

# Civil Society–Government Synergy and Normative Power Italy

Raffaele Marchetti

There is a need for a reassessment of the Italian contribution to international affairs. If a more comprehensive and pluralist reading of Italian action at the international level is developed, an image of normative power Italy may emerge. Italian input has been crucial in a number of transnational campaigns that have had significant impact at the international level. The cases of the peace in Mozambique, the International Criminal Court, the Moratorium on the Death Penalty and, more recently, the Ban on Female Genital Mutilation all illustrate Italy's contribution to international affairs, especially the politics of norm change. These cases are all characterised by the presence of intense civil society-government synergy. In order to advance the understanding of the processes and impact of transnational mobilisations, this analysis examines the domestic conditions that facilitated such synergy, intended as key conditions for the empowerment of transnational activism itself.

*Keywords:* civil society, transnational campaigns, normative power

The Italian role in international affairs has traditionally been interpreted through the mainstream diplomatic lens of government action. With very few exceptions (for example, Enrico Mattei's so-called 'ENI diplomacy'), the action of the Italian government has always been considered Italy's exclusive contribution to the international system. This understanding is, however, proving increasingly limited in heuristic terms. Focusing solely on governmental dynamics fails to provide a comprehensive picture of Italy's input into international affairs. In a world

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characterised more and more by a pluralist form of global governance, it is simply outdated to remain anchored to a state-centric reading of international political interaction. First of all, several sub-components of the national institutional structure are going global:<sup>1</sup> from regions to cities,<sup>2</sup> but also disaggregated parts of the state such as courts, ‘authorities’, etc.<sup>3</sup> Second, non-governmental actors, such as private firms, trade unions, political parties, think tanks, and civil society organisations (CSOs) are also impacting on different international domains.<sup>4</sup> Only by taking these two other actors into consideration, is it possible to capture fully the overall impact of Italian political action at the international level. Hence, this article aims to examine these new forms of political agency and understand their interaction and synergy with the traditional forms of a country’s external projection. In this vein, it focuses specifically on civil society organisations and their interaction with the government, as a micro case study of a broader understanding of Italian foreign policy, in the pluralist sense.

Studies on Italian civil society organisations and social movements with an international dimension have contributed to the contemporary debate.<sup>5</sup> Prominent among them are those related to globalisation and war. The mobilisations against neoliberal globalisation, especially the Global Justice Movement and the events of the 2001 G8 in Genoa, have been analysed repeatedly.<sup>6</sup> The pacifist mobilisations from the 1980s onward,<sup>7</sup> including during the Balkan conflict<sup>8</sup> and up to the Iraq war<sup>9</sup> have also been studied extensively. In addition, a few studies on specific campaigns,<sup>10</sup> or on specific civil society actors, such as the Community of Sant’Egidio<sup>11</sup> or the fair trade movement (*Commercio equo e solidale*)<sup>12</sup> have also been carried out.

What has been missing so far in the debate is a dialogue between the studies on Italian foreign policy and research on Italian civil society. Foreign policy analysts

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<sup>1</sup>Slaughter, *A New World Order*.

<sup>2</sup>Alfieri, *La politica estera delle regioni*.

<sup>3</sup>Bonanni, *Politica estera della Repubblica Italiana*.

<sup>4</sup>Respectively, Renda and Ricciuti, *Tra economia e politica*; Varsori, “Il movimento sindacale”; Pilati, “Political Parties and Italian Foreign Policy”; Lucarelli and Radaelli, “Italy: Think Tanks”; Cugliandro, “New Actors on the Horizon”.

<sup>5</sup>Pianta, “Imagination Without Power”; Marcon, *Le ambiguità degli aiuti umanitari*; Moro and Vannini, *Società civile tra eredità e sfide*.

<sup>6</sup>Pianta, *Globalizzazione dal basso*; Andretta et al., *Global, nonglobal, new global*; Reiter et al., “The Global Justice Movement in Italy”.

<sup>7</sup>Lodi, *Uniti e diversi*; Ilari, “Storia politica del movimento pacifista”; Giacomini, “I movimenti per la pace”.

<sup>8</sup>Marcon and Pianta, “La dinamica del pacifismo”; Marcon, *Dopo il Kosovo*.

<sup>9</sup>Ruza, “Institutionalization of the Italian Peace Movement”; Della Porta, “No to the War”.

<sup>10</sup>Marchetti, “The Politics of Transnational Campaigning”; Nessuno tocchi Caino, “La campagna del Partito Radicale”; Marchetti and Marino, “La campagna per la moratoria”.

<sup>11</sup>Giro, “The Community of Sant’Egidio”; Morozzo della Rocca, *Fare pace*; Gentili, *Lessons from Mozambican Peace Process*.

<sup>12</sup>Rosi, “Etica e pratica”.

have tended to underestimate, if not completely overlook, the contribution of non-governmental actors to the overall impact of Italian foreign policy.<sup>13</sup> This is mainly due to a disciplinary bias that has focused much more on bilateral and multilateral intergovernmental interaction than on pluralist forms of global governance. Conversely, civil society scholars have tended to interpret civil society organisations or social movements as actors playing a different game than government.<sup>14</sup> This, instead, is mostly due to the Western and (ultimately) normative inclination to see the world of civil society and social movements as radically autonomous from political systems, but always at risk of being co-opted by them. Overcoming these disciplinary limits, this article argues in favour of a more comprehensive understanding of Italy's contribution to international affairs, able to capture both the *independent* international relevance of Italian civil society actors and the *synergy* between the Italian government and its national societal counterparts.

### CSO-government synergy

Research on civil society tends to explain the impact of non-governmental actors at the international level by referring to a number of specific factors. They include both the internal characteristics of the CSOs, such as their ability to mobilise resources<sup>15</sup> and to frame goals and strategies adequately,<sup>16</sup> and their external conditions, such as the political opportunity structure within which they act.<sup>17</sup>

Among the success factors, the relation between civil society organisations and governments is particularly important.<sup>18</sup> In the literature, the focus is usually put on the target state, and the relation between CSO and the government is usually characterised as contentious or, at a minimum, competitive. As Price points out:

research on the success or failure of transnational activism often turns to domestic structures and culture to explain variations in success when the targets are states. A key finding is that transnational activism may be insufficient to produce change without the opportunity provided by government leaders who are sensitive to their state's reputation.<sup>19</sup>

Research on policy gatekeeper and veto players has, in this context, constituted an important part of this trend of research on transnational CSOs.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>See, for instance, the otherwise sophisticated study by Brighi, *Foreign Policy, Domestic Politics*.

<sup>14</sup>See, for instance, the comprehensive study by Reiter *et al.*, "The Global Justice Movement in Italy".

<sup>15</sup>McCarthy and Zald, "Resources Mobilization and Social Movements".

<sup>16</sup>Goffman, *Frame Analysis*.

<sup>17</sup>McAdam *et al.*, *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements*.

<sup>18</sup>Keane, *Civil Society and the State*.

<sup>19</sup>Price, "Transnational Civil Society and Advocacy", 592.

<sup>20</sup>Busby, *Moral Movements and Foreign Policy*.

A relatively less studied angle on civil society-government interaction is focussed on cooperation rather than competition.<sup>21</sup> From this perspective, the relation is configured neither as CSOs unidirectionally influencing the state, nor as the state subcontracting or co-opting NGOs. The relation is rather one of reciprocal synergy<sup>22</sup> that may generate an effective enhancement of the political capabilities of both governmental and non-governmental actors. Given the predominantly intergovernmental nature of the international system, CSOs need to rely on governmental actors for an entry channel into diplomatic bargaining. At the same time, governments can benefit from the indirect support provided by CSOs. During the long-term process of agenda setting, preparatory work, and actual international negotiations, there are an increasing number of windows of opportunities for unofficial actors to informally influence proceedings. This can be done by generating awareness and public support in the to-be-persuaded country, by providing technical expertise, by shaming and blaming the opposite camp, etc. CSO-government synergy may be enacted both domestically within a single state and multilaterally through multi-stakeholder initiatives.

What is still insufficiently clear in the literature is under what specific conditions such CSO-government synergy works the best. A number of hypotheses on the factors facilitating synergy may be formulated on the basis of the most recent studies.<sup>23</sup> They include:

- (H1) readiness of the government to provide funding for CSOs (*gov. fun.*)
- (H2) broader, bipartisan support in the political system for the campaign (*bipart*)
- (H3) the existence of other institutional partners besides the national government, making it possible to form hybrid coalitions with other (parts of) international institutions and governments (*hyb coa*)
- (H4) the existence of other nongovernmental partners besides the national CSOs making it possible to form transnational CSO networks (*tn net*)
- (H5) resonance between the framing of the campaign and the overall institutional normative paradigm: the cultural fit (*reson*)
- (H6) a focus on soft policy sectors: human rights, environment, etc. (*soft pol*)

With the intention of testing these hypotheses, the article examines four cases of Italian nongovernmental action (facilitating factors will be highlighted) and formulates a number of case-oriented comparative reflections in the concluding remarks. A small-N comparison is developed through a qualitative comparative analysis,

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<sup>21</sup>An exception is constituted by those studies concentrating on the inclusion of CSOs in official national negotiation delegations (Glasius, *The International Criminal Court*).

<sup>22</sup>Uvin, "From Local Organizations to Global Governance"; Utting *et al.*, *Global Justice Activism*.

<sup>23</sup>Risse-Kappen, *Bringing Transnational Relations Back In*; Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Risse *et al.*, *The Power of Human Rights*; Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*.

under the assumption that in these cases multiple conjunctural causation applies.<sup>24</sup> The four cases have been selected on the basis of their historical coverage (from the late 1970s to present), their differing impact (ranging from success in creating new international institutions to initiating a peace process), their ideological divergence (Catholic or liberal), and their different policy areas (from peacebuilding to human rights) (see Table 1). Overall, they represent a good sample of the most influential civil society campaigns at the international level promoted by Italian non-governmental actors. While the risk of selection bias is always present, what should be stressed here is that the objective is not to study all Italian civil society mobilisations at the international level. The article looks only at the actions of those mobilisations promoted by Italian non-governmental actors and developed through transnational networking and institutional synergies that proved able to cogenerate a momentous impact on the international system.

Before proceeding, a proviso should be stated. The article aims, exclusively, to identify those factors that proved important for the viability of the synergy in the cases studied. Thus, it recognizes the importance of CSO-government synergy, but does not take it as the only causal factor that led to the final outcome of the mobilisation. Other important factors such as a permissive international context, focusing events, low costs, etc., should be taken into consideration for a complete reconstruction of the causal chain, but this is beyond the scope of the present article.<sup>25</sup> Therefore these other factors will only be secondarily taken into consideration in the accounts of the specific case studies.

## The case studies

### *The initiative for peace in Mozambique*

The Mozambican civil war (1977-92) attracted a number of different peacebuilding initiatives. Of these, the mobilisation for peace in Mozambique begun in 1983 by the Italian Community of S. Egidio<sup>26</sup> (hereinafter Community) was decisive. It reached its climax during the negotiations between the two conflicting parties, which took place in Rome between 1990 and 1992 and led to a peace agreement signed under the auspices and with the mediation of the Community.<sup>27</sup>

It took more than ten years to build up trust between the Community and the parties to the conflict. The first contact between the Community and Mozambican political entities occurred in the late 1970s, but it was only in the 1980s that it turned into a proper political dialogue. Previously, the traditional focus of

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<sup>24</sup>Ragin, *The Comparative Method*.

<sup>25</sup>A more exhaustive analysis will be provided in Marchetti, "L'Italia che cambia il mondo".

<sup>26</sup>The Community of Sant'Egidio, founded in Rome in 1968, is a Catholic movement aiming at disseminating the Gospel, interfaith dialogue and assistance to the poor. It has 50,000 collaborators and works in 70 countries. It has a long tradition of peace mediation, especially in Africa.

<sup>27</sup>Gianturco, "La pace in Mozambico".

Table 1. Four ‘Italian’ mobilisations of international significance.

	<i>Period</i>	<i>Key Italian CSO</i>	<i>Ideological orientation</i>	<i>Policy area</i>	<i>Synergy with government</i>	<i>TN networking</i>	<i>Institutional impact</i>
<i>Peace in Mozambique</i>	1983-92	CSE	Catholic	peacebuilding	present	absent	success
<i>International Criminal Court</i>	1994-98	NPWJ	liberal	international criminal law	present	intense	success
<i>Moratorium Death Penalty</i>	1987-2007	HOC, CSE, Amnesty International-Italy	liberal/Catholic	human rights	present	intense	success
<i>Ban Female Genital Mutilation</i>	2000-12	NPWJ	liberal	human rights	present	intense	success

Legend:

CSE = Community of S. Egidio

HOC = Hands Off Cain

NPWJ = No Peace Without Justice

interaction had been limited to humanitarian aid: being the first international donor (also thanks to the funding provided through official Italian development aid) (H1), Italian civil society enjoyed privileged access to the local context. In the 1980s, the Community moved to an upgraded dialogue with the two fighting parts, the national government supported by the Marxist Frelimo party (*Frente de Libertação de Moçambique*) and the guerrilla movement, Renamo (*Resistência Nacional Moçambicana*). A first entry point was provided by a couple of meetings in Rome organised by the Community in 1982 and 1984 between Enrico Berlinguer, then secretary of the Italian Communist Party, and a key Mozambican Bishop, Jaime Gonçalves, in contact with Frelimo. In 1985, another important meeting between the Pope and Mozambican President Machel was organised in Rome. The Community continued to build up trust in the following years, extending the scope to the guerrilla movement, Renamo. The meeting with its leader, Afonso Dhlakama, in 1988 opened the way to engagement with the movement. A few months later, the Pope visited the country and met with the new President Joaquim Chissano. In addition, the humanitarian aid supplied throughout the 1980s by the Committee of the Friends of Mozambique<sup>28</sup> further contributed to building up a more direct relationship with the Mozambican government. The high level meetings and material aid proved essential in consolidating the Community's credibility in the eyes of both parties. The key outcome of the process was the invitation for Andrea Riccardi, leader of the Community, to take part in Frelimo's Congress in 1989 and the Dhlakama's subsequent visit to Rome in 1990.

During the 1980s, a number of international and regional attempts at conflict resolution had all failed.<sup>29</sup> At the beginning of the 1990s, however, the two parties to the conflict had developed sufficient trust in the Community as an honest broker to ask for a negotiation table (initially secret, and then formal) to be set up in Rome. After 14 years of fighting, peace negotiations began in July 1990.<sup>30</sup> Four negotiators were accepted by the parties: two members of the Community, a representative of the Italian government, and Bishop Gonçalves. The 'institutional lightness' of the setting, composed of *super partes* outsiders allowed for a more genuine, closed-door, and flexible conversation.

The external support of the Italian political system was important throughout the long journey towards peace. Beginning with the brokerage provided by the Italian Communist Party and continuing with the formal and financial support of the Italian government, specifically the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (H2). The political support was bipartisan: both the Communist and the Christian

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<sup>28</sup>An informal gathering of mainly private citizens intended to raise awareness and collect funding for the Mozambican cause.

<sup>29</sup>Mediation was attempted by, among others, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Malawi.

<sup>30</sup>Gentili, *Lessons from the Mozambican Peace Process*.

Democratic Party supported the peace initiative, albeit in different ways, and this gave continuity to the synergy between the Community's action and the external political support (H2). The Italian government provided logistics, moral and financial support to the peace process.

The negotiations lasted for two years. Rather than imposed from above by the international community or 'bought' by economic 'sticks and carrots', this peace agreement emerged slowly through a process of ownership and confidence building in which persuasion and reciprocal recognition were genuinely intermingled. Step by step, and also thanks to the role of the mediators, the two parties rediscovered the possibility of building reciprocal trust. As argued by Giro, the Community's non-official diplomacy was particularly important in "reconstructing links to isolated realities that have slipped out of the control of the state system".<sup>31</sup> Once this essential 'domestic' result was achieved, official diplomatic acknowledgment took place, leading the country out of civil war.

### ***The campaign for the establishment of the International Criminal Court***

While activism for the creation of an International Criminal Court (ICC) to judge the most serious crimes of concern to the international community had a long tradition, a specific campaign for that purpose only materialised in the 1990s, significantly contributing to the 1998 Rome Statute of the ICC and, after ratifications, its establishment in 2002. As promoter of this transnational mobilisation, the Italian CSO, No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ),<sup>32</sup> played a prominent role, thanks also to the positive synergy with the Italian government.

Following the model of the post-World War Two Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, two international criminal tribunals were established in the 1990s in relation to crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, 1993) and Rwanda (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, 1994). These *ad hoc* cases provoked a debate on the need to create a permanent body to deal with serious violations of international humanitarian law related to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. It is in this context that the mobilisation of CSOs needs to be interpreted. While CSOs were already active on this issue, it is by taking advantage of this specific international window of opportunity that they managed to organise an influential mobilisation for a permanent ICC.

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<sup>31</sup>Giro, "The Community of Sant'Egidio".

<sup>32</sup>NPWJ is an international non-profit organisation founded by Emma Bonino as the result of a 1993 Radical Party campaign that works for the protection and promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and international justice. It works on three main issues: international criminal justice, female genital mutilation; and MENA democracy. The Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty is a political association of citizens, parliamentarians and members of government of various national and political backgrounds who use nonviolent means to promote human rights and democracy. It has consultative status at the ECOSOC.



The campaign for the establishment of the ICC gained impetus in parallel to the 1994 annual United Nations General Assembly, which decided to set up a Preparatory Committee mandated to discuss a draft Statute of the Court. This was perceived as a first step towards convening a diplomatic treaty conference. On February 1995, a transnational network, the Coalition for an International Criminal Court (CICC), was founded (H4) by a number of NGOs among which NPWJ played a primary role. The coalition proved to be a very influential actor in the process that led up to and during the negotiations of the treaty conference held in Rome in 1998.<sup>33</sup>

Lobbying, providing experts and interns, producing expert documents, convening conferences, disseminating information to a wider audience, and organising street actions were the key activities of the CICC. Throughout the campaign, the CICC worked in close collaboration with the so-called 'Like-Minded Group' (LMG) of states supporting the cause more strongly (H3). At the Rome Conference, "the two acted as a single group[,]... frequently consulted each other and developed concerted efforts to exert the maximum possible influence on the delegates in attendance".<sup>34</sup> NGO members even participated in the formal proceedings as representatives of small countries that did not have sufficient resources for setting up a delegation of their own.

The role played by NPWJ in the CICC was very significant. NPWJ was a founding member of the Coalition. It was active throughout the process supporting the coalition's activities of institutional lobbying and advocacy, but also by setting up its own initiatives. Most significant of all was perhaps the collaboration between NPWJ and the Italian government which secured the hosting of the conference in Rome, acted as a bridge between the national political sphere and the world conference, provided substantial funding (H1), and generated bidirectional (governmental and non-governmental) pressure on both the overall proceedings of the diplomatic conference and bilateral relations. The almost unanimous consensus among the Italian political elites (H2) and the deep framing resonance with the mainstream Italian political thought (shaped as it is by both Catholic and liberal principles, by the horrors of the Nazi-Fascist crimes, and more recently the crimes in the Former Yugoslavia) (H5) guaranteed continuous support throughout the campaign. Moreover, the NPWJ leadership role of Emma Bonino, at the time European Commissioner, definitely contributed to making this synergy viable and, with a leading role, smoother by creating an almost unitary actor at least in terms of strategy. Notable among the specific initiatives carried out by NPWJ was its Judicial Assistance Programme which provided technical assistance to those countries in need of legal expertise. Important was also its political pressure through public campaigns and institutional lobbying promoting national ratifications after

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<sup>33</sup> Glasius, *The International Criminal Court*.

<sup>34</sup> Cakmak, "Transnational Activism in World Politics", 387.

the treaty had been signed, which led to the final establishment of the ICC in 2002.

### **The campaign for the moratorium on the death penalty**

Activism against the death penalty has a long tradition with significant roots in Italy.<sup>35</sup> A major achievement was the outcome of a transnational mobilisation led by a number of Italian CSOs and developed in close cooperation with the Italian government and European institutions: a resolution for a moratorium on capital punishment was voted by the UN General Assembly in 2007, and then again in 2008, 2010 and 2012 with an ever larger majority.

The mobilisation for this cause sprang primarily from the encounter of three Italian civil society actors: the Community of Sant'Egidio, Amnesty International (especially the Italian branch), and an NGO, Hands Off Cain (*Nessuno tocchi Caino*),<sup>36</sup> linked to NPWJ through their common affiliation to the Nonviolent Radical Party, Transnational and Transparty.<sup>37</sup> Besides these three single organisations, a special role was played by the World Coalition Against the Death Penalty, an umbrella network of many NGOs active in different countries on the issue of the death penalty (H4).<sup>38</sup>

The Italian mobilisation dates back to 1987 when the *Non uccidere* (Thou shalt not kill) network was established to fight against the death penalty (H6). Following an incisive public campaign which penetrated the political parties in a bipartisan and lasting manner (H2), the first proposal for a moratorium was approved in 1989 by the Italian parliament as a motion aimed at pushing the Italian government to call for a three-year moratorium. This was the first positive contact between civil society and Italian political institutions which generated an increasingly firm institutional commitment to abolishing the death penalty. This CSO-government commitment continued throughout the campaign in a bipartisan way (H2), providing significant funding (H1) for the campaign and gradually building a solid convergence in terms of framing resonance (H5).

In the 1990s, the mobilisation went through its first international scale shift. There were numerous contacts with European civil society organisations and think tanks. In addition, a clear effort was made by CSOs to have the cause espoused

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<sup>35</sup>In 1764, the Italian criminologist, Cesare Beccaria, published a cornerstone pamphlet on the issue of the death penalty, *On Crimes and Punishments*. The first political entity to abolish the death penalty was allegedly the Grand Duchy of Florence. In 1787, the Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo of Tuscany passed a law to this end.

<sup>36</sup>HOC is an organisation of the Radical Party, founded in 1994 and based in Brussels. HOC is predominantly committed to the issue of abolishing the death penalty and, beyond lobbying, mainly monitors capital punishment in the world, awarding the “Abolitionist Prize”.

<sup>37</sup>*Nessuno tocchi Caino*, “La campagna del Partito Radicale”; Zamparutti, *La pena di morte nel mondo*; Marazzitti, “Diplomazia umanitaria”.

<sup>38</sup>Sculier, *Towards a Universal Moratorium*.

not only by national but also by European institutions (H3). This was pursued with and through the Italian government by using communitarian procedures and actions focused on key governments. Full endorsement by the EU meant not only political support, but crucially also funding for the campaign. In 1994, a major scale shift occur when the proposal for the moratorium was submitted by the Italian government to the United Nations General Assembly, but was rejected by eight votes.

Given the limited success in New York, the campaign sought other, more promising avenues within the UN system. Two important successes were achieved in the Commission on Human Rights (later Council on Human Rights) in Geneva in 1997-98 with the approval of a text in favour of a moratorium presented by the Italian government. The vote not only provided new motivation for the activists, but also, and more importantly from an institutional perspective, fully inserted the death penalty in the UN agenda. 1999 marked another turning point when the text for the resolution was for the first time presented to the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva by the European Union, meaning that the campaign was endorsed by all EU member states.

After many initiatives at the local, national, European and global level, the campaign intensified its efforts in 2007. A particularly encouraging constellation of political events materialised: the repeated successes in the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, the EU commitment, and the Italian support ratified by a change in its constitution. Furthermore, bilateral initiatives were launched in collaboration with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of several European member states to persuade third countries to adopt the text. In particular, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs created a special monthly roundtable (*unità di crisi*) to enhance interaction with CSOs and plan common strategies. More generally, the Italian government provided intense political and financial support throughout the campaign. On 2 November 2007, a petition in favour of the moratorium with five million signatures was delivered to the UN. On 18 December 2007, the UN General Assembly approved the resolution for a moratorium on the death penalty with 104 votes in favour, 54 against, and 29 abstentions.<sup>39</sup>

### ***The campaign for the ban on female genital mutilation***

The first transnational mobilisation against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)(H6) was launched in Africa in 1984 by the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children (IAC). From this mainly regional scope, the mobilisation went through a scale shift in the 1990s when it was endorsed by a number of European CSOs belonging to the European Network for the Prevention and Eradication of Harmful Traditional Practices (Euronet-

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<sup>39</sup>UN General Assembly, *Resolution on the Moratorium*.

FGM). In 1995, contacts involved mere information sharing; but in 2002 a real transnational activist network was established. NPWJ joined the campaign against FGM in 2000 and played an important role thereafter in close cooperation with the Italian government. The final achievement came in 2012 when a UN resolution was passed by consensus.

The enlargement of the campaign to European and more generally Western CSOs (and later governments) in the 1990s proved crucial in the long run (H3; H4). First, it contributed to changing the framing of the mobilisation from one centred on health to one centred on human rights. This aligned the campaign's objectives with the broader overall ideological context of the UN and made the campaign's claims more palatable to the international community, which in turn generated further political and financial support. Second, it contributed to upgrading the institutional expertise needed to navigate UN procedures smoothly. Third, it helped to persuade important Western countries to support the campaign by politically endorsing its goals and financially sustaining its actions.

The campaign developed through a slow process of awareness-raising in different political contexts, on the African continent in particular. In order to persuade people of the importance of banning FGM, the CSOs involved in the campaign targeted other potentially similarly-minded CSOs, governments, media, and different political actors able to push for a normative change. Public meetings, expert conferences, political conferences, teaching in schools, mass petitions, cultural events, street demonstrations, and institutional lobbying at the national and UN level were the main activities of the campaign. The strategy was first focussed on passing anti-FGM national legislation in a sufficient number of countries, and then moved the political struggle to the UN in order to make the change universal. At the UN, country delegations as well as the Commission on the Status of Women, UNICEF, and later the General Assembly were under advocacy pressure. In all of these activities, NPWJ, and especially its leader Emma Bonino, played a very significant role in the mobilisation as a key bridge between the African and the European political context and a decisive contributor to the campaign's scale shift at the UN level thanks to its institutional expertise.

The close relations between NPWJ and the Italian government also proved very important for the campaign. Italian institutional support was bipartisan (H2) and the fit with the overall Italian political culture very close (H5). Under the political lobbying of NPWJ, successive Foreign Ministers Massimo D'Alema, Franco Frattini and Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata all endorsed the campaign and helped to widen consensus on the declaration bilaterally and multilaterally at the UN and EU level. The Italian government also passed a particularly strict law to punish the crime of FGM in 2006, created an ad hoc national commission on FGM in 2009, set up a toll-free number for denouncing cases of FGM in 2010, and put political pressure on third countries to pass and effectively implement similar laws. The

Italian government also provided considerable financial support for the campaign: €1.5 million directly to NPWJ, and USD5.5 million indirectly through the UNFPA-UNICEF's 'Female Genital Mutilation Cutting: Accelerating Change' programme (the programme's total budget in 2008-11 was USD27 million) (H1). Lesser financial support was also provided by a number of Italian local authorities, including the City of Rome, the regional administrations of Piedmont, Apulia, Emilia Romagna, and the provincial administrations of Milan and Turin.

On 20 December 2012, a resolution calling on countries to eliminate female genital mutilation was adopted by consensus at the UN General Assembly,<sup>40</sup> following the decision in favour taken by, among others, the Commission on the Status of Women of the Social and Economic Council and the Third Committee on Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs, after publication of a special report by the Secretary General in 2011.<sup>41</sup> This resolution on FGM is a significant landmark insofar as it constitutes a ban on FGM practices, asserts their contrast to the ideal of human rights, reinforces the legitimacy of laws already adopted at the national level, and strengthens the efforts of anti-FGM activists and politicians at the national and regional level.

### **Comparative analysis: normative power Italy**

In these four 'Italian' cases, the hypotheses on the facilitating factors for CSO-government synergy mentioned at the beginning are broadly confirmed. In this regard, the main result emerging from the case studies concerns the different synergic patterns at work in the area of human rights vs. the area of peacebuilding/international criminal law. In the human rights area (that is, the campaign on the death penalty and FGM), all six hypotheses are confirmed. Instead, in the 'more difficult' area of peacebuilding/international criminal law (that is, the campaign for the ICC and for peace in Mozambique), a less clear pattern can be observed. The table of truth (Table 2) reports the dichotomized variables representing the facilitating conditions for the viability of CSO-government synergy.

Beyond these conditions, which can be generalised to some extent, there are a number of specifically 'Italian' factors that help provide a fuller account of why synergy occurred. They include: a) the hybrid nature of the Radical Party lying somewhere between institutions and civil society, but also with a transnational identity and accreditation at the UN ECOSOC; b) the involvement of the Vatican and Christian networks and their influence both domestically and internationally; c) the close relationship between the world of activism and the world of

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<sup>40</sup>United Nations General Assembly, *Intensifying Global Efforts*.

<sup>41</sup>United Nations, *Ending Female Genital Mutilation*.

**Table 2. Table of truth on variables affecting CSO-government synergy in the four ‘Italian’ cases.**

	H1 <i>gov fun</i>	H2 <i>bipart</i>	H3 <i>hyb coa</i>	H4 <i>tn net</i>	H5 <i>reson</i>	H6 <i>soft pol</i>
<i>Peace in Mozambique</i>	1	1	0	0	1	0
<i>International Criminal Court</i>	1	1	1	1	1	0
<i>Moratorium Death Penalty</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Ban Female Genital Mutilation</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1

institutional politics, and the significant interchange between them on issues of foreign affairs;<sup>42</sup> d) the high level of participation among Italian citizens in CSOs<sup>43</sup> and the subsequent public trust in them;<sup>44</sup> e) the weakness of umbrella organisations, which creates incentives for the individual action of Italian CSOs;<sup>45</sup> and finally, f) Italy’s middle power position in the international system attenuating the ever present suspicions of Western great power neo-colonialism, while generating an incentive for the use of soft power (given the absence of other kinds of political resources) and collaboration with the EU.

More broadly, a comparative examination of these four cases shows that when a positive institutional impact at the international level was achieved, the synergy between non-governmental organisations and government was always present. The interaction between CSOs and the national government constituted a strengthening factor for (at least certain types of) transnational mobilisations. While other factors may be relevant as well, this study suggests that, at least in the Italian case and with reference to the domain of human rights, cooperation with government tends to be a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for influencing international decision-making. The informal and hybrid coalescing with the government helped the Italian CSOs enter the intergovernmental playing field in that it provided access and funding, but also increased the diplomatic ‘respectability’ of the campaign. Governmental sponsorship also proved expedient for another reason, though: it was important in enhancing domestic support. Not only did it indirectly create the conditions for preserving local support and fostering the emergence of new supporters, but it also acted as a “coral reef”,<sup>46</sup> that is a broker facilitating the getting

<sup>42</sup>Just a few examples of this kind of interchange include Emma Bonino, leader of NPWJ and currently Minister of Foreign Affairs; Andrea Riccardi, leader of the Community and former Minister of International Cooperation and Integration in the Monti government; and Mario Giro, key member of the Community and currently Under-secretary for Foreign Affairs. The difference between the degree of viability of civil society-government synergy at the international and domestic levels should be noted here. According to Moro and Vannini, at the national level such synergy tends to be less productive (Moro and Vannini, *La società civile tra eredità e sfide*, 109–13).

<sup>43</sup>In 1999, 33.3 percent of Italian citizens were members of a CSO (IREF, *L'impronta civica*, 253).

<sup>44</sup>Moro and Vannini, *La società civile tra eredità e sfide*, 170.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, 79–82.

<sup>46</sup>Tarrow, “Transnational Politics”, 15.

together and formation of trans-ideological coalitions among different Italian CSOs as in the case of the moratorium on the death penalty.

These case studies also point to the importance of local/national political dynamics in any transnational mobilisation. The international political opportunity structure, consisting of the skilful balancing by activists of the local/national and international/transnational dimension, is a complex, multilayered chessboard, and a key factor that significantly contributes to the success of the mobilisation. As the salience of the civil society-government synergy amply shows, the national dimension remains crucial for the viability of transnational campaigns aiming to have an institutional impact related to human rights norms.

Finally, in addition to the advantages for CSO mobilisations resulting from synergy with the national government, what also emerges from this brief study is the potential benefits for government action deriving from interaction with non-governmental actors. In most of these cases, the Italian government acquired a leadership role by cooperating with the Italian CSOs and their transnational coalitions. The ICC, the moratorium on the death penalty, and the ban on FGM all suggest an image of Italy as a 'normative power', which is rather astonishing when compared to Italy's relative marginality in international decision-making, despite its membership in many important fora. While it is undeniable that these mobilisations would not have been successful without a number of favourable external conditions in the international system, it is equally indisputable that without Italian input (meaning *combined* government/non-government input) they would have been more difficult to achieve, would have been achieved later, or perhaps would not have been achieved at all. It seems evident, for instance, that many of these issues would not have been included in the official international agenda without the combination of the advocacy of Italian CSOs and the diplomatic lobbying of the Italian government. Seen from this angle, the wider Italian political system proved able to contribute significantly to the formulation of the normative understanding and the subsequent institutional framework of key international policy issues in the areas of human rights.

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