

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **A. Background**

The European Union (EU) has been facing the biggest humanity crisis since 2013. It sounds to have a serious problem on dealing with the coming migrant/immigrant people from many conflicting area in the world such as Syria (from the civil war), North Africa (especially from Eritrea which is rooted in its harsh military services), Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and many more. In seeking asylum in the EU countries, the migrants are coming with some main reasons like if they are refugees of the war it means they are seeking for a better place to live than their country, if they are coming from a poor country most of them are coming for the economic reasons and etc. They were desperate and persecuted in their home land then decided to flee to Europe by boats and took the risk of a very dangerous journey through the Mediterranean Sea (Polleschi, 2014)

However, not few of them dare to take this risk. The fact shows that the number of the coming migrants is folded every year (Patrick Kingsley, 2015). Even after there were a lot of migrant boats drowning recently they keep coming in the same number or even higher. It is the main reason why EU concerns to the efforts of tackling down the number of migrants who keep coming up to now. EU has been aware that if this situation remains, there will be a lot more problems happening in the EU's countries. So, the EU by cooperating with its members was trying to solve

this problem by holding an operation in the Mediterranean Sea. It started from the Hermes operation (2011-2013) on the southern border between Italy and North Africa which then remained as a failed operation then changed with the Mare Nostrum operation (2013-2014) near Libya's coasts which surprisingly succeeded in their search and rescue acts (it was not initiated by the EU, but by Italy) and because of the budget reason it was continued with the Joint operation Triton in 2014 which had lower capacity in terms of search and rescue tools rather than the previous operation (Ministero Della Difesa, 2013). On 22 June 2015, however, as a part of the European Union's Comprehensive Approach the EU launched a European Union military operation in the southern Central Mediterranean / EUNAVFOR MED and was known as SOPHIA (EEAS Website, 2016)

From all operations stated above, the Mare Nostrum operation (MNO) was the most successful program with Italy as the sole host-state which was also held by their navy rather than the other operations. Operation Mare Nostrum (OMN) was established by the Italian Government last October 18, 2013 to tackle the dramatic increase of migratory flows during the second half of the year and consequent tragic ship wreckages off the island of Lampedusa. So, it was Italy's initiative but funded also by the EU and considered as not only Italy's effort but also represent the EU as a whole. OMN consisted of an empowerment of the Migration Flows Control (MFC) activities carried out within the Italian

Navy operation Constant Vigilance, according to a 2004 national law (Tositti, 2014).

The naval and air units deployed to Mare Nostrum was essential to improve maritime security, patrol sea lanes, combat illegal activities, especially human trafficking and tackle the Mediterranean humanitarian emergency in the Sicily Straits, averaging 5 Italian Navy ships and their air units at any given time. As a matter of fact, to embark medical doctors from the Sea, Air and Borders Department (specialized in communicable diseases) a cooperation agreement had been signed with Ministry of Health – Prevention Department, (USMAF).

An agreement with Save the Children had provided professionals onboard for units of information, support, legal counseling and cultural mediation for the children and teen-agers rescued at sea. All rescued people underwent medical triage, to assess their health conditions and necessary treatments. The USMAF doctors onboard allowed early prevention from the risks of possible infections spread ashore. During the last 364 days of relentless activity in all weather conditions, the units of the Italian Navy have engaged in 421 operations and rescued 150.810 migrants; 5 mother ships have been seized and 330 alleged smugglers have been brought to justice. (UNHCR, Central Mediterranean Initiatives, 2014) These results have been achieved by 900 military engaged any single day, 32 naval units and 2 submarines taking shifts in over 45,000 hours of active operations. (Ministero Della Difesa, 2013)

In the last quarter of 2013, the EU's rejection of continuing this operation is being criticized by many parties because the bad predictions after the end of this operation were coming to be real at that time (International, 2014). Moreover, the number of the drowning migrants' boats increase after the MNO was higher, which was tenfold higher than in the previous operation. Therefore, many parties from the campaigners until the NGO's leaders were sounding loudly to blame that the EU and Italy took the wrong decision (Hertog, 2015). This condition seemed to be worse when despite the huge number of migrants who were drowning in the Mediterranean Sea, the coming migrants do not decrease (Brady, 2014). So, the EU's prediction and Italy's decision were blamed as a wrong decision. However, there would be always reason behind the decision which was made by the Italy to end the Operation Mare Nostrum. In media, it seemed like they did it intentionally to tackle the huge number of immigrants. EU member states blamed the OMN for the mess it had but they did not seem to think that to change it with Triton operation and conduct under the FRONTEX, the EU border management agency, was not a better solution. Then, it is worth questioning why Italy finally willing to end the OMN and did not think of how the international world would react to their decision.

So, this paper will try to explain the possible reasons why finally Italy willing to end up the successful and impressive operation which had rescued more than 100,000 migrants in a year (Neslen, 2014).

## **B. Research Question**

1. Why did Italy finally willing to end up the Operation Mare Nostrum (OMN) which remained as the successful operation during 2013-2014?

## **C. Theoretical Framework**

To analyze the problem, it needs a theory to help us simplify and decide which fact matters and which does not (Baylis, Smith, and Owens, 2008). There might be a lot of facts which we could find to explain the real factor behind the end of the OMN but it will be difficult to see which one really matters and which does not. So, in the effort of explaining the reasons behind the decision this paper will use the *Decision Making* theory.

William D. Coplin, on his book “Introduction to International Politics: A Theoretical Overview”, stated that at least there are three influential factors which influence the decision makers in deciding their foreign policy: *First*, the domestic political conditions of the state, including cultural factors that underlie the human political behavior. *Second* are economic and military conditions or capabilities, including the geographic factor that has always been a major consideration in defense/security for years. *The Third* is international context, the circumstances of a state that has been a goal of the foreign policy and the influence of other states relevant to the faced problem (Coplin, 1992).

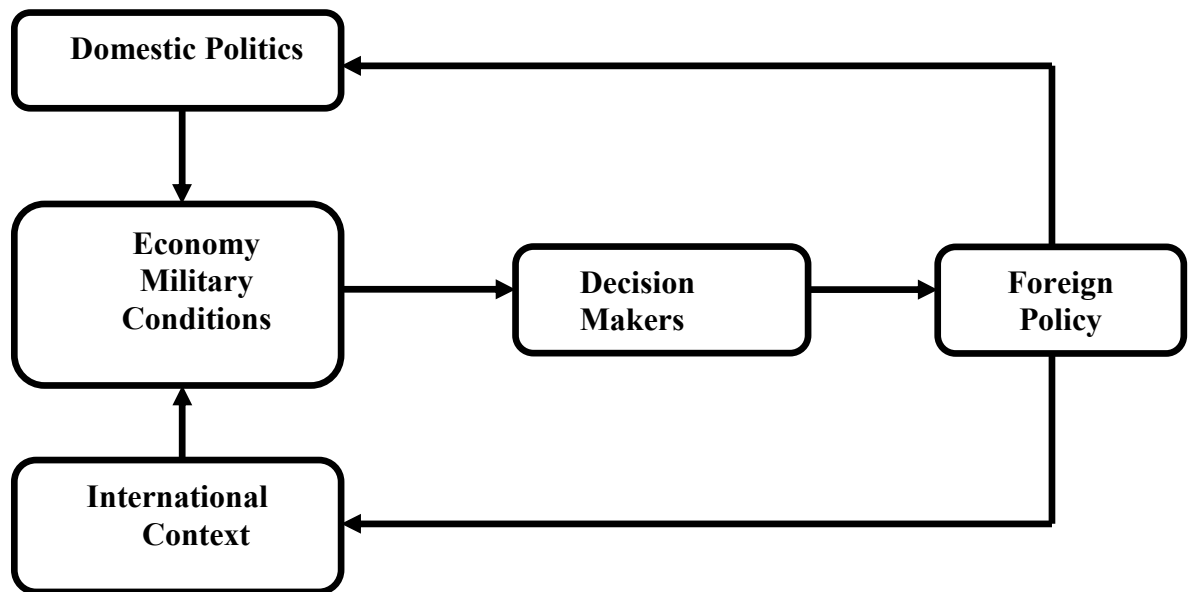
Every decision maker should have been dealing with, at least, those three factors as their consideration when making a decision. They are not

allowed to just ignore them and act or decide like what they want (without consideration) because as stated by Slantchev:

*“States do not act. People do. States do not make decisions. People do. States do not have goals. People do”* (Slantchev, 2005)

In order to understand more easily the three factors that influence the decision making process, the writer will try to describe it into a chart illustrated as follows:

**Figure 1. 1 Foreign Policy Decision-Making Process, by William D. Coplin, *Source: (Coplin, 1992)***



The chart describes that domestic conditions, especially the domestic politics, enable to influence the foreign policy of a state. The conditions of domestic politics can be simply understood as a system of governance which has been adopted by a state and become the main reference in taking any action including decision making. *Then*, both economic and

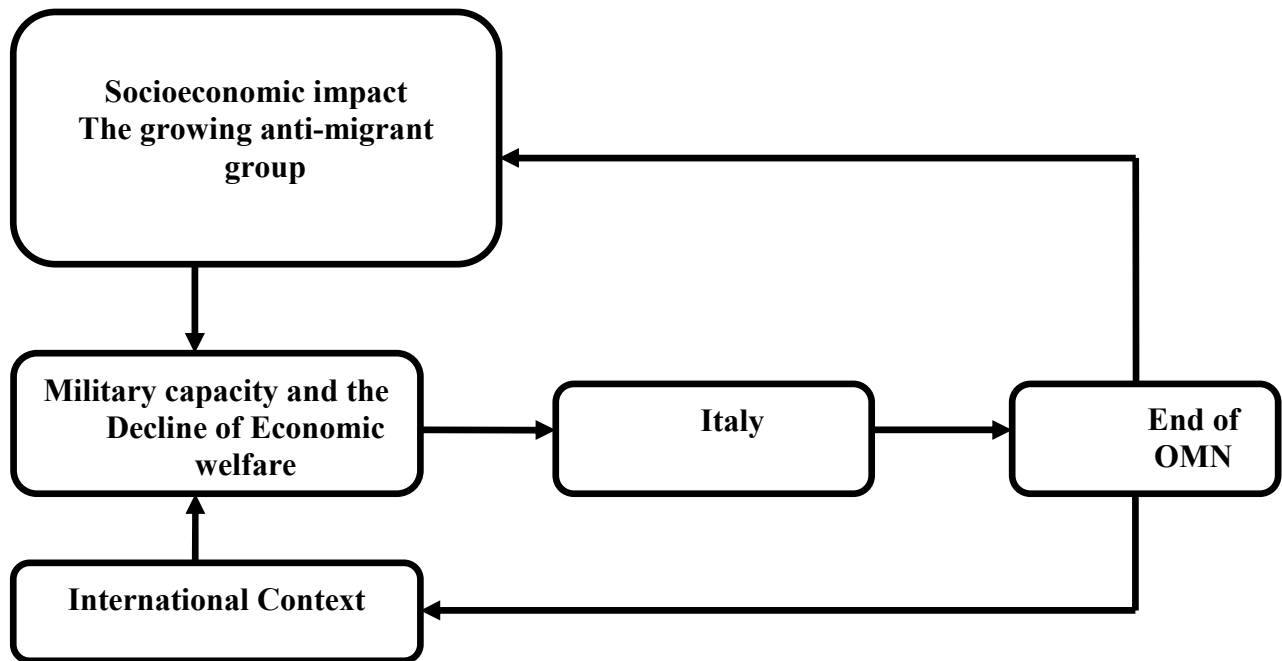
military capabilities have been decided as one of main factors which strongly influence the foreign policy decision-making process. *Finally*, Coplin includes the International context as the third factor to be essentially considered by the actors and decision makers of foreign policy. This last factor slowly but sure has been influencing a lot of decisions in the last decades since people start realizing that to create a better world people should start to aware of each other.

The decision to end the Operation Mare Nostrum had been not only considered as the Italy decision but European Union (EU) as a whole. ONM sounded as successful search and rescue operation that make Italy also proud of their navy and the world stated that Italy had been doing well. On the other hand, other EU member states start asking and arguing that ONM is one of pull factors that make immigrants keep coming even in a folded numbers since they think that they will be saved and rescued if they have reached the Mediterranean Sea.

Shortly they had no worry to flee even though they know exactly it is illegal. So, when Italy needed an extra additional budget to keep this operation run, no state that showed their hands to share this responsibility together. In the media, budget/financial problem was mentioned as the main factor why Italy finally gave up with this operation. The lack of budget had sounded as the problems of operation's continuation. Other EU member states showed their agreement to end the operation by not responding or giving additional fund to this operation.

The writer illustrates the basis of the state' decision in ending the ONM by the following chart:

**Figure 1. 2 the illustration of the applied theory**



The Illustration can be explained based on the theory:

### **1. Domestic Politics**

The writer will try to explain how the Italy's domestic politics influences the decision making process which leads EU member states to finally agree to end the ONM through analyzing:

#### **1.1 Socioeconomic impact**

(Environment, Jobs, Security)

During the Operation Mare Nostrum was running in the Mediterranean Sea, Italy had been a host state for thousand



hundreds immigrants coming from the horn of Africa, Middle East and other parts of the world. After entering Europe via Italy, migrants would at least stay for days to continue their journey to the north. Considering the number of migrants that Italy have already had and added with the recent amount of coming migrants Italian could feel disturbed. *First* thing to be affected by the decision was surely Italy's domestic politics especially in the socio-economic aspect which was job opportunity.

#### 1.2 The growing of anti migrants group in the society.

The rise's tension on the right wing party was evidence to the current situation. Opinion was undeniable. Moreover, the operation was not cheap and the country's facilities for looking after these refugees are being overwhelmed. It brought Italy to the terrible situation. Opposition to immigration like explain in point 1.1 above had helped fuel a surge in support for the anti-immigrants Northern League Party. In a demonstration which happened on 31 October 2014, the Northern League Party had sounded their demand.

## 2. The Economic and Military capacity

Giving any search and rescue action towards the illegal immigrants who keep coming from many conflicting areas in the world, a state should consider and figure out about their capacity at first. It will stimulate problems then if a state with less capacity put this humanity obligation above their citizen's welfare. It was just like Italy during the ONM that spends not less than 9 M per month while EU only gave 9 M€ per year. It brought problem already for Italy, but it seemed that other EU member states do not do the same. As stated Mirriam Dalli (a Maltese Labour Party Politician:

*“ . . . .Because most of the time we talk about “responsibility sharing”, but when you look at the numbers only a few countries are really sharing this responsibility” (Mirriam Dalli) (Global: Debating Europe, 2014)*

For a while, it might be fine for Italy since at the very first beginning they themselves initiated this search and rescue operation because they were feeling guilty for the tragedy on October 2013 which caused the dead of more than 600 hundred migrants in the shore. However, it just could not simply to continue like this. Other EU member states should also be aware that what had been done by Italy also on behalf of European Union not only on itself. Instead of offering help, states were acting like it was just fine to end the ONM if it was not possible again to run it.

### **3. International Context**

In this part the writer will try to analyze the international influence especially the influence of the European Union's decision not to support the continuation of Mare Nostrum. Since Italy was one of EU member states it is important to consider how the EU's decision in supranational-level giving its influence towards Italy's decision to end the OMN. It is also important to take into account remembering that EU is a unique intergovernmental organization which has special characteristic in terms of its system. Its system is developing time to time seeking a better pattern to fit.

European Union cannot ignore its position and responsibility in this case. It binds clearly with the International Law about humanitarian and migrants. In addition, both EU law and the ECHR prohibit the rejection at borders of persons at risk of persecution or other serious harm (principle of *non-refoulement*). So, the decision was in the middle consideration between the responsibility of saving lives and maintaining the union's (member states) interest.

#### **D. Hypothesis**

Italy had a hard time facing critics and at the same time should deal with the emerging problem caused by the migrants. It was the only states who responded the emergency situation in Mediterranean Sea and struggled for its continuation by calling for help to the union. However, finally Italy was willing to end this operation. By using Willism D. Coplin decision making theory it can be concluded that, Italy's decision to end the Operation Mare Nostrum was because:

- a. Domestic politics.
- b. Economy and Military capacity.
- c. International context.

#### **E. Method of Research**

This research will be conducted by a qualitative research to analyze the problems and then draw the conclusion. There are three main steps of a qualitative research: data collection, data categorization, and analysis.

##### **1. Data collection**

The writer would conduct library and online research to collect data related to the theories and concepts in strengthening the ideas which would help the writer to analyze the problems. In the data research about the problems, the writer would collect information from the Internet about recent news regarding it. The statistic data will also be

collected from the official EU websites that are provided to give the valid information about the recent activities of migrants/immigrants recently.

## 2. Data categorization

The data that which will be collected are going to be classified in order to determine which data are appropriate for the research and the data which are not.

## 3. Analysis

From the collected and categorized data, the writer will conduct an analysis in accordance with the theories and concepts which have been described on the theoretical framework. From the analysis, the conclusion is going to be asserted that would answer the writer's question.

## **F. The Scope of Research**

The writer will make a limitation in this thesis regarding to the scope of time which was set since the establishment of OMN in 2013 until 2014 when it was ended. However, any useful information to the time this research is conducted might be calculated to give a better consideration in finding the real factor behind the end of such successful operation.

## **G. The Structure of Thesis**

- Chapter I : Examining the background, research question, theoretical framework, hypothesis, method of research and system of writing
- Chapter II : Explaining the profile, goal or purpose, history, deployed assets, external contribution, record of OMN and how Italy and EU had been dealing with the coming migrants.
- Chapter III : Explaining the dynamic of search and rescue management and emergency responses in EU and the rejection to continue the operation.
- Chapter IV : Analyzing the possible factors behind the end of the decision to end the OMN and change by Joint Operation Triton which was handled by FRONTEX.
- Chapter V : Figuring the conclusion coming from the whole chapters.