (from 18th October 2013 to 31 October 2014): 156,362 rescued migrants; 439 SAR operations; 9 command/mother ships; 366 arrested boat drivers (Pasta, 2014). Mission Mare Nostrum finally ended on December 31st, 2014, after two months of coexistence with Triton. Was Mare Nostrum, a "search and rescue" operation, a "pull factor" in illegal immigration, as some policy-makers stated?[19] This is a tricky question.

17. JOINT OPERATION TRITON

As a result, Joint Operation Triton, designed as a new operation in the Central Mediterranean,[20] was launched on 1st November 2014 with an estimated monthly operational cost between €1.5 and 2.9m per month. In the intent of those time EU home affairs Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, Joint Operation Triton was formed from operations Hermes and Aeneas, two joint EU border operations in the same area.

The "joint" nature of the Triton operation translates in 21 member states supporting it by offering human (65 guest officers in total: European Commission Memo, 2014) and technical resources (*12 technical assets: two Fixed Wing Aircrafts, one helicopter, two open shore patrol vessels, six coastal patrol vessel, one coastal patrol boat; five debriefing/screening teams*: Frontex, 2014). Also, responsibilities are now distributed: while in Mare Nostrum Italy was responsible for the migrants intercepted during the operations; in Triton, migrants fall under jurisdiction of the country's border they are trying to cross.

Since the beginning, however, the relationship between Mare Nostrum and Triton was not clear and contrasting statements at the domestic and European level (*from the Italian Minister of Interior and from the Former Home Affairs Commissioner*) make the matter even less comprehensible.[21]

The main dilemma was to conciliate the nature of an operation supposed (*in the Italian interpretation of the matter*) to replace Mare Nostrum and the fact that Frontex is a (small) border guard agency with a relevant mandate and cannot conduct any SAR (Search and Rescue) operation (or better to say, it cannot focus on SAR) like Italy was doing in the framework of Mare Nostrum.

Managed by Frontex, Triton main focus must be on border control and management, focusing on patrolling coastlines and vetting migrants, stretching not beyond the 30 nautical miles from Italy's coast lines. It has no resources for effective patrolling of high sea and its range of action does not extend to international waters,

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17   The EBF provides financial support to assist the Schengen countries in responding to the protection of the external borders.

18   It is important to remark that Mare Nostrum was conceived as an empowerment of the Migration Flows Control(CFM) activities carried out within the Italian Navy operation Constant Vigilance, according to a 2004 national law (Italian Anvy Website, 2014).

19   UK's minister of state of the foreign and commonwealth office, JOYCE ANELAY stated "*we do not support planned search and rescue operations in the Mediterranean. We believe that they create an unintended 'pull factor', encouraging more migrants to attempt the dangerous sea crossing and thereby leading to more tragic and unnecessary deaths*" (Parliament UK, 2014).

20   It covers coastal areas in Southern Italy and sea to the south of Sicily, see: Fronntex, 2014.

21   Cacciotti 2014; Commissioner Malmström stated that the future and continuation of Mare Nostrum is a question for the Italian government, Carrera and Den Hertog, 2015.

where many shipwrecks take place. Despite this, starting from November 2014, Frontex has recently agreed to provide such search and rescue support and new funds to supports and extend its mandate were allocated.[22]

18. IS TRITON OPERATION IN LINE WITH EU FOREIGN POLICY OBJECTIVES?

To be effective, Triton cannot work alone. It must be sided and supported by a clear and shared set of EU foreign policy objectives. Furthermore, EU foreign aid and technical assistance to the African and Middle Eastern countries, from and through which migrants are travelling, needs to be carefully evaluated and adjusted when needed.

Migration diplomacy needs to be developed at the central EU level to stimulate third countries capacity to manage migratory flows and disrupt smuggling networks. In brief, EU migration policy must be aligned with relations with countries involved in immigration issues (departure or transit countries).

Refugee communities should enjoy protection as close as possible to their home country and resettlement schemes must be developed. North African asylum seekers, for instance, are at the centre of a new resettlement scheme and a "regional protection programme" designed by EU that allows them to apply for refugee status before departure.[23]

19. ROLE OF THIRD STATES

To defeat the illegal migration phenomenon at its roots, the network of human smuggling must be disrupted and cooperation with third countries is crucial to this effect.[24] Therefore, actions and policies involving a strengthening of external border security must be sided by an improvement of cooperation with countries external to the EU but determinant for the issue (*countries from which illegal migration flows originate or through which they pass*).[25]

Joint operations with third states (i.e. Mauritania and Senegal as part of Hero operation) are, however, more difficult, as a EU Regulation stipulates that it "*shall comply with norms and standards at least equivalent to those set by Union legislation also when cooperation with third countries takes place on the territory of those countries*"[26]. Key gateways countries such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Niger, Mali and Sudan should enjoy a different relationship with EU who should offer technical support to manage immigrants. Also, Eritrea needs to be helped with regard to the refugee issue.

In a world full of failing states, countries like Morocco and Tunisia may still offer an important support to EU in joint patrol operations of their Mediterranean borders. Indeed, cooperation with the countries of origin is the key but not always possible – Libya, for example, is currently in a political chaos being ruled by different groups

22 The new Regulation 656/2014 provides the legal framework for border surveillance, SAR and disembarkation in the context of Frontex operations. It states that annual reporting to the Parliament must be also provided to report about accidents; see the official document at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.189.01.0093.01.ENG; rule of law challenges also emerged in the negotiation process of Regulation 656/2014; six member states with Mediterranean sea borders (Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus and Malta) argued that the "*regulation of search and rescue and disembarkation in an EU legislative instrument is unacceptable*" and "*constitutes a red line*". An estimated amount of €18.250.000 had been allocated as initial tentative operational budget allocation for the continuation of Joint Operation Triton until the end of the year 2015 (EU Commission Press Release, 2015).

23 This would decrease the number of risky Mediterranean crossing (EEAS, 2013).

24 "*As we work to tackle the dramatic situation in Libya, we have decided to step-up our partnership with third countries along the main migratory routes as part of our cooperation on the Khartoum and Rabat processes. This should help to dismantle criminal networks of traffickers and smugglers and to give maximum protection to those in need, starting with areas neighbouring crises. Our resettlement efforts have improved and this should help to stabilize refugee communities in third countries, together with the work of the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration*", Feredica Mogherini, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission (EU Commission press release, 2015).

25 A 16-paged programme of measures to combat illegal immigration across the maritime borders of the EU Member States was adopted already in 2003 (*following the presentation by the Commission of a report of a study conducted by CIVIPOL regarding the control of the EU's maritime borders*) and suggested operational measures to improve border control (Council of The European Union, 2003).

26 Regulation (EU) No 1168/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 amending Council Regulation (EC) No 2007/2004 establishing a European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the EU.

and unable to control its own territory. During its EU presidency, Italy organized conferences with other African countries to share concerns and debate cooperation. Not enough to solve the matter but a step in the right direction.

20. SMUGGLERS ADAPTATION DURING TRITON JOINT OPERATION

Means utilized by smugglers have changed in accordance with the circumstances. So, the use of fishing boats and pleasure crafts while making less dangerous the travelling for the immigrants, was no longer responding to traffickers needs to reduce the number of vessels employed/number of departures and maximise their incomes.[27] Therefore, they started using lager boats, usually repaired decommissioned freighters, and they learned to study better how to avoid detection by authorities while increasing rescue possibilities.[28]

Consequently, the Automatic Identification System on ships is frequently switched off by smugglers to avoid detection, making the boat electronically invisible to the Italian search and rescue authorities and allowing quick departures of smuggler before the ship is detected. Also, departures are timed so that their ships cross the paths of merchant ships, ensuring the rescuing action that they are obliged by law to provide in case of a distress call[29].

21. MARITIME AWARENESS, SURVEILLANCE AND INFORMATION SHARING

Maritime awareness, surveillance and information sharing are indeed crucial to manage illegal immigration. For what concern European surveillance, which engulfs the other two, it is composed by two systems: EUROSUR and MARSUR.

EUROSUR is a multipurpose European border surveillance network (presented as the 'system of the systems'), gathering multi-source information and able to provide a real time situational picture of the EU borders. It aims at detecting, preventing and combating illegal immigration and cross-border crime and contributing to ensuring the protection and saving lives of migrants. It works through a system of nodes (one of those is Frontex itself) and hubs, and it encourages actor (civilian and military) to share information.

MARSUR is a naval information exchange system aiming at avoiding functional duplications and improving cooperation. Both will be feeding information into the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE)[30] when it becomes operational by 2020.

22. TRITON EXTENSION TILL THE END OF 2015

On the 19th of February the EU Commission decided to extend Joint Operation Triton until at least the end of 2015, as a way to show support to Italian efforts[31] and the Asylum Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) granted Italy €13.7 million (used for establishing an emergency fund) to pay for the operation. It also awarded funds to support unaccompanied minors.[32] Immigrants' initial needs including medical screening and legal advice will continue to be covered by the 'Praesidium' project.

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27   A new, interesting, trend is the decreased willingness to lose their ships. Well known is the case (covered by international press) when smugglers pointed Kalashnikovs at Italian rescuers to reclaim their cargo ship for restocking (The Guardian, 2015).

28   The possibility of being rescued by authorities is an element that smugglers use to attract more and more possible migrants. On the other side, the fact that such rescue is "granted" seemed to have decreased the price immigrants pay (making an increased number of "clients" the only way to maximise the smugglers' profit); http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2014/12/14/inside-the-smuggling-networks-flooding-europe-with-refugees.html

29   Classic point of departure is Mersin, Turkey, which is connected by ferry to Latakia, Syria; in Mersin there seems to exist a well established network proving also accommodation for immigrant in transit (Frontex, 24.12.2014).

30   The sharing of relevant information between military and civilian actors is the main goal of CISE; http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs/policy/integrated_maritime_surveillance/index_en.htm

31   "(…) The message we are sending today is very simple: Italy is not alone. Europe stands with Italy", Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos, EU Commission press release, 19 February 2015.

32   Their number increased %278 since 2013 as the EU Commission reported; EU Commission press release, 19 February 2015.

23. HOW TO DEAL WITH THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE AT THE EU CENTRAL LEVEL?

To begin, immigration issues should be widely discussed to develop a comprehensive approach in a new European Agenda on Migration.[33] EU approach to migration must be organized and permanent, instead of reacting to events.

Former president Juncker already proposed the creation of a stand-alone commissioner for migration to defeat the splitting of the issue in multiple domestic institutions and EU agencies. Immigration is a not a stand-alone issue, it implies "*visa liberalisation, border control, refugee protection, trade, development, humanitarian aid and foreign policy*" (Brady, 2014). It is a "joint" issue to be dealt with at the European level, involving also countries that do not seem to be affected by it because of their geographical location. This is motivated by the flow of immigrants that often use Mediterranean countries only as an access point to enter Europe willing to reach inland or northern countries[34].

Of course, the human component of the phenomenon must be taken into account as well as the negative implications of illegal immigration, such as human trafficking and workers exploitation. With this in mind, those time newly nominated High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federic a Mogherini called for a EU foreign policy with a central role for human rights.

The recent Italian EU Presidency focused, "on paper", the migration issues as a priority to promote a more stable and organized response mechanism to migratory pressures. Despite the efforts, no concrete steps were taken in this direction. A joint approach at the European level cannot translate only in an operation like Triton, with limited resources (notwithstanding they were increased, they are still insufficient, especially considering the instability peak in North Africa) and its inability (by mandate) to disrupt the criminal network at the basis of illegal immigration.

Intelligence (*meaning the gathering and sharing of information through appropriate channels*) must side Triton, acting like its operational brain and giving ad hoc direction on how better to employ human and technical resources. Also, the legal systems of receiving countries must be updated and reformed in their dealing with migrant flows, making them more "human right compliant" but, at the same time, less appealing, basically following the already mentioned core of EU migrant policy - ensure legal migration while preventing illegal migration.

Ultimately, stability, when possible, in originating countries is the only way to stop or at least reduce the flow of migrants and this can be reached only through joint European efforts in offering support and advices to third countries on security reforms, reconstruction policies and peace building activities.

CONCLUSIONS: THE CHANCES FOR THE INTEGRATION AND FOR A POLITICAL STRATEGIC UNIFICATION

The development of a new unified apparatus in order to prevent and to counter operatively strategic risks and problems in the wider scenario, is considered to be as a matter of course something dangerous for the international equilibrium. Therefore, it is difficult to classify the EU as a geo-political experiment. There are different interpretations of it: a "unicum" without precedents, the collateral (Jelen, 2012) output of the globalization, a direct product of the post-modern passage, the result (or the cause) of the nation-state crisis, a simple sequence of geopolitical misunderstandings, or something else.

The same issue concerns the definition of integration as a phenomenon without alternatives, following predetermined trajectories on a path that would inevitably lead on the one hand to the unification ("either can give rise to a state, or breaks up"), or on the other hand to interim solutions such as "*sharing power*" or "*pooled sovereignty*". Such issue is a dilemma for every integration inducing – also non-intentionally and non-consciously – a kind of involvement in a borderless world, in which providing security is a matter of responsibility, not of ideology.

The present migration problem actually relies not only on the management of the crisis itself, but also on the persisting and increasing instability of a foreign country (especially Libya and Sirya). An instability that firstly

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33 Advanced and less advanced countries can share views on the matter only in a few organized arenas, one of which is the Global Forum on Migration and Development, https://www.gfmd.org/

34 Countries like Sweden, for example, but also Bulgaria and Romania, which were affected by a dramatic increase in asylum requests

enables crime organizations to instrumentalize migration waves and secondly to spread the perception of Europe as an ideal destination land for populations from many African and Middle-East countries. A situation that requires a different strategic answer because the EU and Italy are fighting the secondary effects instead of the real and deep-rooted cause of the crisis.

Obviously, the implementation of security functions in a multi-scale context portrays a different scenario. Security in a borderless world implies the need to grant a mutual and irreversible trust among stakeholders, including the ability to carry out internal checks of their own devices and to share tools, resources and information that are essential for their survival, eventually for undertaking actions with active security impact.

That is why for such functions it would be unthinkable a low intensity form of integration not at the political level. An enquire comes up: is the "political" Europe ready for assuming such responsibility, for facing the multi-sides risks arising in the opening global scenario? In other terms, is the Europeist ideal alimenting some misunderstanding the Europeans have to solve?

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