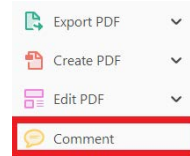


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
...e of nutritional conditions, and landmark events are monitored in populations of relatively homogeneous single n of *Saccharomyces*, and is initiated after carbon source [1]. Si are referred to as mei n of meiosis-specific g *revisiae* depends on th inducer of meiosis) [3 I functions as a repre repression, the genes pression) and *RGR1* at rase II mediator subur osome density [4]. *SIM* irectly or indirectly re

jstaddon Reply X  
 05/05/2017 15:32 Post

### 2. Strikethrough (Del) Tool – for deleting text.

 Strikes a red line through text that is to be deleted.



**How to use it:**

- Highlight a word or sentence.
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- The text will be struck out in red.



... experimental data if available. For ORFs to be had to meet all of the following criteria:


1. Small size (35–250 amino acids).
2. Absence of similarity to known proteins.
3. Absence of functional data which could not be the real overlapping gene.
4. Greater than 25% overlap at the N-terminus terminus with another coding feature; over both ends; or ORF containing a tRNA.

### 3. Commenting Tool – for highlighting a section to be changed to bold or italic or for general comments.

  Use these 2 tools to highlight the text where a comment is then made.


**How to use it:**

- Click on .
- Click and drag over the text you need to highlight for the comment you will add.
- Click on .
- Click close to the text you just highlighted.
- Type any instructions regarding the text to be altered into the box that appears.


...nformal invariance:  r  
 A: Math. Gen., Vol. 12, N  
 ...lified theory for a matrix  
 'ol. 8, 1984, pp. 305–323  
 ...d manuscript, 1984.  
 ...ching fractions for  $D_0 \rightarrow K+K$   
 ...lation in  $D_0$  decays' Phys

jstaddon Reply X  
 This needs to be bold  
 15/05/2017 15:40 Post

### 4. Insert Tool – for inserting missing text at specific points in the text.

 Marks an insertion point in the text and opens up a text box where comments can be entered.

**How to use it:**


- Click on .
- Click at the point in the proof where the comment should be inserted.
- Type the comment into the box that appears.

... Meiosis has a central role in the sexual reproduction of nearly all eukaryotes. *Saccharom* analysis of meiosis, esp by a simple change of n conveniently monitored cells. Sporulation of *Sae* cell, the  $a/a$  cell, and is of a fermentable carbon sporulation and are refe [2b]. Transcription of meiosis, in *S. cerevisiae* activator, *IME1* (inducer of the gene *RME1* funct Rme1p to exert repressi of *GAL1* gene expression) and *HGR1* are required [1, 2, 3, 4]. These ge ... or det ... trig ... its are ... us sin ... ne ty ... the a ... only d ... c gen ... tion d ... ional ... ne pro ... DNA-l ... ve req ...


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- Click on the proof to where you'd like the attached file to be linked.
- Select the file to be attached from your computer or network.
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The attachment appears in the right-hand panel.

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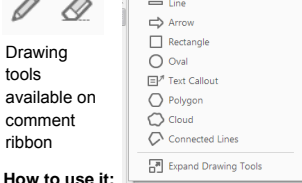
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- Click on  .
- Select the stamp you want to use. (The [Approved](#) stamp is usually available directly in the menu that appears. Others are shown under *Dynamic, Sign Here, Standard Business*).
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on perfect competition, constant ret  
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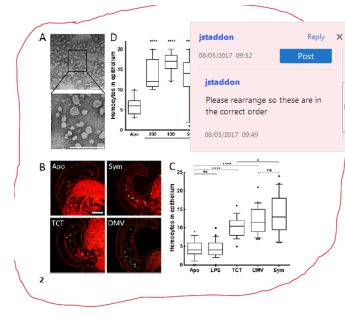


**7. Drawing Markups Tools – for drawing shapes, lines, and freeform annotations on proofs and commenting on these marks.**

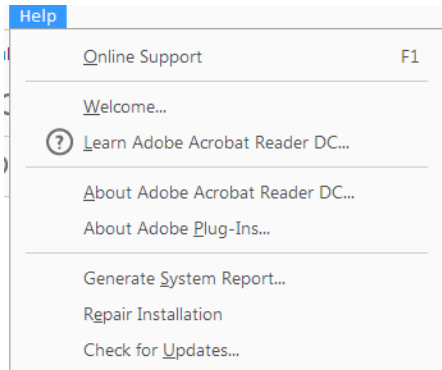
Allows shapes, lines, and freeform annotations to be drawn on proofs and for comments to be made on these marks.

**How to use it:**

- Click on one of the shapes in the [Drawing Markups](#) section.
- Click on the proof at the relevant point and draw the selected shape with the cursor.
- To add a comment to the drawn shape, right-click on shape and select *Open Pop-up Note*.
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# From the Change of the Pattern to the Change in the Pattern. The Trilateral Game in the Italian Intergovernmental Relations

2 1 Silvia Bolgherini, Marco Di Giulio, and Andrea Lippi 

*Territorial arrangements have commonly been observed looking at the reforms that privileged a change of the pattern in the intergovernmental relations Constitutional change that enhanced decentralization and autonomy, but scholars paid attention to the implicit evolution. This change in the pattern is likewise incisive and crucial and involves legislative acts, financial transfers, informal practices, and political strategies. Level of governments is consequently called to take part in role playing. The article demonstrates the relevance of the change in the model looking at Italy from 2001 to 2016 as a pilot case for multilevel system countries and their intergovernmental relations. A secondary analysis on resources scrutinizes the trilateral game among the State, the Regions, and the Local Authorities through gradual and layered modifications. Hence, the article raises hypotheses for further research on the relevance of change in the pattern and its generalization multilevel system countries.*

**KEY WORDS:** intergovernmental relations, games of power, overlapping authority model, negotiation modes, quasi federalism

## 摘要

领地安排 (Territorial arrangements) 时常能在某种改革中被发现。这种改革特许政府间关系 (intergovernmental relations) 出现能促进去中心化 (decentralization) 和自治的制度变化。本学者关注的则是其中隐含的发展。这种模式内的变化相当关键，它涉及了立法行动、金融转移、非正式实践和政治策略。各级政府进而都需要参与其中。本文将 2001-2016 年间的意大利作为试点案例，证明了模式内变化对多层系统国家及其政府间关系的相关性。第二步分析通过逐步的分层修改，仔细检查了国家、区域和地方政府间的三方博弈。由此，本文提出多种假设，用于未来研究模式内变化的相关性、以及此相关性在多层系统国家中的一般化。

**关键词:** 政府间关系, 权利博弈, 权威重叠模式, 谈判模式, 准联邦制

## Resumen

Los arreglos territoriales han sido comúnmente observados después de examinar las reformas que favorecieron un cambio de patrón en el cambio constitucional de relaciones intergubernamentales que incrementó la descentralización y la autonomía, pero los académicos han puesto atención a la evolución implícita. Este cambio en el patrón es también incisivo y crucial e incluye actos



1 *legislativos, transferencias financieras, prácticas informales y estrategias políticas. El nivel de los*  
2 *gobiernos está siendo llamado consecuentemente para hacer parte de ese rol. El artículo demuestra la*  
3 *relevancia del cambio de modelo al examinar a Italia de 2001 a 2016 como un caso piloto de países*  
4 *de sistema multinivel y sus relaciones intergubernamentales. Un análisis secundario de los recursos*  
5 *analiza el juego trilateral entre estado, regiones y autoridades locales a través de las modificaciones*  
6 *graduales y sobrepuestas. Por ende, el artículo presenta hipótesis para más investigación acerca de la*  
7 *relevancia del cambio en el patrón y su generalización de países con sistema multinivel.*

8 **PALABRAS CLAVES:** relaciones intergubernamentales, juegos de poder, modelo de autoridad super-  
9 puesta, modos de negociación, cuasi federalismo

## 11 Introduction

12  
13 Shifts in territorial patterns at sub-national level have been scrutinized by  
14 scholars by looking at the change of institutional designs through reforms  
15 (Baldersheim and Rose, 2010; Behnke, Petersohn, Fischer-Hotzel & Heinz, 2011;  
16 Benz & Broschek, 2013; Keating, 2013). Reforms affected both federal states and  
17 states with a “multilevel system” (Agranoff, 2014) that experienced devolution,  
18 regionalization, or “quasi federalization” (Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2014:122) in  
19 order to get an improvement in their balance of power, through readjustments  
20 and revisions of their intergovernmental relations (IGRs) (Hoffmann-Martinot &  
21 Wollmann, 2006).

22 As stated by Behnke and Benz (2008:214), reforms frequently concerned a  
23 change of the Constitution and often resulted as inefficient and partial. Formal  
24 Constitutional amendments seem to be very difficult to achieve and sometimes  
25 they trigger further formal and informal (less visible, but incisive) dynamics in the  
26 vertical distribution of authority that aim at integrating and reshaping the  
27 adopted Constitutional change. It means that, beyond explicit and formal amend-  
28 ments, the territorial allocation of power evolves also through secondary, implicit  
29 and patchy movements.

30 In this article, we thus distinguish between the first and the second type of  
31 territorial change, and focus on the second one, in order to scrutinize its features  
32 and test its significance in studies concerning different territorial patterns and pol-  
33 icy change. In the following pages, we call the first type (territorial reforms turn-  
34 ing into new arrangements through Constitutional amendments), a case of change  
35 of the pattern; and the second type a case of change in the pattern, i.e., territorial  
36 reforms concerning limited reorganizations, micro-provisions and *de facto* realign-  
37 ments that implement the reforms through readjustments in the IGRs and negotia-  
38 tions among the involved tiers of government. It will be argued that the change  
39 in the pattern does matter and can significantly influence the implementation of a  
40 certain intergovernmental pattern and its development, also by including steps for  
41 further reforms.

42 The first aim of this article is to argue that change in the pattern entails a  
43 “game of power” (Scharpf, 1997) among the involved levels of governments as  
44 actors aimed at maximizing their power. This game is influenced by  
45

1 contingencies, policy windows, party politics, and legal framework. Secondly, the  
2 article aims at describing what kind of resources may be displayed by each level  
3 of government and which negotiations may result from this game.

4 A case study supports this reasoning: the “trilateral game” among the State,  
5 the Regions, and the Local Authorities occurred in Italy from 2001 to 2016, more  
6 precisely from the 2001 amendment of the Constitution (approved by popular refer-  
7 endum) and the 2016 attempt (rejected by popular referendum).

8 Italy is a suitable case for generalizing implications deriving from multilevel  
9 system adaptations and for looking inside the change in the pattern of local gov-  
10 ernment and policy change. Italy experienced in fact a long-standing evolution  
11 turning in time into an Overlapping Authority Model, according to Wright’s (1988)  
12 definition of IGRs. Scholars interpreted this layering as a “quasi federalism”  
13 (Bobbio, 2005; Brunazzo, 2010; Lippi, 2011): it, in fact, triggered a stepwise trilateral  
14 game in vertical arrangement that changed over time into differently shaped center-  
15 periphery relations. As scholars described (Baldini & Baldi, 2014; Bolgherini &  
16 Lippi, 2016), it produced ambiguity and a permanent uncertain oscillation between  
17 decentralization and recentralization. All these dynamics have been observed in  
18 federalist countries, like Germany, as well as in regionalized (Spain) or decentral-  
19 ized ones (like UK) (Behnke et al., 2011). More precisely, while all these countries  
20 definitely adopted an intentional arrangement, Italy remained halfway and experi-  
21 enced an Overlapping Authority Model inspired at the same time at federal, regio-  
22 nal, and decentralized designs. For this reason, this country may be a case in point  
23 to get generalization. The final aim of the article is consequently to show that even  
24 if reforms may remain suspended, and thus the rules-in-form may remain the  
25 same, the rules-in-use might change significantly. Evidence of how intergovern-  
26 mental relations change even though the underlying legal framework remains the  
27 same will be thus provided. The article will analyze the above-mentioned trilateral  
28 game by looking at the allocation of policy resources by the State, the Regions, and  
29 the Local Authorities according to Dente’s (1997) classification. The research ques-  
30 tion concerns the different allocation of each of these resources and thus the differ-  
31 ent center-periphery relations during the scrutinized time span. By looking at this  
32 different resource allocation over time, it will be assessed the change in the model  
33 and the ambiguities of this change. This analysis is set forth in Sections 4, while  
34 the theoretical background is presented in Section 2 and the Overlapping Model of  
35 Authority concerning the Italian case is described in Section 3. Finally, evidence  
36 and developments are discussed in Section 5.

### 37 **Change in the pattern and games of power in the IGRs**

38 The main topic of this article concerns the institutional change that occurs  
39 when a State proceeds toward a more differentiated allocation of power. This pro-  
40 cess typically concerns federal states (Elazar, 1964), since the key-definition of fed-  
41 eralism implies the (constitutionally entrenched and guaranteed) dispersion of  
42 authority across many levels of government (Agranoff, 2001). Analogously, the  
43 same may be applied to “multilevel systems” (Agranoff, 2014), namely States that  
44  
45

1 experienced a shift from centralistic and monopolistic allocation of authority  
2 toward a multilevel vertical arrangement without becoming explicitly federalist  
3 (Behnke et al., 2014). Federal states are in fact conceived in the literature as subject  
4 7 8 to permanent change (Agranoff & Radin, 2015; Behnke & Kropp, 2016): their  
5 dynamics are considered driven by contingencies (e.g., windows of opportunity,  
6 party politics, economic conjuncture, their specific institutional architecture, etc...)  
7 10 (Benz, 2016:724)). In federal cases, IGRs may thus result as evolutionary and sub-  
8 ject to continuous readjustments. Similarly, also multilevel system can embrace  
9 evolutionary change combined to differentiated and layered allocation of power  
10 (Benz & Broschek, 2013).

11 The basic concern is always the vertical arrangement and the resulting degrees  
12 of freedom for each level of government when negotiating power with the other  
13 tiers.

14 Bakvis (2013) showed for instance how in the Canadian case, compared to the  
15 EU, the relevance of hierarchy remained inside the level of governments, while in  
16 the IGRs it was the mechanism of bargaining to prevail, due to the multilevel and  
17 overlapping authority dispersion “in the shadow of (earlier) hierarchy.” Equally,  
18 Ingold and Pflieger showed the seemingly incoherent attitude of Swiss institutions  
19 at international and domestic level, since IGRs matter and shape contradictory poli-  
20 cies on the same issue. This point has been extensively analyzed by Wright (1988:40-  
21 48) in his seminal work on IGRs. Adopting a Boolean set description, he argued that  
22 IGRs can be shaped on three recurrent models, according to a different extent of  
23 flexibility and uncertainty. The first model is called Coordinate Authority Model  
24 and assumes distinct boundaries and separate competences between the State and  
25 the Local Authorities. In this model, local units can exert only legal power granted  
26 by the State, but both entities are independent and autonomous, linked only tangen-  
27 tially. Differently, the Inclusive Authority Model entails a hierarchical relation  
28 depicted as concentric circles and displays proportional power corresponding to  
29 each level. It means that enlargement and reduction of power for one, will imply a  
30 proportional widening or diminishing for the others. As in the game theory, one  
31 level can win or lose power depending on the others’ gains and losses. Finally, both  
32 models are superseded from the Overlapping Authority Model (OAM). It combines  
33 autonomy and discretion with constraints and influence. While the other two mod-  
34 els were opposite—autonomy and independence vs. dependence and hierarchy—  
35 the OAM mingles interdependency with bargaining. More precisely, it entails six  
36 “overlapping features”: (1) limited and dispersed power; (2) modest and uncertain  
37 areas of autonomy; (3) high degree of interdependence; (4) simultaneous coopera-  
38 tion and competition; (5) negotiation; and (6) agreement by bargaining. All these  
39 properties are evolutionary, often implicit and piecemeal. As stated by Wright,  
40 OAM is really attractive and successful, since it permits both ambiguity and degrees  
41 of freedom along with routinization by practice. Somehow OAM implies an unde-  
42 fined, but permanent, re-arrangement among level of governments. For these rea-  
43 sons, it seems particularly suitable for analyzing contemporary networked patterns  
44 of government and multilevel governance (Agranoff & Radin, 2015; see also Fraune  
45 & Knodt, 2017).

1 On this point, Alcantara, Broschek and Nelles (2016) specified the difference  
2 between Multi Level Governance (MLG) and IGRs. MLG broadly involves multi-  
3 level systems together with a variety of non-governmental actors organized at dif-  
4 ferent territorial scales and aimed at producing public goods. IGRs include instead  
5 the relationships between level of governments producing public goods in the  
6 same country limited to the institutional vertical chain. Consequently, IGRs «are a  
7 discrete instance of multilevel politics in which government actors engage primar-  
8 ily with other government actors, organized at the same territorial scales, in a pro-  
9 cess of decision making» (id:42). According to Agranoff (2014:3), IGRs may be  
10 defined as the various combinations of interdependencies and influences among  
11 public officials in all types and level of governmental units with particular empha-  
12 sis on financial, policy, and politics issues. Analogously, Kuhlmann and Wollmann  
13 (2014:119-121) stress the unstable and changeable geometry between center and  
14 periphery and its upwards or downwards adaptations as the main IGRs' feature.

15 Nonetheless, whenever treating with IGRs, we cope with a certain amount of  
16 negotiation concerning the overlapping power formally assigned to different levels  
17 of government. Certainly, the institutional arrangement matters and can determine  
18 the type and the intensity of bargaining. As stated by Benz and Broschek (2013)  
19 and by Benz (2016), Constitutional change represents the starting point for this  
20 reasoning. Games of power resulting from the OAM can take place if, and only if,  
21 territorial arrangement has been formally and previously modified through a  
22 change of the Constitution that assigned a different allocation of authority across  
23 national territory—for instance, from unitary to regionalized State, or from region-  
24 alized State to a cooperative federalism. This is a change of the pattern. The rise  
25 of meso-government through the empowerment of the regions (Sharpe, 1993) or  
26 the rescaling strategies of the Nation-State (Keating, 2015) are both examples for  
27 change of the pattern.

28 The micro-adjustments (including decentralization or de-concentration) are a  
29 second type of change and concern instead the stepwise bargaining and redefini-  
30 tion of competences, authority, and policies between the center and the periphery  
31 (for instance, from cooperative to coercive or polarized federalism). This is thus a  
32 change in the pattern and it is intrinsic to multilevel systems.

33 Therefore, Behnke and Benz (2008:216-217) distinguish between reforms (i.e.,  
34 the change of the pattern) and evolution (i.e., the change in the pattern). While  
35 reforms are explicit and defined as an alteration of the written text of the Consti-  
36 tution by amendments, evolution is often implicit and formally residual and  
37 affects constitutional change that does not pertain to the written text, «altering  
38 meaning and practices without changing the wording» (ibidem). Behnke and Benz  
39 argue that implicit change necessarily occurs because Constitutions are incomplete  
40 contracts and never definitively delimit neither the powers assigned to each actor  
41 and institution, nor the scope of the decision rules. The implicit change can addi-  
42 tionally stabilize and legitimize the state arrangement through *de facto* micro-  
43 alterations, specific and limited legislation, intergovernmental agreements or even  
44 judicial sentencing (innovative interpretation). Evolution is instead more hidden  
45 and creeping, but incisive and often leading to (further) potential change of the

1 Constitution. It may occur between two reforms and may match rules, informal  
2 practices, legal interpretation, and political agreement among political parties.  
3 Moreover, evolution deals with a routinization of the new pattern in a relatively  
4 modified arrangement. This change fits the gradual institutionalist perspective  
5 (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010): it is not an official change, but a «gradual and layered  
6 **13** without a clear direction» one (Benz, 2016:712).

7 In this perspective, a change in the pattern may consequently include negotia-  
8 tion modes. These modes may determine the type of relationships among levels.  
9 **14** This concept has been introduced by Petersohn, Behnke and Thode (2015) in a  
10 comparison of multilevel systems looking at the permanent reallocation of power  
11 in state-society relations due to contextual factors and party politics. Negotiations  
12 have been also singled out by Dente (1997) in five types of resources available to  
13 each level of government: legal, financial, political, information, and know-how  
14 resources. Legal resources comprise the formal division of powers enshrined in  
15 the Constitution and laws; financial resources mean the possibility to collect and  
16 spend money and the control over these movements; political resources include  
17 the channels of access and influence both from the part of single politicians and  
18 political parties; information resources mainly concern data collection for policy-  
19 making; and know-how resources include the technical skills of the bureaucratic  
20 apparatus. In this article, information and know-how resources will be grouped  
21 together and considered as cognitive resources.

22 Within these negotiations, the role of parties is reputed as crucial: the center-  
23 periphery cleavage shapes parties' organization and representation, and this fact  
24 influences, in its turn, both strategies and political relevance of negotiation  
25 **15** (Hopkin, 2003; Thorlaskson, 2009). Moreover, devolution and decentralization  
26 may influence parties' adaptation in national arenas and in the creation of oppor-  
27 tunities at the local level, as well as in the maximization of their power through  
28 the IGRs (Van Biezen & Hopkin, 2015).

29 Negotiation modes can be thus classified by looking at two dimensions: the  
30 horizontal and the vertical one (Petersohn et al., 2015). The vertical one simply  
31 concerns the degree of decentralization assigning autonomy or self-rule to sub-  
32 state governments by power transfer (and reverse). Horizontal dimension con-  
33 cerns asymmetry in power distribution among territorial units. Both dimensions  
34 may open to different negotiation modes: (1) unilateral, involving only actor at  
35 the center; (2) bilateral, conducted between the center and one sub-state entity;  
36 and (3) multilateral among the center and the representatives of one or more sub-  
37 state entity at the same time. Multilateral negotiations are more oblique and  
38 uncertain, because they require consensus among diverging interests. Wallner  
39 (2017:420) states that the set of negotiating relations may occur as combination of  
40 three C's: coercion, competition, and cooperation. They are not alternative but  
41 complementary, and can be exerted either from above or from below according to  
42 contingencies and to social, political, and financial factors. Following this perspec-  
43 tive, Agranoff (2014:7) states that multilateral games are the essence of IGRs,  
44 while Benz (2016:716) argues that the interplay among levels of government is  
45 made of political negotiation, administrative policy making and the interpreted

1 and preserved law by the Constitutional Courts. In this case, IGRs can conse-  
2 quently be understood as “sequential of games” played by levels of government  
3 as political actors (Behnke and Kropp: 587).

4 This last aspect has been deeply scrutinized in studies on federalism. Posner  
5 (2007) pointed out the coercive federalism played by different administration in  
6 the United States favored centralization and supervision. Previously, Kincaid  
7 (1990) observed the pendulum from cooperative to competitive American federal-  
8 ism by analyzing the bargaining between States and the Federal administration.  
9 More recently, Conlan (2017) described the move from cooperative to polarized  
10 federalism emerging from changeable interpretation of IGRs in Canada. Lastly,  
11 Biela, Henni and Zons (2014) focused on Swiss federal strategies to overcome  
12 deadlocks by empowering sub-state entities not at the decision level, but at the  
13 implementation level: by granting more decentralization to sub-state levels may  
14 preserve their leadership and favor autonomy.

15 As for non-federal cases, Sandford (2016) scrutinized the British case and  
16 interpreted devolution not as a territorial governance evolution, but as a series of  
17 contract-style agreements between central government and local public bodies to  
18 pursue agreed outcomes in certain policy areas. He claims that a post-territorial  
19 governance is taking place as a result of the role playing by both center and  
20 periphery.

21 All these examples refer to changes in the pattern, and not of the pattern. As  
22 theorized by Elazar (1964), sub-national governments are not agents of some  
23 national government hierarchy, but important players in the intergovernmental  
24 system. Interplay can consequently embrace collaboration, but also ambiguity and  
25 hypocrisy (Agranoff, 2001). Moreover, this interplay produces variable outcomes,  
26 which may result not necessarily coherent, but often incremental and contradic-  
27 tory. Nonetheless, these “sub-optimal” outcomes may smooth divergences and  
28 contribute to integrate disparities and to prevent conflicts.

29 Evolution (change in the pattern) can consequently be observed as stepwise  
30 sequence of disentanglement and re-entanglement. This effect seems fitting to the  
31 Lindblom concept of disjointed incrementalism relaunched by Hoppe (2017:228).  
32 Change in the pattern can be consequently intended as a type of incoherent and  
33 piecemeal muddling through adjustments.

34 Kropp and Behnke (2016) depict the zigzagging trajectory of German federal-  
35 ism looking at incongruity intrinsic to the game of power when Constitutional  
36 change is implemented and every change may lead to a new reform that postu-  
37 lates opposite goals. This institutional incongruity is typical of the change in the  
38 model, since it displays the incremental attempt to make reforms effective both in  
39 the light of societal and economic needs, and of political pressures by the parties.  
40 The overall result is a sticky, layered and never clear and definitive change.

41 Summing up, three points may result from this theoretical review. Firstly, a  
42 change in the pattern is an incisive trend of informal and formal interventions that  
43 may significantly alter the territorial arrangement according to the resources avail-  
44 able to each level of government. As such, it represents a gradual, layered, and  
45 unclear adaptation of the “official” reform, indirectly contributing to consolidate

1 or reshape institutional change. Secondly, this evolutionary change is not  
2 mechanic, nor linear, but similar to a game of power played by the different levels  
3 of government acting as political actors. Thirdly, the result is a sticky change,  
4 often contradictory and without a clear direction: a definitely ambiguous and lay-  
5 ered change.

### 7 **The Italian case: trilateral game and change in the quasi-federalist pattern**

#### 8 *The overlapping authority model after the 2001 reform*

10  
11 Against this background, the Italian case provides an excellent viewpoint on  
12 these topics. Italy experienced three major attempts of Constitutional change  
13 (along with a series of minor changes throughout the decades) in the last 20 years.  
14 The year 2001 marked the shift from a unitary to an OAM, recently interpreted as  
15 <sup>16</sup> a case of quasi-federalism (Brunazzo, 2009; Lippi, 2011; Citroni and Di Giulio  
16 <sup>17</sup> 2014). Then, a devolution reform aiming at reinforcing the regional competences  
17 on some matters failed in 2005 and an overall reform aiming instead at overhau-  
18 ling the whole political and institutional system failed again in 2016. The 15-year  
19 time span between the first (2001) and the last attempt (2016) will be here taken  
20 into consideration with a focus since 2010, in order to investigate the impact of  
21 the change in the pattern in the Italian state and the dynamics of what may be  
22 labeled trilateral game, that is a game of power played by the State, the Regions,  
23 and the Local Authorities in those years.

24 Throughout the XIX century, the Italian State had been established as unitary  
25 following the French Napoleonic model (Kuhlmann & Wollmann, 2014: 57-59).  
26 This unitary arrangement was maintained also after WWII with the Municipalities  
27 and the Provinces (the 2nd tier) entirely subdued to State authority (Baldini &  
28 Baldi, 2014; Bolgherini & Lippi, 2016). This arrangement changed in 1970, when  
29 the Italian Parliament approved the final implementation of 15 ordinary status  
30 regions (OSRs) in addition to the five special status regions (SSRs) already estab-  
31 lished in the aftermath of WWII. During the 1970s and the 1980s, the State was  
32 still in charge to steer the local affairs but it was supported by the local branches  
33 of national parties (Tarrow, 1977), while since the early 1990s local authorities  
34 were strongly empowered (Bobbio, 2005). The direct elections of mayors and  
35 provincial presidents in 1993 and that of regional presidents in 1999 paved the  
36 way to reinforced meso- and local levels of powers and to the 2001 reform.

37 The Constitutional reform approved in 2001 devolved to the Regions a series  
38 of State powers ranging from environmental planning, energy, transportation,  
39 etc. and heavy-budget tasks (i.e., health policy), thus resulting in an OAM.  
40 Nonetheless, the Regions partially disregarded these new intergovernmental  
41 tasks (Piattoni & Brunazzo, 2010) and an intentional attitude of regional steering  
42 and governance was promoted only by a limited number of Regions: hence, the  
43 overall regional capacity to steer local governments and territorial governance  
44 remained weak. In those same years, the State lost capacity of control on both  
45 the Regions and the Local Authorities while its strongest tool still remained its

1 transfers toward the other levels of government. As for the Local authorities,  
2 municipalities in particular experienced an increase in terms of legitimacy but  
3 they increasingly accumulated public debt and lost some of the freedom gained  
4 in the previous decades (Bolgherini, 2016; Dente, 2012). The failed devolution  
5 reform in 2005 signed a turning point but reinforced these trends and thus the  
6 overlapping authority model, with all its ambiguities. All these evolutions led in  
7 time to the most recent changes of the trilateral game and to the last turning  
8 point of the Italian change in the pattern, started since 2010 (Bolgherini & Lippi,  
9 2016) (see Table 1).

10 In 2010, due to the global crisis, the national center-right coalition government  
11 led by Silvio Berlusconi started to enact some austerity measures, which were  
12 later implemented and pursued also by the following three governments led by  
13 Mario Monti, Enrico Letta, and Matteo Renzi, respectively. Triggered also by  
14 exogenous constraints such as the EU pacts (Dinan, 2012; Dyson, 2012), the austere-  
15 rity measures were all oriented to balanced budget, public expenditure contain-  
16 ment, and cost saving. That translated mostly into cuts of state transfers to local  
17 governments and in an increasing limitation of local autonomy (Bolgherini, 2014,  
18 2016).

19 Austerity represented a policy window for the central level to pursue a new  
20 strategy consisting in the progressive erosion of previously existing arrange-  
21 ments. Differently from the past, the goal of this reshaping strategy was the re-  
22 scaling of the whole system through «a stronger coordination and steering role  
23 of the central state to the detriment of the local levels» (Bolgherini & Lippi,  
24 2016). Such a rescaling intention mostly revealed itself in the law (No. 56/2014)  
25 known as the Delrio Law, approved in 2014 and which fixed a minimum  
26 threshold of institutional change to be fulfilled by local authorities, and dele-  
27 gated the Regions to further implement their internal multilevel governance with  
28 a high degree of autonomy, even if under relatively strict time constraints  
29 (Bolgherini 2015; Bolgherini, Lippi & Maset, 2015; Di Giulio and Profeti, 2016).  
30 This law should pave the way to the major Constitutional reform of 2016, which  
31 should have replaced the Senate with a Chamber of the regions, entitle regions  
32 and municipalities with further tasks, eliminate the provinces and other multi-  
33 level arrangements. Approved in Spring 2016 this reform was rejected by a popu-  
34 lar referendum in December of the same year. Nonetheless, the Delrio law is  
35 fully operational and it is producing effects on the trilateral game as well as  
36 changes in the pattern.

37 Table 1 displays the main innovations occurred 2001–2014 leading to the main  
38 changes in the pattern in the Italian case.

#### 39 *Research design and questions*

40  
41  
42 The change in the pattern, scrutinized in the Italian case, has an empirical and  
43 20 a scientific relevance (Gerring, 2007). Firstly, for the scope of this change and for  
44 its systemic effects, and thus for its empirical evidence. Secondly, for the fact that  
45 Italy may be a potential case for all those countries experiencing multilevel system



**Table 1.** Evolutionary Overlapping Authority Model in Italy 2001–2016

Year and event	Content	Political turning point
2001 Constitutional reform on Title V ratified by referendum (Const. Law 3/2001)	Federalist shift: attribution of legal exclusive power to the regions (by enumerating, in art. 117, the state's exclusive legislative powers and leaving all the rest to the regions); explicit statement for sub-national authorities of a constitutionally guaranteed status as constituent parts of the Republic	Center-left government tries to smooth down Northern League claims for federalism and "secession"
2003 (L 131/2003—La Loggia)	Partial implementation of the 2001 constitutional reform: Federalist attribution of powers to the regions	
2005 Constitutional reform proposal on Devolution	Devolution (arts 117–118); Federal Senate	Northern League in the governing coalition
2006 referendum on Devolution	Const. reform on devolution rejected through popular referendum	
2009 Fiscal federalism—revision of art. 119 Const. (L 42/2009)	Settlement of fiscal federalism principles (correspondence between local revenues and available financial resources at the same local level; autonomy, responsibility, coordination, cohesion, and solidarity)	Bridge period between decentralization and recentralization trend
2010 Urgent measures concerning regional and local authorities (DL 2/2010 then converted into L 42/2010)	Suppression of territorial areas authorities (ATOs); cutbacks to state transfers to local bodies	Global crisis and austerity paradigm Technocratic government (Mario Monti)
2011 austerity measures (DL 138/2011 Summer measures and DL 201/2011 Rescue Italy)	Further measures for financial stabilization and development and Urgent measures for growth, equity and public finance consolidation: Suppression of provinces (aborted); provisions on IMC and cooperation among small municipalities; Reduction of province functions; provincial executive body suppressed; indirect election of provincial president	
2012 Spending review (DL 95/2012—spending review—then modified and converted into L 135/2012)	Urgent measures for spending review with unaltered services for citizens	
2013 National budget law for 2013 (L 228/2012 Stability law)	Measures for metropolitan cities, provinces, municipal unions and fusions Suspension of metropolitan cities and province merging	Legislative elections: political stalemate
2014 Delrio Law (L 56/2014)	Reallocation of power among sub-state levels: Weakening of the provinces, implementation of the Metropolitan cities, empowerment of IMC and Municipal Unions and amalgamations	Matteo Renzi's government: attempts to a change the pattern
2016 Constitutional reform proposal	Constitutional reform proposal Const. reform rejected through popular referendum	

Source: Authors' compilation.

1 and moving through partial adjustments, by showing that a change in the pattern  
2 may be as impacting as a change of the pattern. In this regard, the Italian case  
3 provides in fact incisive insights for other cases where institutional or policy dead-  
4 locks have become relevant only recently. The paper sheds light on a dimension  
5 of change that is often overlooked in political science and that is likely to become  
6 crucial across Europe. The research question that guided our analysis was in fact  
7 to explore the ambiguous and minor—but enduring and lasting—adjustments in  
8 the Italian pattern in order to assess if and how those changes affected the trilat-  
9 eral game among the State, the regions, and the local authorities. The blurred pat-  
10 tern that Italy displays is in fact not an atypical one. Other countries in Europe  
11 (e.g., Germany, Spain, UK) show, although differentiated, evidence of change and  
12 more or less visible shifts are detectable. The Italian case may thus provide an  
13 interesting asset for cross-country comparisons. Thirdly, as it will be hinted in the  
14 conclusion, for this type of change may turn out to be a sort of conflict-smoother  
15 and a system-stabilizer, by preventing strong(er) contentious attitudes among the  
16 three players of the game.

17 The trilateral (State-regions-local authorities) game and the relevant negotia-  
18 tions and exchanges will be scrutinized under the lens of the actor-centered  
19 approach (Scharpf, 1997), thus considering each level of government as an actor  
20 playing in the game and having interests and resources at stake. The portrait of  
21 the change in the pattern in the Italian case will be provided by analyzing the dif-  
22 ferent resources in the hands of each of the three players in the trilateral game,  
23 according to the types of resources proposed by Dente (1997) and recalled in the  
24 previous section.

25 As mentioned in the Introduction, the main goal of this article is to under-  
26 stand the allocation of resources and to assess the different center-periphery rela-  
27 tions during time in the model and the ambiguities of this change. A secondary  
28 analysis, mostly based on previous researches and on documental materials, will  
29 be thus carried out. In the following section, the relevant empirical evidence gath-  
30 ered in this analysis will be provided.

### 31 **Change in the model: resources of the trilateral game**

32 This section assesses the main movements occurred to IGRs in Italy since the  
33 2001 reform. The assessment does not take into consideration all adjustments that  
34 have occurred in such a time span—such as, just to name a few, the restructuring  
35 of functional authorities regulating public services, the measures concerning tax-  
36 sharing agreements, the power to collect taxes for LAs, the so-called federalismo  
37 demaniale (the possibility for LAs to utilize and valorize real estate properties of  
38 the State concerning cultural and natural heritage). Conversely, the assessment  
39 focuses on some major adjustments occurred that significantly contributed to  
40 reshape IGRs in Italy. Such changes mostly took place since 2010, as the financial  
41 crisis eventually forced the Italian national government to implement austerity  
42 measures. These, in turn, paved the way for a new wave of institutional reforms  
43 ended up with the Delrio Law in 2014.  
44  
45

Table 2. Resources in the Trilateral Game (2010–2016)

Game/resource	Political	Legal	Financial	Cognitive
State-regions	Empowerment of Regions' Governments	Stability	Same autonomy Shrinking resources since 2010	Incremental empowerment of Regional resources
State-LGs	Empowerment of grass roots political class	Formal stability with destabilizing micro-regulation	Increasing LGs fiscal autonomy until 2010. Politicization and uncertainty since 2011.	Incremental empowerment of LGs resources
Regions-LGs	Context-specific balance of power	Expansion of Regions' competences	Stability	Context-specific

Table 2 summarizes how these major adjustments have only occurred in certain domains, while substantial stability has marked other domains.

### *State-regions*

After the 2001 Constitutional Reform, the relation between the State and the Regions used to be significantly conflictual. That was mostly due to the ambiguous allocation of legal resources between the two levels in the concurrent law-making competences. Although in terms of legal framework, the relations among the two actors have remained quite stable, even after the Delrio reform, State and Regions have struggled over its implementation. The number of Court litigations between State and Regions is emblematic in stressing this situation (Lippi, 2011; <sup>21</sup> Issirfa 2013): legal contentious between State and the Regions after the 2001 Constitutional reform has involved great part of the Constitutional Court activity with more than 1,500 trials started from 2003 to 2015. The peak of this trend occurred in the first years of the global financial crisis (2008–2011), while since 2013 the total number of Court litigations slowly decreased, probably due to the expected new Constitutional reform process. The 2016 Constitutional change should remarkably alter State-Regions relations in its legal dimension. According to this reform (Law n. 387/2016), Regions should appoint their representatives in the new Senate. A significant range of tasks about decentralization and local policies should consequently be shifted to the new Senate, especially those concerning impact evaluation and EU policies: at least on paper, the new Constitution should strongly empower Regions' political resources. Its failure did not keep the status quo entirely due to the operating Delrio Law, which points in the same direction of the aborted Constitutional reform. The long-established Conferenza Stato-Regioni—a permanent coordination venue with representative of national and regional governments—never institutionalized as a real political arena for bargaining between the Regions and the State (if excluding its complaining about financial transfer and the quest for additional funding from the State (Tubertini, 2010). The conflict on legal resources can be thus interpreted as a by-product of a change in the distribution of political resources between State and the regional governments. These latter are in fact emerging as new political centers, due to the

1 empowerment of Regional Presidents (Musella, 2009)—who often undertake sym-  
2 bolic political conflicts with the State over high salience issues—and to the struc-  
3 turing of political parties at regional level (Ignazi & Pizzimenti, 2014). As far as  
4 the preference of national parties are concerned, the issue of empowering region-  
5 alism has been a constant feature of the center-left Democratic Party (Partito  
6 Democratico—PD)’s strategies, while the right-wing regionalist-born Northern  
7 League (Lega Nord) has maintained—to some extent paradoxically—a more pru-  
8 dent profile due to a more localist bias (Di Giulio and Profeti 2015).

9 A pattern of stability emerges as far as financial resources are considered.  
10 Although the Italian quasi-federalism has recently gained momentum—in terms  
11 of political power devolved to Regions—still the meso-level government has lim-  
12 ited fiscal powers and the OECD Tax Database keeps considering Italy among  
13 unitary countries with no significant tax revenues collected at the regional level  
14 (Table 3). A closer look to regional accounts gives a more nuanced picture of  
15 regions’ fiscal autonomy, which highlights a high rigidity of both revenues and  
16 expenditures. On the one hand, fiscal autonomy is not irrelevant: in fact, despite  
17 the total amount of regional tax revenues is limited if compared with more  
18 advanced federalist political systems, revenues from taxes, sales, capital gains (en-  
19 trate tributarie ed extratributarie) rose on average from 57 to 66% between 2007  
20 and 2013 (ISTAT 2014), with remarkable regional divergence. Besides, it is worth  
21 noticing that Italian regions do not have their own taxes, but they mostly rely on  
22 tax sharing agreements by which they benefit from some percentage of national  
23 taxes. The great part of regional tax revenues come from the Regional Tax on Cor-  
24 porate Income, which is a tax on companies’ incomes and from variable amounts  
25 of the income tax and the VAT. However, Regions cannot dispose of these rev-  
26 enues at their own will, since these revenues cover almost the 88% (in 2014) of  
27 the National Health Fund (Corte dei Conti 2016: xv). Since 1993, the national  
28 health system has been in fact regionalized as regional governments took over  
29 powers both from the State and local authorities in a sector that nowadays  
30 accounts alone for almost the 80% of their current expenses, and represents the  
31 16% of the overall Italian public expenditure (Ibidem: xvi; Toth, 2014: 7).

32 The scenario concerning cognitive resources displays an incremental empow-  
33 erment of Regions—even if scattered along the North/South and big cities/small  
34 municipalities divides. Since the 1990s, Italian Regions increasingly equipped  
35 themselves with agencies and managerial skills. The State delegated the Regions  
36 to establish targeted agencies for environment (e.g., river basins), job placement,  
37 tourism, public utilities (water and sanitation, waste and disposal, local trans-  
38 portation). Many Regions autonomously promoted the creation of specialized  
39 agencies to manage specific policy sectors (e.g., economic development, research  
40 and consulting, agriculture, ICT and digital divide, NGOs). Almost all Italian  
41 regions hold financial and trade consulting agencies. All these entities can be gathered  
42 into holding: for instance, the Region Lombardy created the «Lombardy sys-  
43 tem», a network of agencies integrating four strategic sectors of activities: ICT,  
44 infrastructure, furniture, and grants. Lastly, the regions may own public-private  
45 companies or public companies operating in limited, but territorially relevant (in

1 some case also very profitable), fields of activities, such as buildings, cinema  
2 industry, theatre and arts, transportation and highways, trade shows and exhibi-  
3 **23** tion, thermal baths, parks and biomedicine, etc. (Citroni, Lippi & Profeti, 2015a,b).  
4 As far as the managerial skills are concerned, the landscape is even more scattered  
5 and irregular across the country. Italian Regions historically hire managers which  
6 are more highly educated than those in the remaining public sector. Nonetheless,  
7 scholars repute their overall number to be unsatisfactory (Capano & Vassallo,  
8 2003): in 2013, the 38% of managers had a master degree, but in general the popu-  
9 lation of managers is aged (aged 55 on average) and careers are really long (a  
10 manager achieves its/her position on average after 30 years as public employee  
11 (Vassallo, 2015). As for civil servants in general, the five SSRs have more person-  
12 nel (92,000) than the 15 OSRs. Some regions created specific expert staffs support-  
13 ing the governors and the general managers, while others displaced their  
14 managerial positions throughout the bureaucratic structure.  
15

#### 16 *State–Local authorities*

17  
18 Also in the case of State–Local Authorities (LAs) relations, the legal resource  
19 framework experienced no radical changes over the last 15 years. The only major  
20 issue is represented by the progressive de-institutionalization of Provinces, which  
21 have been transformed in non-directly elected bodies whose executives are  
22 appointed by municipalities. Such a transformation, nonetheless, hardly represents  
23 a downsizing of LAs legal resources. In fact, since long Provinces have become  
24 “colonies” of the municipal political class, so their transformation is only the ratifi-  
25 cation of a gradual change with no significant impact in term of legal allocation of  
26 resources.

27 Conversely, as far as political resources are concerned, local politics surely  
28 expanded its influence in the national arena. In the last decades, Italian mayors  
29 achieved increasing influence and prestige in the country’s politics: mass media  
30 often interview them on national issues and their opinions are reputed relevant  
31 by anchor-men and the public opinion. This strongly overemphasized the real  
32 expertise and the leadership of Italian mayors, but it is a fact they are considered  
33 as the “healthy” part of Italian politics (Bull & Rhodes, 2007; Diamanti, 2003).<sup>1</sup>  
34 Such a rising influence of local political class has instead gained the center of the  
35 stage during the formulation of the Delrio reform (Di Giulio and Profeti, 2016). In  
36 this phase, in fact, the core government positions have been filled by former local  
37 politicians. It is worth noticing that the political leadership at the national level  
38 during the Letta’s and (even more impressively) Renzi’s cabinets, dramatically  
39 changed its nature: national governments have been formed mainly by grassroots,  
40 locally grown politician. Significantly, Graziano Delrio was previously President  
41 of ANCI (the Association of Italian Municipalities), while Matteo Renzi was the  
42 mayor of Florence. Also within the Democratic Party, prominent officers in this  
43 period were mayors, like Piero Fassino, who has been involved in the abovementioned  
44 decisional processes as ANCI president and mayor of Turin.  
45

Table 3. Tax revenues of sub-sectors of general government as % of total tax revenue

	Central government			State or regional government			Local government			Social security Funds		
	1975	1995	2014	1975	1995	2014	1975	1995	2014	1975	1995	2014
Germany	33.5	31.4	31.2	22.3	21.6	22.0	9.0	7.4	8.2	34.0	39.0	38.1
Spain	48.2	50.4	42.3	..	4.8	13.6	4.3	8.5	10.0	47.5	35.8	33.6
France	51.2	42.3	33.1	..	..	..	7.6	11.0	13.0	40.6	46.3	53.7
Italy	53.2	62.7	53.4	..	..	..	0.9	5.4	16.5	45.9	31.5	29.8
UK	70.5	77.5	75.8	..	..	..	11.1	3.7	5.0	17.5	17.8	18.7

Source: OECD, Fiscal Decentralization Database (2015).

The rise of local political class has been underpinned also by a trend of increasing fiscal autonomy for LAs. As highlighted in Table 3 above, over almost forty years, Italy became one of the countries where LAs have the most pronounced autonomy after having been one of the least decentralized. Hence, increasing LAs tax powers has been one of the priorities for the reforms implemented in the early 1990s. The introduction of a Tax on Buildings (ICI) effectively produced an abrupt increase in LAs' autonomy that nonetheless is not equally distributed throughout the territory: been dependent on the real estate values, LAs fiscal system has undermined the revenues of less developed areas (Ambrosanio, Balduzzi & Bordignon, 2015). Besides, over the last decade Italian LAs' fiscal autonomy has faced a troublesome and to some extent paradoxical evolution. Political parties—and prominently the Northern League—have in fact strongly advocated for fiscal federalism, surrounded by a public debate largely in tune with this decentralizing programme. The shared belief was that the more the financial resources available at the local level, the higher the accountability and effectiveness of its local political class (Bordignon, Galamerio & Turati, 2014). Nonetheless, substantial policymaking has largely neglected this federalizing commitment, and local taxes' cuts have instead become a contentious issue for national electoral campaigns (Bussu & Galanti, 2015). In 2007, the center-left government led by Romano Prodi operated a first and limited cut on ICI for lower income households. This paved the way for a very divisive political campaign in 2008, which led Silvio Berlusconi's center-right government to completely abolish ICI. That explains the dramatic curb of local taxes revenues occurred in 2008 (Table 3). Later on, the technocratic executive led by Mario Monti reintroduced a tax on buildings (now called IMU), which revenues were only partially collected by municipalities—while roughly half of the income goes to the State in order to cope with the financial crisis. Recently, the Renzi government decided to politicize local tax issue and abolished IMU tax in the budget law for 2016, covering municipalities losses with inter-governmental transfers.

In terms of cognitive resource, LAs seem to have gradually expanded their capabilities. Experts and well-trained practitioners have traditionally been the main resources of municipalities since the 1970s. In the last decades, however, Italian municipal management reinforced even more their cognitive tools: on the one side, through new and well-trained local managers, on the other side through

1 the development of training experiences and meeting activities among local public  
2 officers. This fact contributed to show a public image of local civil servants strik-  
3 ingly opposed to that of State public employees (Santoro, 2014). Scholars inter-  
4 preted this process as an effect of the strong commitment of the local civil  
5 servants in the performance of municipal policies. That because they are mostly  
6 recruited at local level and work for the administration of the municipality they  
7 **24** live in (Balducci, 1997). The cognitive empowerment prominently consisted in  
8 acquiring NPM-oriented new expertise (human relations, accounting, evaluation,  
9 etc...) replacing the mere traditional legal background, and in fostering the  
10 capacities to create networks, communities of practices and associations among  
11 the municipalities and their public employees (Lippi, 2003). This growing trend  
12 drastically slowed down in the last decade, in particular after the global economic  
13 crisis. Austerity policies dramatically retrenched funds for training and network-  
14 ing, although the diffusion of new expertise and practices at local level still  
15 remains a relevant resource for municipalities. Moreover, in the last years, the  
16 National Association of Italian Municipalities (ANCI) increasingly equipped with  
17 archives and databases, as well as with consultants and agencies, which support  
18 the Association in its advocating policies toward the State. As a result, the Min-  
19 istry of interior's State archives on municipalities has been integrated by those of  
20 research and consultancy agencies on local financing (IFEL) and local policies  
21 (CITTALIA), directly managed by the associations of municipalities.

### *Regions-LAs*

22  
23  
24  
25 Since 2001 and until recently, the relations among Regions and LAs have  
26 undergone only little change, with regional governments still having few powers  
27 at hand to shape their own territorial governance. The Delrio Law altered such  
28 equilibrium through the de-institutionalization of the provincial governments, the  
29 effective implementation of the Metropolitan cities and by setting a compre-  
30 hensive framework for municipal unions and amalgamations. As said, this law was  
31 intended to integrate a constitutional change, which instead eventually failed.  
32 Nonetheless, the Delrio provision is effective and has started to produce  
33 transformations.

34 In terms of legal resources, Italian Regions have acquired for the first time a  
35 clear mandate to reshape their own territorial governance according to their own  
36 specific strategies. The implementation of this political opportunity has nonetheless,  
37 until now, been scattered and slow. If, on the one side, such a change may be consid-  
38 ered as a zero-sum-game won by the Regions, on the other side, the impact of this  
39 change turned out to be very different throughout the country as the specific distri-  
40 bution of political local resources within each region could counterbalance the new  
41 authoritative powers of regions: only in some specific cases, the OSRs adopted a  
42 clear and intentional pattern of sub-regional governance. Most of them have instead  
43 been inertial and have waited for the approval of the Constitutional reform to take a  
44 path in this respect. Court litigations and strong political cleavages between political  
45 parties and different sub-regional areas also hindered the implementation process.

1 To provide a portrait of this *in fieri* situation, three main regional strategies can be  
2 singled out: (1) a hard neo-centralist strategy, supported by those Regions (e.g., Tus-  
3 cany) that explicitly absorbed their provinces' legal tasks; (2) a soft neo-centralist  
4 strategy enacted by those Regions (e.g., Emilia-Romagna and Lazio) that instead  
5 adopted a multilevel governance approach, which allowed them to preserve their  
6 provinces but strongly strengthened the regional steering and coordination power;  
7 (3) a maintaining strategy, supported by those Regions (e.g., Lombardy), which  
8 decided to preserve the previous arrangement and thus enacted only a limited  
9 reshaping of the provinces and empowered their municipalities (Bolgherini et al.,  
10 2015). Be it as it may, the new sub-regional governance, in particular the creation of  
11 supra-municipal areas, has been promoted by some Regions with the aim of creating  
12 an intermediation with the municipalities. That triggered a sort of domino effect:  
13 municipalities and provinces excluded from the new metropolitan cities requested for  
14 new functional areas (Area vasta) or for enlarged metropolitan cities, which should  
15 include them. By doing so, territorial governance in each Region reshaped, in an  
16 action/reaction dynamics, the initial design conceived by each regional government:  
17 the original design triggered in fact a quest for adjustments and re-design at the  
18 local level. This process of re-definition of borders and authorities (especially of the  
19 Aree vaste) has not ended yet and has thus far displayed, as said, very different  
20 results in the Italian Regions. Another policy area where Regions acquired legal  
21 powers is that of municipal amalgamation. Voluntary amalgamations were intro-  
22 duced in 1990 and never converted into compulsory ones. Their total number has  
23 been very limited until 2010 (Baldi & Xilo, 2012): only nine mergers took place in  
24 that period. Municipal amalgamations have been enhanced by the devolution in  
25 2001 and then by the fiscal constraints after the economic crisis, when they became  
26 an important tool to try to reduce public expenditures. Their total number increased  
27 when the Regions were delegated by the Delrio law to steer their sub-regional gov-  
28 ernance strategy (Marinuzzi & Tortorella, 2014): from 2014 to 2016, 50 new amalga-  
29 mations have been recorded. They mostly appeared in Center-North regions (i.e.,  
30 Emilia Romagna, Trentino, Lombardy, and Tuscany) and include also municipalities  
31 with more than 5,000 inhabitants. These mergers have been strongly fostered by  
32 State financial contribution (+20% of financial transfers every year for 10 years and  
33 the dispensation out of the restrictions of the Stability pact for 3 years). Many  
34 Regions additionally promoted amalgamations with own financial support and ben-  
35 efits, with targeted campaigns and deliberative democracy strategies. The amalga-  
36 mation figures are still limited but evidently growing (Bolgherini, Casula & Marotta,  
37 2017; Mauri & Ricciardi, 2015; Rumpianesi, 2014) and increased where the Regions  
38 engaged politically beyond the State legal framework, and thus promoted addi-  
39 tional incentives and exhibited political and symbolic commitment through adver-  
40 tising, deliberative democracy procedures, etc.

41 As far as financial resources are concerned, the Regions-LAs relation has tradi-  
42 tionally little salience and faced little change. No specific financial transfer from  
43 the Regions in favor of Local authorities is worth noticing, even with the recent  
44 IGRs arrangement. Regions can provide funds to support local policies, in particu-  
45 lar by incentives and funds provided by specific regional laws on certain topics or



1 policy areas (e.g., amalgamations, local transportation, social services, health, etc.)  
2 or by competitive announcement for grants, mainly provided by European funds  
3 on specific activities.  
4

### 5 **Discussion and conclusion**

6  
7 The article focused on the long-standing territorial arrangements in Italy scruti-  
8 nized as a multilateral game among three different levels of government (State,  
9 Regions, and Local Authorities) from 2001 to 2016, namely after shifting away  
10 from the unitary State model through the devolution of power and autonomy to  
11 sub-state entities. In the considered 15-year time span, a stream of legal provi-  
12 sions, financial deployment, parties' strategies and informal practices followed the  
13 Constitutional reform held in 2001 and marked a long phase of minor adjustments  
14 and enduring changes. A gradual, stepwise and partially contradictory incremen-  
15 tal change, without any specific direction, brought Italy away from the unitary  
16 pattern and shifted it through continuous readjustments toward a more mixed  
17 and undetermined arrangement. As a result, IGRs moved either toward decentral-  
18 ization or instead toward recentralization, according to specific provisions and  
19 policy windows that, each time according to the relevant political situations,  
20 favored such adaptations.

21 Relying on the empirical evidence of the trilateral game presented in the pre-  
22 vious section and based on the type of resources in the hands of each of the three  
23 territorial actors, the evolution of Italian IGRs may be summed up as follows.

24 The State/Regions game entitled the regions with the task of steering and  
25 shaping the sub-regional governance according to their local policy priorities,  
26 visions, and responsibilities. Their political resources increased as well as their  
27 cognitive ones. Although they gained power during time, they still need(ed) both  
28 popular support and strong public transfer by the State to finance their public  
29 spending in crucial policies like healthcare. Furthermore, the national State repeat-  
30 edly attempted, in recent years, to downsize them by using the financial policy  
31 instrument. The institutional body entitled to coordinate State-Regions relations  
32 (the Conferenza Stato-Regioni) is both undervalued and marginal. On the con-  
33 trary, the role of parties emerged as crucial to mediate the IGRs: regional gover-  
34 nors increasingly aim(ed) at influencing the national political system, while  
35 national parties tend to limit the political salience of the Regions. Currently, the  
36 future of State-Regions relations is extremely provisional, also due to the failed  
37 2016 constitutional reforms and the incomplete landscape it consequently left (in  
38 particular the Delrio law, which now suffers the lack of those parts of the consti-  
39 tutional reform that should have completed it). It is hence probable that the Con-  
40 stitutional Court will continue playing a major role on this side of the trilateral  
41 game.

42 The State/Local Government relations saw LAs being financially constrained  
43 through the austerity measures and through a harsh strategy of cutbacks of public  
44 expenditure, fiscal retrenchment of public services and organizational consolida-  
45 tion. Moreover, a significant and creeping recentralization affected the Local

1 Governments since 2008 in favor of the central State and to the detriment of their  
2 own autonomy. The legal resources remain formally relatively stable, even if an  
3 intense micro-legislation provided for an incremental reshaping of inter-municipal  
4 cooperation, amalgamations and districts for local public services. Conversely,  
5 LAs have gathered more cognitive resources and municipalities are now called for  
6 finding a new role through a more direct and committed involvement in inter-  
7 municipal cooperation.

8 Finally, the Regions/Local Authorities relations turned out to be the most  
9 prominent novelty: the Regions have been invested since the Delrio law in 2014  
10 with the task of steering their sub-regional governance and got more power at the  
11 detriment of the provinces, which are slowly weakening; Metropolitan cities have  
12 been newly introduced, while inter-municipal cooperation and amalgamations  
13 have been strongly promoted. Evidence shows that only some Regions are effectively  
14 implementing the Delrio law and some changes are still only on paper (e.g.,  
15 the full abolition of the provinces, the real boost of amalgamations, the effective  
16 sub-regional governance). More interestingly, Regions seem to have different  
17 strategies about their own territorial politics, confirming the increasing relevance  
18 of bargaining on this side of the game among territorial actors. Hence, the balance  
19 of power as far as political resources are concerned, goes along with a relatively  
20 stable legal framework and with a cognitive resource empowerment, while the  
21 still present financial pressure by the State undermines the chance for an autonomous  
22 and effective regional governance.

23 Looking at the evidence presented thus far under the light of Wallner's (2017)  
24 three Cs, competition seems to be the prominent relation between State and  
25 Regions, while the State/Local Authorities relations are characterized by a coercive  
26 behavior of the central State, gaining room of maneuver and restoring a sort  
27 of vertical approach. Instead, the Region/Local Authorities relation is moderately  
28 marked by cooperation, although some coercive strategies by the regions—or  
29 some competitive attitudes by the municipalities—may emerge as influential.

30 Some final remarks are worth mentioning. First, our evidence confirms that  
31 the changing IGRs in Italy did not lead to a definitive landing place: the Italian  
32 trilateral game may be in fact considered as a prominent case of change in the  
33 pattern, where change takes place by gradual evolution, and not through reforms.  
34 Its trend depicts a still provisional arrangement without any clear direction and a  
35 gradual incorporation of innovations by readjustments and games of power. The  
36 two failures in changing the Constitution, both toward more federalism (2005)  
37 and toward recentralization (2016) confirm this statement.

38 Secondly, the change in the pattern revealed to be sticky and ambiguous: the  
39 Overlapping Authority Model seems to be the fitting trend in the Italian case. The  
40 so-called quasi-federalism, started in 2001, resulted to be both dynamic and influenced  
41 by contingencies: as a result, the provisional and oscillating change is sticky  
42 and contradictory, subject to political contingencies and external policy windows.  
43 The trilateral game hence displays uncertainty and path dependency.

44 Furthermore, a side-effect seems to appear, which could be deepened in  
45 further researches. Despite the sticky and contradictory change in the pattern,

that may result even entropic, this type of IGRs evolution seems nonetheless to have prevented widespread and harsher conflicts among the territorial actors and to have smoothed down disparities and differences; thanks to the continuous and persistent negotiations it implies. Tensions have thus been diluted and conflicts have been displaced and managed locally. In this perspective, the 2001 reform has been a sort of “safety valve,” which canalized latent issues and absorbed the oscillation within the model, and never opened the way to radical centrifugal pressures. This aspect needs to be further explored also looking at other countries through comparative research. Nonetheless, the Italian trilateral game, with its uncertain and gradual institutional change in the pattern, is definitely ongoing and may turn out to be a leading analysis for comparative research on layered change and hybrid territorial arrangements.

### Note

1. The rising of local political class is a long-term by-product of the introduction of the direct election for the mayors in 1993. Direct popular legitimacy and different competences put the mayors in a strong political position since. It is not by chance that in those years a movement (called Mayors’ Party), a new powerful lobby of local interests and of “moral” renewal of political class, was born. It represented a new local leadership, which was also perceived as a moral renovation in a particularly turbulent political environment. Hence since the 1990s, mayors, especially those of the big cities, have played a forefront role in national policymaking.

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