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***‘Crack Troops or Bloody Killers? States,
Political Parties, and Mercenaries 1805-2017’***

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‘Spendon contante il sangue per credito di paga’

Vittorio Alfieri

‘Citizens of Benin...the hour is grave. At seven hours this morning, an unidentified DC-8 jet aircraft landed at our International Airport of Cotonou, carrying a crapulous crowd of mercenaries...black and white...financed by the lackeys of international imperialism...A vile plot to destroy our democratic and operational regime’

Bruce Chatwin

‘The House of Commons is a beast not to be understood, it being impossible to know beforehand the success almost of any small plain thing, there being so many to think and speak to any business and they of so uncertain minds and interests and passions’

Samuel Pepys

Abstract

Addressing political attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors, this dissertation offers an original empirical contribution and a new theoretical framework to investigate international norms, and relations between political parties and private armed groups. I code and analyze all references to mercenaries and private military and security companies in the Italian and British Parliamentary debates from 1805 to 2017. Regarding the norm, I demonstrate that the anti-mercenary norm evolves through three critical moments. Between 1805 and 1945, an anti-mercenary moral norm is present to a relevant extent in politicians' debates, though it does not consistently constrain states' behavior. The norm is weak. Between 1945 and 1991, anti-mercenary sentiments start to decline, and all discussions about their operations are clearly distorted by Cold War dynamics. The norm is very weak and highly politicized. After 1991, the norm targets security contractors for a brief period, as negative references and moral attacks significantly decrease. The norm disappears. Concerning instead political parties' attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors, I demonstrate that from 1945 to 1991 Cold War dynamics trump any other moral or functional consideration on mercenaries. In Italy, leftist parties are almost exclusively responsible for the aversion toward hired soldiers. Anti-Americanism, anti-colonialism, and fear of coups, emerge as the main drivers of political hostility. Conversely, British parties' attitudes converge on a similar aversion, though the reasons behind the antagonism differ. While anti-communism dominates the Conservatives' discourses, the Labour presents a more colorful picture, with Cold War-related antagonism emerging from the extreme left. Conversely, after 1991 the political and economic problems of privatization become protagonists in both countries, as Italian parties converge on comparable postures, whereas a more significant gap emerges among parties in the United Kingdom. The results of this work produce insightful empirical and theoretical implications for the literature on mercenaries and contractors, on political parties and Foreign Policy, on the Cold War, and on international norms.

Chapter I: *Introduction*

Why do states adopt different political and military approaches and attitudes toward mercenaries and private military and security companies (PMSCs)? Literature on ancient and recent forms of privatization of warfare and security has widely addressed this and similar questions, trying to explain divergences and similarities in the ways states and other political actors shape their postures toward private hired armed groups. This work provides two contributions to this lively literature, trying to answer to two main sets of questions. The first class of puzzles regards the anti-mercenary norm, a topic scholars have debated, and still debate, with passion, competence and frequent disagreement. Does a strong anti-mercenary norm exist? If the antagonism against mercenaries is actually enshrined in a strong norm, what are its origin, bases, and the drivers of its evolution? More specifically, does the norm descend from other stronger norms, as the one on state neutrality, or does it have an independent and maybe moral origin? Then, how did the norm evolve from the XIX century onwards, the period in which most scholars agree in locating its first manifestation? And finally, was the norm transferred from mercenaries to private military and security companies in recent times, experiencing a sort of spillover effect, or have instead security contractors not been targeted by such aversion?

The second set of questions concerns instead the different attitudes that political parties endorse toward private hired armed actors, going deeper into the mechanisms that shape political attitudes. This is almost completely uncharted territory, as scholars of military and security outsourcing have always centered their attention on the level of analysis of states, never entering into the details of the internal discussion, i.e. within-country, about mercenaries and security contractors (Collier, et al., 2004). Thus, there are significant gaps and original puzzles that this work addresses. How do political parties create and shape their preferences and postures regarding private armed actors? Do parties show divergent approaches to the privatization of warfare and security? If such differences actually emerge, what are the main drivers and mechanisms that explain these discrepancies? More, along

which critical dimensions, as international politics, military affairs or political economy, do these potentially different attitudes form and evolve?

In order to produce convincing assessments of and answers to these puzzles, I here analyze more than 200 years of parliamentary debates, coding, quantifying and thoroughly discussing every single reference to mercenaries and private military and security companies in the British Houses (1805-2017) and in the Italian Parliament (1861-2017). These are two very different but equally interesting cases for the investigation of attitudes toward private hired soldiers. I create a new dataset and offer an original theoretical framework to study how political attitudes form and evolve in parliaments and how they reflect on policies, decisions and measures, producing political effects. Furthermore, this framework provides the possibility, on the one side, to enlarge handily the analysis to other countries and, on the other, to extend instead the investigation to other actors and topics, for instances pirates or nuclear weapons. In this way, I hope to open the path to improve the generalizability of the results I produce, and stimulate new studies that focus on political postures in the parliamentary arena, for example focusing on other norms or other private armed actors.

I divide this Introduction in two parts, the first centering the attention on the topic of the anti-mercenary norm, the second addressing the relation between political parties, on the one hand, and mercenaries and security contractors, on the other. Both sections follow the same development. First, I provide a rich and thorough literature review on the major contributions that scholars provided about private hired armed groups, the anti-mercenary norm and, in the second section, political parties, on the one hand, and foreign policy (FP) and military affairs, on the other. Second, after a recap of the main research questions, I present the reasons I believe give relevance to the investigation I conduct, in terms of importance of the topic and significance of the contribution this work provides. In this context, I also briefly address the potential problems that my framework and method could generate, though more thorough details will be provided in the Chapter about data and methodology. Third, I discuss the selection of Italy and the United Kingdom as case studies, as well as the preference for

the time periods I analyze, providing reasons that justify these choices and make these case-studies potentially insightful. Finally, I concisely present the results that this work offers and the path I follow in the next Chapters.

The journey of the anti-mercenary norm

From ancient Greece (Bettalli, 2013; Griffith, 2014) to early modern Italy (Mallett, 2013) and from the Thirty Years War to the American Revolution (Parrott, 2012; Singer, 2003) mercenaries and private military and security companies have played a critical role in warfare. If their relevance and presence decline between the mid-XIX century and World War II, the wars of decolonization and more recent conflicts see the reemergence of private military and security companies and other mercenary forces (Avant, 2005; Kinsey, 2006; Mockler, 1970).

Many insightful academic works have centered the attention on the so-called ‘classic mercenarism’. This phenomenon covers a significantly lengthy period, from the most ancient political organizations, as Babylonia, Egypt and Greece to roughly the end of the XVIII century, when the Napoleonic Revolution starts the most intense phase of states’ consolidation of the monopoly on the use of force (Avant, 2000; Paret, 1986). For instances, Bettalli (2013), Griffith (2014) and, more recently, Gómez-Castro (2018) have thoroughly analyzed different aspects of ancient Greek mercenaries, from their origin and their method to conduct warfare, to the political and military effects, and distortions, they generated. While there are very few studies on mercenaries from the birth of the Roman Empire to the Middle Ages, as the phenomenon of mercenarism decline and as scholars devoted little attention to this period, literature of mercenaries in the late Middle Ages and the early Modern Era flourishes in diversity and significance.

Very interesting is the debate about the so-called ‘compagnie di ventura’, mercenary companies that were prominent military and political actors in the early Renaissance Italy, but also in France and

other areas of Modern Europe. Most famously, Ricotti (1847), Villari (1877), and Pieri (1934) have provided a rich account of the military activities of these mercenary groups, especially focusing on the political consequences of their involvement in the political affairs of the Italian Peninsula. Other scholars have more recently contributed to this debate, for example addressing the military and political adventures of famous mercenary captains (Covini, 1998; Covini, 2012; Vigueur, 2013) or the compagnie's profound effects on the map of military and institutional political power, and on the prospect for the unification of Italy as well (Caferro, 1998; Covini, et al., 2011; Grillo, 2018).

Other studies have addressed the activities of mercenaries all over Europe during the Modern Era. Parrott (2012) provides an intelligent and accurate analysis of the contribution of private actors to military affairs in Europe in the XVII century before, during, and after the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), showing how mercenaries and military contractors remained relevant actor for the business of war even after the consolidation of the famous Westphalian political order. Another significant contribution is that of Thomson (1996), who carefully follows the activities of mercenaries and other private groups, as privateers and the British and Dutch chartered companies, from the Modern Era to the XIX century.

Despite the decline of mercenaries' activities during the XIX century, relevant works have analyzed military operations involving private hired soldiers throughout the entire century. For instances, Rodriguez (2006a; 2006b; 2009) offers insightful evidence about British mercenaries and volunteers in the wars of independence in Latin America, and also during the War of the Two Brothers, the First Carlist War, and the Greek War of Independence. Differently, Langley and Schoonover (1995) address American mercenaries and entrepreneurs' activities in Central America between the XIX and XX century. In addition, Liu and Kinsey (2018) and Figes (2011) provide extensive discussions about the role of mercenaries, and states' attitudes toward hired soldiers, during the Crimean War (1853-1856).

Furthermore, scholars have considered the military adventures of mercenaries in more recent times, especially in the developing world during the second half of the XX century. Mockler (1970; 1985) covers the activities of white European mercenaries that fought in Africa, especially during the civil war in Angola and Nigeria in the 1960s and 1970s, but also on other military scenarios, as the civil conflict in Yemen between 1962 and 1970. While Hoover (1977) and Moreira de Sá (2019) address accurately mercenaries' activities, and the following trial against them, in Angola, the Yemeni Conflict is the focus of the investigation of Jones (2004), who centers the attention on the role of mercenaries on the battlefield there. Other than mercenaries' military activities and political enterprises, international law scholars in the XX century have thoroughly discuss the legal status of mercenaries, and relevant laws that target them (Cassese, 1980; Cesner & Brant, 1977; Kwakwa, 1990). Furthermore, recent studies on private military and security companies have devoted ample space to discuss famous precedents of mercenary activities during the Cold War (Latzko, 1997; Musah & Fayemi, 2000; Zarate, 1998).

Finally, scholars in this field have shed light on the emergence and the evolution, since the beginning of the 1990s, of the so-called private military and security companies, following their military enterprises first in Africa and the Middle East and then in the rest of world. Nowadays, the academic literature on PMSCs is massive, rich and diverse, with contributions on the effectiveness and efficacy of such firms (Dunigan, 2011; Mahoney, 2017; Radziszewski & Akcinaroglu, 2013), democratic legitimacy (Singer, 2003), legislative oversight (Liu, 2015; Welch, 2009), war ethics (Eckert, 2015) and regulation of the industry (Chesterman & Lehnardt, 2007; Schaub & Kelty, 2016). The topic is certainly relevant, as nowadays all states, with different approaches and intensities, employ private military and security companies to perform diverse tasks, from basic logistics to sophisticated technological operations, and from the patrolling of governmental buildings to combat operations on the battlefield (Leander, 2013; Dunigan & Petersohn, 2011). Thus, the delegation of military and security tasks still poses urgent political and military questions that researchers need to address.

An important branch of this literature addresses the reasons that explain states' different attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors, in particular focusing on questions of principle and questions of need. Indeed, previous literature claimed that differences among states' outsourcing practices are explained by diverse political and military imperatives (i.e. need), and by diverging cultural attitudes (i.e. principle). Thus, there seem to be two causal streams that define the choices states make regarding whether and how to employ private armed actors. Following this trend in the literature and analyzing political antagonism against private hired soldiers, it is interesting to investigate whether this aversion is driven, indeed, by pragmatic or cultural factors.

Regarding questions of need, a state may hire a security firm to perform a task the national armed forces or the police are not able to complete, for lack of expertise or number of troops. For example, Friesendorf (2015), Krahmman and Friesendorf (2011), and Perito (2009) show how the United States and the United Kingdom had to resort to the market for force to find trainers for the Afghan Military and Police Forces, whereas Italy could rely on its expert gendarmerie (i.e. the Carabinieri) to conduct such tasks. Similarly, a state may resort to mercenary troops to reduce the political costs of a foreign conflict, as the deployment of national soldiers, and especially their death, would attract more attention and criticisms from the media and the public opinion (Elliot, 2010; Scahill, 2007). Additionally, states could be willing to hire mercenaries to hide their direct involvement in a conflict, in order not to antagonize allies or enemies.

On the side of principle, countries may decide to outsource security following a neo-liberal attitude, a belief that, even if the army can conduct military operations, private companies can perform the same tasks more efficiently and effectively. Addressing the United States and Germany's different attitudes toward PMSCs, Petersohn (2011) speaks about a Lockean school that seeks a minimal role for the state, and a Rousseau tradition where confidence in the market is low and the intervention of the state is seen as necessary. Olsson (2013) follows through, arguing that the 'republican' French conception of the state hindered the relation between France and PMSCs. In this context, it is not only

a simple cost-benefit analysis that drives the choice, but a specific cultural belief in the strengths and weaknesses of market versus state solutions. Alternatively, states may decide not to hire mercenaries because of a moral prejudice against them, as the literature on the origin and persistence of the anti-mercenary norm has underlined¹ (Fraser, 2013; Percy, 2007a).

Questions of need and principle constitute the demand side of the phenomenon of state resort to the market for force. However, scholars have also thoroughly analyzed the supply side, highlighting the reasons that have contributed to the rise and fall of mercenaries and private security firms. For instances, regarding PMSCs in the last three decades, Ettinger (2014), and Portada and colleagues (2014) have underlined how the presence of many unemployed soldiers and security professionals after the many African civil wars in the second half of the XX century, has contributed to the birth of a booming market for force in Africa. Similar phenomena happened in the former Soviet Union after the fall of USSR in 1991 and in Latina America after the dismissal of authoritarian governments all around the continent in the 1980s and 1990s (Linz & Stepan, 1996; Mani, 2015). Alternatively, Scahill (2007) demonstrates how the familiar and religious bonds of Erik Prince, C.E.O. and founder of Blackwater, with many members of the American Department of Defense has allowed the firm to sign many and lucrative contracts with the US Administration for the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As a clarification on the scope condition of this work, the analysis here focuses only on the demand side, namely how different functional and cultural factors on the side of states do affect the likelihood of having a strong or weak reliance on the market for force.

Following this statement on the scope condition, it is also important to underline that this work does not consider actors other than mercenaries and PMSCs in the universe of hired and semi-hired private

¹ Interestingly, the famous French philosopher Cecile Fabre (2010) takes the original moral perspective of the mercenary. Instead of focusing on the stigma and prejudice against them, as scholars always do, she highlights the vulnerabilities and problems of the risky profession of mercenarism, arguing that former Special Forces member are a particularly vulnerable category.

soldiers. For instances, literature on conflict, and in particular on civil wars, has often focused on militias. Most famously, Jentzsch and colleagues (2015) provide a thorough and engaging review about militias in civil conflicts, highlighting the results and challenges of this relatively young literature, whereas Carey and coauthors (2013) work on pro-government militias, presenting a huge dataset on their operations and their impact on conflicts all around the world. There are many intertwining and overlapping issues between militias and mercenary groups. For example, militias are typically controlled or co-opted by members of governments, but they, as mercenaries, have sometimes tended to change their loyalties, pursuing personal interests or selling/providing their services to other competitors involved in the conflict (Jentzsch, et al., 2015). Thus, militias, again as mercenaries, may produce a significant impact on the state's ability to hold a monopoly on the use of violence, on processes of nation building, and on the endurance of young democracies.

On the other side, both militias and mercenaries similarly provide appealing advantages for the states or other political actors that employ them. For instances, they may prove to be decisively helpful in counterinsurgency operations, for their local knowledge or their intelligence expertise (Branch, 2007; Lyall, 2010). Then, they both can serve as force multiplier for regular armed forces (Eck, 2015), they may be used to hide official state involvement in a conflict (Carey, et al., 2015), and authoritarian regimes can employ them as a guarantee against internal coups. Having highlighted all such similarities, it is important to underline that this work focuses exclusively on mercenaries and private military and security companies, without considering militias in broad terms, pro-government militias, or any other comparable armed groups. However, the results and the theoretical and methodological implications of this work will certainly produce an impact on the literature on militias.

What all these academic contributions on mercenaries and PMSCs have in common is that they do always refer, to a more or less significant extent, to a widespread political antagonism against private hired soldiers. Despite mercenaries' continuous presence on the battlefield throughout almost all human history, states and other political units often target their activities with fierce criticisms.

Speaking of reasons of principle and need, this aversion has assumed many and diverse forms, from moral condemnations, where mercenaries lack loyalty, virtue, honor and are described as pervert bloody killers, to pragmatic assessments, where they are inefficient, ineffective or show a two-faced interest in the continuation of military hostilities. Machiavelli's famous statement², that mercenary armies are politically dangerous and military ineffective (Machiavelli, 2008; Skinner & Price, 1998), remains always popular among politicians and commentators. As anticipated at the beginning of this Chapter, following the evolution of this antagonism, scholars have centered the attention on the so-called anti-mercenary norm, investigating its strength, moral bases and diffusion.

Thomson (1990; 1996) traces the history of mercenaries, and the political aversion to them, claiming that a strong anti-mercenary norm emerges during the XIX century and then becomes remarkably durable. Percy (2007a; 2007b) follows through, stating that states endorse strong anti-mercenary sentiments, though were unable to produce effective international law against private hired soldiers. Finally, Liu and Kinsey (2018) contest such statements, arguing that objections and criticisms simply target mercenaries' strategic ineffectiveness, more than reflecting the existence of an international norm. They do not deny that politicians employ moral arguments, but claim that such hostility is subordinated to military, political and economic interests. In general, the aversion to mercenaries, of whatever origin, can easily clash with political and military imperatives. When urgent or politically convenient need of private help emerges, states are in a way forced to resort to the market for force. This tension always characterizes political attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors, and thus represents a crucial element of the entire discussion.

In addition, scholars have discussed whether states transfer the norm from mercenaries to PMSCs, which are supposedly legitimate private firms. For example, Panke and Petersohn (2011) make the case for the disappearance of the norm in recent times. They argue, indeed, that states and politicians

² Niccolò Machiavelli discusses issues linked with mercenaries in Chapters XII to XIV of his famous book 'The Prince'.

did not apply the anti-mercenary norm to PMSCs from the 1990s onward. Others have similarly addressed this spillover effect, though there are no systematic studies nor definitive answers (Brewis & Godfrey, 2018; Cohn, 2011).

As there is no academic agreement on these points, many questions remain open. Does a norm against mercenaries really exist? In case of an affirmative answer, is this norm robust? Does it have an independent moral origin, or does it descend from other norms or more general political considerations? What are the reasons behind the presence, absence or persistence of the norm? Did states and other political actors transfer the norm from mercenaries to security and military contractors?

As argued, I devise a new theoretical framework and an original test to answer these questions, tracing and inspecting all debates on mercenaries and PMSCs in the Italian and British Parliaments from 1805 to 2017. In this way, this work enriches and systematizes the debate on the anti-mercenary norm, trying to correct some of its flaws, and to test competing theories. I provide a systematic study of political antagonism, as I focus on every single debate on mercenaries and contractors in Italy and the United Kingdom. In most occasions, previous literature has focused solely on specific critical junctures. While the analysis of specific conflicts or mercenaries' activities is inevitable to address qualitatively the details of states' attitudes and behavior, the long-term and comprehensive exploration I propose will help to depict a more complete picture of the relation between public and private actors in political and military affairs.

In addition, the mixed method I employ allows me to thoroughly analyze and, to a certain extent, empirically test competing arguments about the norm. Again, while scholars have produced, without a doubt, accurate and competent qualitative analyses of the anti-mercenary norm, the quantitative contribution I here provide, sided by a qualitative immersion into specific topics, will enrich the methodological diversity of studies on mercenaries and security contractors. At the same time, I will provide robust results about contrasting theories.

Furthermore, I produce an original dataset that could be then enlarged to other countries or military actors. I consider this contribution on the creation of new data as critical. First, this dataset provides other researchers with ready-to-use tools and categories to assess political attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors. Indeed, new research could easily perform the same exploration on other countries, where parliamentary or similar archives are open and accessible. Second, scholars could apply this method to study political postures toward other private or semi-private military actors. For instances, investigating the famous international norm against piracy, researchers could look in parliamentary debates for every references to piracy and pirates, in order to systematically follow the evolution of such political attitudes.

As a final and decisive contribution, this work creates an original theoretical framework for the study of international norms' influence on political attitudes and rhetorical arguments. The type of analysis I employ, about which I give more details in the theory and method sections, could be useful to address not only parliamentary debates, but also other loci of political or semi-political discussions, for example newspapers, social networks, parliamentary commissions, presidential addresses or public rallies. Finally, this combination of an extensive and systematic quantitative analysis of text data and the qualitative assessment of critical junctures could be extended to topics other than international norms, as just argued. For example, scholars could investigate more systematically the impact of powerful ideologies, as liberalism or political realism, on the attitudes and the rhetorical arguments that decision-makers employ during political debates. Alternatively, new research could explore the impact of the influence of powerful intellectuals, like Niccolò Machiavelli, John Locke or John Rawls, on postures and strategies in the political arena.

The method and theoretical framework I employ are not exempt from problems and criticisms. While I will discuss in the Chapter on data and method such potential weaknesses in thorough details, it is worth here to mention that I have devised instruments to reduce the negative impact of some relevant distortions. For instances, I will carefully address all the references that seem to have a widely

pronounced rhetorical character or that employ the term mercenaries to discuss things largely unrelated with private hired soldiers. In addition, I will provide enough details on the contexts of the specific debates on mercenaries, in order to show that the locus of the discussion is not relevant to create different positions on military and security issues linked with mercenaries and contractors. Later, I will also present the methodological tools I employ to reduce the impact of potential biases or predetermined hypotheses on my side.

The last topic that this section addresses is the selection of case studies. Previous works on the anti-mercenary norm have devoted considerable attention to the United Kingdom, for its long-standing experience with mercenaries and its wide-ranging military activism. In the context of the debate on the anti-mercenary norm, the UK is indeed a compulsory choice, as previous studies have addressed always and accurately the British experience with mercenaries and PMSCs. The comparison, or better the parallel analysis, of this thoroughly studied case with Italy seems useful for different reasons. First, the Italian political and military experience with mercenaries and PMSCs remains under-researched, as a few studies investigate this relation (Marchetti, 2013; Ruzza, 2013; Scardigli, 1996). In this context, established theories and results from the British case can be tested on the largely unexplored case of Italy.

Secondly, Italy had, and still has, a completely different military format³ and foreign policy strategy with respect to the United Kingdom. In the Island, since 1689, continuity in terms of anti-militarism, aversion to standing armies and strong parliamentary control on the army characterizes the British approach to military affairs (Caverley, 2014; Chandler & Beckett, 2003; Cox, 2016). The UK enforced conscription only in extreme situations (1916-18 and 1939-1962) and supported the British Army with many and diverse private and semi-private armies, from the famous Gurkhas to the

³ The notion of 'military format' refers to the specific type of organization of the armed forces a state or a political authority chooses, as in the classic definition and interpretation of Finer (1975).

Hessians, and from the British East India Company to indigenous tribes (Thomson, 1996). On the other side, Italy has always relied on conscription⁴, having a military apparatus that could cover the entire spectrum of military and security services (Jean, 2010; Ruzza, 2011). Moreover, all along its history, Italy was never involved in conflicts abroad to a level comparable to that of the UK. Finally, a long wave of pacificism has often characterized the Italian approach to military affairs, something that have no parallel in the British experience, though not all scholars agree on the actual impact of such philosophical and political approach on Italian Foreign Policy and on parties' political attitudes (Bobbio, 2009; Rosa, 2014; Santoro, 1991). Therefore, there are reasons to expect significant variation to emerge on political antagonism toward mercenaries and PMSCs in the two countries.

Moreover, the selection of these most different cases allows investigating more in details the strength and the evolution of the norm. This is indeed a pragmatic strategy to the test the strength of anti-mercenary sentiments. If a strong norm does really exist, it should constrain the decisions and behaviors of all states, despite their diverse military formats and foreign policy strategies. In this context, Italy represents a useful least-likely case to test skeptic arguments about the existence and strength of the norm, as that Liu and Kinsey (2018) support. On the one hand, a country like the United Kingdom that have employed mercenaries and contractors always and consistently seems an easy case to argue that an anti-mercenary norm does not exist or that is weak, and this is exactly what Liu and Kinsey (2018) do in their article. On the other hand, a country like Italy, that was always averse to mercenaries and contractors, that so rarely resorted to them, and that had many and diverse traumatic experiences with mercenaries, should instead constitute a tough case to argue that the anti-mercenary norm is either absent or weak. Here, as a final remark on case selection and scope conditions, it is important to underline that the selection of Italy and the UK considers, as a broad

⁴ Conscription was a dogma since 1861 and was enshrined in art. 52 of the Italian Constitution in 1948 (Bovio, 2010). After 143 years, the Italian Parliament suspended conscription in 2004, though some political voices are nowadays calling for a reintroduction (La Repubblica, 2019).

framework, the population of Western States. Non-Western norms and political attitudes are not considered here, nor could results be generalizable over such population.

In the discussion section on the anti-mercenary norm, Chapter IV, I show how an already weak norm becomes weaker and weaker, eventually disappearing. During the XIX century to World War II, Italian and British politicians consistently and extensively produce moral attacks against mercenaries, pointing to their disloyalty, inhumanity, cruelty and viciousness. These accusations target mercenaries in many and diverse scenarios, from international conflicts to civil wars, and from discussions on the military format to debates on colonial affairs. Although moral arguments could hide pragmatic considerations to a certain extent, there are here some and significant proofs to argue that the norm has an independent and moral origin in the XIX century. Indeed, only a few references point to functional and strategic arguments to oppose mercenaries, and the same goes for mentions that show anti-mercenary sentiments descending from other stronger norms. However, such enmity does not translate in a consistently averse political behavior: when constrained by political and military urgent needs, both Italy and the United Kingdom do resort to the despised private soldiers.

In a second moment, after 1945, negative and moral references to mercenaries are still present to a significant extent, though their intensity decreases with respect to the previous period. In this context, the drivers of the antagonism seem not to drastically change from the classic arguments against private hired soldiers. Nevertheless, statements and references to mercenaries are more and more conditioned and distorted by the bipolar competition of the Cold War, and rhetoric plays a major role. The tension with political and military needs is strong and states, indeed crushed by the imperatives of the bipolar equilibrium, do again hire or support mercenaries in the developing world.

Finally, after the end of the Cold War, from 1991, calls to the moral stigma and the mercenary nature of private military and security companies drastically decrease and rapidly disappear, after a short phase of initial hostility. For the very first time, a significant number of positive references to security contractors emerge, something that never happened during the debate on mercenaries in previous

decades. Moreover, even states as Italy, traditionally averse to military professionalization and security outsourcing, go on the market for force to buy the services of the private firms.

Political parties, mercenaries and security contractors

In this section, I discuss the relation between political parties, on the one hand, and mercenaries and contractors, on the other. Since previous paragraphs have already provided an extensive review of the literature on private hired soldiers, I here center the attention solely on relevant works that have addressed the role of parties in Foreign Policy and military affairs. Similarly, I will discuss solely the aspects of the relevance, the method and the case-study selection of this work that the previous section has not already considered.

The starting point is that scholars working on mercenaries and private military and security companies, on the one hand, and on parties and Foreign Policy, on the other, never established a dialogue, so that a potentially common area of investigation remains almost uncharted territory. To fill this gap, this and following sections aim to create a bridge between the two topics, investigating the role of parties in shaping political attitudes toward mercenaries and security contractors. In particular, following the approach of the investigation of the anti-mercenary norm, I again focus on parties' positions on mercenaries and PMSCs in Italy and the United Kingdom. I shed light on the mechanisms that create differences, on the left-right spectrum, on the postures toward the employment and the operations of private actors in military and security affairs. The investigation proceeds on three main dimensions: the military dimension, where preferences for conscript or professional armies shape parties' attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors. The international relations (IR) dimension, where Cold War, and post-Cold War, international dynamics drive parties to adopt different postures regarding private soldiers' activities. The political-economic dimension,

where different conceptions of the political and economic problems of privatization create diverging approaches toward private military actors.

Indeed, I speak to the literature on political parties and Foreign Policy, and to that on mercenaries and PMSCs. Both debates are significantly active and dynamic. Regarding parties and military affairs, scholars have followed insightful lines of research, from the impact of coalitions on foreign policy formulation (Beasley & Kaarbo, 2014; Ireland & Gartner, 2001; Joly & Dandoy, 2018), to parties' different positions on troops deployment (Coticchia & Vignoli, 2018; Peters & Wagner, 2011; Wagner, et al., 2017) and to left and right conceptions of the national interest (Rathbun, 2004). Less productive, but similarly interesting, is the literature on parties and the military format, with contributions on conscription (Dyson, 2008; Kier, 1997; McKenna, 1997) and on civil-military relations (Auerswald, 2017; Auerswald & Saideman, 2014; Lagassé & Saideman, 2017). On the other hand, works on PMSCs and mercenaries recently grew in size and diversity. As already shown in the previous section, scholars analyzed, among a great variety of works, the boom of the market since the 1990s (Avant, 2005; Kinsey, 2006), the role of firms providing services for internal security (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2011) and for the external use of force (Leander, 2013).

Regarding the specific dynamics of within-state different attitudes, where parties could play a crucial role, scholars have focused, as anticipated, on reasons of need and principle. To recall this crucial aspect, for instances, in the United Kingdom and the United States, a pronounced reliance on private armed actors may be due to forms of imperial overstretching (Thomson, 1996), lack of specific expertise (Cusumano, 2015; Friesendorf, 2015), or willingness to reduce the political costs of a conflict (Singer, 2003). Indeed, works on the UK have underlined how a neoliberal attitude, and the need for support of the British police and armed forces, explain the country's high reliance on PMSCs (Ortiz, 2015). In Italy, scholars have suggested that some forms of cultural aversion, and the expertise and size of the Italian Army, justify the Italian antagonism toward the market for force (Marchetti,

2013; Ruzza, 2013). However, as stated above, no scholarly effort has targeted the role that political parties play in giving origin and shape to these political postures.

The sections on parties and mercenary groups do indeed test the evolution and robustness of the norm at the level of parties, instead of focusing only on states as most literature on norms has typically done (Boekle, et al., 1999). However, this analysis does not represent a simple robustness check for the development and endurance of the anti-mercenary norm. Indeed, as following paragraphs demonstrate, the investigation of attitudes toward mercenaries and party politics provide engaging insights about political parties' positions on foreign policy, parliamentary studies, and relation in the security arena between exogenous and domestic factors.

Some other reasons that make the path I am following valuable have already been listed in the previous section on the anti-mercenary norm. However, as anticipated, additional contributions descend from the analysis of parties' positions in this context. As Mello and Peters (2018) and others (Böller & Müller, 2018; Kesgin & Kaarbo, 2010) argue, the role parliaments and parties play in the politics of security and military affairs remains an unexplored area, despite the growing involvement of legislative assemblies in military and security affairs (Strong, 2015). This work could consequently contribute to broaden the focus of the study of partisanship and security affairs.

Moreover, as recent literature on private armed actors has underlined, there exists an urgent need to investigate public-private interactions in the realm of security, as they often generate political distortions (Schaub & Kelty, 2016; Welch, 2009). In the effort to deconstruct such interactions, the investigation of the role of parties seems a promising research path. Parties constitute a powerful chain of communication and decision-making between the military and the political arena (Alden & Aran, 2016), other than between institutions and citizens. Most academic works, in particular on the Cold War, have addressed solely the ideological positions of states, interpreted as homogenous units of analysis. Scholars focused on the reasons why states aligned with the United States, the Soviet Union, or held instead ambiguous positions, highlighting economic, political and cultural factors to

explain these positions (Nadzhafov, 2006; Thompson, 2011). However, less attention has been devoted to investigate individuals and factions within states, who were influenced by the global dynamics of the Cold War and at the same time affected national preferences regarding the bipolar strife (Gould-Davies, 1999; Vickers, 2008).

Then, this section contributes to the young literature of rhetorical studies on parliamentary debates (Finlayson, 2007; Palonen, 2019; Wiesner, et al., 2017), coding and analyzing all parties' references to mercenaries and contractors in the Italian and British assemblies since 1805, and producing, as already said, an original dataset. Would this theoretical and methodological approach be successful, it could establish a new framework for the study of political parties' attitudes in Parliaments and other contexts. Scholars could thus test whether the three dimensions I have listed also explain parties' attitudes toward other private or semi-private armed actors. Alternatively, new studies may also center the attention on parties in non-Western states, to verify whether different dimensions and mechanisms surface from debates on mercenaries and other military actors.

Lastly, the selection of Italy and the United Kingdom as case studies for the investigation of parties' positions is justified by different concerns. From the perspective of studies on parliaments and Foreign Policy, I consider valuable and potentially insightful to discuss a Westminster model, the UK, and a case from continental Europe, Italy (Wagner, et al., 2010). More than a thorough comparison, as said, this work provides a parallel analysis of two promising case studies, generating results that could in future be strengthened by enlarging the analysis to other countries (Fairfield & Charman, 2017). My second aim is to focus on Italy, an almost unexplored case in terms of mercenaries and PMSCs' activities (Ruzza, 2013), and on a thoroughly analyzed case as the UK, which provides established findings (Cusumano, 2015; Cusumano & Kinsey, 2016; Ortiz, 2015), as the previous section on the anti-mercenary norm has already stated.

Finally, since I explore an uncharted area, the analysis of two such different cases, in terms of military history and political models, could generate interesting and diverse results, as I expect a great

degree of variation to emerge from parties' positions. Specifically, during and after the Cold War, Italy and the UK are both members of the Atlantic Alliance, though with significantly different hierarchical locations, a reason to expect variation on the IR dimension. Moreover, drastically different political ideologies and the political importance of military operations involving mercenaries and PMSCs further justify sanguine expectations about variation.

In the discussion section on political parties, Chapter V, I demonstrate that the Italian aversion to mercenaries and PMSCs is not a bipartisan belief, as leftist parties are almost exclusively responsible for this antagonism. Anti-Americanism, anti-colonialism, fear of mercenaries as anti-democratic agents, and attitudes toward conscription to a lesser extent, emerge as the main drivers of this gap during the Cold War. Conversely, after 1991, the political and economic dimensions of the privatization process become protagonists. Secondly, I show how parties in the United Kingdom present less pronounced differences on their attitudes toward mercenaries, as parties adopt similar positions on the three dimensions from 1945 to 1991. However, significant divergences emerge during the discussion on contractors, as the British left champions the attacks against the distortions of security outsourcing. Finally, I provide preliminary results about the comparison of Italy and the UK, showing how their antagonism toward private armed actors present similar intensities. This result, a piece of evidence I will elaborate on also in the anti-mercenary norm section, comes unexpected, as the UK has always relied on mercenaries and PMSCs, while Italy was consistently reluctant to hire these actors.

The path ahead

The next Chapter on theory and mechanisms, Chapter II, presents the theoretical frameworks that previous literature has employed, paralleled by my contributions on the anti-mercenary norm and on the relation between political parties and private hired soldiers. In this context, I also discuss the

causal mechanisms that, in my understanding, describe the interaction between the political preferences and attitudes of states and parties toward the employment and the activities of mercenaries and security contractors. As a last step, I show how I generate some relevant hypotheses, and I discuss the theoretical and methodological implications of my choices in this context.

Chapter III deals instead with data and methodology. Here, I address the data generating process, the specifics of the coding of the texts and the potential problems that arise from the methodological choices I have made. Then, I present and discuss the main characteristics of the method I employ, showing how the path to verify my hypotheses will proceed. Furthermore, Appendix I provides additional details about the data and the methodology.

Moving forward, Chapter IV starts the section on results and discussion, focusing on the anti-mercenary norm. After the presentation of all descriptive and empirical results, and the provision of tables and figures on the analysis of data, I begin the detailed discussion of the journey of the norm. As already anticipated, I follow the evolution of the norm and of political postures toward mercenaries in Italy and the United Kingdom since the beginning of the XIX century, proceeding through the Cold War period and finally concluding with security contractors in the last thirty years.

Chapter V follows the same development of the previous Chapter, presenting and discussing the results that concerns the relation between political parties and private hired armed groups. After a brief mention of some critical episodes before World War II, which I analyze more thoroughly in Chapter VI, I center the attention first on the Cold War period, where the analysis covers mercenaries' activities, and secondly on the post-1991 era, where the focus turns to private military and security companies and contractors.

Then, Chapter VI concludes the discussion section, offering additional insights about the relation between states, politicians and parties, on the one hand, and mercenaries and PMSCs, on the other. The discussion focuses on some 'honorable mentions' that previous chapters have overlooked. In particular, the first part addresses political parties' positions on mercenaries before 1945,

concentrating on two important critical junctures, the *Questione Romana* for Italy and the War of Crimea for the United Kingdom. Then, the second part investigates and analyzes states and parties' attitudes toward mercenaries between 1991 and 2017, since previous chapters deal only with PMSC in this period. Other than providing further information about political postures toward hired soldiers, Chapter V serves as a sort of robustness check for some conclusions spelled out in preceding sections. Finally, Chapter VII offers the conclusion for the entire work. After a brief recap of the results of the discussion section, the Chapter specifies the theoretical and empirical implications of the outcomes generated by previous Chapters. Then, it highlights the contribution this work offers in terms of a new theoretical framework, an original dataset and method, and the improvements for the literature on mercenaries and private military and security companies.

Chapter II: *Theory, Mechanisms, Dimensions*

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework and the mechanisms that describe my conceptualization of the anti-mercenary norm. Thus, I address anti-mercenary sentiments, showing how scholars have interpreted and addressed the origin, existence, persistence, robustness, and transfer of the norm. Following previous works, I then spell out my new framework, building original pillars for the theoretical structure of the conception of international norms. Secondly, I introduce the theory and the dimensions I have elaborated about the relation between political parties, on the one hand, and mercenaries and security contractors, on the other. In this context, I center the attention on parties, focusing on how previous literature has discussed and framed the role of parties in Foreign Policy and their positions and preferences regarding the military format and privatization policies. Finally, I offer and describe in details my original framework about parties and private armed actors, focusing on the three dimensions mentioned above.

The anti-mercenary norm and the spillover effect

Following the most relevant literature on norms in International Relations and International Law (Finnemore & Sikkink, 1998; Kahler, 2000; Katzenstein, 1996), a first general theoretical framework is that international norms do affect states' preferences and behaviors. In the broad definition of Brunnée and Toope (2019) norms are 'standards of behavior created through mutual expectations in a social setting'. In International Relations, norms are thus standards of international behavior, 'a set of intersubjective understandings readily apparent to actors (i.e. states) that makes behavioral claims on those actors' (Finnemore, 1996; Florini, 1996). The typical mechanisms are that politicians and decision-makers feel a moral concern to restrain from the behavior the norm forbids, and that they

adapt their postures and decisions to what the international community argues is appropriate⁵. By association, this framework should remain valid and convincing for the anti-mercenary norm, and next paragraphs explain how this specific norm enters this general theoretical picture.

Before considering the details and the development of the debate about the anti-mercenary norm, it is important to briefly consider the complexity and diversity of the literature on norms. Different approaches characterize the academic assessment of norms. Most typically, the liberal-utilitarian school argues that norms play an instrumental role for states in asserting and justifying their material interests. Conversely, constructivist scholars claim that norms precede interests, implying that they have a constitutive effect in the formation and evolution of states and other actors' preferences (Checkel, 1997; Florini, 1996; Klotz, 1995). Following the constructivist approach and German Social Theory, Risse-Kappen (1991; 1994) shows how international norms and domestic factors interplay, profoundly affecting states' interests and behaviors. Without taking a general and explicit stance about the rationalism versus constructivism debate, this work is specifically determined to understand whether the anti-mercenary norm is a mere instrument that states employ to uphold their material interests or if instead the norm has an independent origin and has effectively modified states' preferences regarding the military format and the conduction of hostilities during international and civil conflicts.

While Percy (2007a; 2007b) does not provide a clear definition of what a strong or robust norm is (Liu & Kinsey, 2018), I here argue that if a strong anti-mercenary norm exists, it should influence to a significant extent the attitudes states adopt toward mercenaries, and the decisions they take about their relations with mercenaries. Namely, if policy makers endorse the norm, we should observe first, a considerable amount of negative references to mercenaries in official debates and second, no or

⁵ International norms do not only descend from the international community. In fact, norms are produced also at lower levels, for instances by regional organizations (as the norms originated in and endorsed by the European Union) or by transnational groups as the community of democratic states.

very small variation in terms of political and military decisions regarding mercenaries' employment and activities. Thus, the manifestation, or the materialization, of the norm comes initially as a twofold phenomenon: on the one hand, the norm produces rhetorical discourses that criticize and attack mercenaries. On the other hand, it generates anti-mercenary policies, decisions and measures. As Deitelhoff and Zimmermann (2019) rightly point out, the conceptualization of a norm's robustness require the examination of both the practical and discursive dimension. To sum up, even thousands of anti-mercenary discourses cannot alone prove the existence of a norm, since rhetorical expressions cannot definitely be argued to reflect specific motives behind verbal manifestations (Krebs & Jackson, 2007; Walter, 2017).

Overall, if states do endorse pronounced anti-mercenary sentiments, the second question is whether this enmity has a moral basis, as Percy (2007a) argues, or if it derives instead from non-moral and pragmatic concerns, as if it descends from other stronger norms. Finally, the last set of hypotheses regards what I call the spillover effect of the norm to PMSCs. Does the norm disappear during the 1990s as Panke and Petersohn (2012) argue, or does the moral stigma against private hired armed actors endure, as Bures and Meyer (2019), Brewis and Godfrey (2018) and Herbst (2013) state?

The path to test the hypotheses proceeds in this way. First step, if there are few negative references to mercenaries, what previous literature has labeled as 'taboo talk' (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 181; Tannenwald, 1999), that means that the norm simply does not exist. If instead forms of discursive hostility emerge, the second step is to look whether they are based on moral or pragmatic considerations. The former scenario strengthens the case for an independent moral origin of the norm, whereas the latter supports the argument that the norm is a simple byproduct of strategic consideration or other more relevant norms. However, as anticipated, the presence of a considerable number of moral negative references is not enough to argue that a strong anti-mercenary norm exists. The final step of the process is to look to states' behavior. If states consistently produce antagonistic decisions regarding mercenaries, not employing them or hindering their operations, then the case for the

existence of a strong norm grows more solid. Conversely, if states' behavior and decisions concerning mercenaries considerably change through time and space, that implies that the norm is weak.

The path the discussion will follow requires further clarifications, which complete the picture of the theoretical framework I am building. Going deeper into the mechanisms of these political attitudes, scholars have deconstructed the anti-mercenary norm, investigating its origins and components. Thomson (1996, p. 146) argues that the decreasing presence of mercenaries on battlefields since the XIX century is the byproduct of the norm on states' control on violence. After the gradual, or in some cases abrupt, enlargement of national armies and the disarmament of all private and semi-private actors, states consolidate a monopoly on the use of force and do not tolerate any concentration of military power in private hands (Brunner, 1992; Paret, 1986; Poscher, 2016). Following this crucial process, Thomson claims, an anti-mercenary norm emerges, a norm that still endures today (Thomson, 1996, p. 96). Conversely, Percy (2007b) states that the norm has an independent and moral origin, as states find the profession of mercenarism profoundly objectionable. In this framework, the norm does not derive from other stronger norms, but instead emerges independently, born of the moral dislike of mercenaries, who lack loyalty, love for their homeland, and military ethics. She finds proofs of this enmity in more than 100 United Nations General Assembly Resolutions and in a few statements by British politicians during the civil war in Angola in the 1970s. It is important to notice that the explanations provided by Thomson and Percy are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In Thomson's account, attacks against mercenaries are functional products of states' exigencies to contrast private military power, whereas in Percy's framework condemnations of mercenaries have an independent and cultural origin. However, it is still possible that functional and cultural dynamics coevolve, both contributing to the emergence of a norm.

Finally, Liu and Kinsey (2018, p. 95) claim that restrictions targeting mercenaries are just the 'tangential expressions of more basic and pervasive international norms, namely those of state neutrality, the right of peoples to self-determination, and freedom of movement'. Focusing on critical

moments, as the Crimean War and the conflicts of decolonization, they demonstrate that apparent moral criticisms emerging in the UK Houses do not reflect an authentic moral aversion, but sole strategic considerations. Here, the two scholars give shape to a clearly differentiated framework from that of Thomson and Percy, as they argue that the norm simply does not exist, or if it exists, it is too weak to produce any considerable effect.

Here, two opposing theories seem thus to characterize the norm, and Table I summarizes the three theoretical frameworks that describe the existence and the origin of the norm, and the arguments they employ.

[Table I about here]

Table I: Different frameworks to characterize the anti-mercenary norm

	Thomson (1996)	Percy (2007)	Liu & Kinsey (2018)
Existence	Yes	Yes	No
Origin	Functional	Cultural	No
Argument	The norm descends from the consolidation of the monopoly on the use of force	The norm descends from moral objections against the profession of mercenarism	The norm does not exist, attacks against mercenaries are just byproducts of stronger norms

The last theoretical framework I consider, with the set of hypotheses it generates, regards what I call the ‘spillover effect’ of the norm from mercenaries to private military and security companies. In this context, Panke and Petersohn (2011) argue that the anti-mercenary norm, which they claim exists in the XX century, degenerates and then disappears during the 1990s and the early 2000s. As for their general framework, they claim that if after significant and widespread violations of a norm, states are not sanctioned, a norm degenerates. This is exactly what happened, they note, for the anti-mercenary norm, when from the 1990s states started to hire PMSCs on the private market⁶: ‘As the use of defensive force by mercenaries is no longer an exception, and is now considered legitimate, the applicatory scope of the anti-mercenary norm has been de facto limited’ (Panke & Petersohn, 2011, p. 730). Similarly, Herbst (2013) and Phelps (2014) note that PMSCs have been able to drain legitimacy from many sources, and that they are now successfully overcoming the ‘ingrained stereotypes’ and the mercenary stigma that initially characterized them, as well as their employees and activities.

Differently, other scholars argue that the moral stigma against private hired armed actors endure, as this spillover effect indeed transferred anti-mercenary antagonism to security contractors. Bures and Meyer (2019) agree that the norm is no more ‘puritanical’ as in was during the XX century, but they claim that two significant features of the antagonism against mercenaries and contractors persist, namely mercenaries lacking a proper cause to fight and the lack of states’ control (monitoring and sanctioning) on their activities. They prove their argument analyzing many UN Documents, where UN officials and states’ representatives still present the employment of PMSCs as a measure of last resort, and carefully justify the decision with significant cautions. Finally, analyzing mostly media coverage of PMSCs activities, Brewis and Godfrey (2018) claim that a moral stigma still affects mercenaries and contractors, who are frequently criticized for, again, the lack of a proper cause to

⁶ As for classic legal definitions of mercenaries in International Law, private military and security companies’ employees are full-fledged mercenaries (Rimli & Schmeidel, 2007).

fight, and for the lack of virtue and professional legitimacy. Table II offers a recap of the different frameworks scholars have employed to address the transfer of the anti-mercenary norm to security contractors, the origin of the persistence and the arguments to support the claims.

[Table II about there]

Table II: Different frameworks to characterize the persistence/transfer of the anti-mercenary norm

	Panke & Petersohn (2011)	Herbst (2013)	Bures & Meyer (2019)	Brewis & Godfrey (2018)
Persistence / transfer	No	No	Yes	Yes
Origin	States practice	PMSCs practice	UN practice	Media description
Argument	The norm disappears since states employ PMSCs without being sanctioned	The norm disappears since PMSCs were able to find sources of legitimacy to overcome the moral stigma	The norm persists since the UN still justifies PMSCs employment as a ‘last resort’ measure	The norm persists since PMSCs are still described as mercenaries and morally condemned

This brief overview of the discussion about the norm and the spillover effect clearly demonstrates that the two disagreeing sets of theories on the anti-mercenaries norm (i.e. either a strong norm exists or it does not) produces an oversimplification of the various manifestations the norm can produce. As mentioned, Petersohn (2014) argues that PMSCs, together with the United States, the United Kingdom, and the UN have been able to alter the core of the anti-mercenary norm, in order to justify and legitimize their work. Similarly, Krahmman (2012) shows how international legal discourses about the privatization of security have ‘reconstructed’ contractors as legitimate actors, and how the military command structures in Iraq and Afghanistan have shaped this process. Finally, as again already anticipated, Bures and Meyer (2019) claim that only some peculiar aspects of the norm remain relevant today for PMSCs. Overall, a dichotomous conceptualization of the norm overlooks the various elements that compose the norm, other than the many and diverse forms the same may assume.

In the effort to unpack the various manifestations of a norm, and to build a more nuanced theory, it is crucial to highlight that the supposed violation of a norm, in terms of inconsistent behavior, may not definitely prove the absence of the norm, as states may be constrained by political and military imperatives to behave as such. For instance, previous works on mercenaries (Caverley, 2014) and PMSCs (Cusumano, 2016) show how political convenience strongly drives states to outsource military and security services, another relevant element of the interaction between reasons of need and principle. Here, as Franck (1988; 2006) and others (Chayes & Chayes, 1995; Checkel, 1997; Kratochwil & Ruggie, 1986) suggest, scholars should focus on whether, and how, states justify or hide the violations of a norm. Other than typical strategies, as referring to urgent needs that justify a supposedly inappropriate behavior, or blaming other actors, as internal bureaucracies, states also try to hide the violation. For instances, as seen above, Bures and Meyer (2019) discuss the justificatory strategies of the UN after the employment of PMSCs, while Cusumano (2019) demonstrates that

when norms and political interests conflict, states may engage in an ‘organised hypocrisy’, dissociating talks and deeds.

Thus, what I call ‘hide-or-justify strategies’ constitute a relevant pillar of the theoretical framework that describes the debate about international norms. Other than representing a powerful test for the strength and robustness of a norm, different strategies reflect different type of interiorizations and manifestations of a norm. For example, if politicians do not feel the need to hide or, when discovered and denounced, to justify violations, that evidence serves as a convincing indication for the absence of a norm. Moving gradually forward, more diffused, detailed and elaborated justifications point to a stronger norm. More specifically, if from a certain point onward decision-makers start to provide justifications that target only peculiar violations of specific aspects of a broader norm, then that sheds light on a likely alteration of the core, or of some relevant peripheral aspects, of the same norm.

In this context, the tension between norms’ provisions and political necessities, briefly mentioned in Chapter I, emerges distinctly. This competition or conflict between norms and political or military imperatives is not new in the literature. For instances, Tannenwald (1999), and other scholars more recently (Dolan, 2013; Gibbons & Lieber, 2018), address the tension between the potential usefulness of atomic weapons and normative prohibitions against the use of nuclear military assets. Adopting this perspective, it is interesting to contrast the outcome of the tension in case of nuclear weapons, namely non-use, with that on mercenaries and contractors, a wide and diffused employment.

Another aspect, following Bull (1977) and others (Bull & Watson, 1985; Schmitt, 2006), is that international norms are not always valid in the entire world or for all states, and that the same states may apply, or feel constrained by, different norms depending on where they produce their behavior. Most famously, Carl Schmitt (2006) shows that after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, European states obeyed to rigid international norms regulating warfare while fighting on the European soil, in terms on *jus in bello* and *jus ad bellum*, whereas their conflicts in the Americas were utterly unrestrained. This geographical factor thus serves as another theoretical element that may create

different expressions of international norms. For instances, supposing that European states endorse a moral stigma against mercenaries, they may prefer to restrain from hiring them for their conflict with European peers and on the European territory. On the other hand, the same states, imagining them upholding a moral prejudice against people in colonial lands, may decide for the employment of mercenaries in these territories, as no respect or moral considerations deter them from doing so. From this point, during the discussion, I will try to investigate whether states and politicians apply different standards, or perceive different constrains, regarding the employment of mercenaries in Europe and in the rest of the world.

To sum up, different pillars constitute the theoretical framework this section builds and Table III summarizes the main theoretical aspects of this work's contribution. Importantly, as Sandholtz (2009; 2019) correctly claims, norms are 'moving pictures', pictures made of multiple frames and that manifest themselves along a nuanced continuum. Consequently, the cases presented in Table III represent salient points on this continuum. On the one hand, states and politicians' taboo talks, hide-or-justify strategies, consistent or inconsistent behavior. On the other, norms' different degrees of manifestation, contrasting geographical expressions, politicization and disappearance, and tension with political and military imperatives. The interaction of these elements produces a framework that will shed light on the anti-mercenary norm and, potentially for future research, on other norms.

[Table III about here]

Table III: Three cases for international norms

	Case I: Strong Norm	Case II: Weak Norm	Case III: Absent Norm
Taboo Talks	Present (many)	Present (many)	Present (few)
H-or-J Strategies	Present	Present	Absent
Anti-Norm Behavior	Very rare	Sporadic	Frequent

Political parties, mercenaries and contractors: The three dimensions

Considering the relation between, on the one hand, political parties, and, on the other, mercenaries and contractors, a different type of theoretical framework applies. I suggest that, in this previously uncharted territory, three main mechanisms shape parties' different postures toward hired private armed actors: attitudes toward conscription and the military format, international postures on prominent issues as bipolarism or anti-colonialism, and preferences toward privatization in areas other than security. As already argued in the Introduction, the three mechanisms descend from three distinguished dimensions. First, the military dimension, where preferences for conscript or professional armies shape parties' attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors. Second, the international relations dimension, where Cold War, and post-Cold War, international dynamics drive parties to adopt different postures regarding private soldiers' activities. Third, the political-economic dimension, where different conceptions of the political and economic problems of privatization create diverging approaches to private military actors. These expectations, it is now claimed, derive from well-established theoretical frameworks.

First, on the military dimension, a party that supports conscription should negatively interpret forms of military and security professionalization (Caforio, et al., 2008; Krahnmann, 2010). In this context, such aversion should definitely target mercenaries, one of the least legitimate private armed actors (Percy, 2007a), but also contractors, who, as already argued, are often described as mercenaries (Brewis & Godfrey, 2018). Secondly, on the IR dimension, both Cold War mercenarism and recent security outsourcing are phenomena tightly linked with American Foreign Policy activism and Western colonialism and neo-imperialism (Mockler, 1970; Welch, 2009). Therefore, a party that condemns old and new forms of imperialism should direct this antagonism also on the armed agents of these policies, namely mercenaries and contractors. However, during the Cold War, also communist powers employed mercenaries to a significant extent, so that some aversion from parties that endorse anti-communism could also emerge from the political discussion. Finally, on the

political-economic dimension, a party that is averse to privatization policies in general, for example in the sectors of transportation and energy, should transfer this animosity also to security privatization (Krahmann, 2010).

Nonetheless, two main alternative explanations, or dimensions, could also explain parties' different attitudes toward the market for force. First, the specific context of parliamentary debates could distort the results, or also explain variation and lack of variation on political attitudes, as parties may discuss with different arguments, hostilities, and intensities in different contexts. Second, specific conflicts or political scenarios could justify contrasting positions. In this case, anti or pro-mercenary attitudes could be explained by specific political and military situations 'on the ground', without broader considerations influencing the debates. During the discussion, I will keep track of these alternative dimensions, trying to assess properly their explanatory power.

Coming to my case studies, in Italy, following Kier (1997) and others (Dyson, 2008; Krahmann, 2010; McKenna, 1997) I expect leftist parties to show a fiercer antagonism toward mercenaries and contractors. On the military dimension, the left has traditionally been more supportive of conscription, interpreted as a tool to strengthen national sentiments and to protect the country from potential right-inspired coups (Bovio, 2010). On the IR dimension, previous studies have highlighted a more pronounced anti-Americanism of European leftist parties during and after the Cold War (Klautke, 2011). In Italy, leftist parties have always adopted a more European and Mediterranean Foreign Policy posture, whereas the center-right coalition has been a loyal ally of the United States since 1945 (Acanfora, 2013), and has favored the Atlantic dimension of Italian Foreign Policy after 1991 (Andreatta, 2008; Brighi, 2007; Caffarena & Gabusi, 2017).

During the Cold War, the left's aversion to the US, NATO and Western imperialism activism is strong, though these negative sentiments significantly drop from the 1980s onward and especially after the end of the Cold War. On the other hand, while the right interprets anti-communism as a constitutive principle, the center champions a strong but more moderate antagonism (Furlong, 1992;

Newell, 2000). Even if d'Amore (2001), investigating the proceedings of the Defense Commission in Italy from 1945 to 1994, finds low level of conflict and mostly bipartisan decisions, significant exceptions exist. The most important is certainly the debate on the international posture and positioning of Italy after 1945, a borderland territory in the bipolar competition. Thus, since mercenaries play a significant role in the proxy conflicts of the Cold War, parties' divergences should emerge to a relevant extent on this issue. Finally, on the political-economic dimension, leftist parties have been more averse to privatization in general, so that the outsourcing of security should meet their disapproval, more than that of the right (Di Majo, 1989).

The protagonists of Italian politics are, since 1945, the Democrazia Cristiana (DC) and the Partito Comunista (PCI), while other players as the Socialists (PSI) and the Neo or Post-Fascists (MSI) are second-level actors (Galli, 1994). The DC is a conservative and catholic party who participate, very often as the sole or most important member of the coalition, in all Italian Governments from 1945 to the end of the 1980s. In the context of Foreign Policy, the alliance with the United States and other NATO members is the core component of its foreign agenda. Regarding instead domestic military affairs, the DC moderately favors conscription, though tendencies towards professionalization emerge in the 1940s and from the 1960s onwards (Bovio, 2010).

On the other side, the PCI, for sure an anti-system party (Bull & Newell, 2005; Sartori, 1976) which will remain always at the opposition, experiences the tension between reform and revolution and between support and denial of the Soviet Union. In particular, the PCI's alignment with the Soviet Union experiences various fluctuations and tensions, from the de-Stalinization process to the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian insurrections (Drake, 2004; Iandolo, 2014). Looking westward, the PCI initially strenuously opposes the Atlantic Alliance, grounding this position in strong pacifist and anti-military attitudes and in anti-American postures, though relaxing such opposition from the 1980s. Anti-colonialism and support for conscription are almost dogmas, interpreted as conditions to contrast potential military-led rightist attacks against democracy, and to support communism in the developing

world (Jean, 2010). Since mercenaries, most of them white European men, represent one of the most hateful manifestations of colonial and neo-colonial policies (Mockler, 1985), the PCI and the PSI should definitely target them with fierce accusation. During the Cold War, indeed, both parties keep tight contacts with many liberation movements in the developing world, especially in Angola, Guinea and Mozambique (Borruso, 2009; Passerini, 1970, p. 65). Moreover, particularly until the end of the 1970s, Communists fear potential coups led and organized by external and internal actors, and executed by local hirelings. In this way, leftist politicians connect anti-democratic mercenary activities abroad with potential local anti-democratic insurrections (Crainz, 2003; De Felice, 1989).

At the beginning of the 1990s, a political crisis subverts the Italian political system and traditional parties disappear. New actors emerge, as the Lega Nord (LN), a regional and secessionist party, and Forza Italia (FI) a center-right party created by the media tycoon Berlusconi (Ignazi, 2008). Others are the heirs of old parties, as the Ulivo (UL) following the PCI-PSI tradition and Alleanza Nazionale (AN) from former members of the MSI. From 1994 on, many of them will change name, but the structure of the party system will remain similar, at least until very recent times, with the emergence of a strong populist movement, Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S) and the transformation of the Lega Nord into a national party. On the IR dimension, the profoundly ideological strife between the left and the right, reflecting the international bipolar competition, comes to an end, and new parties do find more spaces and opportunities for bipartisanship in the Foreign Policy arena.

Moreover, on the military dimension, following sanguine expectations about global peace, and other military endogenous factors, conscription ceases to represent significant values for all parties. In this context, there are other significant changes in the organization and, most importantly, in the missions of the Italian Armed Forces. For instances, after an almost total immobility during the Cold War period, after 1991 Italian troops are involved in many and various military missions abroad, a factor that may have a powerful impact on political attitudes toward contractors (Coticchia & Moro, 2016; Ignazi, et al., 2012; Moro & Coticchia, 2015). Finally, on the political-economic dimensions,

privatization in sector other than security does sometimes surface as a divisive issue (Barucci & Pierobon, 2007; Bottai Polimeno, 2019; Il Sole 24ore, 2018).

To sum up, regarding the mechanisms and dimensions I have proposed, during the Cold War, the Partito Comunista Italiano and, to a lesser extent, the Partito Socialista oppose the alignment with American FP and colonialism, contest privatization policies and defend conscription. On the other side, the Christian Democracy and other centrist parties, and the Movimento Sociale Italiano, the neo-fascists, support Atlanticism, privatization, and try to reform conscription. After 1991, the left, composed by many new parties, relaxes its positions on the military and IR dimensions: anti-American sentiments experience a drop and there are low level of clash between parties on policy outcomes regarding military affairs and missions abroad, though dissent does not vanish (Coticchia, 2014). Moreover, the suspension of conscription in 2004 is a bipartisan process (Giustetti, 2000). Finally, discussion on privatization fluctuate from consensus, where also leftist governments enact some privatizations, to more conflictual moments (Bortolotti, et al., 2003).

It is important to stress the fact that such brief characterization of the Italian parties' system over more than 70 years produces inevitable simplifications. The PCI in the 1950s is a very different party from the PCI in the 1980s, as this could be argued for many parties during and after the Cold War. For instances, the MSI, the neo or post-fascist movement, is initially opposed to Atlanticism and Americanism, for reasons very different from that of the Communists, though in the 1960s it relaxes its positions and endorse the Italian-American (or Western) alliance (Chiarini, 1992). Then, diverse political trends conflict within the DC, where different groups within the party hold divergent positions about, for example, Foreign Policy. Finally, also the socialists are always very ambiguous in their relations with both the DC and the PCI, often showing fluctuating political attitudes and preferences.

However, there are not strong reasons to believe that such changes in parties' principles and preferences imply significant U-turns or drastic changes in their attitudes toward mercenaries. For

example, the fact that the PCI does relax, from a certain point onward, its opposition against the US does not directly imply a softer attitude toward the fiercest forms of imperialism in the developing world, as mercenaries are (Di Nolfo, et al., 1992). Similarly, the increasing distance between the PCI and the PSI since the late 1950s does not create significant gaps in the Foreign Policy of the two parties, at least for what regards their positions toward political and military issues in Africa and Asia (Borruso, 2009; Cortesi, 1972). Moreover, if the analysis of the results will reveal significant shifts in the motives behind parties' anti-mercenary sentiments, I will investigate whether the drivers of change may be constituted by a different Foreign Policy or a new international or internal posture adopted by the party in question.

Concerning the UK, I have different expectations. Here, after 1945, the protagonists are always the Labour (Lab) and the Conservative Party (Con), leaving other actors as the Liberals or the Social Democrats at the margins. The Labour gathers the tradition of trade unionists, socialists and radicals in a coherent and unified party, though internal dissent sometimes threatens such unity, for example on the German rearmament, the Vietnam War and civil rights (Crowcroft, 2008; Morgan, 1990). On the other side, the Conservative Party supports the traditional and conservative values of the British right (Turner, 1999).

On the military dimension, since the birth of the British Army in 1689, politicians of all colors consistently oppose the enforcement of conscription, interpreted as an attack against civil liberties and a political danger (Chandler & Beckett, 2003; Cox, 2016). A conscript army was construed as a potentially dangerous and powerful tool that could fall under the Crown's control, but also, as said, as an unacceptable intrusion into the civil liberties of the British people (Beckett, 2003; Strachan, 1997). Furthermore, frequent and intense forms of anti-militarism have often generated disrespect and discrimination toward members of the Army (Spiers, 2003). Therefore, the possibility to rely on hired forces should not create significant differences among parties.

On the IR dimension, issues linked with the Empire, colonialism, and military activism never significantly divide parties in the political arena, with opposition always relegated to the margins (Howe, 1993). Similarly, anti-Americanism should not play a role, as the left never endorses strong anti-American sentiments. Finally, both the left and the right strenuously fight against the expansion of communism and Soviet imperialism, though this mission is interpreted as more critical on the right side of the Houses. On the political-economic dimension, privatization becomes a divisive issue only from the end of the 1970s. Thus, in this context, the left should turn to antagonistic postures only during and after the 1980s.

More specifically, during the Cold War, the Labour and the Conservative Parties show consensus on many military and Foreign Policy decisions (Ball, 1987). As argued, the organization of the British Armed Forces, the Empire, the Special Relation with the US and Foreign Policy activism find bipartisan support in the Houses. Concerning instead internal politics, the consensus is not as solid. If the Conservatives support forms of ‘semi-socialism’ in the 1950s and 1960s (Ramsden, 1990), the Thatcher and Major Governments (1979-1997) create significant disagreements between the two sides of the Houses, especially on privatization policies (Gamble, 1991), with many Labour politicians strongly and strenuously opposing these measures (Parker, 2013). Therefore, I expect a part of this contestation on privatization to transfer to the discussion on security outsourcing, especially since the 1980s onwards. After 1991 and the end of the Cold War, the tradition of bipartisanship on the organization of the Armed Forces, as well as on the Special Relation, continues, with both Labours and Conservatives supporting the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (Dumbrell, 2006; Phythian, 2008).

Table IV and V summarize the mechanisms of and the expectations on the three dimensions. In Italy, leftist parties adopt a more negative posture toward mercenaries, during the Cold War, and the IR dimension emerges as the critical locus where parties’ attitudes strongly diverge. In the United Kingdom, parties show similar positions on hired soldiers from 1945 to 1991, though discussions on

the IR dimension, and on privatization policies in the 1980s create at least some distance. Regarding contractors in the 1990-2017 period, the expectations about Italy and the United Kingdom work toward opposite directions. In Italy, I expect more convergence between parties' attitudes, considering the decreasing importance of the IR and the military dimensions. However, together with a more relevant political-economic dimension, they should contribute to maintain a gap between the left and the right. In the UK, I expect instead more divergence, with the political-economic dimension widening the small gap that should emerge during the Cold War.

Finally, concerning the countries comparison, previous literature suggests expecting a fiercer antagonism to emerge in Italy than in the UK both during and after the Cold War, as anticipated in previous sections. More formally, this framework generates the following four hypotheses:

H1: In Italy, from 1945 to 1991, the left shows more aversion toward mercenaries with respect to the center and right. The IR dimension is the main driver of this antagonism

H2: In the UK, from 1945 to 1991, parties adopt similar postures toward mercenaries and show similar preferences on all the three dimensions. Small divergences emerge on the IR and pol-eco dimensions

H3: In Italy, from 1990 to 2017, the left still show more aversion toward PMSCs with respect to the center and right, though attitudes converge more than during the Cold War. All dimensions contribute to maintain a gap among parties of different families

H4: In the UK, from 1990 to 2017, the left shows more aversion toward PMSCs with respect to the center and right. The political-economic dimension is the main driver of this antagonism

The path to test the hypotheses follows a parallel quantitative and qualitative approach, as the next Chapter on method will thoroughly discuss. The comparison of quantitative indicators of the antagonism toward mercenaries and contractors allows verifying if variation among parties and countries actually surfaces from the debate. Then, the mixed analysis of the drivers that explain the emergence of the aversion sheds light on whether the dimensions I have listed do constitute the most significant loci for the generation of divergent political attitudes. Finally, a qualitative immersion in some critical moments will show if parties' antagonism does reflect in actual policies and decisions regarding mercenaries and contractors.

[Table IV and V about here]

Table IV: Mercenaries 1945-1991

	Italy		The UK	
	<i>left</i>	<i>center/right</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>right</i>
Military dimension	strong support for conscription	weak support for conscription	strong aversion to conscription	strong aversion to conscription
IR dimension	strong aversion to NATO, US and FP activism	strong support for NATO, US and FP activism	strong support for NATO, US and FP activism	strong support for NATO, US and FP activism
	strong support for communism	moderate aversion to communism	moderate aversion to communism	strong aversion to communism
Pol-eco dimension	strong aversion to privatization	weak support for privatization	weak aversion to privatization (strong from the '80s)	weak support for privatization (strong from the '80s)

Table V: Private military and security companies 1991-2017

	Italy		The UK	
	<i>left</i>	<i>center/right</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>right</i>
Military dimension	very weak support for conscription	very weak support for conscription	strong aversion to conscription	strong aversion to conscription
IR dimension	weak aversion to US, NATO and FP activism	moderate support for US, NATO and FP activism	moderate support for NATO, US and FP activism	strong support for NATO, US and FP activism
Pol-eco dimension	moderate aversion to privatization	moderate support for privatization	moderate aversion to privatization	strong support for privatization

Chapter III: *Data and Method*

In this Chapter, I discuss the data I have collected for the analysis, and the method I employ to verify the expectations listed in the previous section on theory and mechanisms. I address the main epistemological characteristics of my methodological approach, which is built on three major pillars, namely ontological individualism, a long-term historical perspective, and the qualitative content analysis of parliamentary debates. Then, I present and describe the data, discussing the data generation process and the coding categories I employ to code the Italian and British parliamentary debates I have analyzed. In this context, I give considerable space to assess the potential drawbacks and flaws of the dataset I have built and the method I employ, showing the strengths and weaknesses of the approach I have selected. Finally, I go into thorough details about the method I use, presenting the most significant features of the quantitative and qualitative dimensions of the investigation I will conduct in the following Chapters.

All over the entire Chapter, I provide an approximation of the MIDA approach (Blair, et al., 2019; Pearl, 2009). I thus focus on the characteristics of the causal Model (M), on the Inquiry (I) about the distributions of variables, on the Data Strategy (D), and finally I provide the Answer Strategy (A), showing how the investigation helps in answering the research questions I pose. Although the data and the methodological strategies I employ lack some rigorous elements that MIDA requires, the theoretical approach to research design presented by Blair and colleagues is particularly helpful to build the structure of a methodological chapter.

Epistemological approach and data description

The methodological structure of this work stands on three main pillars, or tools to conduct the analysis. First, following ontological individualism (Little, 2016, p. 78), I argue that the best proxy

for a country's endorsement of an international norm are the positions expressed by the Members of Parliament (MPs), namely the set of values, beliefs and rhetorical arguments of the decision-makers (Finlayson, 2007; Putnam, 1973, p. 73; Snyder, et al., 1954). Similarly, in order to address the positions and preferences of political parties, I focus on the opinions and arguments supported by single politicians during debates in the parliamentary arena to then aggregate the picture at the party level.

Second pillar, a long-term historical perspective. Since norms and cultural factors evolve and change in the long run, my analysis covers an extended period, as that is necessary to produce a consistent and reliable analysis. Indeed, the need is to grasp the practical effects and manifestations of a norm, and to properly understand the evolution and causal power of cultural attitudes (Putnam, 1993, p. 13; Trachtenberg, 2006). For what instead regards parties, I contrast the costume of existing literature that focuses on parties only in the last three decades, as again, I adopt a long-term view in order to understand the evolution of parties' political postures.

The third and last pillar is the qualitative content analysis of parliamentary debates (Mayring, 2014; Palonen, 2019; Wiesner, et al., 2017). In order to spot and properly address every nuance of debates about the norm, moral accusations, pragmatic considerations, and anti-mercenary sentiments' links with other relevant factors and dimensions, a manual coding is necessary. Indeed, while quantitative text analysis may offer more guarantees in terms of systematization, and protection against biases, it does not provide tools that are nuanced enough to serve as an accurate instrument for an analysis as the one I conduct here (Farrelly, 2015, p. 41; Gee, 2007; Wodak & Krzyzanowski, 2008).

Another crucial advantage of this approach is its flexibility and its two-faced nature. Indeed, while the researcher starts the textual analysis with some deductively predetermined categories, the extensive, long-term and accurate investigation I here suggest leaves the door open for new categories to surface from the texts under scrutiny. In this way, the researcher inductively explores this possibility, while carefully analyzing and coding the parliamentary debates, or other texts as data

(Munck, 2004; Ragin, 1994). Once a new and properly defined category does actually pop out from the texts, the analyst should restart from the beginning, applying his or her new set of conceptual categories.

Then, concerning the very object of analysis, parliamentary debates, differently from Percy (2007a), and Bures and Meyer (2019), who mostly focused on UN Resolutions, and from Herbst (2013), who considered media discourses, I argue that national parliaments constitute a more appropriate locus for the analysis of a norm's endorsement. Herein, discussions and decisions are more directly relevant for policy-making and there are no international equilibria distortions. In this way, it is possible to analyze every single debate on mercenaries and PMSCs, differently from previous studies that have focused solely on critical junctures (Liu & Kinsey, 2018), or on a mix of national and international laws, and anecdotal behavior (Krahmann, 2012; Krahmann, 2013; Panke & Petersohn, 2016). Finally, the strengths of this approach similarly favor the assessments of parties' positions and arguments, since I center the attention on all and every debate in which politicians mention mercenaries and PMSCs. Differently from the literature on norms, the investigation of parliamentary debates is a more common feature of studies on political parties.

For the analysis of the anti-mercenary norm, I manually analyze and code all the references to the keyword *mercenar-* in the period 1805-2017 in the British Houses and in 1861-2017 in the Italian Camera and Senato (i.e. lower and upper chambers), and to *security contractors*⁷ in 1990-2017 for both countries. The unit of analysis is the paragraph that contains the keyword. More specifically, I have looked for all the paragraphs that contain the keywords in the Italian and British Parliamentary

⁷ Since there are many ways to refer to contractors and PMSCs, I also searched for keywords as “contractors”, “private security companies”, “private military companies”, “private security firms”, “private guards” etc. Moreover, I have also looked for the names of the most famous companies such as Academic (formerly known as Blackwater), Dyncorp, MPRI, Securitas, Executive Outcomes, Sandline International, G4S etc.

Archives⁸, and then I have extrapolated and transferred all of them to a text file, keeping all relevant information about the date and topic of the debate. Finally, I have coded and analyzed every paragraph.

In Italy, I start in 1861, right after the unification, whereas for the UK, I begin in 1805 because the dataset starts from there. The aim, it is worth repeating, is to follow the long-term evolution of the anti-mercenary norm. Consequently, the ratio for selecting the time periods is to look as far back as possible, namely in Italy in 1861 whereas for the UK in 1805. The rigorous analysis proceeds following a diachronic approach: first, the XIX century until World War II and then the Cold War period. The investigation then stops in 1991, as mercenaries' relevance and presence drastically decline after the end of the Cold War. However, since I have collected data on mercenaries until the end of 2017, I will consider some 'honorable mentions' of mercenaries and contexts in which they are involved after 1991, for example the war in Libya from 2011, in Chapter VI. The analysis on PMSCs begins instead in 1990, as the phenomenon starts to experience a booming increase.

On the other hand, the assessment of parties' positions starts in 1945, as in both countries a structured party system is present. The analysis then follows again a diachronic structure, with the focus on mercenaries during the Cold War and on PMSCs after 1991. However, since I have collected data on parties since the XIX century, I will address some, again, 'honorable mentions' in the period prior to 1945, for instances the War in Crimea and the Questione Romana. In addition, again in Chapter VI, I will also consider parties' positions on mercenaries between 1992 and 2017, providing insights on general trends and on the Libyan Crisis of 2011.

Coming to the specifics of the coding, I have manually coded every single paragraph for the year, the name of the MP, the government/opposition membership, the topic of the speech, the neutral, negative

⁸ The British Archive can be found at <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>, the Italian Archive is at <https://storia.camera.it/> and at https://www.senato.it/3065?voce_sommario=35

or positive character of the use of the keyword (*Character*) and the moral or non-moral nature of the same use (*Moral*). The variable *Character* assumes value +1 when the reference to mercenaries or contractors is positive, 0 when neutral and -1 when negative. The variable *Moral* describes only cases where *Character* equals -1, and it assumes value 1 when the negativity is based on moral arguments, 0 when it is not. Moreover, I have created a variable to detect when the use of the keyword mercenaries is just an insult or a simple rhetorical tool to attack a colleague (*Insult*). For instances, cases in which a MP refers to a colleague as a ‘mercenary of the United States’ or when the keyword refers to out-of-context issues as mercenary love. For the analysis of parties’ positions, I have also coded the paragraphs for the political party and its position along the left-right spectrum⁹. I have then conducted the same operation for PMSCs, employing the same coding categories. Additionally, I have detected in another variable every use of the word mercenaries to describe contractors (*Mercenary*) since this indicates the spillover of a stigma (Brewis & Godfrey, 2018). The variable *Mercenary* takes value 1 when a MP calls contractors ‘mercenaries’ and 0 when he or she does not.

Finally, I have listed in an additional variable the main reason(s) behind the accusations against, or the praises for, mercenaries and contractors (*Mechanism*). Common arguments are that these actors are inherently evil, that they damage the grandeur of the nation or the spirit of the army, that they support tyrants and heinous regimes or that they are ineffective on the battlefield. Here, I keep particular attention to the arguments, or categories, provided by previous scholars. For example, I keep track of references to other norms, as that on state neutrality and freedom of movement (Liu & Kinsey, 2018), to the monopoly on the use of force (Thomson, 1996), and to moral justification of the antagonism against mercenaries and contractors (Percy, 2007a). In this way, I have worked

⁹ Parties are divided in three categories (left, centre, right) and are positioned on the left-right scale (from 0, far left, to 10, far right) following <http://www.parlgov.org/>. In order to assess the robustness of my results I also code parties’ positions employing the Rile Index of the Comparative Manifesto Project, see https://visuals.manifesto-project.wzb.eu/mpdb-shiny/cmp_dashboard_dataset/

deductively to see if these categories surface from the debates and from the specific positions that politicians express. However, as anticipated, I have also employed an inductive approach to verify whether new categories, that previous literature did not consider, do emerge during the political discussions.

For what concerns the sole analysis of political parties, I have created a variable (*Dimension*) that identifies specific references to the dimensions and mechanisms I have listed. For instances, if an accusation to mercenaries is framed in a speech against US imperialism, this mention supports anti-Americanism as a relevant factor on the IR dimension. Similarly, if MPs criticize contractors while contesting the legitimacy of outsourcing policies, this observation strengthens the case for postures toward privatization as a critical mechanism, on the political-economic dimension. Finally, if mercenaries are criticized for a specific operation in a specific context, this observation supports the alternative explanation that unique conflict scenarios drive political aversion. Appendix I provides more detailed information about all variables, the data generating process, and some more specific aspects of the coding and the dataset.

The coding of *Character* and *Moral* requires further discussion. For what regards *Character*, negative references are sided by words as mobs, criminals, bloodthirsty, wicked, hordes, reprehensible, unrestrained, and by mentions of privates' lack of loyalty, disrespect for human rights or ineffectiveness and inefficiency. On the other side, positive mentions point to privates' professionalism, usefulness, efficacy or expertise. All other references are neutral, as politicians simply describe mercenary activities or do not express a clear judgment.

Examples of negative references are '*That is a gross distortion of the true nature of mercenaries. They are nothing more than hired killers who murder to order and for no other purpose than commercial gain*¹⁰', or '*history, and also Machiavelli, teaches us who mercenaries are and what their*

¹⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 15 Jun 1976 <http://bit.ly/2IFvhXF>

value is¹¹'. Instead, instances of typical neutral references are '*the armies of France were composed of Swiss troops and other mercenaries*¹²', or '*the reasoning of Kennedy is this: we attacked you with mercenaries, but you defended and our operation was a failure*¹³'. Finally, examples of the actually very few positive references are '*Aegis (a PMSC) has a solid experience and knowledge of the Dhi Qar province, where it works for the reconstruction of Iraq*¹⁴', or '*I also pay tribute to those people who are not mentioned very often — the civil servants and civilian contractors who make that deployment possible. We should thank them for their contribution to our nation's security*¹⁵'.

Once I identify a negative reference, I code it for the moral assessment of the negativity. For example, saying that mercenaries are degenerates, ignominious, pervert or bloody killers constitutes a moral condemnation, as it refers to a matter of principle. On the other side, to disapprove privates for their poor military value or for the fact that they are expensive or ineffective is a non-moral criticism. Instances of moral attacks against mercenaries or contractors are '*The Pope has his own corrupt and crooked mercenaries*¹⁶', or '*mercenaries who hire themselves out for mercenary reward to unofficial bodies of killers as professional soldiers*¹⁷'. Conversely, examples of negative non-moral references are '*That citizen Army should be the Militia, which could be turned into a real Army of the greatest value, and which would defend the country far better than an Army of lads of 18 or 21 years of age, or than an Army of mercenaries*¹⁸', or '*The Empire was under serious threat, because its only defense*

¹¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 21 Feb 1866 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg09/sed046.pdf>

¹² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 16 Apr 1823 <http://bit.ly/2KZWir3>

¹³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 25 Oct 1962

<http://www.camera.it/dati/leg03/lavori/stenografici/sed0729/sed0729.pdf>

¹⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 28 Mar 2007 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_03113_15

¹⁵ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 7 Nov 2012 <http://bit.ly/2Vhfrst>

¹⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 24 May 1872 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg11/sed225.pdf>

¹⁷ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 19 Jan 1968 <http://bit.ly/2L8NnmW>

¹⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 7 Mar 1871 <http://bit.ly/2XH4kqm>

were mercenaries¹⁹. Again, Appendix I provides more examples and details about all the other variables and a complete codebook.

Problems and cautions

My methodological choices overcome some potential problems. First, hidden interests or biases linked to political framing (Chong & Druckman, 2007) are always present when the investigation targets MPs' speeches. For example, a MP could passionately stress his opposition against mercenaries because of a personal and economic interest in the enforcement of conscription, or another MP could not mention scandals involving contractors because she holds shares of a PMSC. However, the fact that politicians lie or support hidden agendas, framing their arguments in a convenient and untrustworthy way, does not constitute an insurmountable problem, as I am specifically interested in understanding whether politicians endorse a norm or if instead they refer to mercenaries just to employ a rhetorical tool or for other strategic reasons (Dixon, 2017). The same consideration is valid when I address parties' positions, as my aim is to investigate what are the driver of parties' attitudes toward mercenaries, namely whether they reflect specific moral assessments on hired soldier or if instead they are born of general political contexts. Finally, I see no reasons to believe that a relevant number of politicians could have such a strong personal interest in mercenaries' activities that they come to distort in a significant way their arguments during the political debate in the Parliament.

Anyhow, before counting and analyzing the nature and character of the references, I have dropped the observations that present a clear and pronounced rhetorical character (i.e. the variable *Insult*). As already anticipated, when the use of the term mercenary is employed as a personal insult, or out of

¹⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 26 May 1927 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg27/sed192.pdf>

the context of military and security affairs, the observation is dropped from the dataset. Examples of this kind of mentions are ‘*If Germany is not to be armed, is she to contribute towards the cost of French and British divisions? If so, do we become mercenaries to the Germans²⁰?*’ or ‘*we cannot allow the Minister the possibility to employ his volunteers and his mercenaries to hinder the right to strike²¹.*’

Secondly, the discourses I have analyzed could disproportionally represent the reasoning behind controversial issues, which could attract many references compared to policy decisions that generate instead a broad consensus. In this way, many of the observations I have collected could represent extreme outliers that appear in the context of particularly conflictual discussions. However, one look to the database dispels these fears, as the debates from 1805 to 2017 in both Italy and the UK address at length every topic that previous literature on mercenaries and PMSCs has deemed as relevant. Moreover, the act of considering many and diverse issues, instead of focusing on some pre-determined critical junctures, should reduce the negative impact of this distortion, indeed.

Third potential problem, the Italian and British debates are mostly complete, though some gaps are present, especially before 1946, due to improperly scanned documents or to debates that are entirely missing. However, this happens in rare cases, and there are no reasons to believe that the lack of data is systematic or that missing cases are representative of specific categories. Herein, also the problem of the very context of the debate in which politicians mention mercenaries or contractors is relevant. In the legislative assemblies, politicians produce different kinds of discourses, sometimes directly addressing their colleagues or only their party’s members, and other times instead speaking clearly for the general public. In this way, variation in the intensity of the anti-mercenary norm endorsement or in terms of parties’ positioning could emerge from these divergent types of speeches. Nevertheless,

²⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 13 Jul 1952 <http://bit.ly/2L41R7V>

²¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 5 Jul 1951

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0717/sed0717.pdf

the fact that I consider so many observations should correct for this potential distortion. In addition, for the most controversial cases, as the attitude of the Partito Comunista Italiano during the Cold War, I will also consider other sources as newspapers and parliamentary questions.

Then, in order to reduce the impact of pre-determined hypotheses and sanguine expectations, I have remained blind to the name of the MP giving the speech, his or her party affiliation and to the general debate while doing the coding. Namely, I have extrapolated the paragraph that contains the keyword, then I have coded it, and only after that, I have looked up for the information about the categories just mentioned. As a final step, I have come back to the whole debate, reading the contributions of other politicians and trying to understand in a more accurate way the context in which the debate about mercenaries or contractors was happening.

Finally, even if most of this work focus on the parallel analysis of two different countries, Italy and the United Kingdom, I will also discuss at certain points the case for comparison. Consequently, there is the need to address the linguistic and conceptual issues that could emerge in this context during the investigation. It may be possible that Italian and British MPs mean different ‘things’ when they use the term ‘mercenaries’. For example, British politicians could hardly ever describe hired groups as the famous Gurkhas as mercenaries, whereas their Italian colleagues could consider the same forces as classic examples of mercenaries. Alternatively, while Italian decision-makers could label non-conscript armies as mercenary troops, their British peers would likely never employ the same term. When such clear differences in the language and the conceptual framework used to refer to mercenaries surface from the debate, I highlight and properly address them. Furthermore, a specific focus on the same experiences (indigenous troops in the colonies, European mercenaries in Congo, American contractors in Iraq etc.) should correct for linguistic and conceptual divergences, at least partially. Appendix I offers a more thorough discussion of these potential linguistic problems, focusing also on the translation of the Italian debates.

This last point raises the question whether Italy and the United Kingdom are actually comparable cases in terms of attitudes toward mercenaries and contractors. As already argued, even if the main objective of this work is to conduct two parallel analyses, there is a need to address the problems of comparison, as these issues will surface sometimes in the following Chapters. In the Introduction and in the Chapter on theory and mechanisms I have listed many reasons that make Italy and the UK distant cases in terms of military affairs and Foreign Policy, from their very different military formats, to their colonial history and to their level of involvement in military missions abroad. However, it is important here to stress again the fact that first, the two countries did share some similar experiences with mercenaries and contractors, as the employment of mercenaries troops in the colonies or the hiring of PMSCs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Second, as already said, their differences are in a way beneficial for this investigation. Indeed, regarding the strength of the anti-mercenary norm, the test on two different cases will boost the reliability of the results. On the other hand, the exploration of the uncharted territory of parties' positions on mercenaries and contractors will similarly benefit from the analysis of two distant cases.

Method

Although scholars do not agree on a common or unified method to address parliamentary debates, previous literature converges on the importance of contextualization (Palonen, 2019; Wiesner, et al., 2017). Following this methodological prescription, scholars often base their works on careful rhetorical interpretations of specific discourses, associated with detailed reconstructions of historical contexts, and of the political situations in which they originated and evolved. I do not deny the relevance and the critical role of context to address these issues and conduct such investigation. Indeed, I devote a significant part of this work to context-sensitive and qualitative interpretations of specific parliamentary discussions, where mercenaries and contractors constitute a critical cause of disagreement. Nonetheless, I also consider appropriate to locate these interpretations into a wide-span

picture, as I employ a quantitative analysis of a long historical period to keep track of general tendencies and patterns. The combination of these two elements represents one of the most significant constitutive character of the new framework I am proposing throughout this entire work.

Thus, as anticipated, in order to test my hypotheses and address the two case studies, I combine quantitative and qualitative strategies, employing a triangulation of different approaches (Tarrow, 2004). With this multi-method approach, the quantitative analysis cover the entire period, 1805-2017, the qualitative investigation, for reasons of space, targets specific and critical experiences in which mercenaries and contractors are involved (Seawright, 2016). I employ descriptive statistics to compare the positions of the parties and to assess the endorsement of the norm, while empirical models and tests, together with a thorough qualitative and context-sensitive analysis, bolster my results.

As mentioned in the previous Chapter, the investigation of the anti-mercenary norm proceeds through three main steps. First, the quantification of negative references, second, the quantitative analysis of the drivers of the antagonism toward mercenaries and contractors and, third, the qualitative exploration of critical junctures to see whether decision-makers consistently produce behaviors, policies and decisions that hinder the activities of private hired armed actors. As Dixon (2017, p. 85) has correctly argued, many analyses of norms ‘have tended to focus on easily measurable behavioral acts of compliance [...] and conceptualize compliance in dichotomous terms’. Here, instead, my nuanced plan allows to overcome this simplistic approach, and to focus on detailed characteristics of states’ postures toward norms and norms’ violations. For what regards political parties’ positions, the investigation follows a similar path. First, I will compare quantitative indicators of aversion to mercenaries, highlighting the dimensions and mechanisms that explain potential divergences among parties. Second, I will thoroughly address significant instances, or critical junctures, in which parties take specific measures regarding mercenaries and private military and security companies.

Chapter IV: *Weak, Politicized, Absent: The Anti-Mercenary Norm in Italy and the United Kingdom 1805-2017*

There are 1007 references to mercenaries in the Italian and British Parliaments between 1805 and 1991. As Table VI shows, the topics that attract the highest number of mentions are wars and the organization of the armed forces. Furthermore, negativity characterizes a similarly high number of references in both countries, and moral concerns play a considerable role, though slightly more in Italy than in the UK. Finally, the term mercenaries is employed out-of-context or as a pure rhetorical tool in a relevant number of observations, again more often in Italy. Figure I and II show the temporal evolution of negative and moral references. Negativity stays consistently at a high level, though slightly decreasing over time, while the importance of moral concerns more significantly decreases as time goes by.

Regarding PMSCs, there are 335 references to security contractors in the two Parliaments between 1990 and 2017. As Table VII displays, conflicts remain a critical topic in both countries, while internal security is more relevant an issue in the UK. Moreover, if negativity affects half of the references in both states, moral concerns characterize less than one third of the mentions. In addition, differently from the debates on mercenaries, there is here a relevant number of positive references in both countries. Finally, politicians refer to PMSCs' employees as mercenaries in less than one third of the observations, though slightly more often in Italy. Figure III, IV and V provide a clear picture of the temporal evolution of negative and moral-based references, and of the spillover effect. As time

goes by, negativity decreases, moral condemnations almost disappear and politicians refrain from calling contractors mercenaries²².

A brief look to the results provides four preliminary insights. First, the number of references is considerably higher in the United Kingdom, for what regards both mercenaries and PMSCs. This difference seems likely to reflect the higher direct involvement of British military and political forces in contexts where hired soldiers play a role, and the wider employment of mercenary forces by the UK. Moreover, for the dataset on mercenaries, the higher number of references is also justified by the greater number of years considered. Second critical result, the antagonism against mercenaries and PMSCs has a significant presence in the parliamentary debates in Italy and the UK. Third, a considerable portion of this hostility descends from moral concerns. Finally, almost all trends are negative, meaning that the intensity of anti-mercenary sentiments consistently decreases over the years.

[Tables VI and VII about here]

[Figures I to V about here]

²² These results, along with the discussion and the sections on theory and method that regards the norm, appears in a forthcoming article: ‘Weak, politicized, absent: The anti-mercenary norm in Italy and the United Kingdom 1805-2017’, *Journal of Global Security Studies*.

Table VI: General results for parliamentary debates on mercenaries in Italy and the UK

	Italy 1861-1991	UK 1805-1991	Tot
N	293	714	1007
Topic = War	60.4%	80.4%	74.6%
Topic = Army	21.8%	13.2%	15.7%
Negative references	69.3%	67.2%	67.8%
Positive references	0%	2.1%	1.5%
Moral references	62.4%	54.4%	56.7%
Rhetorical tool	20.8%	12.2%	14.7%

Table VII: General results for parliamentary debates on PMSCs in Italy and the UK

	Italy 1990-2017	UK 1990-2017	Tot
N	61	274	335
Topic = War	72.1%	38.3%	44.5%
Topic = Security	24.6%	59.5%	53.1%
Negative references	50.8%	48.9%	49.2%
Positive references	16.4%	9.5%	10.8%
Moral references	32.3%	23.9%	25.5%
Spillover effect	27.9%	17.9%	19.7%

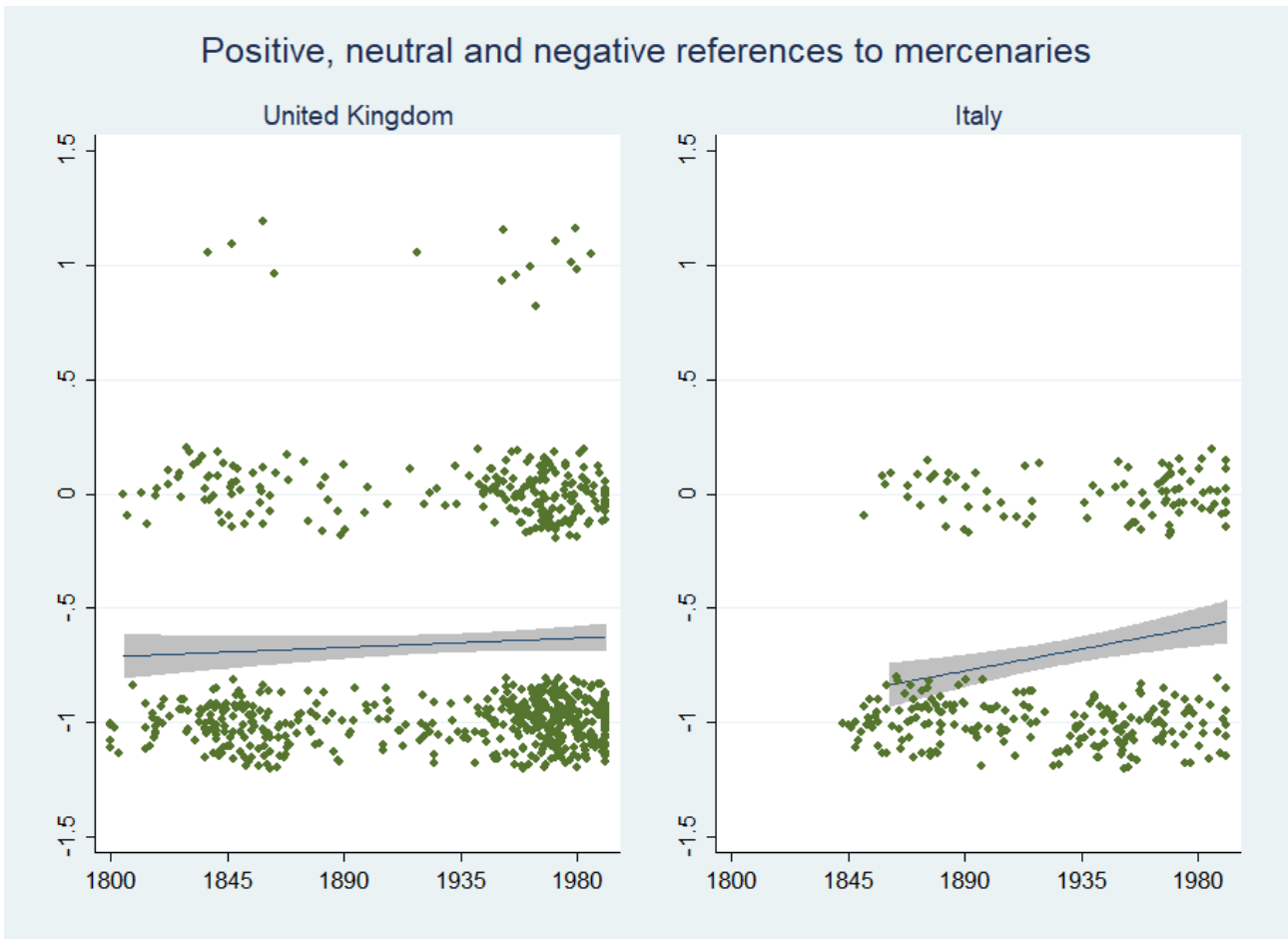


Figure I: Positive (+1), neutral (0) and negative (-1) references to mercenaries in the UK (1805-1991) and Italy (1861-1991), with regression line and 95% confidence intervals. The decrease over time of negativity is statistically significant in Italy, and not significant in the UK. The values of the observations have been randomized on the +1, 0 and -1 lines in order to appreciate the density in single years.

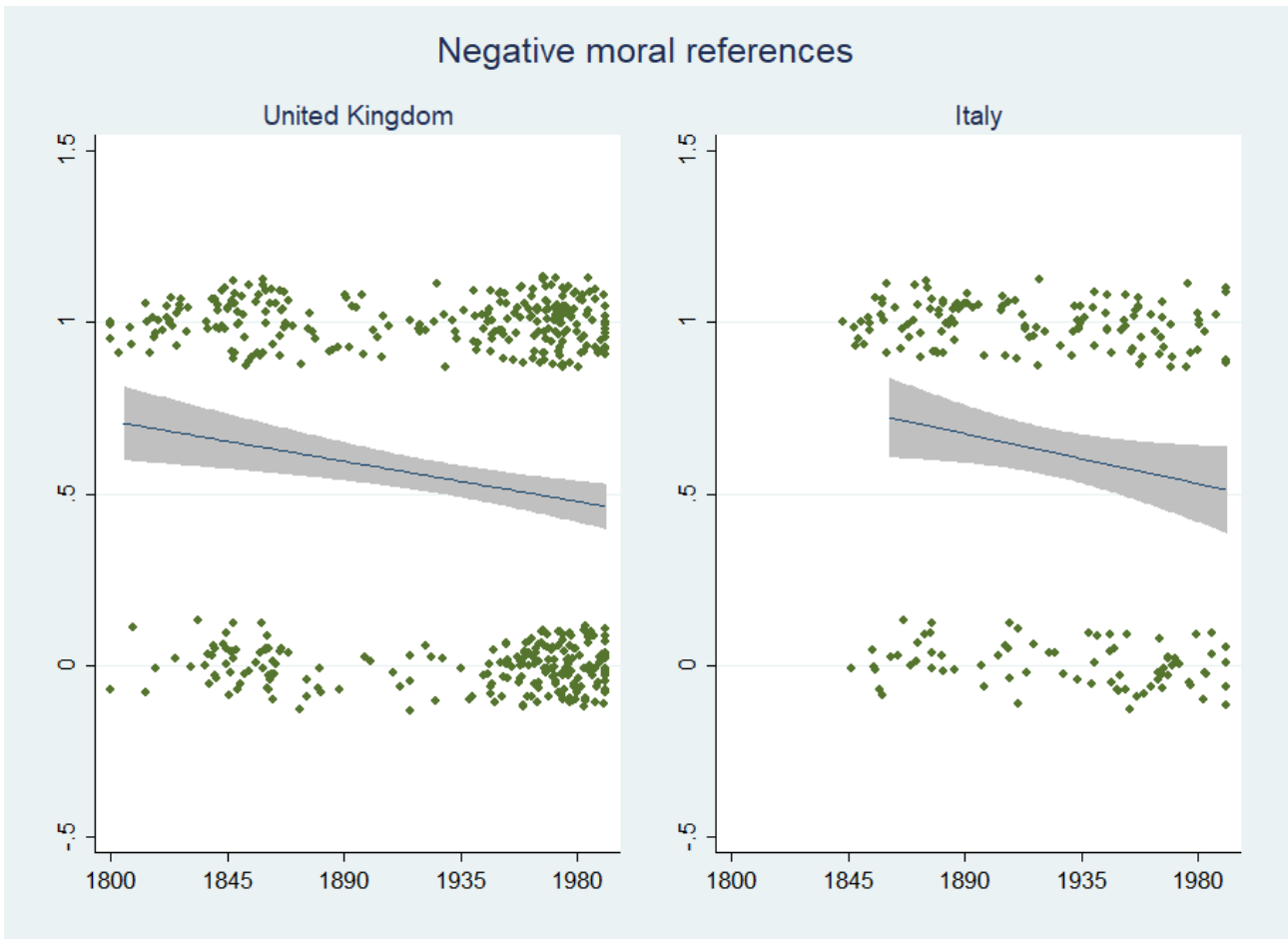


Figure II: Moral (+1) and non-moral (0) negative references to mercenaries in the UK (1805-1991) and Italy (1861-1991), with regression line and 95% confidence intervals. The decrease of moral references is statistically significant in both countries. Observations' values have been randomized on the +1 and 0 lines.

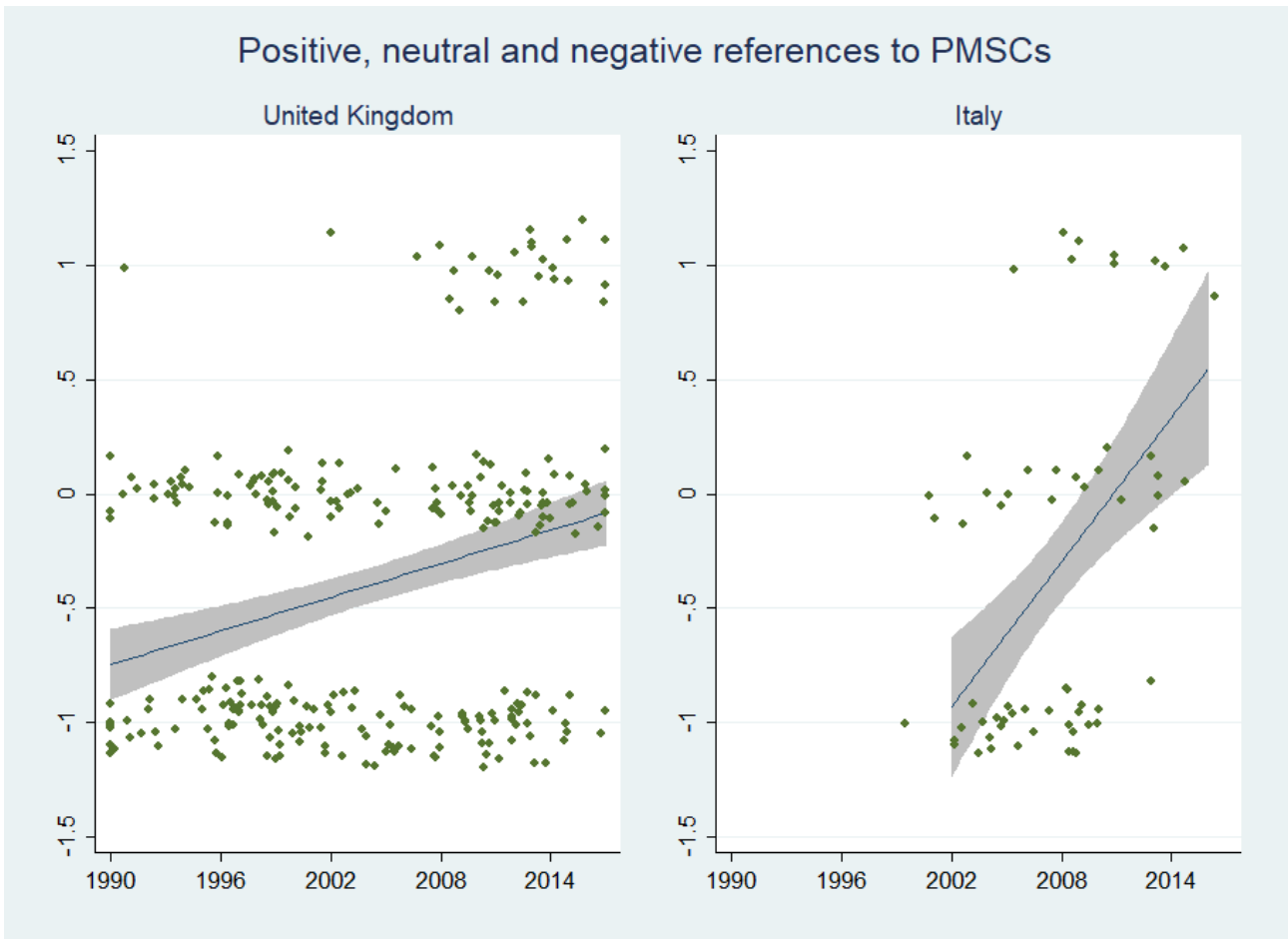


Figure III: Positive (+1), neutral (0) and negative (-1) references to PMSCs in the UK and Italy (1990-2017), with regression line and 95% confidence intervals. The decrease over time of negativity is statistically significant in both countries. Observations' values have been randomized on the +1, 0 and -1 lines.

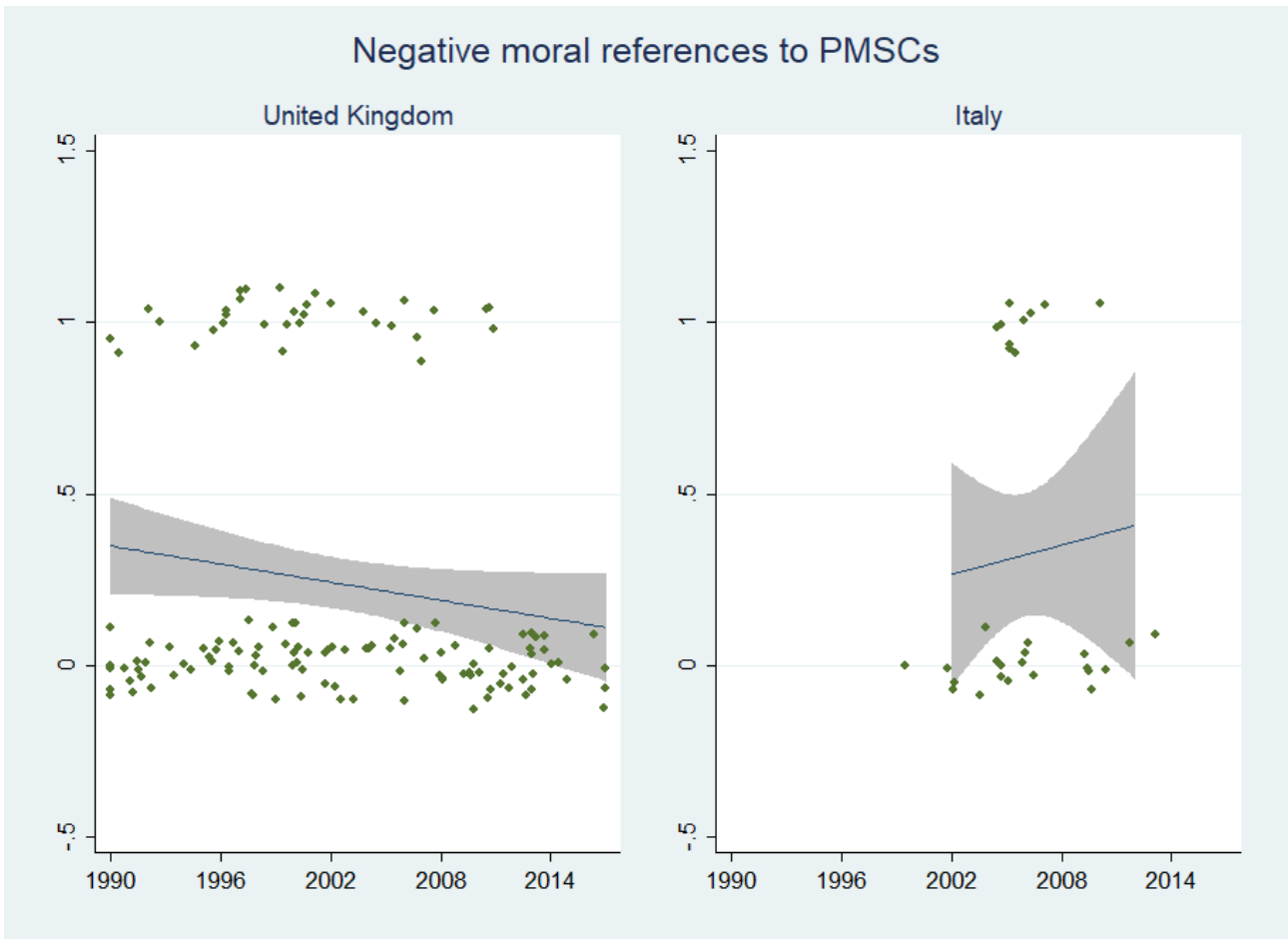


Figure IV: Moral (+1) and non-moral (0) negative references to PMSCs in the UK and Italy (1990-2017), with regression line and 95% confidence intervals. The decrease of moral references is statistically significant in the UK, while in Italy N is too small to produce a significant test. Observations' values have been randomized on the +1 and 0 lines.

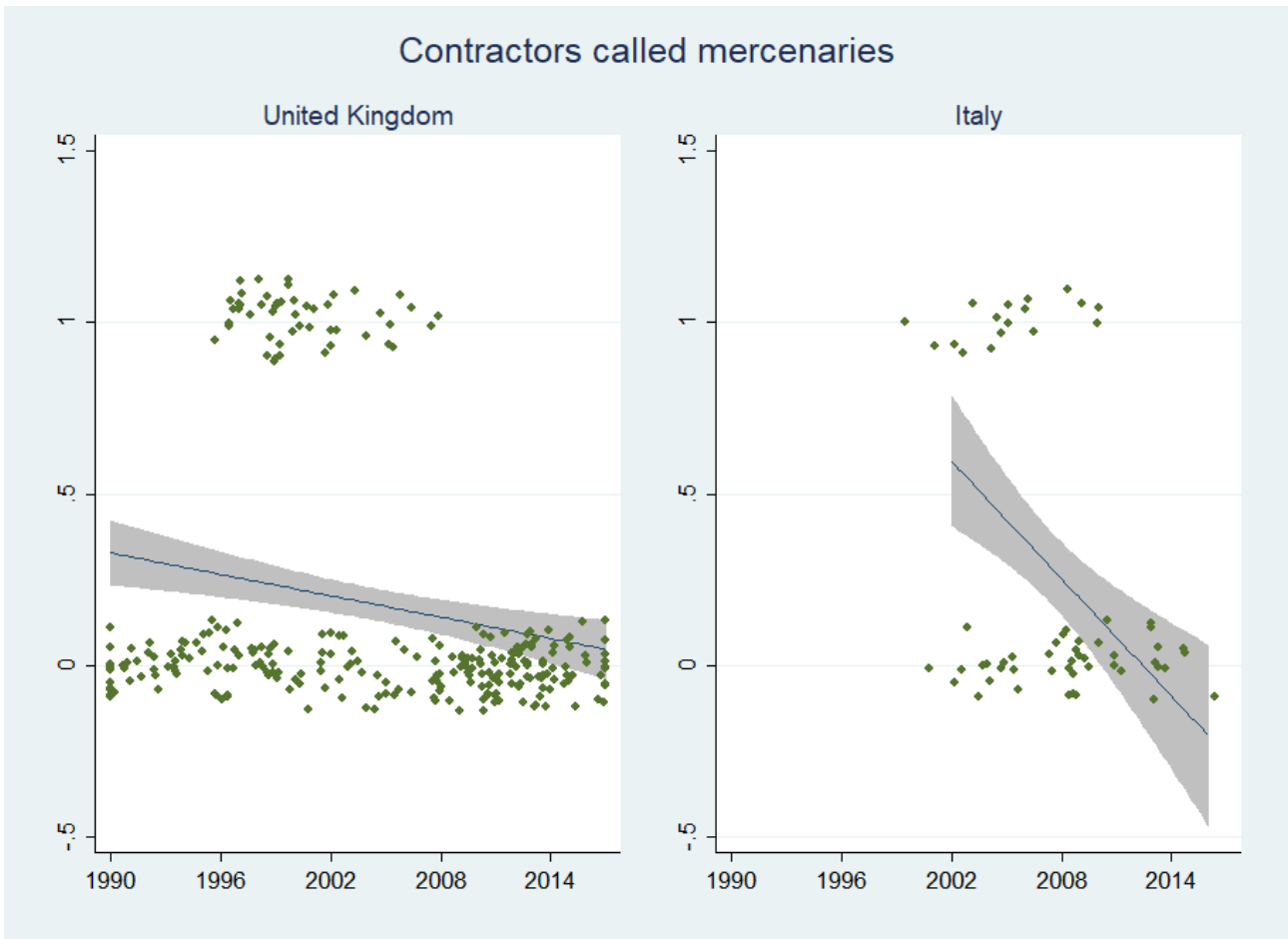


Figure V: The spillover effect, instances in which contractors are called mercenaries (+1) in the UK and Italy (1990-2017), with regression line and 95% confidence intervals. The decrease of the spillover effect is statistically significant in both countries. Observations' values have been randomized on the +1 and 0 lines.

Mercenaries in the Very Long XIX Century 1805-1914

This section covers an indeed very long period²³. As anticipated in previous Chapters, in order to reduce the inevitable distortions that such an extended analysis generates, I focus on specific critical junctures, providing enough details regarding the context of the debates. In particular, I analyze four different topics: first and second, the possibility to enlist mercenaries in the national Armed Forces and in the colonies. The latter is a critical locus of mercenaries' activities, as both countries hold similar debates on these issues. Third and last, two conflicts where mercenaries play a relevant role, namely the War in Crimea²⁴ (1853-1856) for the UK, and the *Questione Romana*²⁵ (1861-1872) for Italy.

Starting from the military format, the two countries adopt completely different approaches, as Italy has a universal conscript army whereas the United Kingdom professional armed forces (Bovio, 2010; Chandler & Beckett, 2003), as argued above. If British politicians continuously stress the value of an all-volunteer army and the potential risks of a standing force, their Italian colleagues highlight the dangers of professionalism, and assign strong positive values to conscription. Despite such different

²³ Since there are very few references between 1915 and 1945, the analysis in this section covers the period between 1805 and 1914. Appendix I provides reasons for this choice.

²⁴ The conflict explodes when an alliance formed by the Ottoman Empire, the UK and France attack the Russian Empire, to contain the Russian expansion toward Europe and Turkey (Figes, 2011, pp. 158, 195, 333). The Crimean War is relevant for the relation between mercenaries and the UK, as it represents the last instance, until the emergence of PMSCs, when the British Government considers the possibility to hire mercenaries in a major war (Bayley, 1977).

²⁵ The term describes the problem of Rome, after the Italian unification still controlled by the temporal authority of the Pope. The Italian government is firmly willing to take control of the city, natural capital of the Peninsula, and MPs evaluate diplomatic and military solutions. In this context, mercenaries are a crucial factor, since the army of the Vatican is entirely composed of foreign hired soldiers (Fiorentino, 1997; Mori, 1963; Spadolini & Ceccuti, 1997).

perspectives, not only the debates follow similar trends, but also negativity and morality similarly characterize a considerable numbers of references in both countries.

Right after the unification of the nation in March 1861, Italian politicians face urgent and critical decisions about the organization of the newborn Italian Armed Forces. In this context, politicians of all colors converge on universal conscription as the best choice for the nation, and the possibility to hire professional soldiers or mercenaries is firmly excluded (Bovio, 2010). Discussing potential reforms of the Army in 1863, in particular during a debate on the dispositions regarding the conscription class of 1843, Boggio resolutely dismisses potential reductions in the number of young Italians called to arms. In this context, he expresses widely shared concepts: *‘When the army is a national army, the State should try to have the highest number of citizens and the least of mercenaries [...] when an army is an oppressive instrument in the hands of a constitutional government, this government will try to have less citizens and more mercenaries²⁶’*. On the same line, Corte in 1867, who is determined to contrast a Government proposal to directly enlist former Austrian military officials, namely soldiers who were living in the newly acquired territories after the Austrian-Italian War of 1866. He claims that Italian soldiers are not just professionals that can be acquired on a market for force, because there are additional criteria that must be satisfied: *‘The Italian army is essentially national, it is not a mercenary army. In the Italian army, it is not enough to be a good soldier, because one needs to be also a good citizen²⁷’*.

In 1871, another year of relevant discussions about the reform of the Army²⁸, Cugia highlights the improvements that conscription have brought to European armies, and points out how the Prussian

²⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 30 Jul 1863 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed488.pdf>

²⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 13 Apr 1867 <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg10/sed020.pdf>

²⁸ The rapid and astonishing victory of the Prussian Army in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 lead Italian politicians to heated discussions about potential reforms of the Italian Armed Forces. There are mainly two groups in the Parliament, one arguing for an immediate implementation of the Prussian model, the other resisting such change. Cugia, member of

Armed Forces should serve as a model for the Italian Army: *‘In all Europe after the Napoleonic Wars, states enforced conscription, in this way providing great improvements for the armies. Back in the days, armies were composed of hirelings, mercenaries, few volunteers and many forcibly drafted. So, these troops could not have a real authentic character like that of Prussia²⁹’*. In 1905, discussing the possibility to send Italian military officials to Africa in a sort of proto-multilateral operation in what was the Congo Free State, Santini argues against such proposal of the Minister of War. Here, he makes explicit references to British, Belgian, and Dutch soldiers as a negative example: *‘I am sure that Italian officials do not wish to have, as the mercenaries of other nations, monuments or memorial with lions, even in the case of the Neerlandese Lion³⁰’*.

Finally, in 1914, debating on the preparation of the Italian Army for a potential involvement in WWI, Maffi compares the value of conscription with the distasteful organization of the British Army, again directly confronting politicians who expressed flexible positions about conscription. With a significant amount of sarcasm, he claims that *‘The mercenary army of England is reduced to the point that to find soldiers they need to ask prostitutes to recruit drunk people in the pubs³¹’*. During debates on the organization of the Italian Armed Force, and over all references, the possibility to hire mercenaries is consistently criticized (73.3% of negative mentions), and politicians employ often moral arguments to express their aversion (53.1%). Thus, a considerable number of Italian MPs not

the first group and confronting the contrasting opinions of the other branch, lists here some of the reasons that make the Prussian Army so strong.

²⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 20 Jun 1871 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg11/sed126.pdf>

³⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 12 Jun 1905 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg22/sed115.pdf>. Here, the reference to the Neerlandese Lion may refer to the Order of the Lion of the Netherlands, a order of chivalry created at the beginning of the XIX century and often awarded to members of the Army. Alternatively, the reference to the monument with the lion may refer to Lion Monument of Lucerne, a memorial built in 1820 to remember the Swiss Guards who died during the French Revolution.

³¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 23 Jun 1914 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg24/sed108.pdf>

only support the case that mercenaries are less effective than soldiers on the battlefield, but also argue that mercenaries present inherently evil characteristics.

Conversely, as repeatedly said, the British Army is an established institution since 1689. During the XIX century, debates in the Houses mostly regard potential military reforms, the Foreign Enlistment Bill and the organization of the military ranks in the regions of the Empire (Arielli, et al., 2016; Caverley, 2014). In the United Kingdom, politicians are almost as critical as their Italian colleagues on the involvement of mercenaries within the British Army's ranks (58.9% of negative mentions), and morality plays a significant role (45.5%). In 1919, discussing the Foreign Enlistment Bill, and the possibility for British subjects to go and fight for money in South America, Wilson calls mercenaries '*wicked*' who damage the spirit of the Army³². During the same debate, Lord Castlereagh claims that to allow citizens to serve as mercenaries is '*manifestly against the law of nations*³³'. In 1830, Sir Burdett, debating on military law, argues that British soldiers should not be flogged in the presence of German mercenaries, as the act would be particularly degrading. In particular, he refers to this act as '*that wicked, atrocious, flagitious system of flogging English soldiers in the presence of German soldiers; of mercenaries*³⁴'.

In 1855, Yorke, commenting on the Armed Forces of the Sultan of Turkey, claims that the employment of mercenaries would be '*degrading*' for the British Army and that it would tend to the '*ultimate ruin of its [The Empire's] power and influence*³⁵'. In 1867, Major Anson states that in every European conflict during the XIX century mercenaries were recruited from the '*black slums of Europe*', and he also calls the Foreign Legion a '*wretched force*³⁶'. In particular, recalling the

³² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 03 Jun 1819 <http://bit.ly/2wOYbMF>

³³ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 03 Jun 1819 <http://bit.ly/2YKMuCE>

³⁴ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 02 Mar 1830 <http://bit.ly/2oMISAL>

³⁵ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 05 Jun 1855 <http://bit.ly/2wSi8mO>

³⁶ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 26 Feb 1867 <http://bit.ly/2oP7UyU>

European mercenaries that the UK was willing to hire for the War in Crimea he argues that *‘it would have been much better to have had recourse to those races which were subject to the rule of England than to have gone a begging for soldiers in the cities of Europe³⁷*. The words of Major Anson highlight a typical attitude among British politicians, namely that the indigenous forces hired among the lands of the British Empire are hardly ever considered as mercenaries.

The anti-mercenary hostility persists in the XX century and still characterizes the debate on the preparation of the British Army for World War I. In 1914, Sir Finlay says that the act of hiring *‘odious’* mercenaries is in contrast with democracy³⁸. In 1915, after the beginning of the War, Wedgwood is in favor of the enforcement of conscription, claiming that mercenaries would be useless in a conflict of the proportion and the character of WWI. Thus, noting a change in the character of war, and trying to weaken the resistances of the majority of his colleague, he argues that *‘In times long ago we used to be able to find paid mercenaries to fight for us, but this is not a struggle in which we can buy mercenaries to fight for us to-day³⁹*.

Therefore, in both countries politicians argue against the possibility to embed mercenaries in their ranks, though they employ different strategies to justify such antagonism. If Italian MPs point more often to the moral, political and military value of conscription, their British colleagues refer to the value of their professional army and to the spirit of British soldiers. In London, MPs often mention the incompatibility between British grandeur and the employment of hired soldiers, citing the term *‘honor’* in many occasions. In Rome, MPs contrast mercenaries to the virtues of the conscript army. In both countries, despite the different strategies just mentioned, politicians consistently attack mercenaries on a moral basis, thus not only referring simply to pragmatic reasons.

³⁷ See footnote 34

³⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 01 Apr 1914 <http://bit.ly/2M72RmX>

³⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 28 Jul 1915 <http://bit.ly/32wAsAc>

Regarding colonial military affairs, the second major topic of this section, the two countries show again drastically different historical experiences. While the United Kingdom in the XIX century possesses the largest colonial Empire of the world, Italy begins its first colonial adventures solely in the 1880s. Thus, in order to analyze homogeneous debates, I here focus on debates on African colonies between the XIX and XX century, as both Italy and the UK are active in similar scenarios and face similar dilemmas regarding the employment of local mercenaries.

While debating in the Parliament, Italian MPs show fierce aversion to the employment of African mercenary troops. In 1897, Del Balzo discusses the military situation in Eritrea and the deployment of the famous Ascari⁴⁰. Even if he recognizes the necessity to operate with indigenous troops, he remains bitterly critical of them. During this discussion, he contests the proposal of the War Ministry to enlarge the recruitment of mercenary indigenous troops: *‘Our presence in Africa is, and will always be, dangerous. It is not possible to sleep peacefully thinking about the trophies of betrayer arms. [...] Misfortune comes to whom relies on venal hands! Misfortune will come to our colony if we put it in the hands of mercenaries⁴¹’*. In 1908, in a very similar discussion to that above, and producing a similar critique, Romussi argues that the Ascari are *‘wretched men, similar to Middle-Ages mercenaries [...] their deployment will bring stories of massacres to this Chamber⁴²’*.

Moreover, in 1902, during a debate about the possibility to extend the breadth of Italian colonial objectives north of Eritrea, Lollini argues against this proposal of the Government. His argument is that a significant extension of the colonial enterprise would imply a too pronounced reliance on local mercenaries, soldiers that can never be trusted. Moreover, he refers to the British experience in

⁴⁰ The Eritrean Ascari were indigenous soldiers enrolled in the Royal Corps of Colonial Troops (Regio Corpo di Truppe Coloniali) of the Italian Army in 1889–1941.

⁴¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 14 May 1897 <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg20/sed019.pdf>

⁴² *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 11 Feb 1908 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg22/sed448.pdf>

dealing with indigenous mercenaries as a negative example: *‘England, which seemed saturated with democratic sentiments, is nowadays thinking about the enforcement of conscription, after the awful performance of African mercenaries in the colonies⁴³’*. Overall, the involvement of hired soldiers in the colonies consistently meets the MPs’ disapproval, as negative mentions are the 70% and moral condemnations the 71.4% of all references.

British politicians seem to follow the same line and adopt a similar posture, as shown by descriptive statistics on negative references (63.9%) and on moral attacks (69.6%). The decades between the XIX and XX century constitute a decisive moment for the British Empire in Africa. The famous Fashoda Incident, a climax of French-British colonial competition, represents a crucial diplomatic victory for the UK and exemplifies the power of the British in most of Africa (Schultz, 2001). In this context, politicians in the Houses hold heated debates about the military management of such an extended territory.

In 1899, addressing the situation of the Empire in Sub-Saharan Africa, Morley makes a strong point: *‘There is one lesson that history teaches more constantly and more impressively than another, it is that when an empire or kingdom relies, not upon its own people, but on bands of foreign mercenaries, its decline and fall may not be rapid, but it is sure⁴⁴’*. In the same year in a debate on Sudan, Labouchere utters even more sharpening words: *‘When you are in a barbarous country, and want to give the inhabitants the benefits of civilisation, it is the worst thing possible to do that by means of Soudanese mercenaries⁴⁵’*.

⁴³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 22 May 1902 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg21/sed244.pdf>

⁴⁴ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 24 Feb 1899 <http://bit.ly/2Qdq9ee>

⁴⁵ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 27 Feb 1899 <http://bit.ly/2Qcnu4o>

In 1901, commenting on the Somaliland Expedition⁴⁶, Brampton Curdon claims that *‘the native troops which are now being employed in Somaliland are nothing better than mercenaries, whose instincts are almost animal. It is a very dangerous thing to send these men to fight in a country when we could not restrain them in the moment of victory or depend upon them in the moment of defeat⁴⁷’*. It is interesting how in the same debate he instead praises the Indian troops who fought in China for the British Empire. Once again, the reasoning behind this difference is that the Indian Army was for many years embedded in the British Armed Forces: *‘I make no objection to Indian troops in China, because they had been so long under our rule that they had an attachment for us and were proud to fight for us⁴⁸’*. Here, the answer of Viscount Cranborne to the words of Curdon is worth mentioning. The Viscount argues that *‘Of course they are mercenaries, in the sense that they are paid; but then so are the British soldiers, of whom we are all so proud. I think it is a strong order to say that these men do not feel their position as subjects of the British Empire as much or even more than we do. [...] and if we find, as we do, that these native troops are far more suitable for the conditions under which warfare in various parts of Africa is carried on we ought to use them⁴⁹’*. One of the very few positive reference, this quotation points to the usefulness and the political and military convenience of employing mercenaries troops in the territories of the Empire. Next paragraphs will elaborate thoroughly on these points, but before the discussion turns to the last two relevant critical junctures, the Questione Romana and the War in Crimea.

In these contexts of conflict where Italy and the UK are more directly involved, a sort of civil war for Italy and an important war on the European soil for the UK, the reasons behind the moral dislike for

⁴⁶ The Somaliland Expedition, also known as the Dervish War, was a series of conflicts (1900-1920) in the Horn of Africa. British, Italian and Ethiopian troops were fighting against the Dervishes led by the famous, or infamous, Mad Mullah.

⁴⁷ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 19 Mar 1901 <http://bit.ly/2O2aeSH>

⁴⁸ See footnote 45.

⁴⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 19 Mar 1901 <http://bit.ly/2JHae56>

mercenaries are even clearer. During the debate on the *Questione Romana*, the Pope's mercenary bands attract furious criticisms (negative references are 77.8%, of which 74.3% moral-based). During the 1860s, the *Questione* is a life-or-death matter for most Italian politicians, generating long and intense debates that often regard the involvement of mercenaries in the Armed Forces of the Vatican. As already anticipated, while the Parliament shows a wide consensus on the need to annex Rome to the newborn Italian nation, strong disagreement emerges about the ways to reach this aim.

For instance, Petruccelli della Gattina, who had strong liberal and anticlerical ideas, argued for prompt military invasion of Rome, supporting his argument with a classic moral aversion for mercenaries. In 1862, he claims that the fact that the Pope has mercenaries is not a neutral fact: *'If the army of the Pope had been composed of Roman soldiers, we would not have raised any objections; but because it will be formed by foreign mercenaries, the horrors that could emerge will be incalculable⁵⁰'*. In 1864, Bon Compagni di Mombello, a former lawyer who held moderate political positions, follows the same line of his colleague, despite their very different political backgrounds: *'There is the possibility of a deplorable event for Italy, deplorable for the Catholic community, for the authority of the Pope, the event in which the Pope would exercise his authority through the employment of foreign mercenaries⁵¹'*.

Furthermore, the *Questione* involved to a profound extent the French military and diplomacy, who had been always interested in the political affairs of the Vatican. This clear political interference, similarly to the role of mercenaries, shock many Italian politicians, who sometimes connect the two heinous aspects of the conflict. In 1867, indeed, Panciani links the Pope's mercenaries with the interferences of France in the *Questione Romana*: *'These soldiers, being French, Belgian, Swiss or Irish, when they are at the Pope's service, are nothing but mercenaries. This simple fact of a French*

⁵⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 20 Jul 1862 <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed269.pdf>

⁵¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 09 Nov 1864 <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed687.pdf>

*General who comes to inspect these troops is a violation of the principle of non-interference*⁵². In this context, Panciani highlights, more than a simple moral attack against mercenaries, also a classic problem linked with hired soldiers, namely the fact that employing them states are able to violate neutrality. As argued in the Chapter on theory, Liu and Kinsey (2018) argue that the anti-mercenary norm is a byproduct of, among the others, the norm on state neutrality. However, explicit references from politicians to this connection surface only extremely rarely in the British and Italian Parliaments.

To sum up, in the words of Italian MPs, the Pope's mercenaries are deplorable, ignominious, without honor and enemies of the people. Discussing the Questione, politicians often refer to Italy's hideous past experiences with mercenaries, as with the famous 'compagnie di ventura' in the XIV century or with the landsknechts in the XV and XVI centuries (Pieri, 1934; Ricotti, 1847). This aspect marks another important difference with the UK, which never had comparable disastrous conflicts with mercenary companies on its homeland.

Only a few years before the Questione, the UK faces the decision whether to employ mercenaries during the War in Crimea (Arielli, et al., 2016; Figes, 2011). Commons and Lords discuss the Foreign Enlistment Bill, as the law proposed by the Government provided for the hiring and employment of European mercenaries, mostly German, for the British expedition in Crimea. In this context, politicians often interpret negatively the involvement of mercenaries in the conflict (75.9%), and moral arguments (52.3%) are often cited.

In 1854, former Prime Minister Smith-Stanley, now the leader of the opposition, expresses his disagreement for the new Aberdeen Government's proposal, as well as his disrespect for mercenaries, highlighting the damage they would generate. In particular, he directly confronts the new Government with sharp words: *'Take that responsibility upon yourselves alone [...] to pay them, but do not ask Parliament to sanction that course, nor to put their fiat, which I am sure I for one never can do, to*

⁵² *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 22 Jul 1867 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg10/sed101.pdf>

*the assertion that the necessities and the honour of the country demand the employment of a mercenary band. It has been from the earliest times [...] the hiring of mercenaries has been the surest mark of the weakness of a nation, and the certain sign of approaching decay*⁵³. The leader of the opposition is not alone in his moral critique against mercenaries, as many colleagues follow through. In the same year, Duncombe similarly contests the possibility to hire mercenaries for the Crimean expedition: *‘wherever mercenaries were introduced there were to be found corrupt Governments – there civil and religious liberty was crushed, and universal national demoralisation prevailed*⁵⁴.

Again in 1854, the Earl of Glengall contests the same Government’s proposal of hiring mercenaries, and recommends instead the employment of the Irish and Scotch regiments of the Militia⁵⁵. In a typical non-moral contestation of mercenaries, namely that they are ineffective on the battlefield, he argues that *‘The militia had always stood their ground when they had been engaged, but it was not certain whether foreign mercenaries would exhibit the same firmness*⁵⁶. Thus, as next Chapter will elaborate on, the debate on the Crimean War show strong anti-mercenary sentiments that cross government/opposition and parties lines. Compared to the debate on the Questione in Italy, politicians in both countries utter very similar moral condemnations against mercenaries, in spite of the clear differences in the two contexts. On the one hand, a conflict on Italian soil, where the enemy employs hired soldiers. On the other, a war with the Russian Empire where the British Government considers the possibility to hire mercenaries for its military efforts.

⁵³ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 15 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2wQ9Ivs>

⁵⁴ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 22 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2Tbq7ID>

⁵⁵ The Militia of the United Kingdom was a reserve military force established in 1801. Following a Royal Proclamation, the Militia could be call in full-time service in case of war or other crises as rebellions or insurrections. Irish and Scottish troops formed some regiments of the Militia (Spiers, 1980).

⁵⁶ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 18 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2XV87oB>

Overall, although previous quotations have shown relevant examples of non-moral criticisms, and also instances of positive references, throughout the very long XIX century there are too many negative moral references to claim that politicians in Italy and the UK do not endorse at least a weak form of the anti-mercenary norm. Moreover, they show moral aversion in many and diverse situations, from discussions on the organization of the army, to colonial affairs, and from European conflict scenarios to civil wars. Across these contexts, moral accusation clearly highlight the old and famous moral dislike for mercenaries, as politicians very often quote words as disloyalty, honor, and refer to various forms of crime.

Confronting the intensity of moral attacks in the diverse types of debate, namely that on the military format, colonial affairs, and the *Questione Romana* and Crimean War, there are reasonable explanations to justify the differences in the level of antagonism. For instances, the debate in Italy on the military format presents the lowest intensity in terms of moral attacks (53.1%). Here, since many discussions concern military technical aspects, there are reasons to expect a large number of pragmatic considerations on mercenaries to emerge. Differently, the debate on the *Questione Romana* shows many moral condemnations of mercenaries (74.3%). As anticipated, the explicit ‘civil war’ character of the dispute with the Pope inflames Italian politicians, who also have a precise political interest in highlighting the vicious character of the Pope’s mercenaries, as for supporting the cause of a military invasion. Finally, moral attacks against mercenaries in the colonies (71.4%) also likely reflect the racist attitudes of many politicians, who verbally assault mercenaries also for their skin color and for their ethnicity.

Regarding the origin of the norm, results indicate that mercenaries generate a pronounced moral antagonism. More than being a byproduct of other international norms, the norm seems to have an independent origin from the old Machiavellian distaste for mercenaries, apparently supporting the argument of Percy (2007a). In both countries, politicians attack mercenaries’ immoral and bloody nature, from their disloyalty and lack of honor (49.9% of negative references in Italy, 39.1% in the

UK) to their tendency to support heinous and oppressive regimes (23.4% and 11.6%). Other reasons, as their military ineffectiveness (13.5% and 13.9%) or the strategic problems and distortions they generate (2.7% and 1.5%) are less often considered. Finally, politicians extremely rarely refer to other norms. British politicians allude to the incompatibility between mercenaries and state neutrality in sole five instances, all during the 1830s, while freedom of movement and self-determination are never mentioned

Nevertheless, the choices the two states made regarding mercenaries in this period seem to challenge the very strength and robustness of the norm. Burroughs (2003), Caverley (2014), Liu and Kinsey (2018), and Wende (2009) have already shown how the UK did not hesitate to hire mercenaries during the XIX and early XX centuries when political and military imperatives required so. Indeed, the so-called imperial overstretch and the narrow ranks of the British Army force the Government to rely on many and diverse private and semi-private military actors. Thus, negative and moral condemnations of mercenaries do not mirror in consistently averse policies, and the tension with political and military necessities highlighted above clearly emerges.

Such dynamics and interactions are similar in Italy, despite all the differences in military formats and foreign policies already addressed. The fact that inflamed moral condemnations do not reflect in political and military practices is starkly clear when observing colonial affairs, one critical occasion in which the Italian Government considers the possibility to hire, and then actually hire, mercenary groups. In Eritrea and Ethiopia from 1885 to 1911, Italian politicians continuously launch attacks against indigenous troops hired by the Army, arguing that African mercenaries are cowards, riotous, drunk, unreliable and disloyal. However, these accusations are sided by a consistently growing employment of indigenous irregular bands and regular mercenary troops (Scardigli, 1996). It is worth noticing that the same dynamics replicate in the 1930s, when Italy invades Ethiopia (Volterra, 2005). Despite the fact that these men have a double moral stigma on them, being mercenaries and being

black in an era of diffused racism, military necessities evidently convince the Italian Government to rely on the market for force.

In this context, politicians often try to justify or hide the supposed violation of the norm. Regarding the employment of the Ascari and other indigenous mercenaries in the Horn of Africa, Italian politicians in a few occasions justify the violation for reasons of military necessity, as shown by the quotation from Del Balzo above⁵⁷. However, the most common strategy seems that of hiding the huge involvement of mercenaries in the Italian colonial strife. As already noted by Scardigli (1996), politicians and generals never account for the merits of the local troops for the military successes in Eritrea, nor do they ever report truthful figures about their numbers. For example, in another occasion in 1897, Del Balzo returns on the involvement of mercenaries in the colonies arguing that *'I am still waiting for an answer from the Prime Minister [...] namely whether the Government really trusts mercenaries and if it is willing to entrust them with the defense of our colony. The Prime Minister again forgot to answer'*⁵⁸. Here, Del Balzo seems to clearly point to hiding strategies adopted by the Italian Government.

UK politicians also engage in hide-or-justify strategies. Being inevitably forced to employ mercenaries to support the military effort the Empire requires, British MPs resort sometimes to calls to military imperatives to justify the use of mercenaries. More commonly, however, they argue that the indigenous troops hired by the Army are not mercenaries, as shown by some quotations above. Moreover, for instances in 1899, Fergusson employs this argument: *'it is a contradiction in terms to describe the employment of the natives in a country to keep the peace of that country as an employment of mercenaries'*⁵⁹. Finally, another typical justificatory strategy is to argue that foreigners

⁵⁷ See footnote 40

⁵⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 15 May 1897 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg20/sed020.pdf>

⁵⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 24 Feb 1899 <http://bit.ly/2WGKaAr>

employed by the Army are not mercenaries because they have been on the side of the British forces since a long time, as Dillon claims in 1899⁶⁰.

Overall, comparing the two countries, Italian politicians do resort more often to hiding strategies, as their limited colonial efforts allow doing so. Conversely, since their British colleagues cannot hide the massive employment of mercenaries the imperial overstretch requires, they try to justify the violation of the norm, arguing that the foreign troops the British Army hires are not mercenaries. The analysis of hide-or-justify strategies reinforces, following Franck (1988), the case for the existence of a weak norm. Despite much anti-mercenary taboo talk in the Parliament, states do resort to mercenaries. However, politicians evidently feel compelled to justify or hide such controversial choices.

Finally, anti-mercenary hostility shows no significant variation controlling for the geographical location of mercenaries' activities. Namely, both Italian and British politicians consistently attack mercenaries involved in Europe and in colonial lands. Thus, there are no reasons to argue that Western states apply a different version of the anti-mercenary norm, as it was the case for other norms in the past (Schmitt, 2006). As shown by the results above, slight differences emerge on the intensities and moral character of anti-mercenary hostility. Nonetheless, these small divergences seems clearly to descend from specific situations, as the racist stigma against African mercenaries or the political relevance of the *Questione Romana*, more than deriving from different geographical manifestations of the norm.

⁶⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 14 Mar 1899 <http://bit.ly/2X2byZR>

Mercenaries in the Very Short XX century 1945-1991

After World War II, new debates on mercenaries emerge from the conflicts linked to the Cold War and the decolonization process, as private soldiers are protagonists in the wars in Congo, Nigeria, Angola, Rhodesia, South Africa, Guatemala and Nicaragua, among the others⁶¹. On the other hand, discussions on the organization of the army continue on the path, and with the arguments, of the previous period.

In Italy, topics linked with the Armed Forces and the military format are rarely discussed in Parliament (D'Amore, 2001), but even if a few, these mentions highlight the same old negativity (73.3%) and moral aversion⁶² (81.8%). Throughout the Cold War, Italian MPs essentially discuss potential reforms of conscription, in the rare occasions where they mention the term “mercenaries”. Covering a period of almost 50 years, these debates show many similarities, as aspects of the Armed Forces’ organization are discussed rapidly and in poor details, whereas the political implications of the military format dominate the discussion⁶³.

⁶¹ Mercenary and semi-mercenary groups are also present in major Cold War conflicts, as in Korea (1950-1953) and in Vietnam (1955-1975) (Blackburn, 1994).

⁶² The significantly higher presence of moral attacks with respect to the previous period (53.1%) seems to reflect the Italian Communist Party’s positive emphasis on the value of conscription and on the Italian Army as a guarantor of democratic institutions, often threatened by internal and external potential coups. Next Chapter will provide more thorough details on this point. Nonetheless, the very low number of references (only 15) could also distort the results.

⁶³ This particular setting of debates on the military format reflects on the one side the Parliament’s poor attention to military issues, something that was very often left to the Defence Commission. On the other hand, the typical heated character of political discussions in Italy during the Cold War influences also these debates, where the enflamed political competition in a way obscures the relevance of military issues.

In 1951 and 1952, Angelucci⁶⁴, Longo⁶⁵ and Bottonelli⁶⁶, during very similar debates on the organization and role of the Italian Armed Forces in the new bipolar international order, argue that a mercenary army is always dangerous and less effective in defending the interests of a nation. In 1969, while commenting on the role of the Army in public order operations in an era of diffused violence, d'Alessio highlights the importance of the independence of the Army and the value of conscription. In particular, he argues that *'The Army of the Italian Republic is profoundly linked to the Constitution and to democratic institutions [...] the soldiers of this Army are in their duty under an article of the Constitution and they are not willing to become mercenaries'*⁶⁷. Finally, in 1991, La Valle talks about professionalization and mercenaries, while debating on the reform of conscientious objection: *'Moving to a completely professional army, with the typical economic incentives of a mercenary army [...] would eliminate the sacred constitutional duty of the defense of the homeland. The defense of the homeland would be outsourced to a company, with respect to which our homeland would be nothing but an employer'*⁶⁸.

Also in the UK, the debate replicates the XIX century dynamics (negativity 73.8% and moral mentions 68.4%), where hired soldiers constitute a bad or sometimes even evil term of comparison with the honorable members of the British Army. In 1961, Wigg, during a debate about a sort of

⁶⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 14 Jun 1951

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0701/sed0701.pdf

⁶⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 16 Oct 1951

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0769/sed0769.pdf

⁶⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 10 Jul 1852

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0955/sed0955.pdf

⁶⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 22 Jul 1969

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg05/lavori/stenografici/sed0154/sed0154.pdf

⁶⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 07 May 1991

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg10/lavori/stenografici/sed0623/sed0623.pdf

updated, and politically hidden, Foreign Enlistment Bill for British military operations in Africa, argues that there is ‘*no sort of morality*’ in hiring mercenaries⁶⁹. Similarly, in 1979 Bruce George cites Machiavelli’s famous arguments to oppose the recruitment of mercenary forces. He expresses a rare anti-professional and pro-conscription opinion, while discussing the organization of the UK Army Reserve: ‘*The role of the citizen army has been very important, not only in breaking down the idea of a military caste but embodying the enthusiasm and commitment of a large number of people who for a variety of reasons do not want to join the Regular forces. [...] Machiavelli, in Florence, hated the idea of mercenaries and wanted to employ exclusively volunteer forces*⁷⁰’.

An often-debated issue, concerning the military format, is the role and status of the famous Gurkhas in the British Armed Forces. Most politicians praise them, as they actually monopolize all the positive references to the term mercenaries during the Cold War. Here, again, the debates show how British politicians create a clear divide between mercenary armies in general, which are always condemned, and mercenary groups who have been for a long time embedded in the ranks of the British Army. The latter are very often praised and defended against the accusation of the typical mercenary stigma, indeed. For instances, in 1961 Wigg, in a session of the debate cited just above, defines the Gurkhas as ‘*crack troops*⁷¹’ and Lord St. Just, while debating on the military budget for the year 1972, proudly claims that ‘*those magnificent fighting men, the Gurkhas, have always been attached to my regiment [...] Putting it bluntly, they are mercenary troops, and they are also the most superb fighting men*⁷²’. Summing up, British and Italian members of Parliament during the Cold War align with their XIX century colleagues when debating on the role of mercenaries in the national armies. Not only morality still dominates such discussions, but also the specific arguments they employ replicate classic anti-

⁶⁹ Hansard Archive, Commons, 07 Mar 1961 <http://bit.ly/2wTdAfl>

⁷⁰ Hansard Archive, Commons, 27 Mar 1979 <http://bit.ly/2NXJ4YG>

⁷¹ Hansard Archive, Commons, 07 Mar 1961 <http://bit.ly/2wTdAfl>

⁷² Hansard Archive, Lords, 22 Feb 1972 <http://bit.ly/32CQZCK>

mercenary references, with frequent mentions of terms as honor, cannon fodder, virtue, and money, among the others.

More telling and presenting far more observations are the discussions about civil wars in Africa and in Central America. In both Italy and the UK, debates mostly focus on the involvement of European and local mercenaries in these conflicts, and Italian and British politicians discuss fairly similar topics.

Even if Italy has almost no direct military involvement in these scenarios, the international relevance and the effects on Italian internal politics of such conflicts lead politicians to vibrant discussions, especially on the wars in Congo, Angola and Nicaragua. The involvement of mercenaries comes with the usual antagonistic feelings, though to a lower level with respect to the XIX century (negative mentions 51.7%, moral-based 38.7%). In 1961, Berlinguer and other member of the Italian Communist Party present a Parliamentary Question, asking the Italian Government to urge France to dissolve the Foreign Legion. This proposal follows international accusations against the French Legion for instances of heinous behaviors during the War in Algeria: *‘The Government should ask to dissolve all regiments of that Legion of mercenaries. Most of them are Nazi, but also many Italians are involved, and they are often employed in slaughters and inconceivable tortures’*⁷³.

In 1964, during long and detailed debates about the Civil War in Congo, one of the most bloody civil war of the XX century, Ingrao talks about the *‘mass slaughters’* of which mercenaries are responsible there⁷⁴ and Alicata claims that these individuals *‘kill for fun’*. He notes that *‘[Congo] is infested by bands of mercenaries [...] 80% of them are former Nazi S.S. who contribute to create an horrific*

⁷³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 03 May 1961

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg03/lavori/stenografici/sed0429/sed0429.pdf

⁷⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 26 Nov 1964

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg04/lavori/stenografici/sed0234/sed0234.pdf

*atmosphere of violence and atrocity*⁷⁵. In 1966, Pigni underlines a not very known aspect of the War in Vietnam, highlighting with serious concern the presence of German mercenaries helping the South Vietnamese Government. This phenomenon, probably resembling in Italian politicians' minds old tragedies involving the Landsknechts or the Hessians, seriously preoccupies Italian MPs: *'there is a dangerous precedent, which is the involvement of German mercenaries in the conflict, about which we could bring the evidence'*⁷⁶. Finally, in 1986 Capanna comments on the Civil War in Nicaragua, denouncing the *'mercenaries, scoundrels of various sort, who conduct armed aggression against the State'*⁷⁷.

Such dynamics are not different in London, with a slightly higher percentage of negative mentions (57.2%), and a similar weight for moral arguments (39.4%). The debate on the Civil War in Congo is rich with detailed accusations against mercenaries. In 1961, Bennett makes *'no excuse'* for mercenaries fighting in Congo⁷⁸, Wilson defines them as *'unscrupulous'* and *'squalid riff-raff'*⁷⁹, while Teeing calls them *'bloody criminals'*⁸⁰. Similarly, other African wars attract furious moral accusations against mercenaries. In 1968, Lord Sheperd shares his profound *'dislike'* for mercenaries involved in the war in Biafra⁸¹, in 1976 Newens *'deplores'* mercenaries in Angola⁸² and in 1978

⁷⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 02 Dec 1964

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg04/lavori/stenografici/sed0240/sed0240.pdf

⁷⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 31 Mar 1966

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg04/lavori/stenografici/sed0438/sed0438.pdf

⁷⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 25 Mar 1986

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg09/lavori/stenografici/sed0465/sed0465.pdf

⁷⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 19 Oct 1961 <http://bit.ly/2QhFpqq>

⁷⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 07 Feb 1963 <http://bit.ly/2NT9Mle>

⁸⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 07 Feb 1963 <http://bit.ly/2NRmK2W>

⁸¹ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 25 Jan 1968 <http://bit.ly/2wU2Lt6>

⁸² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 28 Jan 1976 <http://bit.ly/2M7PrqP>

Faulds argues that in Rhodesia ‘*mercenaries [...] join such fights not for principle, not for a true cause, but to knock off as many blacks as they can*⁸³’.

Finally, the discussion on the involvement of mercenaries in Latin America replicates the arguments and the hostility of the debates on African conflicts. During a 1985 debate on the Civil War in Nicaragua, Lord Milford criticizes the British Government’s lack of action: ‘*are the British Government doing anything about fascist groups in Britain recruiting mercenaries to go and fight with the Contras against the peasants and working class in Nicaragua?*⁸⁴’. In a similar discussion in 1987, Corbyn accuses the British security firm KMS⁸⁵ to be involved in the recruiting of mercenaries to aid the Contras: ‘*More sinister in many ways than the illegal supply of arms to the Contras for their attempt to destroy the Nicaraguan Government is the supply of mercenaries through KMS*⁸⁶’.

Some other interesting references point to the alleged involvement of the Gurkhas in the Falklands-Malvinas War of 1982. During the conflict, Latin American journalists and commentators denounce the brutalities committed by the Nepalese mercenaries in the Islands. The 1982 Nobel Prize laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez claims that these ‘*legendary and ferocious Nepalese decapitators beheaded Argentine soldiers with their assassins’ scimitars [...] at a rate of one every seven seconds [...] They held the severed head by the hair and cut off the ears*⁸⁷’. British politicians seem to take these accusations seriously. For instance, in 1983, Dalyell argues that ‘*As the Gurkhas are our mercenaries,*

⁸³ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 08 Nov 1978 <http://bit.ly/2wPbWLy>

⁸⁴ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 25 Jul 1985 <http://bit.ly/32BktAU>

⁸⁵ This is not the first time Corbyn launches accusations against KMS, as he already denounced the firm’s recruitment of mercenaries for the Civil War in Sri Lanka (see *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 16 Mar 1987 <http://bit.ly/2O5IqNn>). The story of Keenie Meenie Service is interesting as the firm is the predecessor of the more famous Saladin Security Ltd, a PMSC which will play a relevant role in Afghanistan in the XXI century.

⁸⁶ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 24 Mar 1987 <http://bit.ly/2OdJeQy>

⁸⁷ See Osnos (1983) on the Washington Post

*the House is responsible. The Gurkhas, either by the reality or the mythology of their behaviour, have blackened Britain's name throughout Latin America*⁸⁸.

Before turning to the detailed discussions of the nature, character, and reasons behind the anti-mercenary antagonism during the Cold War, it is worth mentioning the role of highly rhetorical and out-of-context references. The total percentage of excluded observations during the Cold War (15.1%) is not significantly larger than the same piece of data during the 1805-1945 period (14.2%). However, the nature of the exclusion does substantially change. While before 1945 most of the references were excluded for their out-of-context character, for example with politicians talking about mercenaries in the industries, in the farms, or in the 'streets' (mercenary love), with the beginning of the Cold War references are dropped mostly for their highly rhetorical character.

A typical and insightful example is the 1945-1955 discussion in Italy on the Atlantic Pact. Politicians, especially from the opposition ranks, employs the mercenary stigma to attack the United States and to argue against the possibility to join NATO. In 1949, Pajetta strenuously opposes the Italian participation in the Atlantic Treaty: *'everywhere an Italian heart is present, everywhere people think about their homeland, you can be sure that there you will not recruit mercenaries for the United States'*⁸⁹. In the following days, other politicians follow through, as Berti, who asks what will remain of *'Italian sovereignty in an alliance structured like this and with such a military organization? We will only provide mercenaries, cannon fodder for those who will direct their Foreign Policy in their interest'*⁹⁰. Finally, also Silipo joins the accusation against the Italian Government's willingness to join NATO: *'You, by joining the Pact of Aggression, the Atlantic Pact (this adjective reminds me of*

⁸⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 15 Apr 1983 <http://bit.ly/2XRterz>

⁸⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 12 Mar 1949

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0192/sed0192.pdf

⁹⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 14 Mar 1949

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0193/sed0193.pdf

*the Nazi Atlantic Wall that so miserably failed), you are determined to transform Italian people in a mercenary army*⁹¹.

Overall, even if also British politicians sometimes employ the mercenary stigma to attack their colleagues, foreign states or other actors, such tendency is definitely more common in Italy (23.5% versus 11.6%). First, this tendency reflects a more conflictual Italian Parliament with respect to the British Houses, as next Chapters will further elaborate on. Second, the diffused rhetorical use of the mercenary stigma offers an insightful theoretical contribution about the role and manifestation of international norms. As another aspect of the tension between norms' provisions and political needs, politicians not only may violate a norm following political and military imperatives, but they can also actively leverage on a norm's rules to produce political attacks and accusations.

Coming now to the analysis of the general evolution of the anti-mercenary norm, during the Cold War politicians again target mercenaries with moral attacks, as seen, though negativity and morality play a minor role with respect to the pre-1945 period. Nevertheless, political and military needs, and in particular the international dynamics of the Cold War, do not allow these criticisms to translate in actual anti-mercenary policies. The United States and the Soviet Union, and their allies, do employ mercenaries forces in the developing world to support friendly regimes, as the bipolar competition requires and justifies these military measures (Michaels, 2012). Indeed, mercenary armies represent convenient proxy forces to hinder the expansion of communist or anti-communist regimes, without a direct involvement of national troops. In these contexts, both Italy and the United Kingdom support these measures. While the British Government and Secret Services play a relevant role in African conflicts and in mercenary operations (Mockler, 1985; Namiskas, 2015; Rognoni, 2003), Italy is never involved directly. However, as argued, the bipolar competition in the developing world, and its

⁹¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 16 Mar 1949

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0197/sed0197.pdf

effects on Italian politics, attract politicians' continuous attention and concern (Di Nolfo, et al., 1992; Vigezzi, 2001).

In the British and Italian Parliaments, attacks against mercenaries are clearly weighted with respect to specific conflict scenarios. The two Governments, loyal allies of the US, consistently support anti-communist operations in the developing world. Attacks against mercenaries come mostly from the oppositions and are evident byproducts of bipolar dynamics, where the international competition is reflected in the national political game. While before 1945 the opposition is not responsible for producing the majority of negative references (56.2% in Italy, 37.8% in the UK), during the Cold War the picture drastically changes (81.9% and 59.7%). This increases the likelihood that debates on and accusation to mercenaries constitute an attractive occasion to criticize the government on Foreign Policy issues. For instances, the Italian opposition, during the entire Cold War monopolized by the Communist Party, is responsible for the 93.5% of negative and for the 96.3% of moral references regarding wars in the developing world, a topic next Chapter will further elaborate on. In the UK, anti-communist (26.4%) and anti-colonial (13.4%) arguments constitute a significant portion of negative references for all parties, highlighting again how the bipolar competition dominates the discussion on mercenaries.

The reasons behind negative and moral references further clarify this picture. Compared to the pre-1945 period, after WWII most attacks point to mercenaries' support for authoritarian governments (51.7% of negative references in Italy, 32.15% in the UK), where condemnations conveniently target specific regimes, whereas a smaller number of mentions point to the old moral dislike for the status of mercenaries (32.5% and 25.2%). Thus, the same old arguments about the moral stigma of mercenaries, with references to their supposed lack of virtue and honor, are still present, but they play a smaller and smaller role in politicians' debates and opinions about conflicts and other military issues.

The emergence of the bipolar competition is thus the critical driver of the change in states' attitudes toward the anti-mercenary norm, considering also that mercenaries all over the world are almost exclusively involved in conflicts linked with the Cold War. While hiding strategies are still present, for example in Italy where Government's members almost never discuss mercenaries' activities, the exigencies of the anti-communist, or anti-capitalistic, effort are so obvious to politicians that they rarely feel the need to justify the employment of mercenaries to contain the expansion of Soviet or American proxy forces in the developing world. The tension between political imperatives and the norm's provisions becomes extremely unbalanced, due to the importance of the bipolar strife. Thus, between 1945 and 1991, the debate on mercenaries is extremely politicized and an already weak norm becomes weaker and weaker, crushed by the exigencies of the Cold War⁹².

Contractors in the Post-Cold War 1990-2017

The discussion in the UK starts in the 1990s, with the involvement of firms as Executive Outcomes and Sandline International in the civil wars in Angola and Sierra Leone (Avant, 2005; Cleary, 1999; Musah & Fayemi, 2000). From the 2000s, most debates revolve instead around the role of contractors and PMSCs in Middle East conflicts. Conversely, Italian MPs do not devote attention to PMSCs before the XXI century, and their speeches cover solely the wars in Afghanistan in Iraq and, from 2011, maritime security. Overall, the context of the debates in both Italy and the UK is less various with respect to previous periods. In the greatest majority of cases, discussions on contractors are aspects of broader debates about the African civil wars of the 1990s and the XXI century conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The only two exceptions are the debate on internal security and the discussion

⁹² Regarding the potential different geographical application of international norms, there are no reasons to investigate this aspect during the Cold War, as all mercenaries' activities, and the debates about them, concern operations in the developing world and thus no variation emerges in terms of different geographical expressions of the norm.

on maritime security, namely the opportunity to hire contractors to provide security on private mercantile vessels (Cusumano & Ruzza, 2015).

Despite such divergences, the discussions in the two countries follow again a similar track, as previous Figures (III, IV and V) have shown. The speeches of British MPs show a spike in moral condemnations during African civil wars in the 1990s and another peak during the very first years of the Iraqi and Afghan wars, dropping thereafter. The discussions of Italian politicians present a similar spike in negative moral-based references in the first phase of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a similar decrease after a few years. Additionally, the spillover effect, when politicians call contractors mercenaries, plays a comparable role in both parliaments, as it characterizes almost solely the pre-2006 period.

Most of the moral-inflamed references replicate the condemnations that politicians threw against mercenaries since the XIX century. In Italy in 2002, Grandi presents a Parliamentary Question about the boom of the market for force, briefly describing the various activities that PMSCs perform around the world. He expresses serious concern, arguing that *‘These mercenary militias are employed in different situations with different functions. For example, in Equatorial Guinea they support and defend [...] a bloody and corrupted dictatorship. [...] In Afghanistan, they provide the bodyguard for President Karzai; in Bosnia, they work for obscure tasks and in Colombia they are involved in the war on drugs⁹³’*. In 2004, Martone similarly notices the dangers associated with the deployment of PMSCs, this time in Iraq. In particular, while discussing the many problems of post-war order in the country, he criticizes the companies’ impunity and the fact that also the Italian Army hires these firms: *‘Today, Iraq is a big firing range [...] thanks to the impunity that the mercenaries of private security*

⁹³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 19 Nov 2002 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_04505_14

companies enjoy. Some of them (namely Kellogg Brown & Root) even protect our troops in Nasiriya⁹⁴.

In 2005, Bulgarelli denounces the links between Italian contractors in Iraq and the former ‘stay-behind paramilitary organization’ Gladio⁹⁵. In 2006, Crucianelli⁹⁶, Sgobio⁹⁷ and Realacci⁹⁸ blame contractors involved in the tortures in the Baghdad prison of Abu Ghraib. In 2007, Deiana⁹⁹, Galante¹⁰⁰ and Bulgarelli¹⁰¹ fiercely criticize the contract signed by the Italian Government with the PMSC Aegis, pointing to the human rights abuses committed by the firm’s employees.

Moving to the UK, in 1999 Cook, famous for his focus on the ethical dimension of foreign policy (Gaskarth, 2013), attacks Sandline ‘mercenaries’ fighting in Sierra Leone, citing the ‘misery’ they have brought in the country¹⁰², and Rowlands follows through, during the same debate about the Civil War, arguing that mercenaries are never ‘legitimate’¹⁰³. References to PMSCs’ atrocities and abuses, and mentions of their employees as killers and criminals cover the entire discussion on African wars, flooding also in the early debates about Iraq and Afghanistan. In 2004, Kilfoyle claims that contractors are ‘nothing more than mercenaries’ and that they do not work for the reconstruction of

⁹⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 17 Feb 2004

<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00114379.pdf>

⁹⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 25 May 2005 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_14675_14

⁹⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 23 Feb 2006 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_19982_14

⁹⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 23 Feb 2006 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_19984_14

⁹⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 23 Feb 2006 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_19989_14

⁹⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 28 Mar 2007 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_03113_15

¹⁰⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 16 Apr 2007 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_03280_15

¹⁰¹ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 02 May 2007 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_01810_15_S

¹⁰² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 12 May 1998 <http://bit.ly/2QuGQSw>

¹⁰³ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 02 Mar 1999 <http://bit.ly/2QujM6b>

Iraq¹⁰⁴. In 2007, Starkey argues that PMSCs in Iraq, called again mercenaries, ‘*commit human rights abuses and breach international law*¹⁰⁵’.

Concerning the spillover effect, in 2002 Baldry explicitly connects PMSCs’ employees with the old mercenaries of the Cold War. Moreover, he criticizes the proposal that the UN should be allowed to hire security contractors in order to have the possibility to deploy peacekeeping troops more effectively and rapidly: ‘*I do not believe that there is any role for mercenaries in UN peacekeeping, as was suggested in the Foreign Secretary’s Green Paper. For example, Frederick Forsyth observed of the mercenaries involved in the Biafra conflict that “most of them were little more than thugs in uniform”. The Foreign Secretary’s suggestion that “A strong and reputable private military sector might have a role in enabling the UN to respond more rapidly and more effectively in a crisis” is a complete non-starter*¹⁰⁶’. Although very few, some negative references surface during the debates also after 2007. In 2010, Lucas still complains about the fact that ‘*Alongside the US and British military in Afghanistan is a “shadow army” of private military and security companies, operating largely outside legal or democratic control*¹⁰⁷’.

Already fewer with respect to mercenaries in previous periods, in Italy negative (50.8%) and moral (32.3%) condemnations drastically decline after 2006. The contract signed with Aegis for the protection of the area around Nasiriya (Ruzza, 2013), after some initial criticisms, finds acceptance among most politicians. In 2007, Intini expresses his agreement with the decision to hire Aegis, a firm that has a ‘*proven experience and knowledge of the territory in the Dhi Qar province, where it operates supporting other actors involved in the civil reconstruction of Iraq*¹⁰⁸’. Pressed by criticisms

¹⁰⁴ Hansard Archive, Commons, 17 May 2004 <http://bit.ly/2OI4pM0>

¹⁰⁵ Hansard Archive, Commons, 25 Apr 2007 <http://bit.ly/2QtjI6E>

¹⁰⁶ Hansard Archive, Commons, 28 Feb 2002 <http://bit.ly/2XWITWU>

¹⁰⁷ Hansard Archive, Commons, 09 Sep 2010 <http://bit.ly/2TDX3tM>

¹⁰⁸ Archivio Storico, Camera dei Deputati, 28 Mar 2007 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_03113_15

and requests of clarity, Intini defends again the choice of the Government to hire Aegis in another debate in 2007: *‘Aegis has all the necessary authorizations from the authorities who are in charge. It is a company officially registered in the UK and thus subject to European Union Law under a regime of fiscal and financial transparency. Moreover, the CEO Tim Spicer has never been convicted of any crime¹⁰⁹’*. Working against the spillover effect, Intini clearly marks a difference between mercenaries and contractors, as in his view legitimate private businesses cannot be compared to illegitimate mercenaries.

Moreover, from 2011, the debate on the possibility to allow PMSCs to provide security for mercantile vessels presents many positive references. Cusumano and Ruzza (2015) have shown how Italy decided to allow mercantile companies to resort to the market for force, especially when the Government realized that the Italian Armed Forces could not do the job for reasons of lack of material and human resources¹¹⁰. In 2011, Pinotti argues that private guards on ships *‘have already demonstrated their effectiveness¹¹¹’*. In the following years, Di Biagio and Battista point to PMSCs’ professionalism and highlight the advantage of freeing the Army from security tasks. The former urge the Italian Government to *‘regulate the involvement of private guards (on private ships), favouring the establishment and the operability of private security firms, functioning also through the structures of Difesa Servizi Spa¹¹²’*. The latter underlines the fact that many other European countries have

¹⁰⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 13 Jun 2007 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic3_00738_15_S

¹¹⁰ Other than the previously mentioned contract signed with Aegis, and the permission to private mercantile companies to hire security contractors, the Italian Government has produced other ‘acts of openness’ toward the market for force. For example, the outsourcing of some food provision, cleaning and IT services in Iraq, or in 2011 with the creation of *Difesa Servizi* (Defense Services) a corporation fully owned by Defense Ministry (Ruzza, 2013).

¹¹¹ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 24 Mar 2011

<http://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/print/16/Sindisp/0/00527343/0>

¹¹² *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 12 Oct 2011

<http://www.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/print/17/Emend/00763806/00746072/0>

already resorted to the market to provide security on private ships: *'In many other countries of the European Union, private security firms, and not soldiers of the national Armed Forces, provide security on the ships'*¹¹³.

Here, the political convenience of employing contractors clearly emerges from MPs' words, as they highlight the benefit of freeing the Army from security tasks, and of avoiding scandals and unwanted attention from the media. For instances, in 2011 Esposito lists the advantages of this choice: *'Ship owners will have the possibility to defend their ships either with the Italian Navy or with private contractors at their expenses. In this way, we will enjoy a reduction in our military expenses. Moreover, this measure will allow keeping mercantile routes open, and will also contribute to bring humanitarian aids to the Horn of Africa without being attacked always'*¹¹⁴. In 2012 and 2013, politicians of all colors as Palmizio, Rutelli¹¹⁵, and Vacciano¹¹⁶ notice how the employment of PMSCs would have avoided the serious political problems born of the 'Marò affair'¹¹⁷.

This affair represents another important turning point for the debate in Italy about contractors and security companies. Whereas the kidnapping of four Italian contractors in 2004 strongly highlighted for the first time the reality of PMSCs in Iraq, leading to a thorough and heated public and political debate, the controversy over the Marò from 2012 certainly changed the judgement of Italian politicians about the role of private security. In 2004, the kidnapping generated a public and private

¹¹³ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 27 Feb 2015 <https://parlamento17.openpolis.it/atto/documento/id/33546>

¹¹⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 21 Jul 2011
<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00609325.pdf>

¹¹⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 13 Mar 2012
<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00647944.pdf>

¹¹⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 27 Mar 2013
<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00698406.pdf>

¹¹⁷ Girone and Latorre are two Italian Marò (members of the naval infantry) who were accused of having killed two Indian anglers. The affair generated a major international controversy between Italy and India.

outrage about the operations and the legal status of contractors, leading to many accusations and critiques, especially from the leftist side of the Parliament, as the next Chapter will demonstrate. Conversely, the 2012 affair contributed to convinced, in part, politicians of all colors of the usefulness of private security in certain scenarios.

The decline of negative (49.9%) and moral (23.9%) arguments starts before in the UK, as morality in 2005 already characterizes less than 20% of negative references. On the other side, positive references continue to increase in number and relevance. In 2007, the Secretary of Defense Browne praises the firm ArmorGroup for the great *'progress made in building civilian security capacity'*¹¹⁸ in Iraq, and in 2009 Holloway claims that PMSCs *'have been working in support of the reconstruction of Iraq, filling gaps that our militaries have been unable to fill'*¹¹⁹. Regarding sea security, in 2012 Lord Hamilton argues that *'one reason why piracy has been reduced so radically is the use of private security companies on merchant shipping going through pirate-infested areas'*¹²⁰, and Ottaway follows through, saying that these firms constitute *'a significant and effective deterrent'*¹²¹ against piracy.

Overall, the trends of negative moral references and of the spillover effect show that anti-mercenary sentiments target contractors for a relatively short period. In the United Kingdom, hostility mostly marks the operations of companies in Sierra Leone and Angola during the 1990s, whereas in Italy aversion targets PMSCs in Iraq and Afghanistan only during the first years of the conflicts. The reasons behind the attacks clarify this picture, as profound moral dislike for contractors characterize mentions (35.4% of negative references in Italy and 27.9% in the UK) almost solely before 2007, whereas the majority of condemnations target the distortions of security outsourcing (59.4% and

¹¹⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 14 May 2007 <http://bit.ly/2EkTUV4>

¹¹⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 14 Jan 2009 <http://bit.ly/2Q2ZBLs>

¹²⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 30 Oct 2012 <http://bit.ly/2EBFKjZ>

¹²¹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 09 Feb 2012 <http://bit.ly/2T3mepf>

58.7%). In this context, politicians in both countries solely criticize specific problems of PMSCs' operations, as they stop contesting the legitimacy of the industry and the moral value of contractors. This pronounced decrease in negative and moral references is sided by a growing employment of security contractors, both for internal security and external force deployment. Initially confined mostly to the United Kingdom and the United States, security outsourcing gains popularity even in countries as Italy, traditionally averse to military and security professionalization and privatization (Leander, 2013).

Finally, the debate in the UK is broad, detailed and covers many and diverse aspects of security firms' activities. Thus, there seem to be no explicit hiding strategies on the side of the Government that employs contractors. On the other side, justificatory speeches are present to a significant extent in the first years of the debates on Afghanistan and Iraq. In this context, a common strategy is to argue that PMSCs are a necessary complement to the Army, which cannot fulfill all security and military tasks¹²². Anyhow, justifications soon disappear, following the drop in negative and moral references.

The debate in Italy is less thorough and diffused, and this difference seems to reflect the few contracts Italy has signed with PMSCs, more than actual hiding strategies. Indeed, politicians, especially from the opposition, address and criticize all Italian outsourcing practices in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Government always provides answers and justifications. Here, a few references point to the fact that all states involved in these conflicts employ contractors¹²³, implicitly indicating that states practice makes a certain behavior more legitimate¹²⁴. However, following a similar evolution to the UK,

¹²² See footnote 61

¹²³ See *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 16 Apr 2007 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_03280_15

¹²⁴ This is an interesting justificatory strategy, though the references are too few to investigate this practice more thoroughly.

justificatory strategies disappear with the significant drop in negative and moral references from 2008 onward.

These results shed light on the reasons of the supposed disappearance of the norm and on the mechanisms of change in states' attitudes toward the norm¹²⁵. First, PMSCs, as officially registered private firms, seem inherently more legitimate than mercenary groups, and states soon endorse this difference. Secondly, increasing national and international regulation allows states to better monitor and sanction firms, reducing the negative effects of outsourcing security. Third, as PMSCs come to play a broader and more critical role in internal and external security and military operations, states justify and legitimize their employment for political reasons. Fourth, debates after 1991 are evidently less politically polarized with respect to the Cold War period, in which the stigma on mercenaries mostly descends from the bipolar competition.

As a final step of the discussion, it is interesting to highlight the similarities in the evolution of political postures toward PMSCs in two such different countries as Italy and the UK. As repeatedly underlined, the UK has extensively employed security contractors, both for internal and external tasks, whereas Italy has only rarely resorted to security outsourcing. Scholars have highlighted this divergence, pointing to the various factors that explain differences in outsourcing practices across countries. Previous research has underlined differences in the structure of the armed forces, as conscript and professional armies, political-economic contexts, as the valorization of market solutions (Marchetti, 2013; Kinsey, 2006; Ruzza, 2013), as well as ideational factors as neoliberal and republican conceptions of the role of the state in security affairs (Cusumano, 2016; Kruck, 2014; Petersohn, 2011). Despite such differences, the anti-mercenary norm, in terms of drop of negative

¹²⁵ These results could also support the restriction in the regulatory scope of the norm, rather than its disappearance (McKeown, 2009). Future research should investigate whether this kind of political hostility targets also contemporary non-PMSCs mercenary groups. Chapter VI provides preliminary results from the analysis of parliamentary debates on 'old' forms of mercenarism in the period 1992-2017.

references, spillover effect, increase of positive references, and justificatory strategies, follows a similar evolution in both countries. Evidently, the discussion about PMSCs at the state and international levels, together with state practice, profoundly influences the debate even in countries with different military formats, foreign policy assets and objectives, and intensities of security outsourcing. Enlarging this investigation to other countries, future research could more convincingly confirm or disprove this hypothesis¹²⁶.

¹²⁶ Regarding the different geographical application of the norm, the intensity of negativity shows significant divergences in both countries depending on whether the debate targets contractors working on European soil or in the developing world. Namely, negative and moral attacks more often target PMSCs working abroad. However, it is difficult to provide a definitive answer about this evidence. The different contexts in which contractors operate, internal security versus warfare, could also well explain such divergence.

Chapter V: Parties, Mercenaries, Contractors: Political Attitudes in Italy and the United Kingdom 1945-2017

After having followed the journey of the anti-mercenary norm in Italy and the United Kingdom, highlighting the reasons behind anti-mercenary sentiments, Chapter V dives in the internal dynamics of parties' competition, addressing their debates on mercenaries and contractors. Next sections offer detailed discussions about the reasons that shape political attitudes toward hired soldiers, showing how parties' structures and preferences influence and determine positions on issues linked with mercenaries' activities and operations. As already argued in Chapter I and II, parties constitute a crucial locus where political preferences form, and they also thoroughly affect states' positions about major political issues.

The first part of this Chapter focuses on mercenaries during the Cold War, investigating Italian and British parties' attitudes toward private hired soldiers from 1945 to 1991. The second part addresses instead security contractors and PMSCs in the post-Cold War period, showing how parties' postures toward the market for force change and evolve until 2017. Then, the next Chapter will present additional results about the relation between parties and mercenaries before 1945 and after 1991, analyzing some 'honorable mentions' during these two periods.

Italian parties during the Cold War: A fiercely antagonistic left

Between 1945 and 1991, there are 151 references to mercenaries in Italy. Leftist parties¹²⁷ mention mercenaries 95 times and negative references are the 81.5%, while the percentage drastically decreases for the center, 30%, and for the right, 6.7%, over 27 references for each. Thus, the left not

¹²⁷ The left: PCI (58 references), PSI (14), and others (9). The center: DC (13), and others (7). The right: MSI (15).

only refers to mercenaries more often, but also employs a far more negative approach. Finally, as already argued in Chapter IV, there are no positive references in the entire period.

Figure VI and VII show how enmity against mercenaries increases moving toward the left of the political spectrum in Italy, whereas British parties show no or very small variation in terms of their references and arguments on mercenaries. While I have employed the ParlGov Left-Right Index to code parties' positions, results go in the same direction and are similarly statistically significant when using the Manifesto Rile Index. In Italy, the government/opposition membership is also weakly significant, as the PCI, the champion of the anti-mercenary antagonism, is consistently at the opposition for the entire Cold War. Moreover, t-tests show that the difference of the means of the variable *Character* for the left and, respectively, for the center and the right is significantly different from zero (Dunning, 2012, p. 181). Appendix I provides the results and details of all models and tests.

Figure VIII and IX complete the general quantitative picture, presenting the predicted margins for every value of the left-right spectrum, from 0, far left, to 10, far right. In Italy, the values of the margins show a clear negative tendency, i.e. anti-mercenary hostility significantly decreases moving to the right of the left-right spectrum, whereas results are not significant in the UK, as parties adopt the same posture. Again, details about the results and control variables of the models are found in Appendix I.

[Figure VI to IX about here]

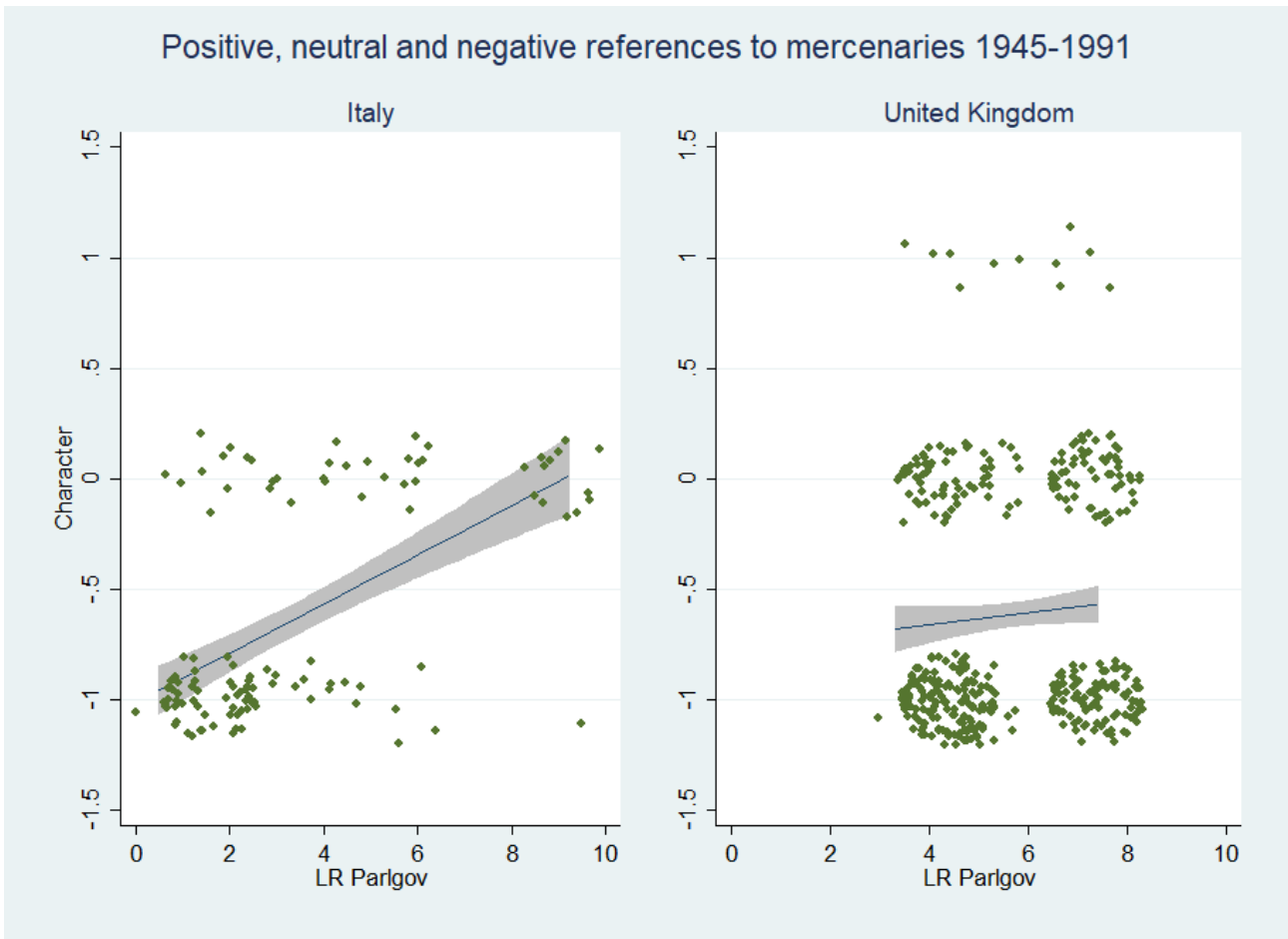


Figure VI: positive (+1), neutral (0) and negative (-1) references to mercenaries in Italy and the UK (with regression line and confidence intervals), for parties from far left (0) to far right (10), 1945-1991. Observations' values have been randomized on the +1, 0 and -1 lines.

Positive, neutral and negative references to mercenaries 1945-1991 (Rile Index)

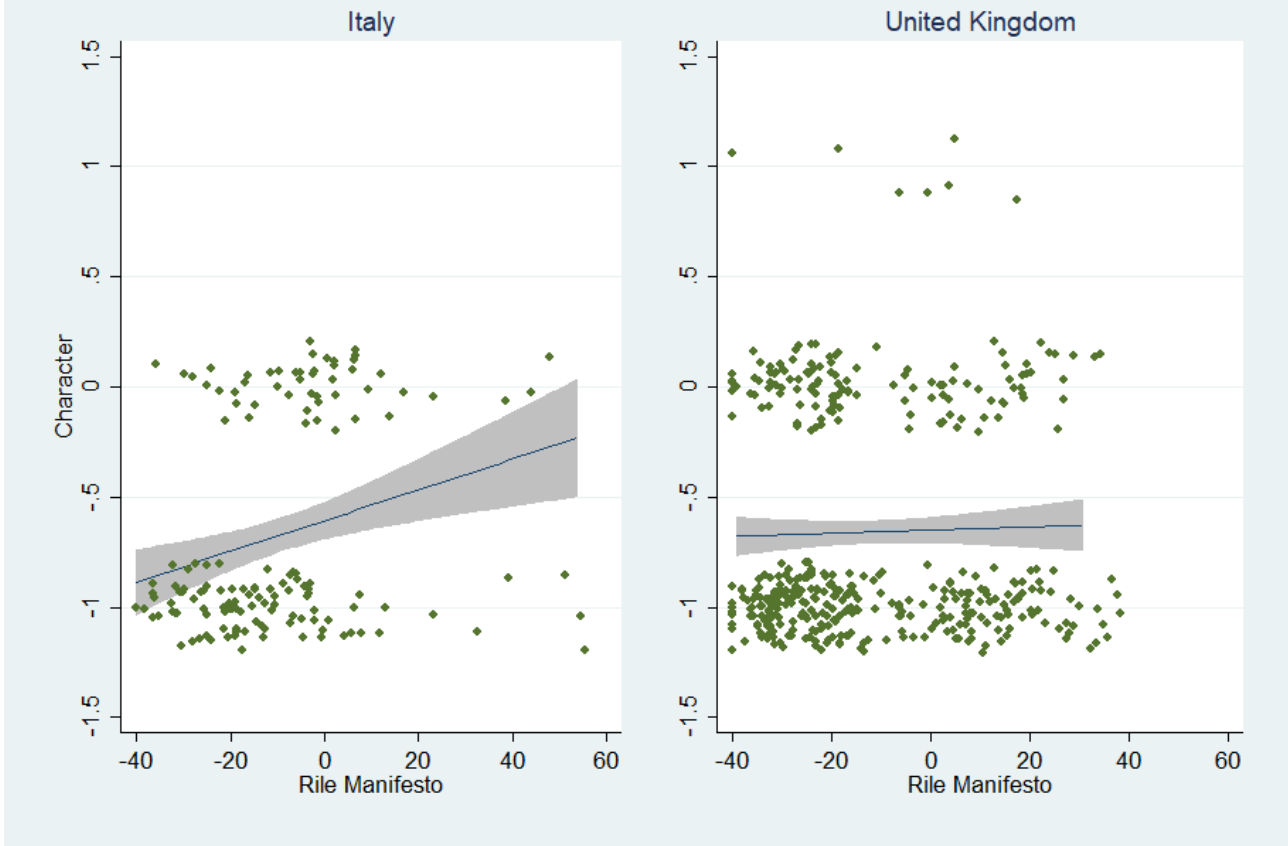


Figure VII: positive (+1), neutral (0) and negative (-1) references to mercenaries in Italy and the UK (with regression line and confidence intervals), for parties from far left (-50) to far right (+50), 1945-1991. Observations' values have been randomized on the +1, 0 and -1 lines.

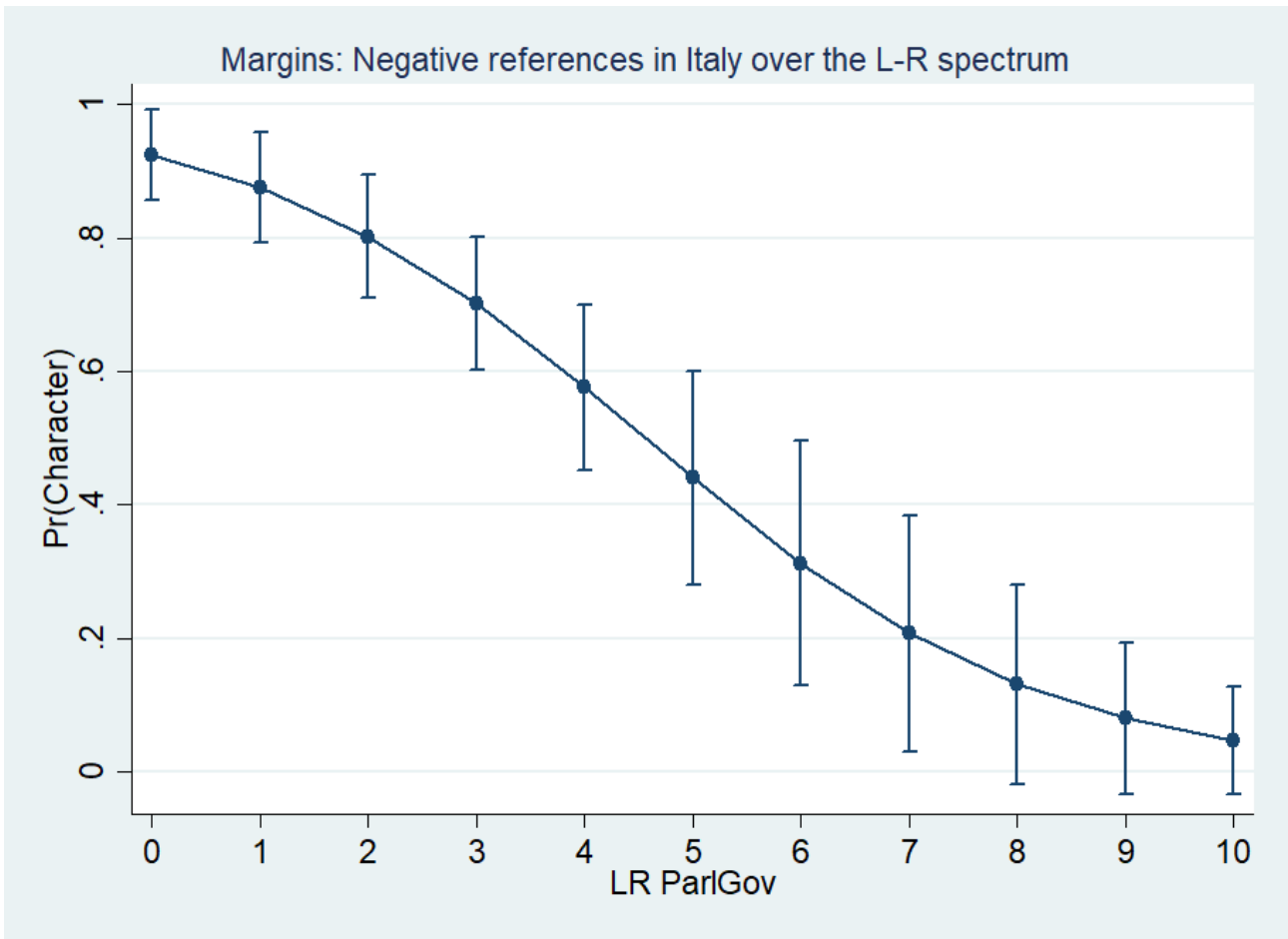


Figure VIII: predictive margins, with 95% confidence intervals, for the likelihood of negative references in Italy on the left-right spectrum (ParlGov Index), 1945-1991

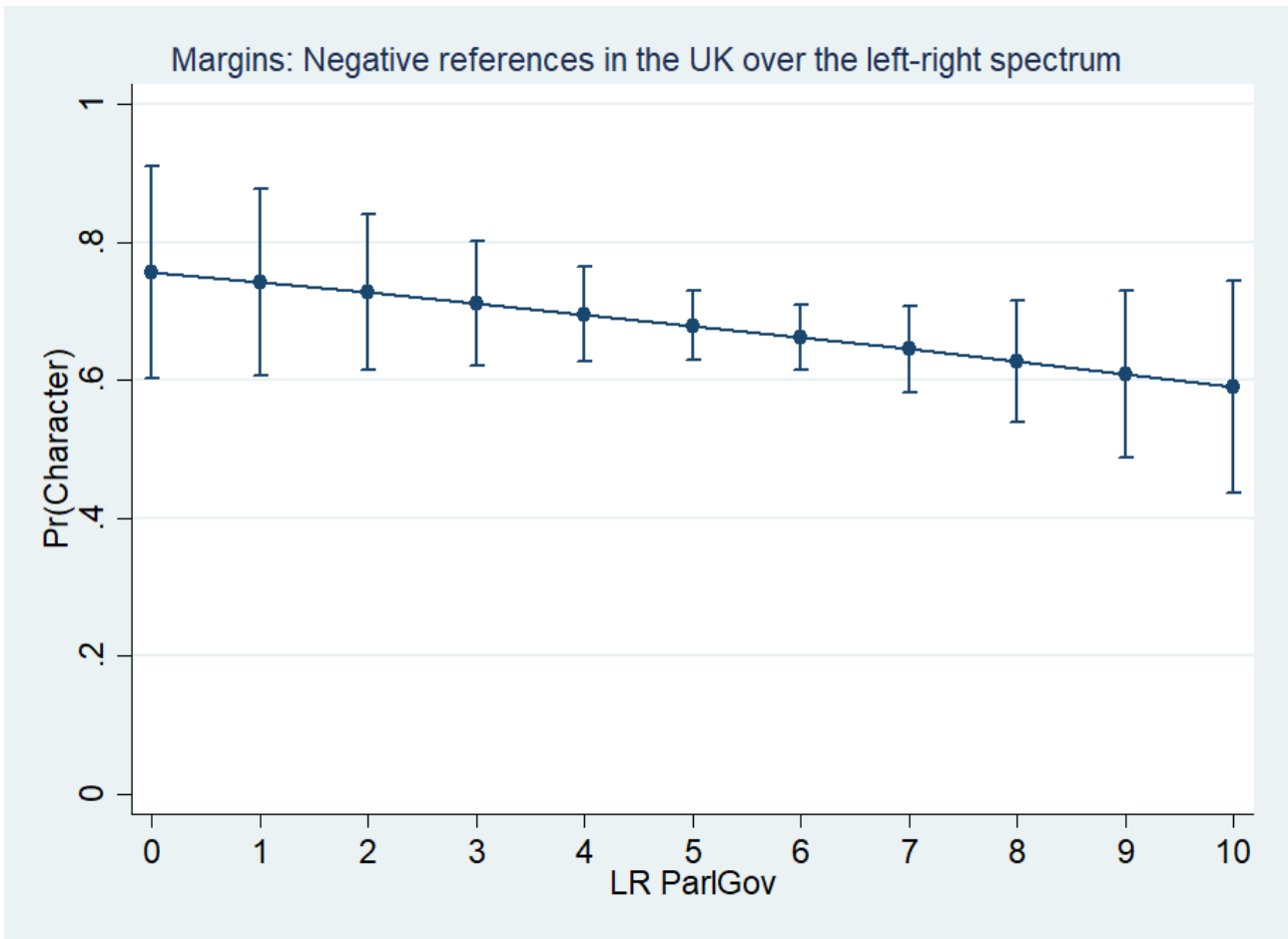


Figure IX: predictive margins, with 95% confidence intervals, for the likelihood of negative references in the UK on the left-right spectrum (ParlGov Index), 1945-1991

Results seem thus to confirm the first hypothesis (H1). Not only the Italian left champions the antagonism against mercenaries, but also the IR dimension is clearly the main driver of such aversion. In general, arguments against mercenaries target often their support for private and public tyrants, especially in Africa and in Central America. In 1951, Pajetta (PCI) argues against the use of mercenaries in Africa by Western countries, seen as bloody tools employed by oppressive dictators: *‘Mercenaries go in other countries not to fight for that nation nor to defend their home-country; these soldiers are prone to commit abuses¹²⁸’*. Discussing the war in Congo in 1961, Targetti (PSI) clarifies this point: *‘Italy, along with France and Belgium, took part in an action that is the negation of what a country willing to support social values should do. All the forces and means of the predatory Belgian capitalism are fighting against this cause, also resorting to mercenary soldiers¹²⁹’*. During the 1960s and 1970s, other eminent members of the PCI as Ingrao¹³⁰ and Alicata¹³¹ rise against the massacres committed by mercenaries in Congo, but also in Angola, Nigeria and Nicaragua. Other leftist parties follow the same line, with Milani¹³² (Unità Proletaria) denouncing the US-led mercenary aggression in Nicaragua in 1983, and Capanna¹³³ (Democrazia Proletaria) calling these mercenaries *‘scoundrels’*.

¹²⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 17 Oct 1951

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0770/sed0770.pdf

¹²⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 17 Nov 1961

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg03/lavori/stenografici/sed0541/sed0541.pdf

¹³⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 26 Nov 1964

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg04/lavori/stenografici/sed0234/sed0234.pdf

¹³¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 02 Dec 1964

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg04/lavori/stenografici/sed0240/sed0240.pdf

¹³² *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 28 Mar 1983

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg08/lavori/stenografici/sed0657/sed0657.pdf

¹³³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 25 Mar 1986

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg09/lavori/stenografici/sed0465/sed0465.pdf

As briefly anticipated in the previous Chapter, the justification for the anti-mercenary hostility lays often on Cold War dynamics, for instance on anti-colonialism, a topic again tightly linked with the American-Soviet strife. In 1961, Berlinguer (PCI), who would have become Secretary of the PCI in 1972, highlights the connection between mercenaries and private interests in Africa. During a debate about the French Foreign Legion, and the fact that Italian citizens were trying to enlist in its ranks, Berlinguer argues that *‘The system (of mercenarism) is expanding. News indicate that Belgium is willing to follow the French example, establishing a Foreign Legion that would be fighting in Congo together with those local mercenaries, who were bought by billionaires that are not willing to renounce to their richness there¹³⁴’*. Again in 1961, Vecchiotti (PSI) depicts a broad and preoccupying picture, where mercenaries are the armed agents of global projects of colonialism. In particular, during a long and broad debate about the yearly budget of the Foreign Affairs Minister, he claims that *‘Reality shows that the conspiracy is broader than the activities of mercenaries hired by private or state interests. We know for sure that an international police operation, led by old colonialism, is working with new forms of colonialism¹³⁵’*.

Another relevant factor that explains the pronounced hostility of the Italian left is, as anticipated, anti-Americanism. In 1961, Togliatti (PCI), the then leader of the Communist Party, directly connects American conflicts for containment with the abuses committed by mercenaries. Commenting on the Bay of Pigs American invasion, he argues that *‘In Laos as well as in Cuba, mercenaries are prompted by the US to assault local population to oppress their independence and freedom¹³⁶’*. Many more

¹³⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 14 Apr 1961

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg03/lavori/stenografici/sed0420/sed0420.pdf

¹³⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 27 Sep 1961

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg03/lavori/stenografici/sed0491/sed0491.pdf

¹³⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 20 Apr 1961

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg03/lavori/stenografici/sed0423/sed0423.pdf

anti-American references surface from the debates in the 1950s and 1960s. The highly controversial Italian participation in the US-led NATO, the massive involvement of American military forces in the developing world, and some of the hottest moments of the Cold War drive MPs from the opposition's ranks to produce frequent attacks against either the US directly or against the Italian Government's involvement with American Foreign Policy. Nonetheless, despite decreasing anti-US sentiments in most Italian parties, as noted in Chapter II, anti-Americanism characterizes references also in the 1970s and 1980s, though to a lower intensity with respect to the previous two decades. In 1982, Pajetta, discussing the Salvadoran Civil War of 1980-1982, argues that '*The United States is sending Latin American mercenaries to El Salvador [...] with a willingness to show their supremacy and their inferences in other countries' internal affairs*¹³⁷'. In the following years, the Civil Conflict in Nicaragua produces many and diverse attacks against the United States' employment of mercenaries. In 1985, Ronchi (DP) claims that '*The USA want to overturn the legitimate sovereign Government of Nicaragua. They are doing this [...] with mercenaries directly paid by the CIA, supporting the bands of the Contras, and also with sabotages, assassinations, and economic boycott*¹³⁸'.

Remaining on the IR dimension, the strategies adopted by politicians from other branches are to avoid discussing such issues or to downgrade mercenaries' dangerousness. In 1952, answering to a fierce attack by Boldrini (PCI), who accuses the US of creating mercenary armies in the Far East, Coppi (DC) contests the use of that specific, and stigmatized, term to address American proxy forces¹³⁹.

¹³⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 11 May 1982

<https://www.camera.it/dati/leg08/lavori/stenografici/sed0501/sed0501.pdf>

¹³⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 14 Mar 1985

<https://www.camera.it/dati/leg09/lavori/stenografici/sed0281/sed0281.pdf>

¹³⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 10 Jul 1952

<http://www.camera.it/dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0955/sed0955.pdf>

That is a clear example of a justificatory strategy addressed in Chapter IV, where politicians argues that some kinds of troops or soldiers are simply not mercenaries. In 1967, in a debate on the civil conflicts in Congo and Rhodesia, Oliva (DC) neutrally describes the activities of mercenaries, undermining the relevance of hired soldiers and the involvement of the Belgian Government in the recruitment¹⁴⁰. Here, instead, the strategy is to hide and/or downgrade the activities of mercenaries in support to American or European interests.

In addition, centrist and rightist politicians attack Soviet and Cuban mercenary forces in very few instances. Namely, politicians of the DC and other parties in Government, together with the rightist opposition of the Movimento Sociale, only rarely exploit the mercenary stigma to attack the Soviet expansion in the developing world and the Italian Communist's support of such Foreign Policy¹⁴¹. In 1976, Costamagna (DC) denounces in a Parliamentary Question the involvement of USSR, Cuba and the PCI in the Civil War in Angola in support of the local leftist forces. He claims that *'Italy is the Western country that most supports the cause of the Angolan Communists. The PCI is responsible for the leftist movements in Africa and Berlinguer employs KGB airplanes for obscure missions in Western Africa. This, to support the Army of Nheto with powerful Soviet weapons and more than 11 thousands Cuban mercenaries'*¹⁴².

¹⁴⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 13 Jul 1967

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg04/lavori/stenografici/sed0717/sed0717.pdf

¹⁴¹ This lack of political attacks using the mercenary stigma on the side of the Italian Government and opposition from the right may be explained as a cautious strategy. Their potential use of such a rhetorical and political weapon could have easily exposed them to backfire from the left, as mercenaries represented proxy forces employed more by Western powers than the USSR and its allies.

¹⁴² *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 19 Feb 1976

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg06/lavori/stenografici/sed0445/sed0445.pdf

Similarly, in 1980 Bemporad (DC), during a debate about the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, links this new supposed form of Soviet imperialism with the Russian support of African regimes in the previous decades. In particular, he highlights the dangers of the ‘*expansionist imperialist policy of the Soviet Union, already shown by the military and economic intervention in Mozambique and the Horn of Africa, and with the employment of Cuban mercenaries in Angola*¹⁴³’. Interestingly, the PCI and other leftist parties engage in hiding strategies regarding Cuban and Soviet mercenaries in Africa. Indeed, communist and socialist politicians mention mercenaries in the Civil War in Angola in sole two instances, whereas their discussion on hired soldiers in Congo and Nicaragua is far more extensive and detailed.

Finally, the last powerful driver of anti-mercenary antagonism on the IR dimension, an element that stands at a crossroad with the military dimension, is the reference to hired soldiers as armed agents of heinous regimes. As anticipated in the section on theory, this is a locus where leftist Italian politicians connects coups supported by mercenaries in the developing world with the perceived danger of a coup promoted by the right and supported by the United States in Italy. This link is explicit in the words of Lama (PCI) in 1964, who comments on the repressive acts of Italian Police against citizens in Rome. In particular, Police officers charged some people who were demonstrating against the meeting of some Italian politicians with Tshombe¹⁴⁴, and Lama notably argues that ‘*As Mr. Tshombe has his white mercenaries, we in Italy have our plainclothes officers who beat people in the streets*¹⁴⁵’. In 1974, in a period of huge political tension due to frequent terrorist attacks, the infamous

¹⁴³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 09 Jan 1980

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg08/lavori/stenografici/sed0093/sed0093.pdf

¹⁴⁴ Moïse Kapenda Tshombe was the leader of the secessionist state of Katanga from 1960 to 1963. A relevant figure of the Civil War in Congo, he largely resorted to white European mercenaries during the conflict (Rich, 2012).

¹⁴⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 11 Dec 1964

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg04/lavori/stenografici/sed0246/sed0246.pdf

‘anni di piombo’, Achilli (PSI) argues that the members of right-inspired terrorist groups are mercenaries paid by neo-fascist Italian and foreign political organizations¹⁴⁶.

Italian politicians of the left highlight this crucial link also citing historical experiences involving mercenaries. In 1951, Di Vittorio talks about the fascist regime of Franco in Spain, who employed mercenaries against his own people: ‘*He (Franco) hired mercenaries to disrupt with violence the Spanish Republic born of the universal suffrage. He employed Moroccan mercenaries against his people and against the popular will*¹⁴⁷’. Again, this explicit connection between mercenaries as armed agents of authoritarian regimes and the dangers created by the bipolar tension on Italian internal politics is clear from the fact that the discussion that includes this speech from Di Vittorio was about the right to strike. Here, communist and socialist politician complain about the autocratic tendencies of the Government led by the Christian Democrats.

On the other side, the military dimension emerges as a weak but significant driver of parties’ divergent approaches. Here, leftist parties are more prone to characterize professional soldiers as mercenaries, whereas other parties almost never mention the term. The left adopts a profoundly negative stance against projects of professionalization or employment of private force. For instances, in 1951, Angelucci (PCI) argues against the Government’s proposal to employ mercenaries to enlarge the

¹⁴⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 13 Mar 1974

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg06/lavori/stenografici/sed0231/sed0231.pdf

¹⁴⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 06 Aug 1951

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0729/sed0729.pdf

Army's ranks involved in natural disaster relief¹⁴⁸. In the same year, Longo¹⁴⁹ and Bottonelli¹⁵⁰ (PCI) state that a mercenary army represents a political danger, as shown in Chapter IV. In 1969, it is worth remembering, d'Alessio (PCI) stresses the link between democratic institutions and the Army: *'Soldiers of this Army are in their duty under an article of the Constitution and they are not willing to become mercenaries, as some groups of the reactionary and conservative right would like them to be¹⁵¹'*. As already mentioned in the discussion on the anti-mercenary norm, references to the military format in the Parliament during the Cold War are very few, though they still highlight the antagonism of the left, an aversion not matched by other branches in the Parliament. Overall, these brief quotations indicate that the value of conscription remain more relevant for leftist parties, as they connect their anti-professional and anti-mercenary stances regarding the organization of the Italian Army with their defense of Italian people and Italian democratic institutions.

After this extended survey of politicians' words and arguments on the IR and military dimension, the discussion turns to quantitative data. Regarding the mechanisms that explain the left-right gap on the IR dimension, anti-Americanism and anti-colonialism emerge as critical. The 55.2% of the negative references from leftist parties spot a link between the US, or other imperialist forces, and the destabilizing role mercenaries play in Africa and Central America. Second, the interpretation of mercenaries as dangerous armed agents under the control of rightist group and autocratic regimes appears to be a relevant factor, as leftist parties mention this issue in the 25.4% of their negative

¹⁴⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 14 Jun 1951

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0701/sed0701.pdf

¹⁴⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 16 Oct 1951

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0769/sed0769.pdf

¹⁵⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 10 Jul 1952

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg01/lavori/stenografici/sed0955/sed0955.pdf

¹⁵¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 22 Jul 1969

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg05/lavori/stenografici/sed0154/sed0154.pdf

references. As argued, rumors of right-inspired and US-led coups against Italian democratic institutions preoccupy leftist MPs during the Cold War, and they evidently construe mercenaries as instruments for these plans. In this context, the aversion of the Italian left assumes two different forms. An external form, where mercenaries are criticized as armed agents of American and Western imperialism and capitalism, and an internal form, where mercenaries are depicted as armed agents under the control of right-wing groups. Additionally, also attitudes toward conscriptions and the military format matter, as the left cites the virtues of conscript armies against professional and mercenary forces in the 10.4% of negative mentions. On the other side, the few references from center and right parties try to dismiss leftist accusations, arguing that mercenaries are not the armed tools of capitalistic expansions or that the US are not responsible for African wars. Finally, no specific references surface from the political-economic dimension. Evidently, politicians do not establish a direct nor explicit link between the problems of privatization in general and mercenaries' activities.

Only in a small number of references, 10.8%, politicians criticize mercenaries for specific reasons in specific scenarios, so that the alternative explanation that limited and unique military and political contexts drive political antagonism does not find strong support. In Italy, indeed, hostility toward mercenaries is framed in broader political debates in the greatest majority of observations. Next, in order to control for the other alternative explanation, that contexts other than parliaments could paint different pictures of political antagonism, I focus on the PCI, as the Italian Communists show the highest level of negativity and the highest number of rhetorical references. Thus, there are reasons to consider this as a tough case to check the validity of this alternative explanation (Rogowski, 2004). Focusing on potential alternative contexts of political discussion, the Italian Foreign Affairs and Defense Commissions only very rarely address issues linked with mercenaries. Consequently, I center the attention on the official Communist newspaper *l'Unità*. As the description on every first page stated, *l'Unità* was the '*Organo del Partito Comunista Italiano*'. Thus, the newspaper was a direct emanation of the PCI, where many and relevant representatives of the Party often wrote articles.

The keyword ‘mercenar-’ appears in 3176 articles in l’Unità from 1946 to 1991. For reasons of time and space, I have coded a random 5% (i.e. 159) of the articles, employing the same coding categories I used for the parliamentary debates¹⁵². The analysis show similar results to the discussion of Communist MPs in the Italian Parliament, both in terms of intensity of negativity and drivers of antagonism. The percentage of negative references is slightly higher (91.5%), whereas the arguments that explain the aversion, namely anti-Americanism (38.7%), anti-colonialism (21.1%) and mercenaries as instruments for right-wing coups (22.6%) show analogous figures. Finally, references to the military format and the value of conscription (1.5%) are less discussed and less relevant on the newspaper with respect to the Parliament, whereas there is a slightly higher portion of antagonism that is explained by specific military and political contexts (16.1%). Overall, these results show that a different context does not change the antagonism, and the reasons behind it, of the Italian left.

British parties and mercenaries during the Cold War: Similar aversion, different reasons

In the United Kingdom, across 458 references, results warmly confirm the second hypothesis (H2). MPs of the left¹⁵³ mention mercenaries 218 times and negative references are the 68.0%, whereas the Conservative Party shows an only slightly lower percentage of negativity, 59.5%, over 193 references¹⁵⁴. Finally, 45 references from independent and Crossbench MPs are at the 63.4%. Similarly to Italy, the military format attracts few references to mercenaries, and politicians of all colors align on the aversion to hired soldiers. Thus, on the military dimension, politicians contrast

¹⁵² Since in some articles there is more than one paragraph in which the keyword appears, the total number of observations is 185. As in the case of parliamentary debates, I excluded all the observation (35, 18.9%) where the use of the keyword is out-of-context.

¹⁵³ The left: the Labour Party (170), the Liberal Party (24) and the Scottish National Party (4). The right: the Conservative Party (168). The centre/independent: the Crossbench and Independents (41).

¹⁵⁴ Positive references are the 2.5%.

mercenaries' poor military and moral value with British soldiers, who are celebrated for their spirit and force. In 1979, Bruce George (Lab), as shown in Chapter IV, quotes Machiavelli to oppose the recruitment of mercenary forces¹⁵⁵ and Murray (Lab) compares mercenaries, who only care about money, with British soldiers, who instead serve society¹⁵⁶. Independent and Conservative MPs align on this path, for example with Proctor (Con) in 1984 asking the House to prohibit recruiting activities in the UK¹⁵⁷.

Also on the IR dimension, all parties seem fiercely critical of mercenaries. Regarding general attacks against hired soldiers, in 1961, Bennett (Con) makes '*no excuse*' for mercenaries fighting in Congo¹⁵⁸, Wilson (Lab) defines them as '*unscrupulous*' and '*squalid riff-raff*'¹⁵⁹, while Teeling (Con) calls them '*bloody criminals*'¹⁶⁰. In 1968, Lord Sheperd (Lab) shares his profound '*dislike*' for mercenaries involved in the war in Biafra¹⁶¹, in 1978 MacMillan (Con) claims that mercenaries are '*subjugating*' Africa¹⁶² and Faulds (Lab) argues that in Rhodesia '*mercenaries [...] join such fights not for principle, but to knock off as many blacks as they can*'¹⁶³.

Differently from Italy, many negative references target mercenaries hired by communist regimes, an argument that explain the greatest part of anti-mercenary antagonism on the IR dimension. In 1973, during a debate about the Pinochet coup in Chile, Soref (Con) points to the threat hired soldiers pose to Latin America. Here, Soref argues that the victory of the autocratic right is clearly better than a

¹⁵⁵ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 27 Mar 1979 <http://bit.ly/2NXJ4YG>

¹⁵⁶ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 26 Jun 1979 <http://bit.ly/2QP60et>

¹⁵⁷ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 28 Feb 1984 <http://bit.ly/2xBueAh>

¹⁵⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 19 Oct 1961 <http://bit.ly/2QhFpqq>

¹⁵⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 07 Feb 1963 <http://bit.ly/2NT9Mle>

¹⁶⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 07 Feb 1963 <http://bit.ly/2NRmK2W>

¹⁶¹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 25 Jan 1968 <http://bit.ly/2wU2Lt6>

¹⁶² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 14 Mar 1978 <http://bit.ly/2pviUCh>

¹⁶³ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 08 Nov 1978 <http://bit.ly/2wPbWLv>

communist dominion in Chile and in Latin America: *'a far worse holocaust, which would have occurred if the Cubans and the local Marxist mercenaries from Uruguay, Argentine, Bolivia and Colombia had been able to take over'*¹⁶⁴. In 1976, in a long and rich debate about the Civil War in Angola, Lord Alport (Con) attacks the Soviet attempt to penetrate in Africa employing mercenary forces: *'the Russians, realising their previous failures to penetrate into Africa, have left the dirty work to the Spanish-speaking mercenaries'*¹⁶⁵.

While the Conservatives are responsible for most of anti-communist negative references, similar sentiments emerge also from other parties, as expected. In an extended and detailed debate about the Civil War in Congo in 1961, Grimond (Lib) expresses his concern for the possibility that Congolese politicians involved in the conflict may get military help from communist regimes: *'if Mr. Gizenga is supplied with large numbers of mercenaries and others from behind the Iron Curtain this will be an extremely serious situation'*¹⁶⁶. In 1976, in one of the most intense discussion about the Angolan Civil War and the involvement of British mercenaries, Lord Shinwell (Lab) complains about the differences in treatment for British citizens, who sold themselves as mercenaries during the war, and Cuban and Soviet hired soldiers. He asks his peers: *'Are they to be regarded perhaps as peacemakers or will some other definition apply? Are they not also mercenaries? Why should we condemn, although they be very foolish, some of our people, young and middle-aged, who want to assist in this adventure, no doubt for remuneration or some other reason? Why condemn them and not utter one word of rebuke about the Cubans and members of the Soviet Union'*¹⁶⁷?

The reasons behind the antagonism of the left are many and diverse. Other than anti-communist stances, also anti-colonialism, anti-Americanism and the preoccupation with mercenaries as armed

¹⁶⁴ Hansard Archive, Commons, 28 Nov 1973 <http://bit.ly/2FgZDx7>

¹⁶⁵ Hansard Archive, Commons, 17 Feb 1976 <http://bit.ly/2TEbU7A>

¹⁶⁶ Hansard Archive, Commons, 14 Dec 1961 <http://bit.ly/2M8hUAs>

¹⁶⁷ Hansard Archive, Lords, 10 Feb 1976 <http://bit.ly/2WGquMt>

agents of autocratic regimes, surface from the speeches of leftist politicians. In 1962, during a debate about the UN operations in Katanga, Zilliacus (Lab) denounces the involvement of multinational firms in the Civil War in Congo: *'This is an attempt by big business to retain its hold on the vast mineral resources of Katanga, using mercenaries and tools of its own for the purpose. What the people of Katanga want has very little to do with the matter'*¹⁶⁸. In 1976, in a discussion about various aspects of the US-UK relation, Allaun (Lab) urges the Government to take a more resolute position against the covert operations of American Secret Services in Africa. In particular, he asks the Secretary of State Crosland: *'Will my right hon. Friend ask Washington to keep the CIA out of Britain and to stop it recruiting mercenaries for Africa'*¹⁶⁹?

Finally, in 1975, during a debate about the role of Saudi Arabia in the Gulf, Flannery (Lab) utters his preoccupation for the Conservative Party's soft approach toward the military operations of the autocratic regime of the Saudis. He addresses his Conservative colleagues asking whether they are not *'deeply disturbed at the secondment of troops, amounting to their use as mercenaries, to the Omani Republic, that many of us regard this as a defence of feudalism against progressive forces'*¹⁷⁰.

Overall, negative postures show similar intensities and the IR dimension remains the most relevant, though the reasons behind parties' hostility differ significantly. As anticipated, anti-communism is the main driver of Conservative antagonism, as politicians attack the Cuban and Soviet mercenary forces in the 48.1% of their negative references, and Independents follows through (30.7%). This issue is not irrelevant for the left (5.1%), though Labour politicians point also to anti-colonialism (13.1%) and anti-authoritarianism (8.0%) while attacking mercenaries. Anti-Americanism emerges in very few instances and does not play a critical role. Here, as shown by some references above, the

¹⁶⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 02 Feb 1962 <http://bit.ly/2y60SdZ>

¹⁶⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 28 Apr 1976 <http://bit.ly/2yazafW>

¹⁷⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 17 Dec 1975 <http://bit.ly/2LCHv51>

different souls of the Labour Party, in terms of Foreign Policy preferences, clearly surface from the results, which depict a rich and diverse picture of political antagonism.

A far-left wing within the Labour Party criticizes mercenaries in an anti-American and anti-imperialistic fashion. For instances, Corbyn (Lab) attacks in multiple occasions the mercenaries paid by the United States to fight in Nicaragua against the Sandinista National Liberation Front. In 1986, he argues that: *'The involvement of American mercenaries with the CIA-backed "contras" has been known for some time, and the newly uncovered role of British and other European "dogs of war" is also being co-ordinated through right-wing circles in the United States'*¹⁷¹. On the other hand, another faction within the Labour at times joins the Conservatives in their fierce critique against mercenaries employed by the Soviet Union and Cuba. For example in 1976, Shinwell (Lab), who in the 1970s often attacks the left wing of the Labour (Matthew, 2004), argues that mercenaries paid by the USSR that fight in Angola must be strenuously contrasted for the sake of containing communism¹⁷².

Looking to sources other than parliamentary debates helps in grasping the reasons behind the antagonism of the British left. For instances, various issues of the Daily Worker (from 1966 called the Morning Star), promoted debates on the Korean War, arguing that the people of North and South Korea were fighting against the *'Yankee invaders and their paid mercenaries'* or that the Americans were ready to resort even to mercenaries to form a powerful anti-Communist army¹⁷³. Similarly, commenting on the involvement of the British mercenaries in the Civil War in Angola, a March 1974 issue of the Socialist Standard argued that hired soldiers *'deserve contempt'*, but not for their immoral nature, instead because they are the armed agents of *'British and Western capitalism, which cause so much suffering in Africa'*¹⁷⁴. The Angolan conflict, with the involvement of British mercenaries,

¹⁷¹ Hansard Archive, Commons, 15 Dec 1986 <http://bit.ly/2pquxdC>

¹⁷² Hansard Archive, Lords, 10 Feb 1976 <http://bit.ly/2WGquMt>

¹⁷³ Daily Worker, 19 Sep 1950, and 1 Feb 1952 <https://www.ukpressonline.co.uk/ukpressonline/open/index>

¹⁷⁴ Socialist Standard, 72/658 March 1974 <http://socialiststandardmyspace.blogspot.com/2017/03/mercenaries-1976.html>

constitutes indeed a particularly critical moment for Labour-Conservative disagreement over the Cold War and for internal contentions within the Labour, whose more radical members loudly expressed their concern over the activities of mercenaries financed by American and Western powers. As Hughes (2014) has argued, *‘the Angolan mercenary scandal reflected on domestic Cold-War politics [...] illustrated not only by the fierce debates between the Labour government and Conservative opposition over the course of East–West relations and the nature of detente, but also the sense of paranoia that was commonplace within British society regarding the prospects of either subversion by the extreme Left, or a right-wing military coup’*. These examples show that moving to the left of the political spectrum, also parties in the UK replicate the accusations launched by their Italian Communist colleagues, highlighting the connection between mercenaries and American imperialism, neo-colonialism, and internal right-wing subversion.

Finally, parties do align when discussing the military format, as the defense of the spirit of British soldiers against mercenaries surfaces as a relevant mechanism for all parties (13.9% for the left, 11.5% for independents and 7.7% for the right). As in the case of Italy, the political-economic dimension does not emerge as significant.

Results thus demonstrate that in the UK parties’ attitudes toward mercenaries show higher variation with respect to Italy. As already argued, in Italy the Communist Party consistently interprets mercenaries’ activities through the lenses of the bipolar competition, in both its external and internal expressions, whereas the center and the right avoid the discussion or try to dismiss mercenaries’ relevance. Conversely, in the UK, while anti-communism dominates the speeches of the Conservatives, some contrast within the Labour Party emerges.

Again differently from Italy, criticisms that focus on specific battles or political scenarios are more relevant in the British Houses. Indeed, the 51.8% of references from leftist parties, 37.1% from the right and 32% from the independents, target limited and precise events, as the episodes of the civil conflicts in Congo, Angola, Biafra and Nicaragua. Overall, results depict a picture of a much less

politicized debate in the UK with respect to Italy. While Italian MPs always frame the discussion on mercenaries in a strife over bipolarism, in its external and internal dimension, their British colleagues hold often debates about hired soldiers that concentrate on specific military and political scenarios, leaving Cold War dynamics outside the Houses. Two reasonable, and certainly intertwined, explanations could account for such difference. First, following Putnam (1973), throughout the Cold War the political discussion in Italy is significantly and consistently more conflictual than in the UK. Secondly, the presence of an extreme and strong party, the PCI, in Italy and not in the UK, could also contribute to explain this divergence.

Table VIII collects the results concerning the reasons that explain parties' antagonism toward mercenaries. The Italian center and right, and British Independent MPs are excluded from the Table, as they produce too few references to allow a rigorous and significant analysis.

[Table VIII about here]

Table VIII: Drivers of the antagonism during the Cold War (percentages of negative references)

	Italian Left	PCI on l'Unità	UK Left	UK Right
Anti-Americanism (IR dimension)	37.3%	38.7%	5.8%	0%
Anti-Colonialism (IR dimension)	17.9%	21.2%	13.1%	3.8%
Anti-Communism (IR dimension)	0%	0%	5.1%	47.6%
Instruments for Coups (IR dimension)	25.4%	22.6%	8.0%	1.9%
Military Format (Military dimension)	10.4%	1.5%	15.3%	8.6%
Privatization Policies (Pol-eco dimension)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Specific Conflicts (PAE)	8.9%	16.1%	51.8%	37.1%

To conclude this section, and add information also on the results of Chapter IV, results that regard differences across countries are unexpected, as the Chapter on the anti-mercenary norm has already shown, because the United Kingdom and Italy show similar levels of antagonism (63.9% UK, 62.9% Italy). While the Italian aversion comes unsurprisingly, supporting existing literature, the result in the British case is unforeseen. What this Chapter significantly adds to the general debate about anti-mercenary antagonism is that previous studies have evidently underestimated the role of anti-communism sentiments in building hostility toward mercenaries. In this way, the politicization of the norm during the Cold War, on which Chapter IV has elaborated on, has one powerful origin in British anti-communism. Moreover, investigating parties' arguments after 1945, this section has further clarified the reasons behind anti-mercenary sentiments on the military dimension. Here, politicians of all colors criticize mercenaries not to favor alternative military formats, as universal conscription, but to celebrate the spirit of British soldiers.

Italy in the post-Cold War: a different left, a different aversion

As anticipated in the previous Chapter, in Italy debates on PMSCs start in 2002, following the first news about contractors in Afghanistan. There are only 61 references¹⁷⁵, as leftist politicians contribute with 35 references and colleagues from the right and the center with 15 and 11 respectively¹⁷⁶. The left persists with the antagonism against private soldiers, as the 68.6% of references are negative,

¹⁷⁵ The low number of firms registered in Italy and the low level of employment by the state should explain such number (Ruzza, 2011), as already noted in Chapter IV.

¹⁷⁶ The left: Verdi (FV, 11), Ulivo (UL, 10), Rifondazione Comunista (RC, 6), and others (8). The right: Popolo della Libertà (PDL, 4), Forza Italia (FI, 3), the Lega Nord (LN, 3), and others (5). The centre: Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S, 4), Italia dei Valori (IDV, 3), and others (3). Noting the small number of references and the great variation in terms of parties' position, as the recent emergence of populist parties that hardly find a clear collocation on the left-right spectrum, results in this section are preliminary.

whereas the number significantly decreases for the right, 33.3%, and for the center, 18.8%. Finally, the left is more prone to employ the term ‘mercenaries’ to describe contractors, 37.1%, thus transferring prejudices and aversion against mercenaries to contractors. Such transfer, i.e. the spillover effect, happens more rarely for the right, 20%, and the center, 9.1%. As expected, the left still champions the accusations against private soldiers, though the gap with other parties is smaller with respect to the Cold War period. Figure X shows that in both countries antagonism increases moving to the left, though in Italy results are not significant, probably due to the low number of observations. Figure XI presents the predicted margins for all types of references in both countries. Then, Figure XII shows how parties from the left are more inclined to call contractors mercenaries in both countries, though results are only weakly significant, as the margins show in Figure XIII. All detailed models, with complete results and control variables, along with the results of t-tests are found in Appendix I.

[Figure X to XIII about here]

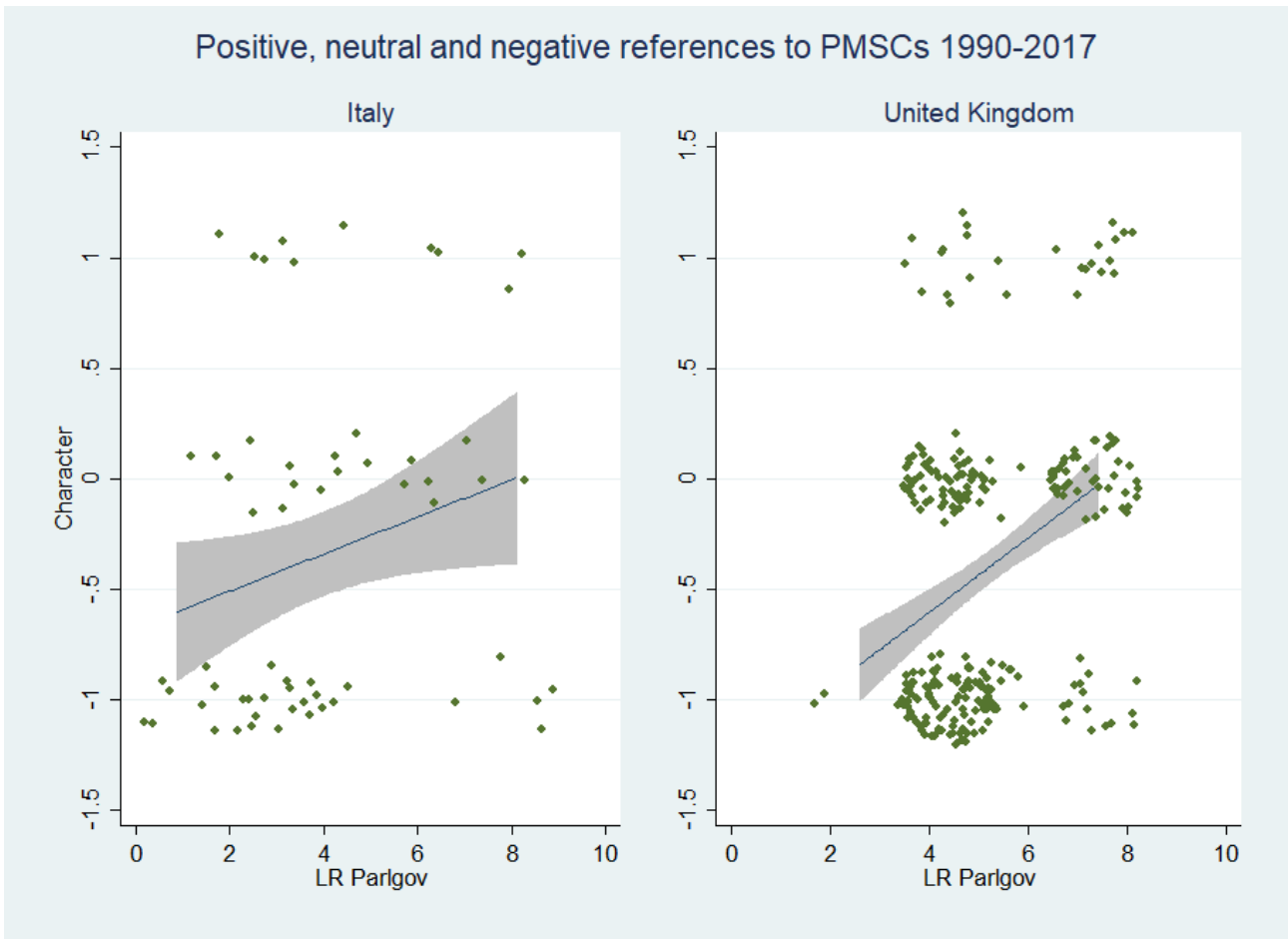


Figure X: positive (+1), neutral (0) and negative (-1) references to PMSCs in Italy and the UK (with regression line and confidence intervals), for parties from far left (0) to far right (10), 1990-2017. Observations' values have been randomized on the -1, 0 and +1 lines.

Margins: References to PMSCs over the l-r spectrum

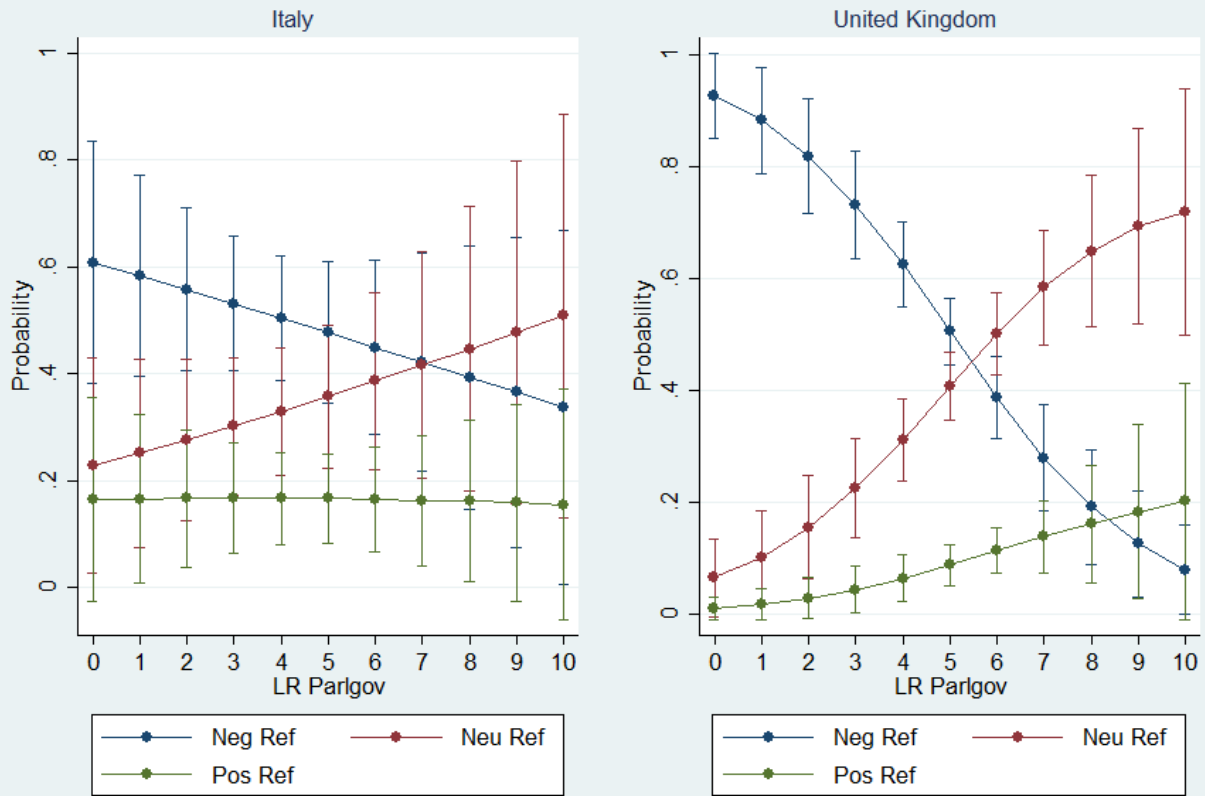


Figure XI: Predictive margins, with 95% confidence intervals, for the likelihood of negative, neutral and positive references in Italy and the UK over the left-right spectrum (ParlGov Index), 1990-2017

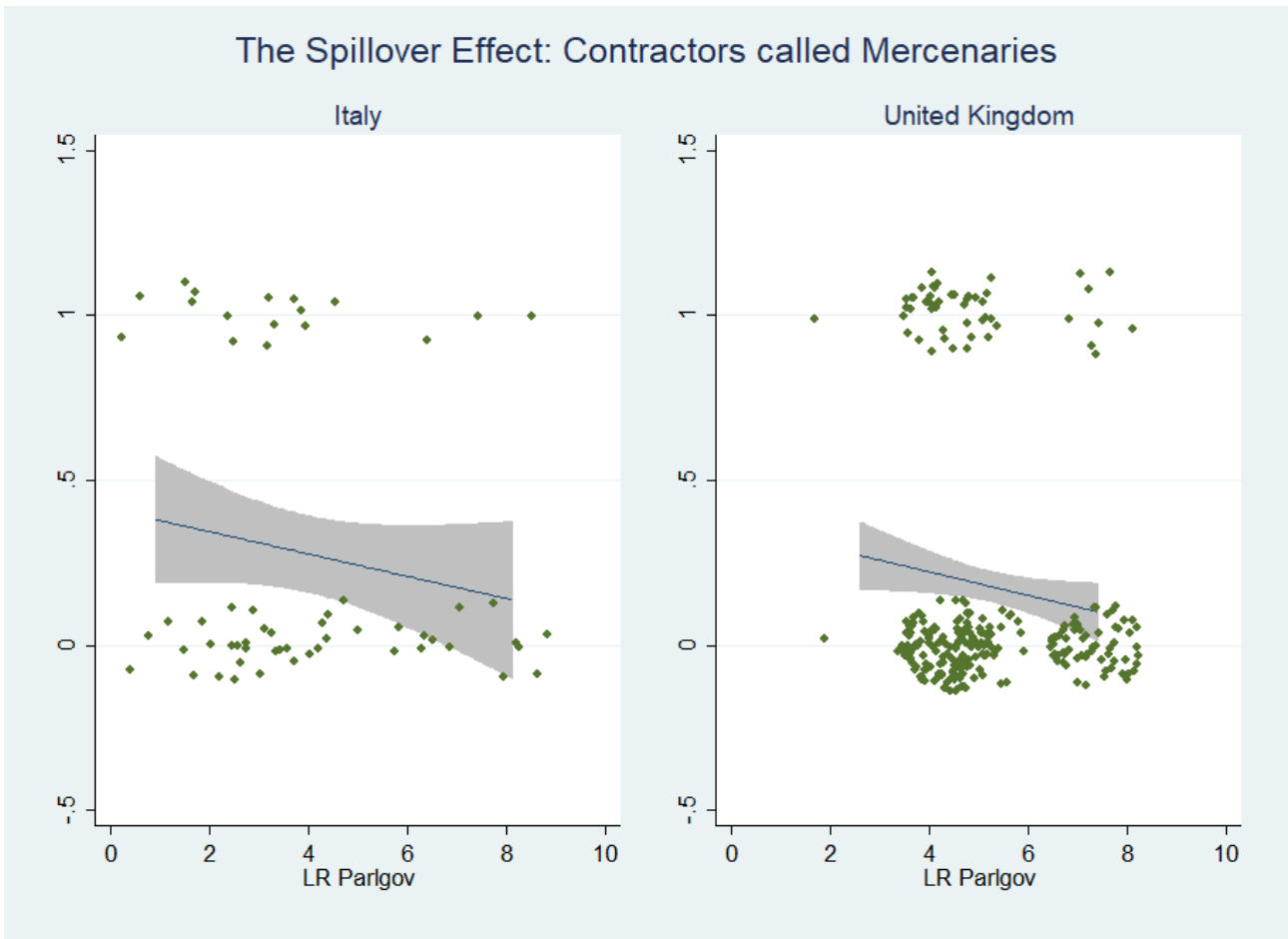


Figure XII: instances in which contractors are called mercenaries (+1) in the UK and Italy, with regression line and confidence intervals, for parties from far left (0) to far right (10), 1990-2017. Observations' values have been randomized on the +1 and 0 lines

Margins: The spillover effect

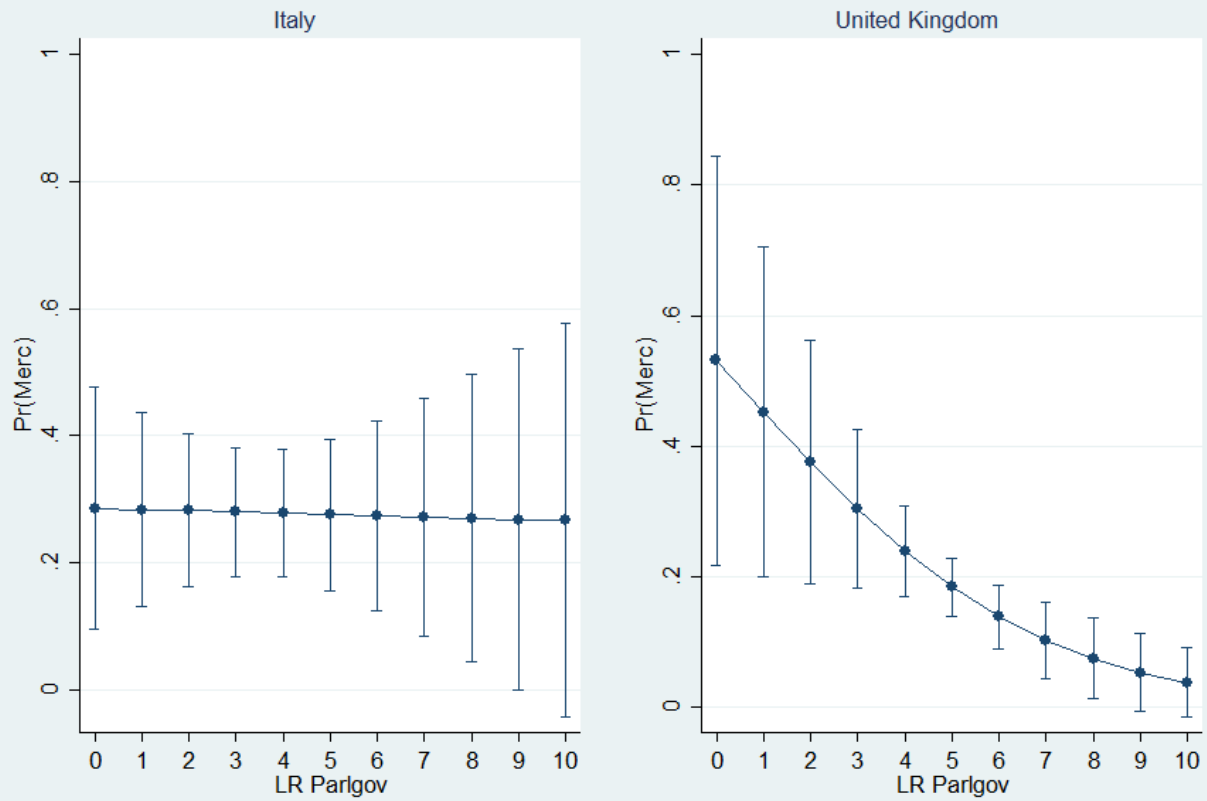


Figure XIII: Predictive margins, with 95% confidence intervals, for the likelihood of the spillover effect (when politicians call contractors mercenaries) in Italy and the UK over the left-right spectrum (ParlGov Index), 1990-2017.

On the IR dimension, leftist MPs rarely point to the old aversion to Western Foreign Policy activism and to autocratic regimes. In 2004, Melandri (Ulivo) holds the US Government responsible for the preoccupying regime of immunity under which contractors and PMSCs operate in Afghanistan and Iraq¹⁷⁷. In 2005, Bulgarelli (Verdi) blames the United States and the American contractors of Blackwater for the death of the Italian military intelligence officer Nicola Calipari¹⁷⁸: ‘*Calipari [...] may have been killed by a group of contractors hired by the US to protect members of the American Secret Services. [...] These contractors, who shot the car where Calipari and the journalist Giuliana Sgrena were on, were employees of the firm Blackwater Security*¹⁷⁹’.

Differently, on the political-economic dimension, leftist accusations are many and vehement. In 2004, Cima (Ulivo), during a debate about a hostage crisis in Baghdad, argues that the kidnapping of four Italians in Iraq is responsibility of contractors, and of the Coalition’s incapability to manage order and violence through private actors¹⁸⁰. She clearly highlights the problems of these public-private interactions, for example noting how Blackwater, again, does not want to share information with the Italian Government, an arguably classic problem of public-private relations.

This episode represents an important turning point for the discussion in Italy about PMSCs, not only because American contractors were accused of being responsible for the kidnapping, but also because the Italian kidnapped were contractors themselves, employees of the American firm DTS Security. The death of one Italian contractor, killed by the kidnappers, generated a heated debate in the

¹⁷⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 26 May 2004 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_10156_14

¹⁷⁸ Calipari was escorting the Italian journalist Sgrena, who was released by Iraqi insurgents that kidnapped her. Approaching the US checkpoint, American soldiers, or contractors, shot the car, killing Calipari and seriously injuring Sgrena (La Repubblica, 2005). The episode generated an important diplomatic and judiciary controversy between Italy and the United States.

¹⁷⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 02 May 2005 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_14036_14

¹⁸⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 19 Apr 2004 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic7_00408_14

Parliament and on the media, also leading to a trial against the supposed recruiters, who were charged with the accusation of unauthorized recruiting of armed forces for a foreign state (Tarquini, 2014). Politicians issued more than twenty parliamentary questions during and after the episode, and this public and political attention led to many other debates on the role of contractors in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

In the following weeks, Deiana (Rifondazione Comunista) also expresses her preoccupation for private-public distortions, pointing to the obscure relations between the ‘*mercenaries*’ of the company KBR, the firm Halliburton, the US Government and the Italian Army¹⁸¹. Again in 2004, Malabarba (Rifondazione Comunista), during a broad debate about Italian Foreign Policy’s objectives, sheds light on the main problem of security outsourcing: ‘*the expansion of the disturbing phenomenon of military privatization and security outsourcing creates large “free zones” where modern factotum mercenaries rage without the limits of international law and treaties*’¹⁸². Infamous scandals involving firms as Blackwater in Fallujah and Baghdad, and CACI and Titan in Abu Ghraib similarly attract harsh criticisms¹⁸³.

MPs from the center and the right do not share the left’s concern and do not join the attacks of their leftist colleagues. In 2004, answering to doubts on the cooperation between the Army and the firm DynCorp, Mantica (Forza Italia) claims: ‘*we believe that this firm does not represent an obstacle for*

¹⁸¹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 20 Apr 2004 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic2_01166_14

¹⁸² *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 30 Nov 2004 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic3_01857_14_S

¹⁸³ E.g. Crucianelli (*Ulivo*). *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 23 Feb 2006

http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_19982_14

*the tasks our soldiers have to perform*¹⁸⁴. In 2011, Scotti (Noi Sud) dismisses leftist MPs' preoccupations about two contracts signed by the company Saracen with Somalia¹⁸⁵.

Apparently, continuity seems to characterize parties' political attitudes within the Parliament, as the left maintains the fiercest antagonism. However, the mechanisms behind this hostility significantly change with respect to the Cold War period. Anti-Americanism and anti-colonialism almost disappear from the debates, as well as mentions of hired soldiers as potential destabilizing forces for democratic regimes, and references to the military format. Instead, the political and economic problems of privatization shine as the critical factors, as politicians from the left point in this direction in the 60% of negative references. Indeed, leftist politicians interpret with preoccupation the involvement of private actors in the management of violence, where the firms' focus on profit, the inability of governments to control them and keep them accountable, and the negative effects on the efficiency of the national armed forces are often cited.

Thus, the third hypothesis (H3) finds here a warm confirmation, at least partially. First, as predicted, the left-right gap in terms of aversion to hired soldiers narrows. During the Cold War, the distance between the left and right (74.8) and the left and center (51.5) in terms of percentage of negative references was significant. After 1991, the gap narrows down to 35.5 and 49.8 respectively. Second, the military dimension completely loses its relevance in debates about contractors, the IR dimension occupies a small niche, though remaining relevant, while the political-economic dimension, as shown, drives the greatest part of the political antagonism. Certainly, such a powerful role for political-economic motives, with respect to the almost irrelevance of the other two dimensions is surprising¹⁸⁶.

¹⁸⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 12 Feb 2004

http://www.camera.it/_dati/leg14/lavori/bollet/200402/0212/pdf/04.pdf

¹⁸⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 03 Aug 2001

http://documenti.camera.it/leg16/resoConti/assemblea/html/sed0512/allegato_b.htm

¹⁸⁶ As already stressed, the low number of observations may have distorted these results.

More recently, from 2011 onward, a drastically different framework characterizes the discussion on private security on mercantile vessels (Cusumano and Ruzza, 2015), as shown in the previous Chapter about the evolution of the anti-mercenary norm after the Cold War. Of the 15 references, seven express positive attitudes, pointing to contractors' professionalism and effectiveness. Here, all parties support this measure, highlighting a potential change of political direction by the left. Unfortunately, numbers are too low to analyze variation among parties and to provide a definite judgement.

The United Kingdom in the post-Cold War: an antagonistic left, the gap widens

The debate on private military and security companies in the United Kingdom starts during the very early 1990s, as firms play a role in African civil wars, and contractors already have a significant presence within British territory. There are 274 references in the debates and results show pronounced differences in the percentages of negative references: the left¹⁸⁷, 56.9%, and the center/independent, 63.8%, present higher values with respect to the right, 20.8%. Additionally, there are slight differences for the employment of the term 'mercenaries' to describe contractors, i.e. the spillover effect: the center/independent is first with 20.6%, then the left with 20.1%, and finally the right with 11.1%.

On the political-economic dimension, the left and the center are vehemently critical against private companies. Regarding security within the UK territory, Labour MPs, along with Liberal Democrats and independents, criticize the firms' standards, in terms of performances and employment policies (24 mentions from the Lab, 1 for Con), and of negative effects on the communities (36 Lab, 11 Con). In 1990, discussing a new Criminal Justice Bill that would have outsourced more security services to the private sector, Madden (Lab) laments that PMSCs' personnel policies are '*to say the least,*

¹⁸⁷ The left: the Labour Party (142) and the Green Party (2). The right: the Conservative Party (72). The centre: Liberal Democrats (32). Independent: the Crossbench (17), and independent MPs (9).

*unsavoury*¹⁸⁸, and Lord Harris (LD) insists on this point, noting that: ‘*a substantial number of people employed by private security firms have formidable criminal records*¹⁸⁹’. In 1996, during a long and detailed debate all about the private security industry, Sheerman (Lab) notes that the industry’s irresistible growth brings many dangers for the British people¹⁹⁰.

On the other side, the Conservative are neutral, when not positive, about the role of security firms. In 1990, during a debate about improving policing in London, Gorman (Con) argues that contractors efficaciously support or substitute the police in tasks as banks and underground security: ‘*The increasing use of private security agencies takes work off the police. The number of bank robberies in London has reduced remarkably in the past 10 years because more banks are using private security firms to police the banks and to carry the money. That is a sensible idea. Contracting out traffic wardens has also been mentioned. [...] I am all in favour of that American idea if it improves people's feeling of safety on the underground*¹⁹¹’. In 1996, answering to the above accusations of Sheerman, Sackville (Con) claims that: ‘*Government have great respect for the private security industry, [...] which conducts the vast majority of its business without any problems*¹⁹²’.

Thus, during the 1990s the debate about security outsourcing on the British territory is inflamed with accusations against contractors, mostly from Labour and Liberal Democrat politicians. It is evident that the anti-privatization contestation against Thatcher’s policies that starts in the 1980s flows into the debate about private security companies. After 2000, left and right parties’ postures converge more and more, and leftist criticisms target specific episodes and not the effectiveness and the

¹⁸⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 20 Nov 1990 <http://bit.ly/2O9BpK7>

¹⁸⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 09 Feb 1990 <http://bit.ly/2MWOX7i>

¹⁹⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 13 Feb 1996 <http://bit.ly/2OeHZPS>

¹⁹¹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 13 Jul 1990 <http://bit.ly/2Q8vQJB>

¹⁹² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 13 Feb 1996 <http://bit.ly/2Q4L1TU>

legitimacy of the industry as a whole. This change, on the side of the left, seems to be due to improved regulation and to the acceptance of the considerable presence of firms all around the country.

Regarding privatization in war, despite the Blair's cabinet responsibility for Britain's participation in the Afghan and Iraqi conflicts, Labour and Liberal Democrats MPs do not support contractors joining the military efforts, something that their colleagues from the right interpret instead as necessary and often positive. In 2004, during a broad debate about Iraq, Baroness Williams of Crosby (LD) accuses some PMSCs' employees of *'illegal behaviour towards Iraqi prisoners, as mentioned in a Pentagon paper'*, and complains about the fact that they *'have not been tried in any way'*¹⁹³. In 2007, while debating about security for British military personnel in Iraq, Baker (Lab) asks for the immediate regulation of contractors working there, as he cites various allegations of human rights violations against them: *'Why have not the Government's intentions, which are stated in the 2002 Green Paper, to introduce legislation to control those companies, been implemented? We have waited five years for that'*¹⁹⁴.

Confronting such accusations, Conservative MPs are often on the defensive, claiming either that the British Army makes a limited use of such firms or that the alleged abuses are exceptions, examples of the justificatory strategies mentioned in Chapter IV. In 2009, as already quoted previously, Holloway (Con) notes that the industry helped the reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, filling gaps that the Army could not cover¹⁹⁵. Later, in 2012, Baroness Warsi (Con), then Senior Minister of State in the Department for Foreign and Commonwealth Office, presents the Government's strategy to work with PMSCs. She argues that *'They are not military companies and operate with the permission and co-operation of host Governments. We work with host Governments to address any concerns raised. We are working with the industry to raise standards globally by establishing a voluntary,*

¹⁹³ Hansard Archive, Lords, 23 Jun 2004 <http://bit.ly/2SAR19n>

¹⁹⁴ Hansard Archive, Commons, 14 May 2007 <http://bit.ly/2xB77X8>

¹⁹⁵ Hansard Archive, Commons, 14 Jan 2009 <http://bit.ly/2Q2ZBLs>

*independently audited and internationally recognised regulatory system that is practical, effective and affordable*¹⁹⁶.

Overall, during debates about Iraq and Afghanistan, Labour MPs mention the negative effects of contractors in 48% of the cases (10.5% for Con) and Con MPs refer to the ‘good job’ made by PMSCs in 21.1% of the instances (4% for Lab). In addition, the left describes as ‘mercenaries’ contractors working in Iraq and Afghanistan in 16% of the mentions, a number that decreases to 0% for the right. However, following the same trend as the debates on internal security outsourcing, after 2007 parties’ attitudes converge, as the left ceases the attacks against the value of PMSCs. Again, it seems that the left contests the negative effects of privatization during a ‘first wave’ and then recalibrates its attitude toward more neutral tones.

Finally, very few references call into question the IR dimension, and almost solely during the African civil wars of the 1990s, where parties adopt similar postures. In particular, the discussion on the Sierra Leone Civil War is illustrative of the old-fashioned consensus about anti-mercenary attitudes. During debates about various aspects of the conflict, Abbott (Lab) sheds light on some neo-colonial features of Western powers’ Foreign Policy in 1998: ‘*it can be no part of an ethical foreign policy to connive at the use of mercenaries*¹⁹⁷’ and Blunt (Con), in the same year, agrees, stating that PMSCs’ employees are just ‘*hired killers*¹⁹⁸’. As a last piece of evidence, no observations are part of the military dimension. To conclude, Table IX shows the results regarding the drivers of the antagonism against PMSCs and security contractors for both Italy and the United Kingdom. The Italian right and center are excluded for lack of a significant number of observations.

[Table IX about here]

¹⁹⁶ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 30 Oct 2012 <http://bit.ly/2SAPZug>

¹⁹⁷ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 12 May 1998 <http://bit.ly/2O8cw1w>

¹⁹⁸ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 18 May 1998 <http://bit.ly/2OaWdaB>

Table IX: Drivers of the antagonism after the Cold War (percentages of negative references)

	Italian Left	UK Indep	UK Left	UK Right
Anti-Americanism (IR dimension)	4%	0%	0%	0%
Anti-Colonialism (IR dimension)	0%	0%	3.7%	0%
Anti-Communism (IR dimension)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Instruments for Coups (IR dimension)	8%	0%	3.7%	0%
Military Format (Military dimension)	4%	0%	0%	0%
Privatization Policies (Pol-eco dimension)	60%	67.6%	58%	40%
Specific Conflicts (PAE)	24%	32.4%	34.6%	60%

Thus, as in the case of Italy, attitudes toward privatization emerge as the most relevant factor that explain anti-mercenary hostility. The analysis of the various mechanisms and dimensions shows that 58.0% of negative references from the left (67.6% from the center) highlight critical problems of the outsourcing process, often centering the attention on the fact that Conservatives and PMSCs focus only on private profit and do not take in consideration security for both British, Afghan and Iraqi people. Other mechanisms, as attacks against democracy, anti-imperialism and anti-Americanism play a very marginal role, as shown in the Table above. Furthermore, results do show moderate support for the alternative explanation about specific scenarios, as MPs often refer to these issues. In this period, attitudes toward PMSCs are less politicized and constrained by internal and exogenous structural factors, and politicians evidently focus more on specific scenarios and problems.

It is interesting to notice that the Conservatives in the UK, the party in general less averse to contractors, almost solely point to specific problems in its few negative references to PMSCs. Other parties, both in Italy and the UK, which directly connect security outsourcing with political and economic broader factors, show a less intense and frequent appeal to specific scenarios. Table X and XI summarize these findings, recalling the theoretical framework presented in the Chapter on theory and mechanisms.

Overall, results convincingly support the predictions of the fourth hypothesis (H4). First, the left-right gap in terms of differences in percentages of negative references moves from 8.5 during the Cold War to 36.1 after 1991, thus showing a significant increase in distance between parties. Secondly, while the IR and the military dimensions are almost never mentioned, the political-economic dimension emerges as the crucial explanation for the gap in the intensity of hostility between the Labour and the Conservative Parties.

[Table X and XI about here]

Table X: Mercenaries 1945-1991, results

	Italy		The UK	
	<i>left</i>	<i>centre/right</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>right</i>
Military dimension	significant driver of aversion	not relevant	significant driver of aversion	significant driver of aversion
IR dimension	main driver of aversion	main driver of lack of aversion	main driver of aversion	main driver of aversion
Pol-eco dimension	not relevant	not relevant	not relevant	not relevant

Table XI: Private military and security companies 1991-2017, results

	Italy		The UK	
	<i>left</i>	<i>centre/right</i>	<i>left</i>	<i>right</i>
Military dimension	not relevant	not relevant	not relevant	not relevant
IR dimension	weak driver of aversion	not relevant	not relevant	not relevant
Pol-eco dimension	main driver of aversion	main driver of lack of aversion	main driver of aversion	main driver of lack of aversion

Finally, regarding differences across countries, a point already stressed in the previous Chapter, Italy (50.8%) and the UK (48.9%) show again a similar intensity in their antagonism. Hostility generally decreases with respect to the Cold War, as politicians evidently consider PMSCs as more legitimate than mercenaries. In addition, both countries resorted directly more often to contractors than to mercenaries, though Italy to a significant lesser extent.

Chapter VI: *Honorable Mentions*

As already anticipated, this Chapter discusses some ‘honorable mentions’ that previous Chapters have overlooked. Indeed, next sections offer pseudo-robustness checks for some claims made in previous paragraphs. Moreover, the time-and-scope extensions of the analysis provides a more complete picture of political antagonism against mercenaries. The first section, ‘honorable mentions I’, focuses on mercenaries and political parties between 1805 and 1945, discussing in details the role of party politics during the debates about the *Questione Romana* in Italy and the Crimean War in the UK, two critical junctures for mercenaries’ activities and political attention to their operations. Other than providing insightful new information about political parties in such a long period and over two relevant historical moments for the two countries, the results also helps in understanding whether the theoretical framework built for parties and mercenaries during and after the Cold War may be applied also to the pre-1945 period.

The second section considers instead debates on mercenaries other than PMSCs and contractors in the period 1992-2017, focusing on the evolution of the anti-mercenary norm. Providing again additional information and new debates, the fundamental contribution of this part is to contrast political attitudes to classic mercenaries and to PMSCs, in order to verify and strengthen the results and claims on the disappearance of the norm.

Finally, the third and final section centers the attention on the one hand on mercenaries other than PMSCs and contractors, and on political parties, on the other, in the period 1992-2017. After a brief presentation of results and statistics the discussions turns to the War in Libya in 2011, a conflict in which mercenaries played a considerable role. The main objective of this part is to verify whether parties’ posture toward mercenaries in this period, and the dimensions and mechanisms behind them, resemble more classic attitudes toward old mercenarism or if instead they mirror political attitudes toward contractors over the same period.

Honorable mentions I: Mercenaries and political parties before 1945

The Questione Romana

As already argued in the Introduction, before 1945 the party system in Italy is not as structured as during the First Republic and in the following decades. Parties are not yet the solid and organized institutions they will become after 1945, and in this period there are no quantitative data about parties' position on the left-right spectrum, so that a rigorous analysis on this element is not possible. For these reasons, I here focus only on the Questione Romana, an occasion in which relevant political issues linked with mercenaries' activities create notable disagreements among Italian parties.

The two political organizations that emerge after the Italian unification in 1861, the *Destra Storica* (Historical Right) and the *Sinistra Storica* (Historical Left), are de facto parliamentary groups or movements, more than political parties in the contemporary interpretation. Moreover, as Ridolfi (2008) points out, the opinions of their representatives converge on many issues, both on domestic and foreign policies. The most relevant controversy and one of the few issues that creates a clear division between the left and right, is the Questione Romana (Croce, 1977). It is worth mentioning that in this context the left-right label must be employed with extreme caution. For instances, the Historical Left is a branch of XIX century liberalism more than a leftist party in the modern sense. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, this section can contribute to parliamentary studies, shedding light on one of the founding and most important moment in early Italian history.

To recall what previous sections have stated, the term Questione Romana describes the problem of the city of Rome, after 1861 still controlled by the temporal authority of the Pope. The Italian Government is firmly willing to take control of the city, and the left-right disagreement specifically regards the way to achieve this goal. In particular, members of the *Destra* favor diplomatic solutions, seeking negotiations with France and with the Pope, whereas the *Sinistra* is determined to employ the Italian Armed Forces to free Rome with military force. In this context, mercenaries are a crucial

factor, since the army of the Vatican was entirely composed of hired soldiers, mostly coming from Switzerland and France.

Between 1861 and 1892 there are 45 references to mercenaries and the Questione, the *Destra* mentions them 17 times, the *Sinistra* 25 and independent MPs 3 times. Regarding the intensity of the hostility toward hired soldiers, the two proto-parties do not show dramatically different values, as negative mentions are 87.5% for the *Sinistra* and 76.5% for the *Destra*. Both groups hold highly negative opinions against the fact that the Pope defends his temporal possessions with mercenary forces, and such opinions are mostly grounded in a moral condemnation of hired soldiers. As already noted and quoted in previous Chapters, Petruccelli della Gattina (*Sinistra*) clearly shows such moral aversion in 1862: “*If the army of the Pope had been composed of Roman soldiers, we would not have raised any objections; but because, as it seems very likely, it will be formed by foreign mercenaries, the horrors that could emerge will be incalculable*¹⁹⁹”. From the *Destra*, Bon Compagni di Mombello follows the same line in 1864: “*There is the possibility of a deplorable event for Italy, deplorable for the Catholic community, for the authority of the Pope, and this is the event in which the Pope would exercise his authority through the employment of foreign mercenaries*²⁰⁰”.

Thus, both parliamentary groups agree on the importance of ‘conquering’ Rome and both consider as heinous the employment of hired force by the Vatican. Moreover, in most of the cases such condemnation is moral, meaning that mercenaries, apparently, are not simply attacked to justify political and military measures against the Pope, instead they are interpreted as a moral problem by themselves. However, such a high level of moral condemnations may be due in part to the role of framing (Chong & Druckman, 2007), as already argued in previous sections. Being interested in boosting aversion toward the Pope, Italian MPs stress the role and importance of mercenaries, actors

¹⁹⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 20 Jul 1862 <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed269.pdf>

²⁰⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 09 Nov 1864 <http://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed687.pdf>

usually interpreted as immoral. At least, country as the United Kingdom charges this accusation against Italy in that period. For instances, in 1853 Hennessy, during a debate about British relations with Italy and France, criticizes Italian Prime Minister Count Cavour for his ambiguous positions on the mercenaries of the Pope: ‘*Count Cavour then began to make speeches in the Turin Parliament, and to write despatches on the subject of foreign mercenaries. In a short time matters got to such a pitch that the Turin Cabinet sent a despatch to Rome summoning the Papal Government to disband all its foreign mercenaries. And yet Count Cavour, who sent this despatch, was the very person who had suggested the employment of foreign mercenaries*²⁰¹’.

As anticipated, disagreement between *Destra* and *Sinistra* solely regards the decision to employ diplomatic or military tools to take control of Rome. Looking deeper inside the debates, the lower percentage of negative references from the *Destra* may reflect exactly this softer approach, where MPs mitigate their attacks against the Pope and his mercenaries in order to support diplomatic solutions and not to exacerbate the relations with France and the Vatican. Results from the government/opposition variable support these considerations. Indeed, the Italian Government, composed mostly by members of the *Destra*, show a level of hostility (72.7% of negative references) slightly lower than that of the opposition (82.6%), monopolized by the *Sinistra*.

An example comes from the Count of Cavour, member of the *Destra* and first Italian Prime Minister in 1861: ‘*The authority of the Pope and the independence of the Church will be better guaranteed by the support of 26 million Italians than by some mercenaries or by troops that are valuable and friend, but still foreign*²⁰²’. On the leftist side, instead, the presence of mercenaries in the Vatican is a crucial element to support the case for the military invasion. Ricciardi (*Sinistra*) touches this point in 1861: ‘*No one here ignores the money (the Pope and France) sent to Rome to pay foreign mercenaries. Our*

²⁰¹ Hansard Archive, Commons, 05 Feb 1863 <http://bit.ly/2AbKH2M>

²⁰² *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 25 Mar 1861 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed022.pdf>

*soldiers should slaughter them*²⁰³. In 1864 Miceli (*Sinistra*) strongly criticizes the soft diplomatic approach of the *Destra*: ‘*Our ministers and diplomats agreed not only to sign a solemn promise not to attack the Pope, but also to defend him, to pay for his debts, and to allow him to form a mercenary army, a horde*²⁰⁴’.

The debate on the Questione, similarly to what will become a clear trend after 1945, show a more antagonistic leftist side of the Parliament toward mercenaries, again remembering the different things left and right represented during the XIX century and after 1945. However, the distance between the left and right is significantly smaller with respect to the Cold War and the post-Cold War periods. Moreover, moral negative references show contrasting results. The *Destra* (84.6%) refers more often to moral issues when attacking mercenaries with respect to the *Sinistra* (71.4%). A result that replicates in the government (75%) versus opposition (73.7%) variable. This apparently surprising result may be due to two factors: first, the very low number of negative references from the *Destra* (only 13). Secondly, the fact that some members of the *Destra* grew more and more antagonistic against the Pope and his mercenaries after the failure of many years of diplomatic negotiations.

The War in Crimea

While more structured than the Italian system after 1861, the party system in the United Kingdom during the mid-XIX century does not resemble the organized and institutionalized structure of the post-1945 period. A mix of parties, parliamentary groups and proto-parties as the Whig, the Tories, the Conservatives and the Radicals occupy the seats of the British Houses. In this period, the War in Crimea, as argued, is a crucial Foreign Policy issue. The development of the Conflict (16 October 1853 – 30 March 1856) almost coincides with the Aberdeen Government (19 December 1852 – 30 January 1855), who resigns exactly after intense accusations about an improper management of the

²⁰³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 17 Jun 1861 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed079.pdf>

²⁰⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 8 Nov 1864 <https://storia.camera.it/regno/lavori/leg08/sed686.pdf>

Crimean War (Figes, 2011). The Whigs and the Peelites, a dissident political faction of the Conservative Party, form the Aberdeen Government coalition and the debate in the Houses revolves around the issue of whether sending mercenaries in Crimea to support the British troops. After many and intense discussions, the British Government decides to hire, prepare and send eastward a mercenary army, though the conflict will end before the actual arrival of hired soldiers on the Crimean land. The importance of the issue and the relevant role mercenaries play during the conflict generate inflamed discussions in the British Parliament and politicians refer to mercenaries while debating on the War in 61 instances.

Differently from the *Questione Romana* and the debates about mercenaries in Italy throughout the all period of investigation (1861-2017), and similarly to the discussions in the UK during the Cold War (1945-1991), the parliamentary dispute about the Crimean War does not create significant differences among parties and between the Government and the opposition. As argued, the party system is loosed and various, with many different types of ‘formations’ constituting the parliamentary ranks²⁰⁵. The left (70.6% of negative references on the topic) shows similar values with respect to the right (77.1%) whereas the independents are more antagonistic (88.8%). However, since the tripartite division is debatable and since many members of the Conservative Party are secessionist and actually part of the Government, the variable government/opposition should provide more accurate and valuable results. Again, results are very similar, as members of the Government (74.3%) and of the opposition (78.9%) present comparable intensities in their anti-mercenary hostility. Furthermore, the percentages of

²⁰⁵ Lacking a quantitative index that collocates parties on the left-right spectrum, it is necessary to rely on the left-centre-right tripartite division. The left: Liberal Party (12 references on mercenaries and the Crimean War), the Whigs (3), and the Radicals (2). The centre: Independent MPs (9). The right: the Conservative Party (20), the Tories (12), the Irish Conservative Party (2), and the Irish Independent Party (1).

moral accusations on the side of the Government (46.2%) and on the opposition (46.7%) show essentially equal figures.

In 1854, the Earl of Derby (Con), from the opposition, makes clear why the Conservatives contest the Government's decision to hire mercenaries. He claims that '*The Government appear to be about to draw their troops from any quarter of the globe who may be ready to come for the sake of their pay alone, and are to be more mercenary soldiers, enlisted into our service and placed beside British troops. I say, then, that this is a question of grave importance — of great constitutional importance — when we find that the Government at this period of the war, after no less than two years' experience of the immediate prospect of the war, are compelled to come down to Parliament with the humiliating confession that, with more than 28,000,000 of population in England, Ireland, and Scotland, they are unable to send an army of 50,000 men to the scene of hostilities without drawing away the troops from our garrisons abroad and placing themselves in humiliating reliance upon the aid of mercenary foreigners*²⁰⁶'. In another debate the same year, the Earl of Derby again argues that the practice of hiring mercenaries is humiliating for the country: '*from all times, and in all countries, the hiring of mercenaries has been the surest mark of the weakness of a nation, and the certain sign of approaching decay*²⁰⁷'. On the same line, during a similar debate in the following days, Adderley (Con): '*Why, then, should foreign mercenaries be pressed into our armies when the services of more valuable troops were freely offered?*²⁰⁸'

On the other side, some members of the Government contest such critiques. Again in 1854, the Duke of Argyll (Lib) answers to the Earl of Derby's attacks: '*Talk about the hire of mercenaries, when the noble Earl knows himself that the noblest victories won under the Duke of Wellington were won partly*

²⁰⁶ Hansard Archive, Lords, 14 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2XAVezu>

²⁰⁷ Hansard Archive, Lords, 15 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2wQ9Ivs>

²⁰⁸ Hansard Archive, Commons, 19 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2XzUSZZ>

*by the assistance of those whom the noble Earl degrades as hirelings*²⁰⁹. Similarly, Watson (Lib) defends the possibility of resorting to the market for force: *'They were told that the British soldiery could not bear the idea of fighting with mercenaries, but when those troops were doing their duty in the Peninsula and at Waterloo, where could they point to any jealousy*²¹⁰*'*

Nonetheless, more than reflecting government versus opposition clear and distinguished positions, the two trends, namely criticizing or defending mercenaries, cross parties' lines. As shown by the results above, many members of the Government criticize the Defense Minister's decision to hire mercenaries. Napier (Lib) argues that: *'It would be degrading and humiliating to the country to go about the world asking for hired mercenaries, it would be destructive of the spirit of the people, and of all that moral elevation which, after all, was the great resource and defence of nations*²¹¹*'*. Following through, Daby Seymour (Lib): *'the fatal system of hiring mercenaries had done a great deal towards that degeneration*²¹²*'*.

As it was the case for the Questione Romana in Italy, and for many other issues during the following decades, also the debate on the Crimean War show how politicians may employ the mercenary stigma to attack their colleagues or foreign actors, as shown by quotations in paragraphs above. Another interesting trend is here the emergence of a justificatory strategy for the employment of mercenaries, mainly a sort of disrespect for, and a perceived great danger from, the enemy. Russophobe attitudes were present in the Houses, and, for instances, Colonel de Lacy Evans argues that against the Russian threat all means are necessary, even the employment of mercenaries (Figes, 2011, pp. 49, 73). Discussing again the Enlistment of Foreigners Bill in 1854, Lord Russell criticizes this cynic attitude of the Colonel, recalling previous military expeditions in which Evans personally led mercenary

²⁰⁹ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 15 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2JBFSkH>

²¹⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 19 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2G331vb>

²¹¹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 20 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2JuWFWx>

²¹² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 20 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2G2bYoP>

armies: *‘Gentleman opposite with such due honour, and whom I trust soon to see here in restored health, receiving from you, Sir, the thanks of this House for his great valour and skill. Sir De Lacy Evans did not scruple, when the throne of an ally of this country was in danger, to proceed to the aid of that monarch, and went to Spain, to head what was now characterised as a band of foreign mercenaries²¹³’*. Again, this debate further shows how politicians debate on mercenaries, where justificatory strategies arguing for their employment collide with moral and pragmatic condemnations.

Overall, the debate on the Crimean War seems to replicate some of the trends that will appear during the Cold War. British politicians discuss in thorough details the military, political and economic aspects of the expedition and the conflict, and of the potential involvement of mercenaries. During these debates, positions on Foreign Policy general objectives, the military format, and the specific role of mercenaries cross parties’ lines and the picture that eventually emerges presents similar figures for all parties and for both government and the opposition.

Honorable mentions II: Mercenaries and the norm after 1991

Since I have collected data on mercenaries also in the period 1992-2017, this section discusses two relevant topics and serves two important purposes. First, the analysis of political attitudes toward mercenaries after 1991 allows a comparison with postures toward PMSCs in the same period, verifying whether the weakening, and the disappearing, of the norm regards also mercenary forces other than security contractors. Secondly, the assessment of parties’ attitudes in next section allows investigating whether the trends, similarities and divergences among parties also characterize the discussion on mercenaries in the post-Cold War period.

²¹³ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 19 Dec 1854 <http://bit.ly/2MmmkUr>

Between 1992 and 2017, there are 333 references to mercenaries, 109 from the Italian Parliament and 224 from the British Houses. However, I exclude from the dataset every mention of PMSCs, when politicians call contractors mercenaries. In this way, figures decrease to 87 for Italy and 179 for the United Kingdom²¹⁴. Overall, results present interesting insights. First, hostility and moral attacks show higher intensities with respect to the debates on PMSCs, highlighting how antagonism toward ‘classic’ mercenarism remains strong, differently from that targeting security contractors. Table XII compares data from the dataset on PMSCs with that on mercenaries in the same period, pointing to the higher aversion toward the latter.

[Table XII about here]

²¹⁴ Furthermore, I also drop from the dataset out-of-context references, as for previous periods. In this case, I exclude 20 references from the Italian debates and 10 from the British debates.

Table XII: Negative and moral references to PMSCs and mercenaries 1991-2017

	PMSCs Italy	Mercenaries Italy	PMSCs UK	Mercenaries UK
	(1990-2017)	(1992-2017)	(1990-2017)	(1992-2017)
Negative references	50.8%	53.73%	49.9%	69.8%
Moral negative references	32.3%	47.2%	23.9%	33.9%

Secondly, as Figures XIV and XV show, discussions on mercenaries in both Parliaments do not experience a decrease in terms of hostility and moral condemnations, which consistently remain at high levels. Differently from the debate on PMSCs in the same period, politicians remain critical and averse to mercenary forces other than security contractors throughout the entire period of investigation. Furthermore, in the United Kingdom the trend of negative references is negative, implying that hostility increases as times goes by. Likely, the discussion over the Libyan Civil War from 2011 onwards significantly contributes to the enflame anti-mercenary sentiments in the last decade.

[Figures XIII and XIV about here]

Positive, neutral and negative references to mercenaries

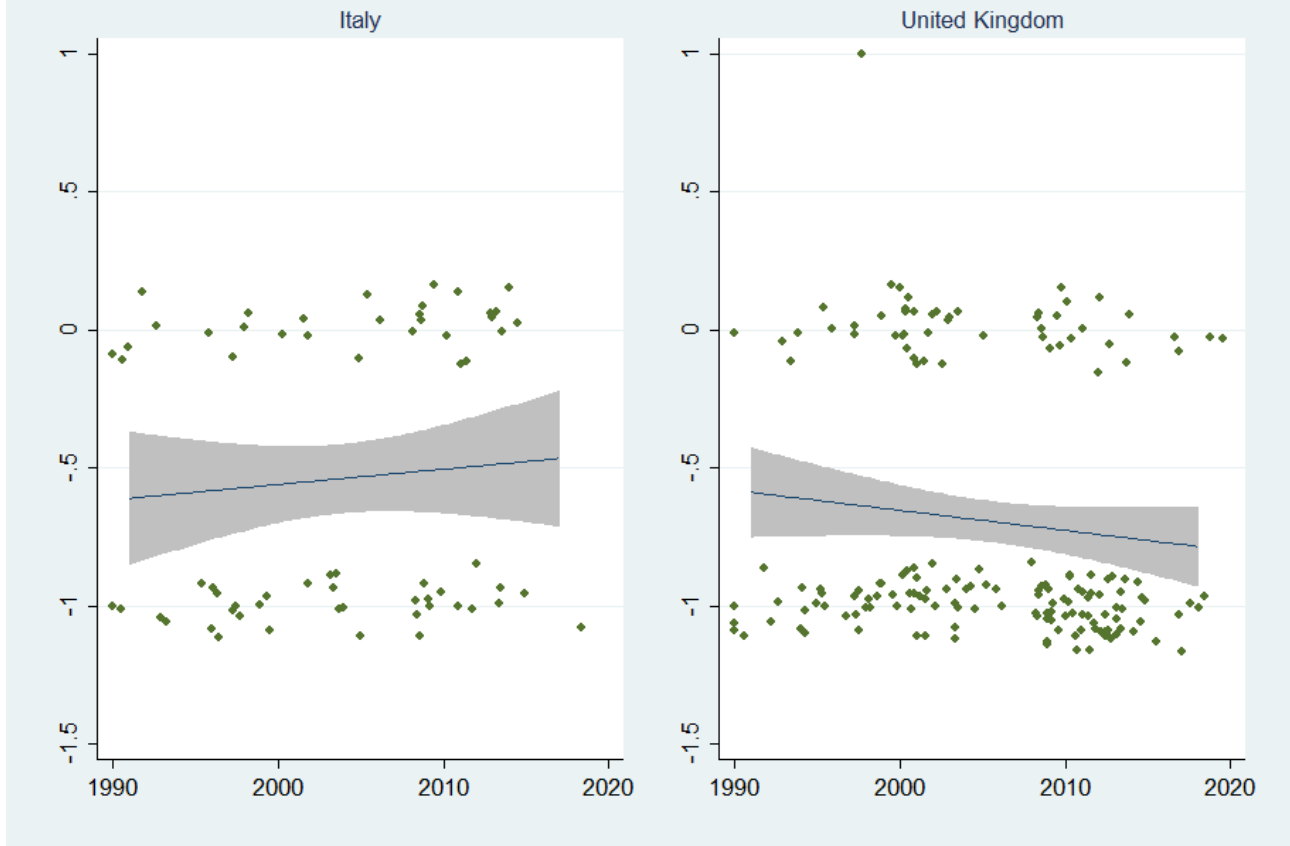


Figure XIV: positive (+1), neutral (0) and negative (-1) references to mercenaries in Italy and the UK (1992-2017), with regression line and 95% confidence intervals. Observations' values have been randomized around the +1, 0 and -1 lines.

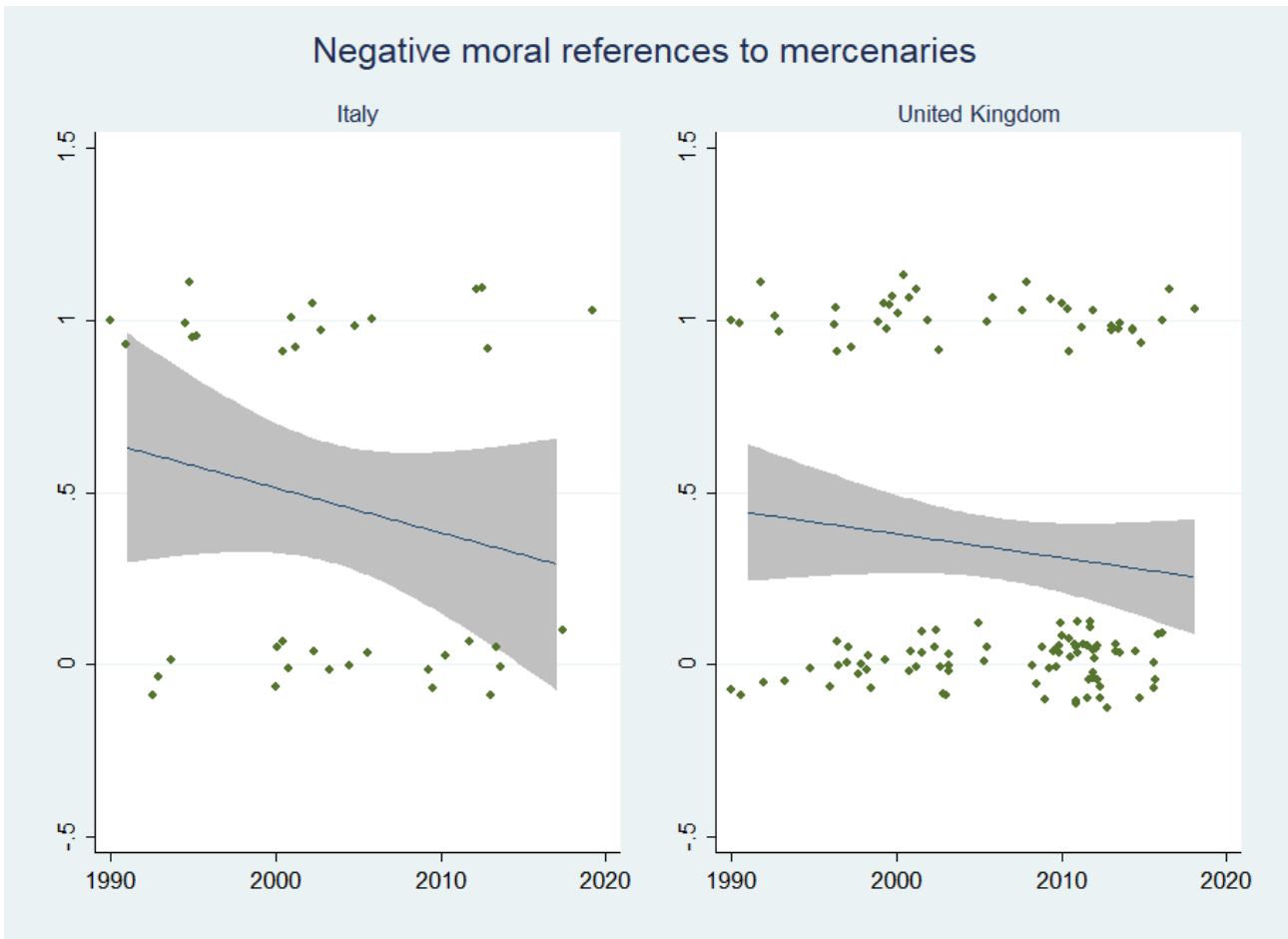


Figure XV: Moral (1) and non-moral (0) negative references to mercenaries in Italy and the UK (1992-2017), with regression line and 95% confidence intervals. Observations' values have been randomized around the 1 and 0 lines.

Thirdly, the reasons behind the accusation against mercenaries in both countries in this period remind of the old antagonism against mercenarism, more than resembling the motives that explain anti-PMSCs sentiments. Indeed, while attacks against contractors were mostly based on the negative consequences of the firms' actions, the discussion on mercenaries after 1991 recover the old topic about hired soldiers as armed agents of dictators and heinous regimes. In the UK, this problem has a relevant weight (17.7% of all negative references), while the focus on the negative 'effects' of mercenaries' operations (44.5%) plays a smaller role with respect to the discussion on contractors (58.7%). This trend is more evident in Italy, where politicians identify mercenaries as agents of nefarious regimes in many occasions (51.4%), whereas the negative consequences of their actions are more rarely cited (11.4%, it was 59.4% for PMSCs in the same period).

Quotations from politicians' debates further clarify the picture. In Italy in 1995, Trantino comments the UN 1989 Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries²¹⁵: *'Who could doubt, with perspicacity and rigour, that a mercenary is a man naturally inclined to commit crimes²¹⁶?'* In 1997, Scantamburlo criticizes the presence of mercenaries in the refugee camp of Tingi Tingi in Zaire, a war zone after the Rwandan Civil War: *'The Government of Zaire is directly involved in this action (arming refugees in the camp) and it is supported by an army of mercenaries, among them many Italians²¹⁷'*.

A topic that attracts attention and many references, for straightforward reasons, is the involvement of mercenaries in the Libyan Civil War in 2011. Franceschini expresses his preoccupation: *'Libya is on the verge of a Civil War [...] there are alarming news about the hiring of a considerable number of*

²¹⁵ The Convention entered into force in 2001 and has been ratified by solely 35 states.

²¹⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 27 Apr 1995

<https://www.camera.it/dati/leg12/lavori/stenografici/stenografico/32556.pdf>

²¹⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 18 Feb 1997 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic3_00756_13

*mercenaries who have the precise task of shooting civilians that protest peacefully*²¹⁸. On the same line, Ranucci, again in 2011: *'The regime has hired African mercenaries who do not hesitate to open fire on unarmed demonstrators'*²¹⁹.

In the UK, attacks against mercenaries target similar operations and employ similar arguments²²⁰. In 1997, Galloway attacks the autocratic regime in Bahrein, which employs mercenaries against its own citizens: *'If, in the teeth of all that evidence, of international opprobrium and expressions of concern, the Bahraini people are still being shot like dogs in the streets by security forces led by British mercenaries and are still being abused on the torture tables in the dungeons of the regime'*²²¹. In 1998, Cahytor lists mercenaries with terrorists and rogue regimes as actors that could have an interest in getting plutonium for military (and evil) purposes: *'It takes little imagination to understand the attractiveness of that option to terrorists, mercenaries and rogue regimes, especially in view of the political instability that prevails in many parts of the world'*²²². In 2004, Swire attacks Mugabe, Zimbabwe's autocrat, and his employment of mercenaries: *'Mugabe's reaction to international pressure is worthy of Colonel Kurtz in "Apocalypse Now". Today, we read of suspected mercenaries*

²¹⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 22 Feb 2011 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic3_01476_16

²¹⁹ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 3 Mar 2011
<http://leg16.senato.it/japp/bgt/showdoc/print/16/Sindisp/0/526229/0>

²²⁰ A very interesting quote, and the only positive references to mercenaries in the whole period, comes from Lord Burnham in 1999: *'We have the Gurkhas. Yes, they are mercenaries, but let us increase and strengthen the force of Gurkhas. That is very much an easy method of increasing our capability to deal with any problem. I must say that I should like to let them loose in Northern Ireland'*. This is an explicit reference to the political and military convenience of mercenary forces, a topic stressed in many and diverse occasions during the discussion of the anti-mercenary norm. See *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 24 Feb 1999 <http://bit.ly/32mNL5U>

²²¹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 3 Jun 1997 <http://bit.ly/32pWHYs>

²²² *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 13 May 1998 <http://bit.ly/32pL2IU>

*landing in unmarked planes, armed with bolt cutters, a sledgehammer, army boots, sleeping bags and walkie-talkie radios*²²³.

Similarly to their Italian colleagues, British politicians are particularly critical against mercenaries employed by Colonel Ghaddafi during the Libyan Civil War. In 2011, Pincher has a strong point on Ghaddafi and his hired soldiers. *‘What is a no-fly zone?’ That is exactly the question that should be asked. Does he agree that it should not be merely a humanitarian air umbrella protecting people from being attacked in Benghazi, but should extend to Tripoli, so that Gaddafi cannot import more mercenaries — his merchants of death*²²⁴?’ Similarly, Prime Minister David Cameron links mercenaries with the support of the heinous regime of the Colonel: *‘Far from meeting those aspirations, Colonel Gaddafi has responded by attacking his own people. He has brought the full might of armed forces to bear on them, backed up by mercenaries. The world has watched as he has brutally crushed his own people*²²⁵.

Other than specific attacks against Ghaddafi’s hired soldiers, politicians frame the problems of the war and mercenaries in a greater picture. Again in 2011, Ellwood confronts Prime Minister Cameron with exactly this problem: *‘This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to encourage democracy to spread across the middle east. He gave a robust message to Colonel Gaddafi. Does he have an equally robust message for the other dictators in Africa who have chosen not to support democracy but to send mercenaries to support Colonel Gaddafi’s dictatorship*²²⁶?’

Overall, results seem to imply that while PMSCs slip away from the target of the anti-mercenary norm, other mercenary forces remain the object of consistent and strenuous criticism in both Italy and the United Kingdom. This evidence could suggest that the core of the norm persists, while states

²²³ Hansard Archive, Commons, 9 Mar 2004 <http://bit.ly/2xIZeib>

²²⁴ Hansard Archive, Commons, 17 Mar 2011 <http://bit.ly/32iFkZz>

²²⁵ Hansard Archive, Commons, 18 Mar 2011 <http://bit.ly/32owqK0>

²²⁶ Hansard Archive, Commons, 28 Feb 2011 <http://bit.ly/2SabQIB>

simply remove PMSCs from the category of old odious mercenaries. Nonetheless, debates on contractors and mercenaries in this period are not easily comparable. While PMSCs have almost everywhere been embedded in various forms in the structures of the Armed Forces, or have at least have worked in cooperation with national armies, mercenaries remain in this period solely illegal bands hired by enemies around the world. Thus, the analysis of the anti-mercenary norm cannot be consistent and extended as in previous periods.

More specifically, the many and significant differences between the two groups, as already argued, certainly contribute to create such a gap. After 1991, while security companies are legitimately registered private firms, mercenary associations and bands, for instances the ones fighting in Libya, remain loose, hidden, disorganized and, almost everywhere, illegal. Moreover, on the one side, states have various and often-productive direct relations with PMSCs, whereas on the other, states never directly employ old-style mercenaries from 1992 onwards²²⁷. In this way, results in this section provides additional valuable information about the evolution of the anti-mercenary norm, demonstrating how the specific character of supposed mercenary forces, together with all other factors highlighted in Chapter IV, has a deep impact on states and politicians' perceptions and attitudes.

Honorable mentions III: Mercenaries and political parties after 1991

This section addresses political parties' attitudes toward mercenaries between 1992 and 2017. Other than enriching the discussion about the relation between private hired soldiers and parties, this investigation serves relevant purposes, as anticipated. First, it allows assessing whether parties' attitudes in this period resembles more the postures toward contractors after the end of the Cold War

²²⁷ This lack of a direct link or involvement does not allow a rigorous investigation about the weak-strong spectrum of the norm.

or if instead they remind the positions parties adopted toward mercenaries between 1945 and 1991. The question is thus whether parties interpret and relate to mercenaries in continuity with their Cold War attitudes or if instead the emergence of PMSCs influence their postures toward mercenary forces other than security contractors. The first part of this section presents general results about parties' attitudes during the entire period, while the second part focuses on the 2011 Civil War in Libya, showing how different parties interpret the involvement of mercenaries in the conflict.

In Italy, results show how parties of all colors stand reasonably close on a similar intensity of aversion toward mercenaries. Considering all 62 references, parties from the left (56.5%), the center (42.9%), and the right (58.3%) present comparable percentages of negative references²²⁸. Over a total of 14 negative references, parties from the left recall the Cold War interpretation of mercenaries as armed agents of autocratic regimes (57.1% of negative references), and also anti-neocolonialism (14.3%) and anti-Americanism (7.1%) play a role on the IR dimension. The military (14.3% of observation refer to conscription) and the political-economic dimension (7.1%) also contribute to explain the leftist antagonism. On the other side, over 15 negative references, the right points more often to general (40%) and specific (33.3%) problems of mercenaries' operations, while the three dimensions play a small role in explaining the hostility²²⁹.

In 1992, Garavini (RC) links mercenaries' operation with American and Western imperialism at the beginning of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia: *'The US and Germany [...] instead of working for peace, slyly operate to create and share new spheres of influence. They bring weapons and*

²²⁸ The left: Partito Democratico (PD, 9), Ulivo (UL, 5), Rifondazione Comunista (RC, 4), Federazione dei Verdi (FdV, 3), and Partito Democratico della Sinistra (PDS, 2). The center: Italia dei Valori (IdV, 5), Movimento 5 Stelle (M5S, 3), Alleanza di Centro (AdC, 2), and others (4). The right: Alleanza Nazionale (AN, 8), Popolo della Libertà (PdL, 6), Lega Nord (LN, 5), Forza Italia (FI, 4), and others (2). With such few references, results in this section can only be considered as incomplete or preliminary.

²²⁹ Parties from the centre amount only for 6 negative references.

*mercenaries, and they support extremist forces of various republics*²³⁰. In 2007, Colombo (UL) combines anti-neocolonial and anti-authoritarian arguments to attack mercenaries in Sudan: ‘*We cannot ask the UN to act [...] and then allow multinational firms to support liberticidal governments as that of Sudan (I refer in particular to the infamous and terrible Arab mercenaries from Darfur, who slaughter women and children)*’²³¹.

As argued, the classic support for conscription, and the mirroring aversion to potential reforms toward professionalization, emerge from the leftist ranks, as Cò (RC) states in 2011: ‘*People ask us for to contrast the cultural and political short-sightedness which wants to entrust mercenaries to defend our community and our country*’²³². Finally, a few negative references from leftist politicians surface from the political-economic dimension. In 1993, Testa (PDS) denounces the link between various private interests in the former Yugoslavia, where Italian banks, arms firms and mercenaries collude to support and boost their profits: ‘*Unknown warlords are hiring mercenaries to fight in the former Yugoslavia. Among them there are 600 Italians [...] mercenaries are recruited in Livorno, La Spezia and Dalmine [...] they are paid by banks, which also support local arms producers*’²³³.

On the other side, parties from the right point almost solely to specific or general problems linked with mercenaries’ activities, without explicit references to the three dimensions. In 1994, referring to general problems, Trantino (AN) argues that ‘*mercenarism is an offence to human dignity*’²³⁴. In

²³⁰ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 17 Jun 1992 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic2_00058_11

²³¹ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 13 Feb 2007

<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00252066.pdf>

²³² *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 16 Jan 2001

<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00007011.pdf>

²³³ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 13 Jan 1993 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic4_09565_11

²³⁴ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 05 Oct 1994

https://www.camera.it/_dati/leg12/lavori/stenografici/stenografico/32447.pdf

2003, mentioning instead specific troubles, Burani Procaccini (FI) expresses her concern for *‘mercenaries from Kuwait who kidnap young girls to avenge the acts of violence that Iraqi soldiers committed against Kuwaiti women during the 1991 war²³⁵’*.

Despite the political revolution that at the beginning of the 1990s drastically modifies Italian parties’ system, parties align on anti-mercenary sentiments that resembles the Cold War period, as the IR dimension still dominates the aversion from the left. On the other side, rightist parties come up for the first time with a considerable number of negative references. Here, it is interesting to notice that when political convenience or political imperatives disappear from the picture, politicians do then express anti-mercenary statements. While during the Cold War center-right Italian Governments had to hide or justify the involvement of mercenaries in anti-communist operations, after 1991 there are no international nor internal reasons not to attack hired soldiers involved in conflicts around the World. The next section on the Libyan Civil War shows clearly how when crucial political issues re-enter the game, the right returns to a neutral tone, and to hiding strategies, while debating on mercenaries’ operations.

In the United Kingdom, over 113 references, parties from the left show an only slightly higher percentage of negative references (70.4%), with respect to the right (69.7%) and the center (67.4%)²³⁶. Thus, as during the Cold War, parties converge on a very similar level of antagonism toward mercenaries. Specific and general problems dominate the anti-mercenary hostility of all parties (the left 70.3%, the center 48.3%, the right 33.3%) and the military dimension contributes to a significant extent, though more for the center (20.7%) and right (16.7%), then for the left (5.4%). The left (18.9%) and center (27.6%) point again, as during the Cold War, to mercenaries’ support for autocratic regimes, but the right (43.8%) is responsible for most of these references. After 1991,

²³⁵ *Archivio Storico*, Camera dei Deputati, 07 Jul 2003 http://dati.camera.it/ocd/aic.rdf/aic3_02484_14

²³⁶ The left: the Labour Party (58) and the Scottish National Party (1). The centre: the Liberal Democrats (21) and independent MPs (22). The right: the Conservative Party (66).

bipolar dynamics and conflicts disappear from the IR dimension, and center and left parties criticize authoritarian regimes' employment of mercenaries all over the world, especially in Africa and the Middle East. On the other side, attacks from the Conservative Party often target Islamic regimes and groups who hire mercenaries, indeed a new element that emerges on the IR dimension.

As said, many references point to specific problems linked to mercenaries' operations. Debating on the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict in 1994, Baroness Chalker of Wallasey (Con) argues that '*We have no evidence that British mercenaries are fighting for Azerbaijan or that British arms have been supplied to that country. We continue to support the CSCE arms embargo and in no way condone the supply of arms or mercenaries to either side*²³⁷'. In 2004, Baroness Crawley (Lab) addresses the reasons of the political instability in Nigeria: '*We agree that the intervention of well-armed mercenaries of both religious persuasions is of concern to us and the Nigerian Government*²³⁸'.

Similarly, a considerable number of observations call into question general problems created by mercenaries. In 2000, Savidge (Lab) comments on the statute of the International Criminal Court, arguing that '*surely some of the worst atrocities in the third world have been committed by mercenaries*²³⁹'. In 2016, praising British citizens who went to Syria to fight ISIS, Jenrick (Con) recalls the old prejudice against mercenaries: '*We have grappled with how to view and respond to our fellow citizens who go abroad to fight in foreign wars. They did so not for money, as mercenaries, but because they believed that was the right thing to do*²⁴⁰'.

Regarding the IR dimension, politicians of all colors criticize mercenaries' support for authoritarian regimes. In 2001, Lord Weidenfield (CB) claims that mercenaries and other forces oppose freedom and liberalism: '*an unholy alliance ranging from atheist revolutionaries, mercenaries and organised*

²³⁷ Hansard Archive, Lords, 10 Feb 1994 <http://bit.ly/2jXHBry>

²³⁸ Hansard Archive, Lords, 09 Jun 2004 <http://bit.ly/2Sd59p2>

²³⁹ Hansard Archive, Commons, 11 Dec 2000 <http://bit.ly/32reRZQ>

²⁴⁰ Hansard Archive, Commons, 19 Apr 2016 <http://bit.ly/2k0179l>

*criminals to religious and racist fanatics. Their common enemy is the open society, liberal order and western-style democracy*²⁴¹. In 2011, Lord Avebury (LD) expresses concern for the harsh measure of the Bahrein Government against its own citizens: *‘the killing of six peaceful demonstrators yesterday, the importation of the foreign mercenaries and the re-arrest of six opposition leaders who have only just been released from weeks and weeks of illegal detention and torture*²⁴².

As anticipated, the Conservative Party leads the attack against mercenaries hired by Islamist regimes and groups. In 2001, commenting on the Nagorno-Karabakh War, Baroness Cox (Con) links mujahidin mercenaries with Osama Bin Laden: *‘During that war, the Azeri leadership enlisted more than 1,000 Islamist mujahidin mercenaries — including Arab veterans of the Afghan war. Some of bin Laden’s senior military commanders fought in at least two battles in Karabakh*²⁴³. In 2003, Luff (Con) claims that *‘Islamist militants have hired mercenaries from Niger to attack Christians in Nigeria*²⁴⁴, and in 2014, Baroness Cox attacks again mercenaries hired by terrorist Islamic groups, this time targeting Boko Haram: *‘Boko Haram is supported by senior figures in the military and the Government [...] and by the use of foreign mercenaries. [...] There is very widespread anxiety over the possible disintegration of the nation of Nigeria and/or the spread of militant Islam beyond the northern states to other parts of the country*²⁴⁵.

Overall, results and trends across parties resemble Cold War dynamics, more than discussion about PMSCs and contractors. Parties’ attitudes converge on a similar level of negativity, specific and general problems remain relevant, and the IR dimension contributes significantly to explain parties’ antagonism against mercenaries. Moreover, while the political-economic dimension never surfaces

²⁴¹ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 04 Oct 2001 <http://bit.ly/2lwBCe1>

²⁴² *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 17 Mar 2011 <http://bit.ly/2xLq9tL>

²⁴³ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 04 Oct 2001 <http://bit.ly/2NR978f>

²⁴⁴ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 17 Jun 2003 <http://bit.ly/32rj27M>

²⁴⁵ *Hansard Archive*, Lords, 24 Jul 2014 <http://bit.ly/2k0zElo>

from the debate, the military dimension still plays a small though relevant role. More interestingly, the establishment of a link between Islamic terror and mercenaries, on the side of the Conservative Party, show how politicians often employ the old stigma of mercenaries to target specific people or groups. Whereas during the Cold War the Conservatives employed such strategy in an anti-communist fashion, after 1991 Islamic groups become the new target of such attacks.

The Civil War in Libya 2011

The Civil War in Libya in 2011 constitutes a relevant Foreign Policy issue for both Italy and the United Kingdom, as both countries participate in the multilateral military intervention against the regime of Gaddafi (Costalli & Locatelli, 2013; Croci & Valigi, 2013; Davidson, 2013; Mello, 2017). In this context, there is a relevant number of observations in which politicians talk about the involvement of mercenaries in the conflict, namely 16 for Italy (26.2% of all references to mercenaries in 1992-2017) and 48 in the UK (29.5%). All references point to the employment of hired soldiers by Gaddafi, who employed them to fight the insurgents and to repress anti-regime demonstrations. Politicians find the use of mercenaries against civilians particularly heinous, a factor that certainly explains the high number of negative references on the Libyan Crisis in the UK (77.1%). In Italy the percentage is significantly lower (50%), an aspect that this section addresses later. Indeed, most negative references in both countries (87.5% in Italy and 68.4% in the UK) base the anti-mercenary criticisms on private hired soldiers' support for autocratic regimes.

Interesting results emerge from a more thorough analysis on parties' positions on mercenaries in the Libyan Crisis. In Italy, parties from the center (71.4% of negative references) and the left (42.9%) are without a doubt more antagonistic than the right (0% over only two mentions). In 2011, Sbarbati (Unione di Centro) highlights how the employment of mercenaries constitutes a particularly abhorrent feature of Gaddafi's policy toward the revolt: *'Everything got worsen after Gaddafi's decision for a*

*violent repression against his own people, employing even mercenaries*²⁴⁶. Adamo (PD) denounces the tragic situation of Eritrean refugees in Libya: *‘Eritrean refugees in various Libyan cities are entrapped in a deadly grip between Gaddafi’s troops and mercenaries*²⁴⁷. On the other side, politicians of the right, as Divina (LN), neutrally describe the presence of mercenaries in Libya: *‘Libyan soldiers have in part deserted [...] Gaddafi has resorted to mercenaries, but by now, his end is certain*²⁴⁸.

These results are incomplete and preliminary since there are only 16 references to mercenaries overall, and factors more important than mercenaries may better explain Italian parties’ different positions on the War (Coticchia, 2014; Coticchia & Vignoli, 2018). However, mentions of mercenaries’ activities shed light on relevant mechanisms and strategies politicians employ when debating about potential military interventions. In particular, the lack of references from the right, and the fact that the only two mentions are neutral, may reflect the right’s more pronounced sympathy for Gaddafi and their initial aversion toward the multilateral military intervention to topple his regime down. While at the end almost all parties vote in favor of the multilateral military operation, initially leaders of Forza Italia, as Berlusconi and Frattini, and the Lega Nord, as Bossi, are opposed to the intervention (Corriere della Sera, 2011; Erlanger, 2011). It is thus possible that politicians from the center and the left employ the stigma on mercenaries to boost their attacks and criticisms against Gaddafi, whereas the right flirts with hiding strategies to avoid such outcome.

²⁴⁶ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 23 Mar 2011

<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00527183.pdf>

²⁴⁷ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 03 Mar 2011

<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00526228.pdf>

²⁴⁸ *Archivio Storico*, Senato della Repubblica, 23 Feb 2011

<http://www.senato.it/service/PDF/PDFServer/BGT/00525557.pdf>

In the United Kingdom, the condemnation against Gaddafi and his mercenaries is almost unanimous, as parties from the left (83.3% of negative references), the center (66.7%), and the right (76.7%) align on similar levels of antagonism. Unsurprisingly, most mentions (60% from the left, 79.2% from the right²⁴⁹) target mercenaries' support for infamous regimes, on the IR dimension, while the remaining references highlight very specific problems of mercenaries' operations on the battlefield. In 2011, Gilbert (LD) provides a textbook mention of the hostility to mercenaries as armed agents of authoritarian regimes: *'The contrast between the cowardice of Gaddafi and the courage of his people could not be greater. While he continues to hide behind mercenaries and soak himself in delusional rhetoric in his compound, the vast majority of the Libyan people are standing in hope, in the open, and poorly armed, against him. Like all tyrants, he has lost his grip on reality'²⁵⁰. On the same line, Pincher (Con): *'The Foreign Secretary and the shadow Foreign Secretary both acknowledged that the Gaddafi regime is at least partly propped up by murderous mercenaries who are terrorizing the civilian population'²⁵¹.**

Thus, the debate on mercenaries in Libya resembles the classic British parties' convergence on Foreign Policy decisions. As Mello (2017, p. 82) argues: 'Libya, on the other hand, poses a challenge for those who suggest a parliamentary prerogative, because parliament merely served as a rubber stamp for an executive decision'. In this context, other parties aligned on the Conservative Government's decision to intervene in Libya to topple down Gaddafi, and the reference to the stigma of mercenaries was a useful strategies employed by politicians of all colors.

²⁴⁹ References from the centre and independent MPs are too few to provide an analysis of the trends of aversion.

²⁵⁰ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 16 May 2011 <http://bit.ly/2NU5TB7>

²⁵¹ *Hansard Archive*, Commons, 04 Apr 2011 <http://bit.ly/2k2uJjV>

Chapter VII: *Conclusion*

The journey of the anti-mercenary norm

This dissertation has first followed the journey of the anti-mercenary norm in Italy and the United Kingdom, an evolution that presents three distinctive and critical moments. During the XIX century and into the first part of the XX century, the two states certainly endorse at least a weak version of the norm, producing frequent and fierce moral attacks against mercenaries, and trying to hide or justify their supposed violations of the norm. However, such sentiments do not reflect in consistent averse behaviors toward mercenaries. Despite pronounced differences in military formats and foreign policy strategies, both the Italian and British Governments resort to the market for force when political and military constraints require so.

After 1945, the debate on mercenary is clearly embedded in, and profoundly distorted by, the logic of the bipolar equilibrium, and the two states subordinate their discussions on and their antagonism to mercenaries to the exigencies of the Cold War. The Italian and British Governments mostly support the Western containment of the communist expansion, and they do not criticize the mercenary forces that serve this purpose. On the other side, the opposition, especially the Communist Party in Italy, attack mercenaries who serve as proxy forces for the anti-communist effort of the United States and NATO. Overall, moral attacks against mercenaries, already fewer with respect to the previous period, are often clear rhetorical tools that politicians employ to contest or promote the global and national anti-communist agenda. Thus, there is no ground to argue that states endorse a strong or robust anti-mercenary norm, as most Western countries support mercenary activities while fiercely and morally criticizing the USSR or Cuba's employment of hired soldiers. In this context, the bipolar chessboard drives both the UK and Italy to hide or justify selectively specific mercenaries' activities.

Finally, after 1990, anti-mercenary sentiments target security contractors only for a brief period. In the two Parliaments, moral negative references significantly decrease and private companies' employees are called mercenaries only before 2006. The more legitimate nature of PMSCs with respect to mercenaries, the improved regulation about firms' policies and standards, and the critical need of private support, lead states to stop vehement criticisms against the market for force and its protagonists. In this context, it seems reasonable to argue that the norm disappears. Nonetheless, the analysis of references to mercenaries other than security contractors in the same period shows that aversion against old-style mercenarism is still strong. In this way, it seems that some aspects of the norm remain powerful, while states clearly 'move' PMSCs and contractors out of the target of the norm²⁵².

These results provide significant empirical, methodological and theoretical contributions. First, contributing to the literature on mercenaries and PMSCs, the analysis sheds new light on the evolution of the anti-mercenary norm, showing how politicians interiorized, employed and related to the provisions and the violations of the norm. Furthermore, what interestingly characterizes all the periods is a clear similarity in the evolution of the norm in both countries. Despite their significant differences in military and political assets and preferences, politicians in Italy and the UK often discuss about mercenaries in comparable ways, interiorize the same meaning and extension of the norm, and produce similar hide-or-justify strategies. Thus, while the employment of mercenaries do show significant divergences, the norm has a similar effect.

²⁵² As noted in previous Chapter there is a limit to the comparison between attitudes toward mercenaries and toward PMSCs in this period. While most Western states, Italy and the UK included, more or less frequently hire and employ contractors, mercenaries' operation in this period are limited to employment in conflict zone, almost always be authoritarian and hostile regimes. Thus, it is very easy for states to produce critiques against such hired soldiers and against their employer. A more accurate and powerful test for the strength and persistence of the norm in this period would require debates on the possibility for Western states to hire classic mercenaries.

Here, the differences in the military formats, foreign policy strategies, political-economic contexts, and ideational conceptions of privatization have certainly had an impact on the intensities of employment²⁵³. However, the similarities in the evolution of the norm, evident from the analysis of the parliamentary debates, suggest that the tension between the norm's provisions and political imperatives often produces violations that, in the case of PMSCs, likely lead toward the disappearance of the norm. Thus, the different political and military necessities of the two countries, more than other factors as divergent interpretations of the norm, seem to explain the different level of intensity in the employment of mercenaries and contractors. For example, during the Cold War, the norm becomes highly politicized in both Italy and the UK, though only Britain, due to its larger and more direct involvement in the military anti-communist strife, employ or support directly mercenaries in Africa. Again, concerning PMSCs, the UK more intense resort to the market for force is explained by military needs and economic contexts, more than by a different conception of the norm.

Addressing international norms and security affairs, new studies could enlarge this analysis to other countries, to test whether the anti-mercenary norm follows a comparable journey in other Western and non-Western states. Furthermore, scholars could address, conceptualize, and analyze the norm in a broader context, connecting it more tightly with other norms and complex systems of international norms. The aim would be to assess the relation between the emergence, robustness, persistence and disappearance of the anti-mercenary norm in relation to other norms. Similarly, future research could address other norms with a comparative approach, investigating whether and how political and military factors contribute to create different geographical manifestations of international norms. For instances, new academic works may shed light on norms regarding international peacekeeping operations, investigating what factors drive states to different approaches. Why does China seem to

²⁵³ These divergences certainly also explain the huge differences in terms of number of references, higher for the UK, to mercenaries and contractors in the two countries during the entire period of investigation. However, despite a richer and more detailed discussion in the UK, the trends and pattern mostly overlap, as shown by the results.

violate the norm that requires UN Security Council permanent members to contribute with only few peacekeepers? Does this behavior depend on a different interpretation of the norm or on political and military needs? Do all other Western and non-Western states align instead on a similar interpretation of the norm, despite their different aims and assets?

Secondly, on the side on method, the investigation offers an original systematic approach to study the evolution of norms, analyzing and coding parliamentary debates. The combination of quantitative analyses of general trends with a qualitative immersion in context-dependent parliamentary scenarios would certainly prove useful for other explorations. The scope and method of this analysis, indeed, could be extended to other contexts, for instances investigating political parties' internal documents, newspapers, international treaties or social media texts. Additionally, scholars could focus on other actors and norms, for example addressing the influence of the norm against piracy on states' behavior and politicians' rhetorical arguments.

Finally, the dissertation provides a last significant contribution, a theoretical framework to interpret and analyze the strength and the evolution of international norms. First, the analysis clarifies what a weak or robust norm is and how it manifests itself through a combination of taboo talk, hide-or-justify strategies and political and military behavior. Secondly, the theory section and the discussion create an original theoretical framework for the politicization of norms, showing how not only military and political necessities, but also international pressures can lead to thorough modifications in a norm's interiorization and manifestation. Thirdly, the dissertation builds a case for norms' disappearance, highlighting how the decline in taboo talk, sided by the increase in positive references and the decline in hide-or-justify strategies, state practice, and strong military and political pressures, can alter thoroughly the core of a norm, leading to its disappearance. Finally, this work also provides new theoretical insights for the rhetorical use and interpretation of international norms. Overall, these contributions generate a new path that future research can follow, an original framework that could be tested on other international norms.

Parties, mercenaries and contractors: Different hostilities and diverging attitudes

The analysis of parties' attitudes in the Italian and British parliamentary debates provide significant insights. After the investigation of the effect on the anti-mercenary norm on states' posture toward mercenaries and contractors, the thorough exploration of within-countries dynamics has allowed assessing more accurately the reasons behind anti-mercenary hostility and the origin of the relation between political preferences and attitudes toward hired soldiers.

First, the Italian aversion toward mercenaries during the Cold War is not a bipartisan belief, as leftist parties show consistently more hostility toward mercenaries. Enmity emerges mostly from the IR dimension, as anti-Americanism, anti-colonialism, and the fear of mercenaries, seen as anti-democratic agents, constitute the critical mechanisms. The support of conscription, on the military dimension, also contributes to bolster averse attitudes from the left. Lastly, the analysis has shown that Italian politicians do not establish a direct link between the problems of privatization in areas other than security, and military outsourcing.

Secondly, when private military and security companies appear on the international stage from the 1990s, attacks from the left restart, especially targeting contractors involved in conflicts in the Middle East. The more common characterization of contractors as mercenaries on the leftist side of the Parliament strengthens these results. However, as predicted, the left-right gap in terms of anti-mercenary hostility shrinks with respect to the Cold War period. In this phase, attitudes toward privatization, on the political-economic dimension, constitute the critical mechanism, as most negative references from the left target the problems generated by the private management of violence. Specific scandals involving contractors in Iraq and Afghanistan contribute to enflame the antagonism, characterizing also the very few negative references coming from the center and the right.

Thirdly, there are no significant differences in the intensity of the antagonism of British parties during the Cold War, as an apparently similar negativity emerge from the IR and military dimensions. Nonetheless, if on the military dimension parties' hostility against mercenaries offer similar reasons, on the IR dimension variation does strongly surface from the debates. Anti-communism defines most of the enmity from the right, while a combination of different factors build the left and center's aversion. Furthermore, specific contexts and conflicts are more relevant and more discussed with respect to Italy, characterizing a significant numbers of negative references.

Finally, concerning debates about security contractors in the United Kingdom, significant differences emerge among parties. If data on the spillover effect show slight divergences, the amount of negative references is significantly higher for parties of the center and left. However, such gap emerges solely during the first years of debates about internal security, and during the initial phase of the discussions about Iraq and Afghanistan. The crucial mechanisms that create this gap are the left and right's different conceptions of the risks associated with outsourcing security and military affairs to private actors, whose focus on profit preoccupies center-left politicians more than their conservative colleagues. The IR and the military dimensions are not divisive nor relevant.

In addition, as anticipated, the analysis provides an original theoretical contribution, building a framework and creating categories and mechanisms to explain parties' preferences toward mercenaries. Scholars could employ such approach to verify whether the same framework, and the same dimensions, are successful in explaining political attitudes toward militias, terrorists or other private armed groups.

Addressing the relation between political parties on the one side, and mercenaries and contractors on the other, the next step will be to extend the analysis to other countries. Moreover, the research strategy I presented and applied could be employed to study political attitudes in contexts other than parliaments or, as said, to actors different from mercenaries. Alternatively, new works could enlarge the scope of the analysis, focusing not on specific actors, but on concepts and objects as realism,

nuclear weapons or cooperation. Finally, following the political debate in Parliament about foreign policy, scholars could in future compare this debate with the general discussions on similar topics, addressing differences in the intensity and character of the debate.

Appendix I

Introduction

This introduction to Appendix I provides the list and brief description of all the variables employed in the dataset (Table XIII). Moreover, it offers clarifications on some relevant aspects of the dataset, as the search for the keywords and the translations of speeches from Italian to English.

- I. In the period 1805-2017 (1861-2017 for Italy), I looked for the keyword ‘mercenar-’ in the British and Italian Parliamentary Debates Archives. I searched for the sole keyword ‘mercenar-’, as the term has only very unusual synonyms as hireling or legionnaire, which, anyhow, appear extremely rarely in the debates. Similarly, combinations of words as ‘hired soldiers’ do also appear very infrequently in the debates. The same is true for the Italian translations of these terms (*mercenario, mercenari, legionari* etc.).

- II. In the period 1990-2017, I looked for the keyword ‘security contractor-’ in the British and Italian Parliamentary Debates Archives. Since there are many ways to refer to contractors and private military and security companies, I also searched for keywords as ‘private security companies’, ‘private military companies’, ‘private security firms’, ‘private guards’ and others. I conducted the same operation for the Italian Archive where I searched for both the English and Italian translations of these terms (e.g. *compagnie militari private, guardie private* etc.). Moreover, in both Archives, I also looked for the names of the most important PMSCs, as Executive Outcomes, Blackwater, Dyncorp, Military Professional Resources (MPRI), G4S, and others.

- III. For what regards the translation of Italian speeches that appear in the article, I personally translated them. For every quotation, I provide the link to the original documents in a footnote, so that the Italian version of every discussion can be rapidly and easily accessed.
- IV. The two datasets, that on mercenaries (1805-1991) and that on PMSCs (1990-2017) overlap in the years 1990 and 1991. Nevertheless, this overlap does not lead to a double counting of events, since all observations in 1990 and 1991 refer exclusively to either mercenaries or security contractors.
- V. Concerning missing data, the dataset present the widest gaps during the period of World War I and World War II (1914-1919 and 1939-1945) in both Italy and the United Kingdom, as some debates have not been recorded during the two World Wars for obvious reasons of force majeure. However, since mercenaries did not play any significant role during WWI and WWII, these gaps should not distort the representativeness and the validity of the results. Moreover, the number of observations seems very low in Italy during the era of the Fascist regime (1922-1943, only five observations). This may be due again to the irrelevance of mercenaries in the first half of the XX century, but also to the fact that the regime did almost erase any form of opposition and debate in the Italian Parliament. Again, potential missing observations should not harm the validity and representativeness of the results, for the same reasons stated above. Indeed, I decided to exclude this period from the discussion. In this way, Italy is always treated as a more consistently homogenous actor, namely a democracy.

Table XIII: List and description of all variables

Var Name	Values	Description
Country	0 – 1	<i>Country</i> assumes value 1 when the reference comes from the Italian debates and 0 for the United Kingdom
MP	-	<i>MP</i> shows the name of the member of parliament giving the speech
Party	-	<i>Party</i> lists the MP's political party
Gov	0 – 1	<i>Gov</i> takes value 1 when the MP is a member of the Government, and value 0 when he or she is a member of the opposition
Position	L-C-R	<i>Position</i> shows whether a party is part of the family of the left, center or right
ParlGov	0 – 10	<i>ParlGov</i> expresses the position of a party on the L-R spectrum from 0 (far left) to 10 (far right)
Rile	-50 – +50	<i>Rile</i> expresses the position of a party on the L-R spectrum combining all the dimensions of the Manifesto Project
Topic1	-	<i>Topic1</i> lists the general topic of the speech, as war, army, internal security etc.
Topic2	-	<i>Topic2</i> lists the specific topic of the speech, as the War in Crimea or Iraq, the Convention against Mercenaries etc
Character	-1 – +1	<i>Character</i> assumes value -1 when the reference to mercenaries and contractors in the debates is negative, 0 when neutral and +1 when positive
Moral	0 – 1	<i>Moral</i> takes values 1 when the negative reference is based on a moral condemnation of mercenaries or contractors, and value 0 when it is not.
Insult*	0 – 1	<i>Insult</i> assumes value 1 when the reference to mercenaries is just an insult, a rhetorical tool or when it is out of context
Mercenary**	0 – 1	<i>Mercenary</i> takes value 1 when MPs call contractors 'mercenaries', and value 0 when they do not
Dimension	-	<i>Dimension</i> lists the references to the three dimensions (IR, military, pol-eco), though also alternative explanations and inductive new categories are considered
Mechanism	-	<i>Mechanism</i> lists the reasons behind the accusations against mercenaries and contractors

*This variable is considered solely for the dataset on mercenaries (1805-1991)

** This variable is considered solely for the dataset on PMSCs (1990-2017)

Codebook

The following Tables (XIV, XV, XVI, XVII and XVIII) present and describe the main variables in the dataset, providing examples of coded paragraph for each category.

Table XIV: Character (positive, neutral and negative references to mercenaries and contractors)

Category	Value	Examples
Positive reference		
A politician highlights some positive feature of mercenaries, as their professionalism, their efficiency or their help to national armed forces in specific contexts	+1	Will he now acknowledge the debt that we owe to the mercenaries who saved the lives of hundreds of hostages who were held in the hands of the rebels? (UK 1965, Fell) Aegis (a PMSC) has a solid experience and knowledge of the Dhi Qar province, where it works for the reconstruction of Iraq (Italy 2007, Intini)
Neutral reference		
A politician neutrally describes mercenaries' characteristics or activities	0	The armies of France were composed of Swiss troops and other mercenaries (UK 1823, Wilson) The reasoning of Kennedy is this: we attacked you with mercenaries, but you defended and our operation was a failure (Italy 1963, Pirastu)
Negative reference		
A politician criticizes or attacks mercenaries for their lack of virtue or for the abuses they commit	-1	Mercenaries are nothing more than hired killers who murder to order and for no other purpose than commercial gain (UK 1976, Hughes) History, and also Machiavelli, teaches us who mercenaries are and what their value is (Italy 1866, Minghetti)

Table XV: Moral (moral and non-moral negative references to mercenaries and contractors)

Category	Value	Examples
Moral reference		
A politician bases his or her condemnation of mercenaries and contractors on a moral ground	1	<p>Mercenaries who hire themselves out for mercenary reward to unofficial bodies of killers as professional soldiers (UK 1968, Rodgers)</p> <p>The Pope has his own corrupt and crooked mercenaries (Italy 1872, Avezzana)</p>
Non-moral reference		
A politician does not base his or her condemnation of mercenaries and contractors on a moral ground	0	<p>That citizen Army should be the Militia, which could be turned into a real Army of the greatest value, and which would defend the country far better than an Army of lads of 18 or 21 years of age, or than an Army of mercenaries (UK 1871, Trevelyan)</p> <p>The Empire was under serious threat, because its only defense were mercenaries (Italy 1927, Mussolini)</p>

Table XVI: Insult (*out-of-context and rhetorical references to mercenaries*)

Category	Value	Examples
Not out-of-context reference	0	/
A politician speaks about actual mercenaries		
Out-of-context reference		
A politician employs the term mercenaries out-of-context or to refer to issues that are not referring to actual mercenaries	1	<p>We may seem like mercenaries providing jobs on a project 400 or 500 miles away, but it may have a longer term beneficial effect on central Scotland's economy (UK 1982, Needham)</p> <p>Odette Philippon describes these mercenaries of human flesh, organizers of the national and international traffic of women (Italy 1958, Merlin)</p>

Table XVII: Mechanism (reasons behind the accusations against mercenaries and contractors)

Category	Value	Examples
<p>Instruments</p> <p>A politician interprets mercenaries or contractors as instruments of tyrants, oppression, autocratic regimes etc.</p>	<p>‘Instruments’</p>	<p>Marxism will not advance his freedom; and Russian Marxism imposed by a collection of over-promoted Cuban muzhik mercenaries will do even worse. It will stifle it under a blanket of oppression and incompetent tyranny (UK 1977, The Earl of Onslow)</p> <p>When the army is an instrument of oppression, the Government will try to have less citizens and more mercenaries (Italy 1863, Boggio)</p>
<p>Poor military value</p> <p>A politician claims that mercenaries or contractors are ineffective on the battlefield or in the streets. They show less military value with respect to armed forces and the police</p>	<p>‘Mil Value’</p>	<p>The militia had always stood their ground when they had been engaged, but it was not certain whether foreign mercenaries would exhibit the same firmness (UK 1854, The Earl of Glengall)</p> <p>When we examined the question of piracy, we realized that to send contractors (<i>instead of Italian soldiers</i>) would make the situation even worse (Italy 2012, Torri)</p>
<p>Grandeur</p> <p>A politician argues that mercenaries or contractors damage the image of grandeur of a nation</p>	<p>‘Grandeur’</p>	<p>If a nation wished to preserve its eminence it must depend on the number and valour of its own soldiers, not on its money to pay mercenaries (UK 1806, General Tarleton)</p> <p>Remember what befell great empires in days gone by, like Rome and Carthage, when they relied too much on mercenaries (UK 1899, Norton)</p>
<p>Consequences and effects</p> <p>A politicians attacks mercenaries or contractors for the negative effects they produce (abuses,</p>	<p>‘Effects’</p>	<p>The assistance of the developed world to the Congo can be advanced much better and more constructively in terms of economic and technical</p>

scandals, crimes, political problems etc.)	assistance rather than by the intervention of mercenaries (UK 1964, Thomson)
Honor	Does the Government know that Italian security contractors have been employed in the prison of Abu Ghraib? (Italy 2006, Crucianelli)
A politician condemns mercenaries or contractors for their inherent lack of virtue or honor	'Honor'
Other norms	I deplored every incursion, including mercenaries [...] It was at that time that this kind of sordid, bloody adventure was concocted in this country (UK 1976, Lord Goronwy-Roberts) <i>(The Foreign Legion is) a bunch of criminals from all over the world, an army of mercenaries without ideals (Italy 1961, Pajetta)</i>
A politician criticizes mercenaries or contractors for reasons that descend from other norms (e.g. state neutrality)	'Norms'
Other norms	He might sympathize with the suffering Portuguese, and allow them the hospitality of our country, but who could sympathize with their hired mercenaries, or allow them to harbour here, in order to concert an attack on a power towards which we professed neutrality (UK 1830, Croker) States which usually let out men for hire in foreign wars, and of whose regular traffic such dealings form a part, were permitted to furnish men to a belligerent, without violating neutrality [...] The troops must not be lent for the invasion; of the country of one of the belligerents; secondly, the number must not be so I great, that the mercenaries shall constitute the principal part of the force of the State (UK 1833, Lord Wynford)

Table XVIII: Dimension (references to specific mechanisms on the three dimensions, military, IR and political-economic, and to alternative explanations)

Category	Value	Examples
<p>Anti-Americanism (IR dimension)</p> <p>A politician frames the reference to mercenaries or contractors in a speech that targets the US, underlining how mercenaries constitute the armed agents of American imperialism</p>	<p>“anti-US”</p>	<p>The United States Administration not only finance acts of violence against Nicaragua by mercenaries but also directly plan and instigate them (UK 1986, Lord Avebury)</p> <p>In Laos and Cuba, there are mercenaries pushed by the United States to assault those people to crush their independence and freedom (Italy 1961, Togliatti)</p>
<p>Anti-colonialism (IR dimension)</p> <p>A politician frames the reference to mercenaries or contractors in a speech that colonial and neo-colonial policies, highlighting how mercenaries contribute to the oppression against countries that fight against such policies</p>	<p>“anti-col”</p>	<p>The Belgians giving up politically but returning to dominate the economic wealth of those areas through the <i>Union Minière</i> and the <i>Foraminère</i>, and it is these companies which have financed and supported the mercenaries (UK 1961, Warbey)</p> <p>A Legion of mercenaries, especially Nazis, who commit massacres and shocking tortures against heroic people who fight for independence and freedom (Italy 1961, Berlinguer)</p>
<p>Anti-communism (IR dimension)</p> <p>A politician frames the reference to mercenaries or contractors in a speech that targets the USSR or other Communist forces, underlining how mercenaries constitute the armed agents of Communist imperialism</p>	<p>“commun”</p>	<p>A far worse holocaust, which would have occurred if the Cubans and the local Marxist mercenaries from Uruguay, Argentine, Bolivia and Colombia had been able to take over (UK 1973, Soref)</p> <p>The Secretary of the PCI Berlinguer carries out mysterious missions in Western Africa [...] to support the Army of Nheto in Angola, trained by 11 5000 Cuban mercenaries (Italy 1976, Costamanga)</p>
<p>Instrument for coups (IR dimension)</p>		<p>so long as there is the danger of intervention from mercenaries</p>

<p>A politician considers mercenaries or contractors as potential armed agents for anti-democratic coups. Emerged inductively, this category refers to a typical internal manifestation of the bipolar competition</p>	<p>“coups”</p>	<p>from other parts of the world, so long will the forces that have been fighting for self-determination inevitably turn to those who will help them (UK 1979, Lord Hatch of Lusby)</p> <p>The Government is trying to recover an old tradition of infamous memory, when foreign mercenary troops were called to repress the aim for freedom and justice of the Italian people (Italy 1949, Puccetti)</p>
<p>Conscription (Military dimension)</p> <p>A politician who supports conscription attacks mercenaries or contractors as they represent the most hideous example of professional soldier</p>	<p>“conscript”</p>	<p>Reliance for the defence of the soil on national armies rather than on long service professionals, or mercenaries as they were called, was, in the 19th century, at any rate, a strong barrier against reaction (UK 1947, Churchill)</p> <p>The Government creates divisions in the army, it makes the army not a national force but it degrades it to the level of a mercenary force. (Italy 1952, Bottonelli)</p>
<p>Spirit of the Army (Military dimension)</p> <p>A politician contrast the valuable spirit of soldiers of the national Armed Forces with the lack of spirit of mercenaries</p>	<p>“spirit”</p>	<p>I think that with very honourable exceptions, the men who came did so as hired mercenaries. They did not come here imbued with the spirit in which we are fighting (UK 1962, Van Straubenzee)</p> <p>The enforcement of security without responsibility is the prerogative of the mercenary throughout the ages, and our Armed Forces neither want to be mercenaries nor can be allowed to be capable of being represented as mercenaries (UK 1972, Wilson)</p>
<p>Problems of Privatization (political-economic dimension)</p>		<p>A substantial number of people employed by private security firms have formidable criminal records (UK 1990, Lord Harris)</p>

<p>A politician highlights the problems of the process of privatizing or outsourcing security, referring to the classic complications associated with these developments (e.g. principal-agent, lack of monitoring etc.) or to specific troubles in the area of security (e.g. arms in private hands)</p>	<p>“privatiz”</p>	<p>The expansion of the disturbing phenomenon of military privatization and security outsourcing creates large “free zones” where modern factotum mercenaries rage without the limits of international law and treaties (Italy 2004, Malabarba)</p>
<p>Specific context or scenario (PAE)</p>	<p>“specific”</p>	<p>I am sure that nobody of any experience or knowledge of Africa would imagine that it would be a simple matter to bring a unified State out of those elements in a short time. If to that already difficult problem we add the presence of white mercenaries, it becomes even more difficult (UK 1961, Smithers)</p> <p>In 1944 these troops invade the area near Cassino [...] it is likely that the contract of these mercenaries allowed them to plunder and rape (Italy 1952, Rossi)</p>
<p>General (PAE)</p> <p>A politician describes or attacks mercenaries “in general” without references to specific contexts or to other categories listed here</p>	<p>“general”</p>	<p>I remember as a student making a special study of Machiavelli and his attitude to mercenary soldiers. Machiavelli, in Florence, hated the idea of mercenaries and wanted to employ exclusively volunteer forces (UK 1979, Bruce George)</p> <p>Introducing legislation to empower Her Majesty's Government to forbid the recruitment of mercenaries within the United Kingdom for specified armed forces abroad (UK 1984, Proctor)</p>

Models

This section presents in full details the results of the statistical models I employed in the dissertation.

Model I, a logit model²⁵⁴, considers references to mercenaries in Italy (1945-1991). The variable LR shows statistically significant results. The coefficient of LR shows that a step of one unit toward the right on the left-right index of ParlGov (from 0 far-left, to 10 far-right) increases the likelihood of a negative reference by an average of 56%. Finally, the variables Year and Gov are not significant, meaning that the temporal dimension and the government/opposition membership are not relevant factors to explain political attitudes toward mercenaries.

Model II replicates Model I, but employing the Rile Index of the Manifesto Project instead of the LR Index of ParlGov²⁵⁵. The left-right spectrum variable remains significant and the coefficient is very similar to that in Model I. The variable Gov becomes significant and its coefficient is significantly high, possibly reflecting the fact that the PCI, the most antagonistic party toward mercenaries, is always at the opposition. Finally, the variable Year remains not significant.

²⁵⁴ As there are no positive references in Italy, the variable Character becomes a binomial variable (i.e. only neutral and negative references). Thus, a logit model can be employed.

²⁵⁵ The Rile Index, which ranges from -50 (far left) to +50 (far right) has been transformed in a variable that ranges from 0 to 10 in order to better compare the results and the coefficients of Model II with that of Model I.

VARIABLES	(I) Character	(II) Character
LRParlGov	-0.560*** (0.128)	
1.Gov	-0.804 (0.605)	-1.911*** (0.562)
Year	0.00708 (0.0189)	0.00744 (0.0172)
Rile010		-0.586*** (0.155)
Constant	-11.23 (37.07)	-11.42 (33.66)
Observations	116	116

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Model III and IV are logit models that consider references to mercenaries in the United Kingdom²⁵⁶ (1945-1991). Neither in Model III (LR ParlGov) nor in Model 4 (Rile), does the left-right spectrum variable show significant results. Indeed, the positioning of parties on this dimension does not predict their political attitudes toward mercenaries, as parties of all families show the same intensity of antagonism. The variable Year is very weakly significant in Model IV.

VARIABLES	(III) Character	(IV) Character
LRParlGov	-0.0882 (0.0733)	
1.Gov	-0.0787 (0.218)	-0.144 (0.216)
Year	0.0168 (0.0110)	0.0211* (0.0118)
Rile010		-0.0632 (0.0602)
Constant	-31.92 (21.70)	-40.67* (23.21)
Observations	395	397

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

²⁵⁶ As there are only 11 positive references, the logit models for the UK consider only negative and neutral variables, as in the models for Italy above.

Models V and VI are mlogit models that address references to security contractors and PMSCs in Italy²⁵⁷ (1990-2017). While the coefficient of the variable Year is positive, though weakly or very weakly and significant, as references become more and more positive as times goes by, the variable for the left-right spectrum is not significant (both using the ParlGov or the adjusted Rile index). However, these results bear poor general significance as the low number of observations and, in particular, the very low number of references from centre and right parties do not allow a rigorous test to be performed.

VARIABLES	(Va) Neg Ref	(Vb) Pos Ref	(VIa) Neg Ref	(VIb) Pos Ref
LRParlgov	-0.149 (0.136)	-0.0718 (0.191)		
l.Gov	-0.587 (0.642)	0.137 (0.838)	-0.581 (0.642)	0.229 (0.877)
Year	-0.141 (0.0953)	0.338** (0.155)	-0.167* (0.0927)	0.317** (0.147)
o.LRParlgov				
Rile010			-0.0210 (0.136)	-0.0982 (0.196)
Constant	283.4 (191.1)	-678.8** (310.8)	336.8* (186.0)	-637.8** (296.0)
Observations	61	61	61	61

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

²⁵⁷ In this case, since there is a significant number of all types of references (positive, neutral, and negative), the model employed is a mlogit. For all models here, the value of the base-outcome is 0, implying that in models Va and VIa neutral references are contrasted to negative references. In models Vb and VIb, neutral references are instead contrasted with positive references.

Here, Models VII and VIII are mlogit models that consider references to security contractors and PMSCs in the UK²⁵⁸ (1990-2017). As in the case of Italy, the variable Year has a positive and significant coefficient, as references generally become more positive as times goes by. Differently from Italy, instead, here also the left-right spectrum variable has a positive and significant coefficient (both using the ParlGov or the adjusted Rile index). As shown by the results and the discussion, the likelihood of having a negative reference to contractors or PMSCs increases moving on the leftist side of the spectrum (Model VIIa). In particular, a step of one unit toward the left on the 0-10 scale increases the likelihood of having a negative reference increases, on average, of 52%. Furthermore, the government/opposition and the Year variables have a positive and significant coefficient.

Differently, Model VIIb show that there is no significant effect for the left-right variable for what regards the probability of having a positive reference to mercenaries. The only significant variable is, unsurprisingly, Year, as positive references increase consistently as time goes by.

This result likely descend from the fact that while the 68.1% of the references from the Conservative Parties happen when the Con are in Government, this figure decreases to 45.8% for the Labour Party, and to 12.5% for the Liberal Democrats and to 0% for the independents. The latter parties are indeed far more critical of mercenaries than the Conservative Party, as causal factors addressed in the theory and in the discussion section predicted.

²⁵⁸ For the reasons that led to the choice of a mlogit model see footnote 251.

VARIABLES	(VIIa)	(VIIb)	(VIIIa)	(VIIIb)
	Neg Ref	Pos Ref	Neg Ref	Pos Ref
LRParlgov	-0.520*** (0.115)	0.102 (0.174)		
1.Gov	-0.746*** (0.284)	0.197 (0.513)	-0.598** (0.296)	0.0758 (0.522)
Year	-0.0487*** (0.0184)	0.143*** (0.0424)	-0.0463*** (0.0177)	0.178*** (0.0477)
Rile010			-0.280*** (0.106)	0.369 (0.239)
Constant	100.7*** (37.01)	-288.8*** (85.12)	94.55*** (35.53)	-360.9*** (96.29)
Observations	274	274	274	274

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Model IX and X, two logit models, concern the spillover effect in Italy, i.e. when Italian politicians call contractors mercenaries (1990-2017). Descriptive statistics in previous chapter show that the left is more prone to transfer the mercenary stigma to PMSCs, though results are not statistically significant, nor employing the ParlGov Index nor the Manifesto Rile Index, again probably for the low number of observations. Differently, the variable Year is significant: as seen in the discussion section, politicians refrain from calling contractors as mercenaries more and more as time goes by.

VARIABLES	(IX) Spillover Effect	(X) Spillover Effect
LRParlgov	-0.0129 (0.155)	
1.Gov	-0.750 (0.794)	-0.811 (0.805)
Year	-0.373*** (0.133)	-0.386*** (0.135)
Rile010		0.0911 (0.149)
Constant	748.2*** (267.4)	774.2*** (271.1)
Observations	61	61

Standard errors in parentheses
 *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

Finally, logit models XI and XII regards the spillover effect in the UK (1990-2017). The use of the ParlGov or the Manifesto Rile Index produce different results. In the former case, the left-right variable is weakly significant (with a negative coefficient) and the government/opposition and the Year variable are significant (positive coefficient). Results change employing the Rile Index as both the left-right and the gov/opp variables are no more significant. Overall, the British left seems to be more inclined to transfer the mercenary stigma to contractors, though the second model does not confirm these results. As in all models regarding PMSCs, time is a significant factor, as the spillover effect loses its power as time goes by. Finally, mixed results from the government/opposition variable will require further investigation.

VARIABLES	(1) Merc	(2) Merc
LRParlgov	-0.366** (0.148)	
1.Gov	1.043*** (0.347)	0.545 (0.379)
Year	-0.0803*** (0.0228)	-0.0791*** (0.0220)
Rile010		0.175 (0.121)
Constant	160.7*** (45.56)	155.8*** (44.04)
Observations	274	274

Standard errors in parentheses
*** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.1

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