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Multilevel governance implications

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Structure of the dissertation

The object of analysis of this doctoral thesis is the managerial dimension of multilevel governance. The research, composed by three papers aims to pass in a gradual way through different stages of methodological knowledge. Indeed, the perspectives chosen are grounded in three streams of thought: Positivism, Realism and Critical Realism.

The typology includes a literature review, a quantitative and a qualitative analysis. The mechanisms observed are: multilevel governance (MLG), inter-governmental relations (IGR) and translation (or translability as pointed out by Rose and Miller, 1992).

The first work '**A managerial vision on multilevel governance and inter-governmental relations: a literature review**' focuses on the literature highlighting the managerial mechanisms of MLG. In particular, it explores the overlapping definitions between MLG and IGR and the existence of performance indicators. The methodology (mainly grounded in the positivist stream of thought) relies on PRISMA, Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (www.prisma-statement.org). This uses systematic methods to identify relevant researches throughout 27-item checklist and a four-phase flow diagram.

The second work '**Do temporary incentives to inter-municipal cooperation work?**' analyses whether temporary financial incentives to municipal cooperation lead to lasting outcomes. The outcomes are represented by the institutionalization of this cooperation typology. In particular, the paper analyses some possible variables that induce the consolidation of Inter – Municipal Associations. The methodology (mainly grounded in the philosophical school of Realism) refers to Realist Evaluation. It assumes that material and social worlds are 'real' and can have 'real effects'.

The third work '**Anti-corruption as a programme of government**' concerns the programmes of government and their translation processes through managerial instruments with particular attention to anti-corruption programme of government. The methodology combines ontological realism and epistemological subjectivism, relevant perspective in Critical Management Studies.

The main structure of the dissertation can be summarized in the following **Table I** showing the object of analysis and the methodological constructs. Author adaptations and extensions in adherence with the thesis object of a table in Westhorp Prins, G. et al, 2011.*

	POSITIVISM	REALISM	CRITICAL REALISM
Paper Title	1. A managerial vision on multilevel governance and intergovernmental relations: a literature review	2. Do temporary incentives to inter-municipal cooperation work?	3. Anti-corruption as a programme of government
Object of analysis	Managerial dimension of MLG	Managerial dimension of MLG	Managerial dimension of MLG
Methodology	Literature review PRISMA - Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses http://prisma-statement.org/	Quantitative Analysis Context-Mechanism-Outcome Configurations (CMOCs)	Qualitative Analysis Deconstruction of a given reality to understand mechanisms/sequences/processes that support events or structured realities
Main research question	Does the managerial literature on MLG and IGR contain instruments of evaluation of MLG?	Do temporary incentives to coordination lead to lasting outcomes?	How does the translation mechanism work within and along a programme of government?
Ontology	There is an objective reality, which exists independent of us	Material & social reality – we interact with reality.	Ontological realism
Epistemology	Truth and final knowledge exist	No final truth or knowledge, but improvement in knowledge is possible.	Epistemological subjectivism.
Causation	Constant conjunction, linear causation. Programs cause outcomes.	Mechanisms operating differently in different contexts generate patterns of outcomes.	No linear causation.
Implications for evaluation	Evaluators ‘tell facts’. Context factors should be eliminated: Quasi-experimental methods.	Evaluators explain how and where programs generate outcomes. Mixed methods (qualitative and/or quantitative).	Researchers explain ‘how and why things happen in the way they do rather than in other ways’**.
Administrative Levels	V	Municipality – Region	Regional - National - International

* Westhorp, G., Prins, E., Kusters, C., Hultink, M., Guijt, I., Brouwers, J. (2011) *Realist Evaluation: an overview Report from an Expert Seminar with Dr. Gill Westhorp*, 5.

** Alvesson, M., Bridgman, T., and Willmott, H. (2009) *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 56.

A managerial vision on multilevel governance and intergovernmental relations: a literature review*

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Abstract. The concept of multilevel governance (MLG) developed during the European Integration and today conforms a range of governance systems. Social scientists shaped different definitions to explain a phenomenon, which comes from different contexts. A broad literature tries to explain if and how this mechanism affects supranational, national, regional and local governance. MLG theory has become important in political science and a defined stream of literature in Public Administration highlights the embedded meaning of governance and the related concept of Europeanization of Public Administration. This literature review outlines *if* and *what kind* of key performance indicators has been theoretically proposed or used. The performance indicators suggest if the MLG process works properly and if the policy inputs match the results. The methodological question arises between the overlapping definitions of MLG from a political perspective and a managerial approach. The aim of this paper is to review the literature on multilevel governance encapsulating managerial competences related to Public Administration in the European context. The paper focuses on English-language scholarly literature highlighting the managerial mechanisms of MLG. In particular, it explores 1. the overlapping definitions between MLG and intergovernmental relations (IGR), 2. the existence - and if possible, the validity - of performance indicators. The literature dataset has been structured using two research engines. The papers hold in this review has been published from 2000 to 2015. Inasmuch as feasible, the literature review sticks to the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology. The results present the rationale and the paradigm. The rationale is the abstraction of policy-making process within MLG mechanisms. The paradigm related to performance is the translation processes of these policies in structures, processes and outcomes. The main limitation of the research considers the difficulty in theorizing managerial instruments outside case studies. The conclusion presents a different research approach that consider the instruments inside the whole translation process of policies in structures, processes and outcomes.

Key words: multilevel governance, intergovernmental relations, PRISMA.

Introduction

The rationale of this paper is the positioning of key terms such as 'tool' and 'mechanism' within the policy-making process, and to discuss their relation with performance. Focusing on MLG system, the paper investigates the way in which these instruments are translated within the policy decision process and highlights some differences with intergovernmental approach.

An etymological approach helps to understand the shift from 'governance' to 'multilevel governance'. This premise wants to add the shaded meaning of 'governance' and the related unsettled meaning of 'multilevel governance'. The aim is to pull out the MLG concept from its application in political science and analyse the managerial component. However, it is essential to introduce some concepts descending from political science in order to understand what is already known and how social and political implications created a sophisticated mechanism as MLG.

I consider the relevant literature on MLG focusing on the main managerial benchmarks instead of summarizing the different concepts related to the theory of multilevel governance. This represents one of the main points of the rationale of the present essay. The literature covers different fields of study (political science and international relations for instance) and levels (international, European, national and subnational), overlapping conceptual streams (federalism and supra-nationalism for example) and dissimilar perspectives arising from participative mechanisms (democracy representation and participatory levels for instance).

a. *Governance*. Theorists hold that there are different definitions of governance. In his seminal contribution, Rhodes (1996) enumerates several concepts of governance that contribute to the analysis of changes in British government: *Governance as the minimal State*, *Governance as a Corporate Governance*, *Governance as New Public Management*, *Governance as good governance*, *Governance as a Socio – Cybernetic System*, *Governance as Self – organizing Networks*. *Governance as New Public Management* is based on, according with Rhodes, two aspects: managerialism and the new institutional economics, which open to incentives like in market competition. Rhodes – considering *governance as good governance* - presents '(...) three strands to good governance: systemic, political and administrative. The systemic use of governance is broader than government, covering the "distribution of both internal and external political and economic power". The political use of governance refers to "a state enjoying both legitimacy and authority, derived from a democratic mandate."

(Rhodes, 1996). Few years later the White Paper on European Governance explains that '(G)overnance means rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which powers are exercised at European level, particularly as regards openness, participation, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.' (European Commission, 2001). Policies of *governance as a Socio – cybernetic system* are not the product of actions by central government, but the interaction with and between local governments, local Authorities, voluntary sector and private sector. Quoting Kooiman, Rhodes (1996) highlights the distinction between the process of governing (the so-called goal – directed interventions) and governance as the result (or the total effect) of socio – political administrative interventions and inter-actions. *Governance as Self – organizing Networks* implies that networks are made up of organizations that need to exchange resources to 'achieve their objectives, to maximize their influence over outcomes, and to avoid becoming dependent on other players in the game.' (Rhodes, 1996). From a managerial perspective, as pointed out by Piattoni in *The evolution of the studies of European Union MLG* '(While) the reasons leading to the shift from government to governance in economics and public administration have largely to do with the 'management of complexity', specific reasons preside over the shift from government to governance in political science.' (Piattoni, 2010: 162).

b. Multilevel governance. Marks, Hooghe and Blank (1996) evaluate contending models of European Union governance stemming from the experience of the 1980s and earlier 1990s. European states were losing their importance on the mediation of domestic interests with the European Commission after Maastricht Treaty. They report some useful question posed by state – centrist (the theorist which analyse the sources of European integration) to understand the passage from governance to MLG (Marks et al., 1996: 205). They sustain that '(O)ne does not have to argue that states are on the verge of political extinction to believe that their control of those living in their territories has significantly weakened. It is not necessary to look far beyond the state itself to find reasons that might explain how such outcome is possible. When we disaggregate the state into the actors that shape its diverse institutions, it is clear that the key decision-makers, above all those directing the state executives, may have goals that do not coincide with that of projecting state sovereignty into the future.' (Marks et al. 2010: 229).

c. Intergovernmental relations. Accordingly to Phillimore, 'we can define IGR as the processes and institutions through which governments within a political system interact.'

(Phillimore, 2013: 229). Agranoff describes four major epochs of IGR with core administrative implications, quoting his previous work (2010): legal and political, welfare state interdependency, government/nongovernmental organization (NGO) partnerships and collaborative networks (Agranoff, 2011: S70). Wright et al. (2010), after an in-depth explanation of IGR concept, describe the generic features of IGR to facilitate the application of IGR in cross-national or global context. As Authors of *The changing landscape of intergovernmental relations and multi-level governance in the United States*, they enumerate these features as follows: 1. Jurisdiction Complexity; 2. Actor Multiplicity; 3. Contentious Contingencies; 4. Multi-Functional Fragmentation; 5. Fiscal/Financial Interdependencies and 6. Sector Boundary Blending (Wright et al., 2010: 140).

d. Europeanization of Administrative Space. Between political science and managerial implications on MLG, there is the concept of Europeanization of public management. Binding decisions, as the European Decisions or Regulations, involve directly Member States, Regions or Managing Authorities – with different degrees of strength. The sovereignty, the related power and the decision-making process are exchanged for a heterogeneous and complex system of policies in a system of ‘Europeanization’. Heidbreder (2011) illustrates the emerging European administrative space (EAS) in a context with a ‘persistent diversity between public administrations’. Using a pragmatic approach, she introduces ‘a typology of the modes in which the supranational domestic levels of public administration interact’. The essential finding of the analysis show ‘that unlike the founding principle of national administrative autonomy, the EU has developed and applies an elaborate set of instruments that interconnect actors present at different levels. The quantity and quality of the various instruments applied vary greatly in their effect on national public administrations. They range from explicit rules that are hierarchically imposed, to mere side-effects of policy implementation or voluntary horizontal co-ordination between member states. The findings suggest dynamics that incrementally reduce the role of domestic administrations as truly independent implementing bodies.’ (Heidbreder, 2011: 723).

1. Objectives

On these bases, the MLG managerial component is defined by measurable elements, which represent instruments in the policy-making area and in public management. The explicit and main question is: does the managerial literature on MLG and IGR contain *instruments of*

evaluation of MLG? Consequently, are these “instruments” related to “performance”? What is performance? There are different definitions of performance and different indicators that can be distinguished in relation to governance (Forbes and Lynn, 2005: 5070; Lynn, Jr. and Robichau, 2013: 203). ‘We need to revisit our usage of familiar performance terms such as ‘efficiency’ and ‘effectiveness’. Despite (or perhaps because of) the frequency of their usage, one should not assume that such term always have the same meaning. Terms such as the famous ‘three Es’ (economy, efficiency, and effectiveness) are drawn from a generic input/process/output/outcome framework [...] and which is very widely used in both the study and practice of public management.’ (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011: 133).

Theories of public policy and theories of governance may represent a starting point for the analysis. Robichau and Lynn (2009) argue that some of those theories do not complement each other very well. Working on a comparison of a (recent) theory of public sector performance, they suggest that ‘multilevel governance theories can supply what continues to be the missing link in public sector policy theories’. They examined policy theories and their embeddedness in governance but sustain that ‘the links between policymaking and the multiple levels of governance within administrative systems are not made explicit and their influence on outputs and outcomes are not carefully considered. By including these levels into policy theories, they could become more complete and insightful.’ (Robichau and Lynn JR., 2009: 21). They outline the gap.

To address these research questions, the study design follows this path. First, I define the positioning of some terms within the policy-making process (rather than presenting given definitions): tool, mechanism and their relation with performance. Second, I review the literature on MLG with special attention to *mechanisms* and *tools* in Public Administration under a conceptual perspective and only in some cases using empirical or partially empirical studies. Third, I compare IGR approach with MLG.

The expected outcomes reflect a logic: the evaluation instruments research in the literature. Indeed, future research is expected to produce theoretical models of analysis that include instruments (tools and mechanisms) in the *space* between policy design/policy making.

The study design is composed by the following steps: identification, screening, eligibility and included studies. The identification presents the records through database searching ‘multi level governance’ OR ‘multi – level governance’ OR ‘multilevel governance’ AND ‘public

management' OR PLUS 'performance' OR PLUS 'mechanism'. The same protocol has been used with 'intergovernmental' OR 'inter – governmental' OR 'intergovernmental' summed with 'public management' OR PLUS 'performance' OR PLUS 'mechanism'. During the screening the redundant records are removed. The eligibility is based on exclusion criteria as presented in the 'Results' section.

2. Methods

The literature review relies on the PRISMA methodology (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses, www.prisma-statement.org) to screen records, to assess eligibility, to exclude articles and to include the results in a qualitative synthesis. This methodology was originally developed for systematic reviews and evaluations of healthcare interventions. A systematic review, as explained by Moher et al., 'is a review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research, and to collect and analyse data from the studies that are included in the review' (Moher et al., 2009:264). PRISMA presents 27-item checklist and a four-phase flow diagram (Figure A with modified flow diagram). Some points within PRISMA expressly refer to clinical research practice. Some of the latest points are excluded, considering the public management field and the political science perspective presented in most of the assessed studies.^{1,2} The use of PRISMA methodology and, in particular the four-phase diagram, represent a useful instrument to reduce the biases across the studies. 'The general concepts and topics covered by PRISMA are all relevant to any systematic review, not just those whose objective is to summarize the benefits and harms of a healthcare intervention.

¹ PRISMA contains different sections/topics. Some of them has been excluded because partial related to clinical practice or quantitative analysis. The items excluded with relative protocol number are: (5) Protocol and Registration, (10) Data Collection Process, (11) Data Items, (13) Summary Measures, (19) Risk of bias within the studies. The point (20) Results of Individual Studies requires for all outcomes considered (benefits or harms) the presentation of quantitative data. In addition, the points (21) Synthesis of results (which concerns the results of each meta-analysis done, requiring the inclusion of confidence intervals and measures of consistency) and (22) Risk of bias across studies have been excluded.

² As introduced in note (1) some PRISMA sections has been excluded in this research. PICOS point – as explained further – has been included partially. PICOS guideline consists in Participants, Interventions, Comparators, Outcomes and Study design. The Outcomes and the Study design are presented in this literature review.

However, some modifications of the checklist items or flow diagram will be necessary in particular circumstances.’ (Moher et al., 2009: 268).

I used inclusion criteria by key word and by research engine. The exclusion criteria could be repeated automatically. During the screening redundant records has been removed directly. The exclusion process at this stage does not concern the distinction between empirical and theoretical approach but the presence of MLG managerial implication in the abstract as *object* and/or as *result*.

The papers included in the review come from English-language scholarly literature from 2000 to 2015. The timespan chosen aims to highlight the *relatively recent* dynamics – in terms of policy and academic epochs in Public Administration - after the development of burgeoning literature on governance. The research engines used are Scopus and Web of Science.

I present a full electronic search strategy for at least one database. The search strategy follows this path and could be repeated. For instance, in Web of Science I search by topic ‘*multilevel governance*’ OR ‘*multi – level governance*’ OR ‘*multilevel governance*’ in title PLUS ‘*public management*’ in the topic. The timeframe includes papers from 2000 to 2015. The result presents 206 papers. I proceed by refining by research domain choosing ‘SOCIAL SCIENCE’ and by research area ‘PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION’. The result presents 48 papers. Another full electronic search strategy (with replicability character) considers Scopus research engine. In Scopus, I search ‘*multi level governance*’ OR ‘*multi – level governance*’ OR ‘*multilevel governance*’ PLUS ‘*public management*’ in the abstract. The timeframe includes papers from 2000 to 2015 using ‘SOCIAL SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES’ as subject area. The result presents 47 papers. Considering IGR, I propose two other examples. In Web of Science I search ‘*intergovernmental relations*’ OR ‘*inter-governmental relations*’ OR ‘*inter governmental relations*’ in topic PLUS ‘*public management*’ in topic from 2000-2015. The general results are 205 but the refined results using the filters of ‘SOCIAL SCIENCE’ as research domain and ‘PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION’ as research area give 58 papers.

The study selection includes all the papers passed through the previous selection process (abstract selection) and used a full text approach. This means that the inclusion parameters are based on coherent and adhesive elements of papers with the topic of present work. However, the main reasons of exclusion at this stage are: (1) papers *entirely* focus on case

studies about multilevel governance and/or IGR; (2) paper which are not mainly focused on Public Administration mechanism.

Defining all variables for any data concerning MLG and IGR (as suggested by PRISMA systematic review) is not possible and goes beyond the aims of the present work - which mainly does not consider case studies.

The main risk of bias resulting from the assessment of the papers – but which can not affect the cumulative evidence – concerns the inclusion or exclusion process. Some studies have a theoretical approach to MLG or IGR but use case studies that specify data. Other studies apply the theoretical framework on empirical examples. The biases in the interpretation of managerial results could arise in the overlapping area created by theoretical papers and papers with dominant empirical part. In empirical studies, the replicability is not guarantee and is not possible to exclude some paper for their relevance at theoretical level.

3. Results

The studies screened are 799: 498 from Scopus plus 301 from Web of Science. The paper assessed for eligibility are 32.

3.1. Eligibility at abstract level

The reasons of exclusion of papers not assessed for eligibility at Abstract level are the following: (a) case studies with minor theoretical reference or replicability as for instance climate change; (b) high level of specificity of main theme as for instance: forest certification, unemployment, rural governance, water framework directive, road maintenance, healthcare IT, hospital reforms, biodiversity conservation, metropolitan governance, Europeanized meat inspection regimes, public service performance in person-related services, minority government performance, waste management, coastal cultural landscape, political marketing, internet sale taxation, child – care policy, gender innovations, ITC sector, nanotechnologies; (c) analysis of private sector laterally included in MLG or IGR, as for example PPPs – public-private partnerships -, corporate governance analysis, private equity, nursing home chain (d) particular mechanisms of MLG or IGR embedded in macro-economic policies or macro-economic planning as for instance financial decentralization mechanisms in China, South Africa's fiscal relations, Sino-American environmental relations, international regimes,

private diplomacy; (e) specific and prevailing theory descriptions, for example network or power theories.

The papers included in the review are 23 papers. The complete study selection process is described in the flow diagram (Figure A, Total records identified through database searching and simplified PRISMA flow diagram).

3.2. Study characteristics

In the following section, I present the conceptual assumptions: positioning of instruments in policy-making process and performance; MLG and the 'management of complexity' and the managerial IGR approach. These theoretical assumptions mirror the three main relevant themes proposed in the prior study design and aim to reply to the main question of present work.

3.2.1. Positioning of instruments in policy-making process and performance.

The analysis of MLG and related instruments (tools and mechanisms) implies a description of the policy-making process. In particular, it seems useful to describe these elements and to present at what level of abstraction they exist. Howlett (2009), recognizing the multilevel and embedded nature of public policies, writes: 'the range of choices left at the micro-level of concrete targeted policy tool calibrations is restricted by the kinds of meso-level decisions made about policy objectives and policy tools, and both of these, in turn are restricted by the kind of choices made at the highest or meta-level of general policy aims and implementation preferences'. From the policy level, with a high level of abstraction there is a shift in a set of less abstract 'objectives'. These objectives 'must be concretized in a set of specific targets or measures which allow policy resources to be directed toward goal attainment (...)' (Howlett, 2009:74). With regard to the purposes of this paper a quite general distinction could be presented as follows: tools and mechanisms work at concrete and meso-level. The first point is to recognise the level of abstraction of these instruments, which change from one MLG system to another. The second point refers to the relationship between goals and means. Indeed, Howlett describing nested policy instruments choices explains how improved policy design requires the understanding of goals-means but also the nature 'of their relationship in each of the different orders of policy: from governance mode to policy regime logic to instrument calibration' (Howlett, 2009: 75). The problem in policy design (and more specifically in MLG) is not a 'definitive definition' of tools, mechanisms or other policy

instruments. The **translation of these policies in practice and in instruments** (called tools or mechanisms) represents **the paradigm** related to performance. This means that performance measurement includes the level of correct translation of policies (from the higher level of abstraction) in concrete tools and instruments. With these two assumptions (the level of abstraction of instruments within the policymaking process/design process and the relationship between goals and means), I can state that the **rationale** of present work is not the definition of these instruments but **the translation process**. Therefore, the performance indicators – usually mirroring and evaluating policy design – are strictly related to processes. Robichau and Lynn (quoting Scott) describe three categories of effectiveness indicators: structure, process and outcomes. ‘Structural indicators reflect the production function, that is the way the organization’s work is organized. Process indicators measures the quantity or quality of the organization’s work, that is, effort or output. Outcomes indicators purport to identify changes in an individual or organization that have been the object of some kind of intervention, service, or regulation. Thus, the effectiveness of each level of governance can be measured in terms of some combination of structures, processes, and outcomes.’ (Robichau and Lynn, 2009: 24). Are these findings applicable to MLG with particular attention to the policy design translation into practice? Some examples reply to the question.

3.2.2 MLG and the ‘management of complexity’.

Escaping from international relations premises (Knodt, 2004) and other ‘ways in which the MLG literature has been developed’ (Stephens, 2013), I focus on the concept outlined by Piattoni of ‘management of complexity’ (Piattoni, 2010: 169). EU Cohesion Policy aims to reduce disparities between European regions with strategies and programs. In a managerial perspective, strategies represent components of policy-making process with different degree of abstraction (declined for instance in tools and mechanisms).

The study (and literature) of Cohesion Policy is explained by different theoretical perspectives, although ‘has so far been dominated by the multi-level governance model developed by Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks and associates (...)’ (Blom-Hansen, 2005: 627). Dąbrowski, focusing on the Joint European Support for Sustainable Investment in City Areas (JESSICA), investigates its effects on the operation of the MLG framework in Cohesion Policy.³ The exploratory research involved a comparative case study based on qualitative research

³ JESSICA, a financial engineering instrument (FEI) of Structural Funds.

methods. The study focused on the use of FEI as a part of JESSICA during the 2007 – 2013 period and the governance mechanisms included the collaboration with financial intermediaries and private investors. Outside the implications of public-private involvement Dąbrowski confirms in conclusion ‘that reaping the potential benefits of MLG is conditional upon the presence of robust institutions, administrative capacity and well-established networks of collaborating organizations at the sub-national level.’ (Dąbrowski, 2014: 11). Sub-national levels have the chance to contribute to EU policies achievement ‘but in return for this autonomy, they must report regularly on their performance and participate in a peer review in which their results are compared with those pursuing other means to the same general ends.’ (Sabel and Zeitlin, 2008: 271). Peer reviews and other reports represent, for instance tools within the MLG policymaking process with different degree of abstraction/concreteness. The evaluation of complex social program includes for instance the European Social Fund (ESF). In 1999, The European Commission and the Italian Ministry of Welfare asked ISFOL (National European Social Fund Evaluation Unit) to undertake the evaluation of ESF, Objective 3, for the period 2000-2006 as reported by the same ISFOL. This analysis highlights the introduction – exactly by Structural Funds – of new ways of evaluation and performance measurement. ‘Over the last decade, there has been a growing demand to evaluate socio-economic programs financed by the European Union’s Structural Funds, supported by the MEANS (Methods for Evaluating Structural Policies) Program launched by the European Commission in 1995.’ (Lion and Martin, 2006: 1)

Open Method of Coordination. From the beginning of 2000 the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is recognised as a governance instrument. Sabel and Zeitlin (2008) enumerate specific elements of OMC – shaped on European Employment Strategy – from the documents of the Portuguese Presidency in 2000 (the Lisbon European Council Presidency Conclusions). These indications are: ‘Fixing guidelines for the Union combined with specific timetables for achieving the goals which they set in the short, medium and long term; establishing, where appropriate, quantitative and qualitative indicators and benchmarks against the best in the world and tailored to the needs of different Member States and sectors as a means of comparing best practices; translating these European guidelines into national and regional policies by setting specific targets and adopting measures, taking into account national and regional differences; periodic monitoring, evaluation and peer review organised as mutual learning processes.’ (Sabel and Zeitlin, 2008: 290). The OMC has the characters of a tool but is

‘a powerful instrument of the soft law’. Accordingly to Baležentis et al., this instrument of soft law ‘embodies flexibility in seeking EU-wide goals, sovereignty losses are minimized and political resistance overcome’ (Baležentis et al., 2011: 11).

These strategies include performance indicators and are present within European MLG context at different levels of abstraction.

3.2.3 Managerial IGR approach.

Toonen (2010) in his contribution - that integrates the two main theoretical perspectives of MLG and IGR - defines the IGR as ‘the configuration of legal, financial, political, administrative and organizational relationships and linkages between the different elements and units which are distinguished within a state – IGC [Intergovernmental Constitution] – system. IGR refers to the administrative or executive side of MLG, which may be more or less ‘bureaucratized’ or ‘politicized’ in various systems of MLG.’ (Toonen, 2010: 40). This is particularly true in North – American systems (Kincaid and Stenberg, 2011; Kumanan et al., 2004) or for defined policies as for instance environment policies (Rabe, 2008; Gupta and Sanchez, 2012) In their work about overlapping concepts of IGR and FED (federalism) Wright, Stenberg III, and Cho explain how IGR differ from MLG in two respects. One is the degree to which IGR incorporates and emphasizes the role and interaction of elected officials and influential appointed administrators in governance process. The prominence of policy issues in general and of fiscal relationships in particular that IGR addressed are the second elements of difference (Wright et al., 2010: 139).

As anticipated in the introduction of this paper, Wright et al. (2010) enumerate the features of IGR to facilitate its application in cross-national or global contexts as follows: (1) Jurisdiction Complexity; (2) Actor Multiplicity; (3) Contentious Contingencies; (4) Multi-Functional Fragmentation; (5) Fiscal/Financial Interdependencies and (6) Sector Boundary Blending. For the purposes of this essay, particular attention is given to Multi-Functional Fragmentation and Fiscal/Financial Interdependencies. Multi-Functional Fragmentation shows a ‘functional fragmentation both between/among policies/programs and across numerous jurisdictional entities’. The fiscal policies ‘involving revenues, expenditures, and debt occupy a prominent place in inter-jurisdictional interactions; a crucial issue involves the transfer/flow of funds between jurisdiction and associated conditions/requirements attached to the transfers’ (Wright et al., 2010: 141). IGR outlines marked fiscal elements in comparison with MLG.

The aim of this work is to find firstly the existence of MLG performance indicators and secondly to highlight the differences with the managerial IGR perspective: performance achievement is one of the most problematic aspects of contemporary IGR. Indeed, Agranoff (2011: 574) explains that in the partnership and network era, one of the most vexing problems for federal and state managers is that while inputs can be specified, there is a lack of control over outcomes. The collaboration instead of performance seems to be the way that allows maintaining more control over the outcomes. For instance, joint cabinet meetings are increasingly used. A research in Canada tries to reply to some question and in particular *if* joint cabinet meetings are effective mechanisms for intergovernmental policy-making. The importance is given by the 'institutional mechanism' provided by joint cabinet meetings more than by cooperation itself (Berdhal, 2011: 273). This is an example of mechanisms within governmental levels. Agranoff (2010) describes the progressive involvement of NGOs in IGR and the change in managerial field articulating some principles of a theory of IGR. The last points enumerated by Agranoff outline that '(As) the non-governmental sector became involved, new tools of governance (for example contract management) were added to previous fiscal subvention, loan, regulatory, tax sharing, and executive federalism. (...) The new tools, plus the emergent activities in participating and managing networks, places the greatest IGR involvement on both the elected and appointed executives and managers who deal with the complexities and intricacies of policy and program'. (Agranoff, 2010: 81). As presented in the introduction of this paper, the managerial perspective on IGR arose during the last decades within Intergovernmental Management (McGuire, 2006). Intergovernmental Management (IGM) 'refers to the array of problem-solving activities, procedures, techniques and forms of steering employed by persons who operate at the interfaces of the different governmental agencies.' (Toonen, 2010: 44). It seems useful to cite some data reported by Wright, Stenberg III and Cho from 1940 to 2007 to understand the positioning of 'intergovernmental management (IGM)'. They extract data related to intergovernmental relations (IGR), intergovernmental management (IGM) and federalism (FED) in *Public Administration Review*. The data set extraction shows the number of articles using the concept of IGR, IGM and FED in *Public Administration Review*. Analysing historical patterns and phases about FED, IGR and IGM the article presents relevant data: IGM did not emerge until the 1970s. According to the Authors 'FED likewise achieved peak appearances in the 1970s. Somewhat surprisingly, however, it exceeded the usage of IGR from the 1980s onward'. The

concept of IGM is not recent and represents a notable 'refinement' over FED and IGR (Wright et al., 2010: 111).

4. Discussion and conclusions

This paper analyses the literature on MLG encapsulating managerial competences related to Public Administration in a European perspective. It explores the overlapping definitions between MLG and IGR, the existence and (if possible) the validity of performance indicators. The main findings related to main research points (positioning of instruments in the policy-making process and performance, MLG and the management of complexity, Managerial IGR approach) produce the following considerations:

1. European MLG context presents instruments (at different levels of abstraction) and performance indicators.
2. The rationale of present work is not the definition of instruments but the translation process. A 'univocal definition' of instruments is not useful for the purposes of present work. The *translation of public policies in practice and in instruments* represents the *paradigm* related to performance (with particular attention to process indicators).
3. Performance evaluation, starting from its wide definition, is one of the most problematic aspects of contemporary IGR (and MLG) systems. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to avoid general abstractions or an accurate case study description of performance indicators (explicative as the examples presented, but not in line with the general purposes of this work). Effectiveness indicators, according to Scott's typology as quoted by Robichau and Lynn (2009), can be distinguished in three categories: structure, process and outcomes.

The limitations of this research can be classified in endogenous and exogenous. The endogenous limitations consider patterns of administrative diversity within the Union (the French centralization for instance and the Federalism form in Germany) and historical diversity (for example the diarchy in EU construction between federalist perspective and supra-nationalism models). The exogenous and main limitation consists in the difficulty in theorizing managerial instruments outside case studies.

In conclusion, the present work reviewed the literature about MLG to find general (and eventually replicable) managerial instruments. In addition, it aimed to link these findings with performance indicators. MLG and IGR panorama (and literature) is enough wide to prevent a

classification of these instruments case by case, but theoretically structured to distinguish different abstraction levels of public policies (micro, meso and meta). The translation of these policies in practice and in instruments (tools or mechanisms for instance) represents the paradigm related to performance. The European context provides examples of instruments at different level of abstraction with related indicators, for instance in Cohesion policy or within the Open Method of Coordination. The link between these instruments – at different level of abstraction – and the performance evaluation could be classified in three categories: structural, process and outcome indicators.

The MLG/IGR comparison, which considers mainly the differences in terms of macro – processes could be defined as the embedded policy relation in federal systems, with a presence of fiscal and financial interdependencies between governmental levels.

Future literature is expected to produce models of analysis in MLG policy-making process with attention to policy translation.

FIGURE A. Total records identified through database searching and simplified PRISMA 2009 flow diagram (adaptation from www.prisma-statement.org)

Record n. 1

Search Engine: Scopus

1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance + public management
2. Last access: June 2, 2015
3. Source: Scopus
4. **Results number: 47**

Searching criteria: from 2000 – 2015, Social Science and Humanities, Abstract.

Search Engine: WEB OF SCIENCE

1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance (in TITLE) + public management (in TOPIC)
2. Last access: July 2, 2015
3. Source: Web of Science

Searching criteria: from 2005 – 2015.
 Refined research area by “Public Administration” and “Social Science”: 206
Filtered results n.: 48

Additional records identified through other sources and included in “Introduction”.
 (n = 6)

Record n. 2

Identification

Search Engine: Scopus

1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance + performance
2. Last access: June 22, 2015
3. Source: Scopus
4. **Results number: 108**

Searching criteria: from 2000 – 2015, Social Science and Humanities, Abstract.

Search Engine: WEB OF SCIENCE

1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance (in TITLE) + performance (in TOPIC)
2. Last access: July 02, 2015
3. Source: Web of Science

Refined research area by “Public Administration” and “Social Science”: 208
Filter results n.: 48

Record n. 3

Search Engine: Scopus

1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance + mechanism
2. Last access: June 03, 2015
3. Source: Scopus
4. **Results number: 148**

Searching criteria: from 2000 – 2015, Social Science and Humanities, Abstract.

Search Engine: WEB OF SCIENCE

1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance (in TITLE) + mechanism (in TOPIC)
2. Last access: June 03, 2015
3. Source: Web of Science

Refined research area by “Public Administration” and “Social Science”: 207
Filter results n.: 49

Record n. 4

Search Engine: Scopus

1. Key words: intergovernmental relations OR inter governmental relations OR inter-governmental relations + public management

2. Last access: June 2, 2015

3. Source: Scopus

4. **Results number: 55**

Searching criteria: from 2000 – 2015, Social Science and Humanities, Abstract.

Search Engine: WEB OF SCIENCE

1. Key words: intergovernmental relations OR inter governmental relations OR inter-governmental relations (in TOPIC) + public management (in TOPIC)

2. Last access: July 2, 2015

3. Source: Web of Science

Searching criteria: from 2005 – 2015.

Refined research area by “Public Administration” and “Social Science”: 205

Filtered results n.: 58

Record n. 5

Identification

Search Engine: Scopus

1. Key words: intergovernmental relations OR inter governmental relations OR inter-governmental relations + performance

2. Last access: June 22, 2015

3. Source: Scopus

4. **Results number: 52**

Searching criteria: from 2000 – 2015, Social Science and Humanities, Abstract.

Search Engine: WEB OF SCIENCE

1. Key words: intergovernmental relations OR inter governmental relations OR inter-governmental relations (in TOPIC) + performance (in TOPIC)

2. Last access: July 02, 2015

3. Source: Web of Science

Refined research area by “Public Administration” and “Social Science”: 199

Filter results n.: 46

Record n. 6

Search Engine: Scopus

1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance + mechanism

2. Last access: June 03, 2015

3. Source: Scopus

4. **Results number: 88**

Searching criteria: from 2000 – 2015, Social Science and Humanities, Abstract.

Search Engine: WEB OF SCIENCE

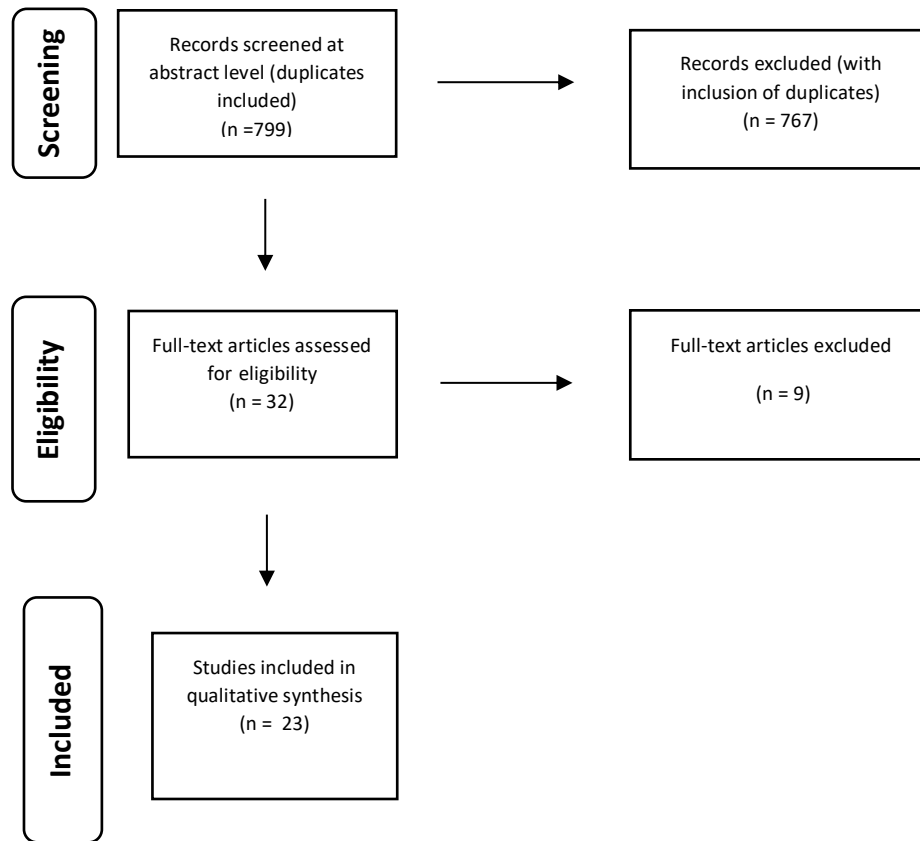
1. Key words: multi level governance OR multi – level governance OR multilevel governance (in TITLE) + mechanism (in TOPIC)

2. Last access: July 02, 2015

3. Source: Web of Science

Refined research area by “Public Administration” and “Social Science”: 226

Filter results n.: 52



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Do temporary incentives to inter-municipal cooperation work? (*)

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List of abbreviations

IMC: Inter-Municipal Cooperation

IMA: Inter-Municipal Association

MM: Merging of Municipalities

CMO: Context–Mechanism–Outcome Configuration

Abstract. This work is grounded in the literature concerning horizontal inter-municipal cooperation (IMC). It analyses the consequences of financial incentives in order to understand whether temporary financial incentives to municipal cooperation lead to lasting outcomes, that is the institutionalization of IMC once incentivized arrangements have elapsed.

The empirical setting is represented by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region in Italy. The program – mechanism under observation considers the incentives to municipal cooperation foreseen by the regional law n. 1/2006, which aimed to facilitate the establishment of inter-municipal associations (IMAs) for the shared delivery of functions and services, especially among small and disadvantaged municipalities.

The main research question aims to understand whether temporary incentives to municipal coordination lead to lasting effects. With this research question, we operate induction at aggregate level (IMAs) and at disaggregated level (municipalities). The paper analyses what are possible variables that induce the consolidation of IMAs. We introduce three sub-research questions (RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4) about whether the attitude to remain in an IMA beyond the compulsory period is driven respectively by the size of a municipality, the number of municipalities in an IMA and the territorial features of a municipality.

The conclusions of this quantitative analysis will provide some new insights about a possible path to the institutionalization of IMC of which IMA is an example. Indeed, it represents a preliminary explanation of variables related to the mechanism of incentives that could be extended to other similar settings.

Key words: multilevel governance, financial incentives, inter-municipal cooperation, realist evaluation.

Introduction

Studies about inter-municipal cooperation (IMC) in Europe intensify in time of economic crisis (Bel and Warner, 2015: 52; Rakar et al., 2014: 732; Rakar et al., 2015: 186). Coordination between municipalities has been proposed and carried out in the last decades at international level as a way to achieve efficiency or better public service delivery. Horizontal cooperation between municipalities, as IMC, seems to be a solution to reduce costs (Swianiewicz, 2010: 3), to enhance the efficiency in service provision and delivery (Zuffada and Coperchione, 2003: 1, Bel and Warner, 2015: 52) and to overcome the shortages related to the fragmentation of local governments (Klimosvskỳ et al., 2014: 647). In the relevant literature, comparative overviews show that the results of IMC are different both in terms of performance and in terms of consolidation. A definition is necessary: the consolidation process refers mostly to the IMC path towards a merger among municipalities, while the institutionalization defines a progressive type of reinforcement, which does not explicitly result in amalgamation forms.

Despite the increasing literature about inter-municipal cooperation, the relation between incentive-based policies and lasting results of collaboration is slightly investigated. The literature outlines the role of 'external trigger' or linking mechanism (Bryson et al., 2006: 46; Rayle and Zegras, 2013: 871). Sorrentino et al. outline – reviewing the main literature about incentives and public partnership – that '(...) most of the above-mentioned studies agree on the fact that the availability of funds and other incentive mechanisms is a necessary but not insufficient condition for public agencies to launch and develop collaborative arrangements, even though there are plenty of studies that claim the opposite.' (Sorrentino et al., 2011: 23).

This work opens with a brief overview of the literature concerning the mechanisms of municipal cooperation. The methodology, grounded in Realist Evaluation, uses a CMOC (Context-Mechanism-Outcomes Configuration) framework. The quantitative analysis, using aggregate and disaggregate data, aims to reply to one question related to the effectiveness of the mechanism and three questions related to context. The setting, Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (FVG), supported Inter-Municipal Associations (IMA) that represent an example of IMC.⁴

⁴ See art. 27 of regional Law 1/2006.

In particular, the analysis concerns the institutionalization of IMA from 2006 (the beginning of the incentives for IMA from the FVG Region) to 2014 (the most recent official data collection point). With 'institutionalization of IMA' we mean the reiteration of IMA agreements. The analysis is based on this main question: do temporary incentives to coordination lead to lasting outcomes?

1. Inter-municipal cooperation: an overview

The literature shows different terminological and content distinctions about the definitions and mechanism of municipal cooperation (or collaboration or partnership). The mechanism brings back to horizontal co-ordination. In his seminal work, Peters defines co-ordination 'as an end-state in which the policies and programmes of government are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae' adding in any case that this co-ordination is a continuum (Peters, 1998: 296). Horizontal co-ordination could involve – the debate is still open – a network definition (Pollitt and Bouchaert, 2011: 20). As Kenis and Provan outline '(A)fter a period of network euphoria, during which these presence was considered as something positive *per se*, questions have arisen as to whether and under what conditions networks are actually performing at a level that justifies the costs of collaboration, which can be substantial.' (Kenis and Provan, 2009: 440). Garlatti outlines that the network issue is progressively becoming relevant for the interpretation of social institutes, with particular attention to enterprises and, in a second phase, to public administration (Garlatti, 2013: 9). Network 'is one of the terms most used to define these conglomerates of connections (other very common labels include: joined-up government, inter-municipal or inter-organizational arrangements, public partnerships, collaboration networks, inter – local agreements).' (Sorrentino and Simonetta, 2012: 189).

Despite the different wording, IMC can be used as overarching term which '(...) includes all arrangements where local governments cooperate with each other, with other public authorities or with private institutions.' (Hulst et al., 2009: 265).

The first and most consistent in terms of strength of relation is the merger of municipalities. Terms as 'amalgamation', 'fusion', 'merger' and 'up-scaling' are also used to describe stronger forms of cooperation (Rakar et al., 2014: 734; Rakar et al., 2015: 188). Hertzog, analysing in particular the French case, presented a useful definition of 'amalgamation' in these terms: '(...)

two or more existing communes merge into a single one that will have the same territory and population as the former ones, but with only one legal personality, one budget, one assembly, and one executive staff. (...)’ clearly stating at the end that ‘X communes have changed into a single one’ (Hertzog, 2010: 296).

The literature distinguishes between different degrees of cooperation: from lighter forms until strongest forms. This is a matter of organizational integration, as pointed out by Hulst et al., which distinguish between standing organizations and agreements. ‘A *standing organization* represents the most organizationally integrated form of cooperation. It implies the integration of activities formerly carried out individually by municipalities into a new organization jointly run by the municipalities and any admissible participants.’ (Hulst et al., 2009: 276).

With attention to IMAs another aspect is represented by cooperation forms which represent a stepping stone to stronger forms, as for instance amalgamations. Are these preparatory phases towards a merger across municipalities? Under certain conditions, ‘a transition from simpler forms of cooperation to more complex forms in the development of the involved territories’ (Labianca, 2014: 185) seems possible. Also Franzke et al., discussing if this kind of cooperation could represent a potential preparation to further and stronger forms, pointed out that: ‘(...) IMC might be potentially the first institutional step towards amalgamation. However, there is no automatism. In addition, it remains theoretically controversial whether a fragmented or consolidated structure should be preferred’ (Franzke et al, 2016: 84). ‘Thus, the question about the choice between amalgamation and IMC makes sense – because they are possible solutions to the same problem and, therefore, have to face the same difficulties. However, they are not just alternate choices; they may even be complementary.’ as explained by Hertzog (Hertzog, 2010: 298). IMC, quoting a useful (or operational) definition by Hertzog (2010: 297) is constituted by the following elements: working together; a formal agreement to do so; a cost (less freedom to act, financial and human commitment); a common objective (create new gains for all parties). Therefore, the IMAs foreseen by the FVG Region, which aimed at the shared management and delivery of public functions and services, represent a form of IMC.

2. Realist Evaluation Approach

The theoretical approach used for this research is realist evaluation (RE), grounded in the philosophical school of realism. It assumes that material and social worlds are ‘real’ and can have ‘real effects’. In particular, in RE, the main question (‘the basic evaluation question’) asks ‘what works for whom, in what contexts, in what respects and how’ (Westhorp et al., 2011: 1). As explained by Westhorp et al., RE uses Context-Mechanism-Outcome Configuration (CMOCs). *Context* refers to features of participants, organizations, staffing, history, culture, beliefs, etc.. As outlined by Pawson and Tilley ‘(C)ontext describes those features of the conditions in which programmes are introduced that are relevant to the operation of the programme mechanisms. Realism utilises contextual thinking to address the issues of ‘for whom’ and ‘in what circumstances’ a programme will work.’ (Pawson and Tilley, 2004: 7)

Programmes, as defined by Pawson and Tilley according to realist evaluation programmes, are theories embedded in a social reality, represent open – systems and are active (2004: 3).

Mechanisms do not explain, in realist evaluation terms ‘how the programme works’. ‘In fact, it is not programmes that work but the resources they offer to enable their subjects to make them work. This *process* of how subjects interpret and act upon the intervention stratagem is known as the programme ‘mechanism’ and it is the pivot around which realist research revolves.’ (Pawson and Tilley, 2004: 6).

RE overturn the perspective ‘(l)it says that programs offer resources or opportunities, but is the decision making of participants that causes the outcomes.’ (Westhorp et al., 2011: 5)

Considering the context and the mechanism, we analyse whether a temporary financial incentive favours the institutionalizations of IMAs (RQ1) and what are the possible context factors that affect the institutionalization of IMAs induced by certain incentivising mechanisms (RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4).

RQ1. Do temporary incentives lead to lasting cooperation?

This is the main research question, which aims to establish whether a mechanism such as temporary incentives leads to the desired outcome of IMA institutionalization.

RQ2: Does the population of a municipality influence its attitude to remain in an IMA?

The FVG Region supported shared management among neighbouring small municipalities in order to deliver services more efficiently. Furthermore, the population size of municipalities

represents one of the main criteria that increases, in percentage, the basic incentives to associated forms (§3).

RQ3: Does the number of municipalities in an IMA influence the likelihood to reiterate an IMA?

The number of municipalities composing an IMA was another of the criteria which determined the basic incentives to associated forms (§3). In particular, the FVG Region wished to favour the association of as many municipalities as possible in the same IMA.

RQ4: Does the territorial configuration of a municipality influence its attitude to remain in an IMA?

In the FVG Region population density in mountain areas is extremely low, for this reason municipalities have been classified as mountain and non-mountain.⁵

3. The program: financial incentives to inter-municipal cooperation in Friuli Venezia Giulia

Before the economic crisis of 2008 that involved most Western countries, the FVG Region promoted IMC between municipalities with financial incentives released in a modular way.⁶ The regional law n.1 enacted on 9 January 2006, 'Principles and fundamental norms of Region – Local Autonomies in Friuli Venezia Giulia' (hereafter Law n.1/2006) represented the new normative architecture concerning these different forms of cooperation. Mergers among municipalities have always been promoted as the main and strongest form of cooperation.

The 'programme' introduced by the regional Law 1/2006, and in particular by chapter V, concerned the coordination of functions and the associated administration of services between local entities. The regional law established three main forms of inter-municipal coordination supported by incentives:

- Inter - municipal Associations (IMAs);
- Unions of Municipalities (UMs);

⁵ Concerning the population density see p. 6 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014b); with reference to mountain and non-mountain classification see Annex A of regional law n. 33/2002 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2002).

⁶ About the general coordination mechanism and in particular about the different policy tools see Garlatti et al. (2015: A4).

- Merger of Municipalities (MMs).

IMAs represent groups of neighboured municipalities with homogeneous features at territorial and socio-economic level. The recipients of incentives for associated forms of cooperation were: IMAs, UMs and MMs. The incentive mechanism was structured in: an extraordinary initial incentive (an inception incentive) to cover the initial expenses and ordinary annual incentives for every function or service which would be shared at any point during the life of an IMA for a maximum incentive duration of six years.

The extraordinary initial incentive (for IMAs and UMs) is evaluated on the bases of the legal nature of the associated forms and of the number of municipalities involved in the cooperation. It is augmented in respect of density parameters and eventual feasibility study (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014b: 31). Provisions on overlapping financial incentives and changes in cooperation asset are defined and sanctioned by the partial rendering of the extraordinary initial incentive.

The population size of municipalities represents one of the main criteria that increases, in percentage, the basic incentives to associated forms. The others two criteria are represented by the number of municipalities composing an IMA and the total area (in square kilometres) composing the Association.

In the intentions of the legislator, the ordinary incentives, released for six years for every shared function or service, represented a way to support the ordinary administration of municipal cooperation. In other words, incentives were delivered to support the transition from municipal cooperation settlement to municipal cooperation institutionalization.

The ordinary incentives, which support functions or services, decrease in a modular way: in the third year of 5%, in the fourth year of 15%, in the fifth year of 30%, in the sixth year of 50%. The decreasing rate is calculated on singular function/service value or macro - function.

As for extraordinary incentives, ordinary incentives forecast sanctionary provisions that consist in the partial rendering of the funds: the curtailment is related to the lack of effective shared services.

Aside from this programme, the setting of this research has been choose for three main reasons.

a) The FVG Autonomous Region has optimal parameters to analyse context factors. With respect to size, the region has an average municipality population of 5.681 inhabitants, even lower than the Italian average municipality population of 7.554 inhabitants.⁷ Furthermore, the demo-spatial character of the region outlines an emphasized low population density, in particular in mountain areas.⁸

b) In Italy, recent developments of the IMA phenomenon are mostly analysed through regional case studies (Zuffada and Coperchione, 2003; Sorrentino et al., 2011; Labianca, 2014).

c) The FVG Autonomous Region has a special statute with enhanced regional legislative powers that include normative autonomy in accordance with national law about defined issues – as for instance local government.

4. Context, mechanism, outcome configuration of IMAs in Friuli Venezia Giulia

This paper applies the CMOC to the analysis of IMAs in the FVG Region as follows:

- Context: municipality population and municipality territorial features.
- Mechanism: regional Law n.1/2006.
- Outcome: consolidation of IMA that is reiteration of IMA agreements after the end of the compulsory period.

Research questions. The main research question concerns the lasting results of temporary incentives for IMC.

RQ1. Do temporary incentives lead to lasting cooperation? That is: have the agreements (“convenzioni”) been reiterated after six years (compulsory period) from been signed?

With this research question, we operate both at aggregate level, that is at IMA level, and at disaggregate level, that is at municipality level. The analysis uses frequency analysis considering as the cut-off date for the end of the compulsory period 15.02.2014, which is the

⁷ The Friuli Venezia Giulia data are: 1.227.122 inhabitants, 216 municipalities, at 31.12.2014 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2015: 24). The national data are: 60.795.612 inhabitants, 8.048 municipalities at 01.01.2015 (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, 2015).

⁸ See note 3 about density.

date of the last survey of IMAs by the Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region. The analysis will consider as 'reiterated':

- the agreements which were reiterated by the same municipalities as for the initial agreements;
- the agreements which were reiterated by a modified group of municipalities than those who had signed the initial agreement;
- the agreements which were signed from the start for a period longer than six years (the compulsory period) and were still active as of 15.02.2014 .

Indicator: status of IMAs in 2014 – active/non active.

Source: Table of Municipality Unions, Inter-municipal Associations and Amalgamations of Municipalities – Year 2014 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014b: 18).

As mentioned in the theoretical approach (§2), three sub-questions were included:

RQ2: Does the population of a municipality influence its attitude to remain in an IMA?

This research question looks at the disaggregate level, that is municipality level: the evaluation uses bivariate analysis comparing the population of municipalities which are still members of an IMA after the compulsory period to the population of those which are not anymore in an IMA after the compulsory period.

Indicator: municipality population (2012).

Source:

- Table of Municipality Unions, Inter-municipal Associations and Amalgamations of Municipalities – Year 2014 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014b: 18).
- Regional Annual Statistical Report, 2013, municipality population at 31.12.2012 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2013: 281).

RQ3: Does the number of municipalities in an IMA influence the likelihood to reiterate an IMA?

This research question works at aggregate level, that is IMA level: the evaluation uses bivariate analysis comparing the average number of municipalities which were present in IMAs which were reiterated to the average number of municipalities in IMAs which were not reiterated.

Indicator: number of municipalities in an IMA (2014).

Source:

- Table of Municipality Unions, Inter-municipal Associations and Amalgamations of Municipalities – Year 2014 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014b: 18).

RQ4: Does the territorial configuration of a municipality influence its attitude to remain in an IMA?

With this research question, we operate at municipality level: we use bivariate analysis comparing the territorial features of municipalities (mountain/non mountain) which are still members of an IMA after the compulsory period to the territorial features of those which are not anymore in an IMA after the compulsory period.

Indicator: mountain municipalities: yes/ no.

Source:

- Table of Municipality Unions, Inter-municipal Associations and Amalgamations of Municipalities – Year 2014 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014b: 18)..
- Annex A, Regional Law n. 33/2002 (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2002).

5. Empirical results

The main research question concerns the lasting results of temporary incentives for inter-municipal coordination. The empirical results will be explained below.

RQ1. Do temporary incentives lead to lasting cooperation? That is: have the agreements been extended once financial incentives expired?

Result: Yes, at inter-municipal level more than 70% of IMA reiterated their agreement during the period 2006-2014 and at municipal level more than 80% of municipalities reiterated the IMA agreement.

According to the Regional survey, 40 IMAs were enacted between 2006 and 2013 but as of 15.2.2014 only 25 IMAs still existed. Another three, *de facto* reiterated their agreement, but after the deadline used for the publication of the survey.⁹

⁹ In particular: 1. 'Alta Val Degano – Val Pesarina', 2. 'Collio – Isonzo', 3. 'Pedemontana Occidentale'.

Veritably, the analysis will consider 28 IMAs as reiterated. Moreover, all members from the IMA 'Alta Valcellina' and IMA 'Maniaghese' joined the IMA 'Valli e Dolomiti Friulane', therefore in reality:

	Count	%
IMA reiterated	28	70%
Joined another IMA	2	5%
IMA not reiterated	10	25%
Total	40	100%

Table 1. IMA reiterated

Therefore, the frequency analysis shows that most IMAs (75%) were reiterated.

However, five out of 28 IMAs reiterated changed their composition with municipalities leaving or joining.¹⁰ Hence, we observe too much variation at IMA level to do a deeper analysis, better to focus directly on municipalities. The municipalities that decided to join at least one IMA during the period considered (2006 – 2014) were 209 out of 217, the total FVG municipalities.¹¹

Frequency analysis at municipality level reveals that the great majority (86%) reiterated their IMA agreements beyond the compulsory period:

¹⁰ Namely, the five IMA that change composition are: a. 'Associazione Inter-Comunale tra i comuni di Buttrio, Cividale del Friuli, Corno di Rosazzo, Manzano, Moimacco, Pavia di Udine, Pradamano, Premariacco, Prepotto, Remanzacco, San Giovanni al Natisone, Santa Maria La Longa, Torreano, Trivignano Udinese', b. Consorzio 'Comunità Collinare del Friuli', c. 'Associazione Intercomunale Palmarino', d. 'Associazione intercomunale tra i Comuni di Brugnera, Caneva, Porcia, Sacile', e. 'Associazione Intercomunale Mare-Carso'.

¹¹ 217 municipalities at the beginning of 2014.

	Count	%
Municipalities which reiterated IMA (RQ1 = 1)	179	86%
Municipalities which did not reiterate IMA (RQ1 = 0)	30	14%
Total municipalities	209	100%

Table 2. Municipalities reiterating IMA

RQ2: Does the population of a municipality influence its attitude to remain in an IMA?

Result: Yes, bivariate analysis shows that there is a negative and significant relationship between municipality size and IMA reiteration; this means that the larger the population, the less likely that the municipality reiterated an IMA agreement.

We consider population size as the independent variable. IMAs were instituted in particular to help small municipalities to share functions and deliver together, hence more efficiently, public services (Zanin, 2013: 68).

Over 60% of the municipalities in the FVG Region are small, that is, they have up to 3000 inhabitants.¹²

	Count	%
Small municipalities (below or equal than 3000 inhabitants)	128	61%
Other municipalities	81	39%
Total municipalities	209	100%

Table 3. Municipality size and IMA reiteration

¹² As defined by article 7 of the regional Law 1/2006.

Comparing the mean population of municipalities which reiterated their IMA agreements with that of municipalities which did not, reveals that municipalities which did not reiterate their IMA agreements are much larger, indeed their population is three times as much on average (Table 4) with respect to municipalities which reiterated their IMA agreements.

Means test analysis	
Average pop. for municipalities which reiterated IMA (RQ1 = 1):	3696 inhabitants
Average pop. for municipalities which did not reiterate IMA (RQ1 = 0):	11202 inhabitants
Pearson's R correlation coefficient:	-0.30 (significant at 95% CI)
Independent samples T-test:	significant at 95% CI

Table 4. Means test analysis for population size and IMA reiteration

A cross-tabulation between reiteration and municipalities categorized by size (small, medium and large) confirms that larger municipalities had a lower degree of reiteration (Table 5).¹³

		Small	Medium	Large	Total
Municipalities which reiterated IMA (RQ1 = 1)	Count	115	50	14	179
	%	90%	85%	64%	86%
Municipalities which did not reiterate IMA (RQ1 = 0)	Count	13	9	8	30
	%	10%	15%	36%	14%
Total municipalities	Count	128	59	22	209
	%	61%	28%	11%	100%
Pearson's R correlation coefficient: -0.21 (significant at 95% CI)					

Table 5. Relation between municipality size and IMA reiteration

¹³ Municipality size was recorded in three categories as follows: small if ≤3000 inhabitants, medium if 3001-9999 inhabitants, large if 10000 or more inhabitants.

As seen before, more than half of the municipalities of the FVG Region are small (61%) and only a tenth of them (10%) did not reiterate the agreement. The medium and large municipalities (respectively 28% and 11% of the total municipalities of the region) show a lower inclination for the reiteration of their IMA agreements and noticeably a third (36%) of large municipalities did not reiterate their IMA agreements.

In this respect, it is interesting to observe that none of the provincial capitals (Gorizia, Pordenone, Udine) reiterated their IMA agreements, while the regional capital, Trieste, never joined an IMA.

RQ3: Does the number of municipalities in an IMA influence the likelihood to reiterate an IMA?

Result: Bivariate analysis shows that there is a positive relationship between number of municipalities in an IMA and IMA reiteration; this means that the more municipalities there are in an IMA, the more likely that they reiterate their cooperation agreement.

‘Number of municipalities’ was chosen as the independent variable. Comparing the mean number of municipalities in an IMA which was reiterated with that of IMAs which were not, reveals that IMAs which were reiterated are composed by a greater number of municipalities, indeed they have twice as many municipalities (Table 6).

Means test analysis	
Average number of municipalities in reiterated IMA (RQ1 = 1):	6 municipalities
Average number of municipalities in not reiterated IMA (RQ1 = 0):	3 municipalities
Pearson’s R correlation coefficient:	0.42 (significant at 95% CI)
Independent samples T-test:	significant at 95% CI

Table 6. Means test analysis for number of municipality and IMA reiteration

RQ4: Does the territorial configuration of a municipality influence its attitude to remain in an IMA?

Result: Bivariate analysis shows that there is no significant relationship between mountain municipalities and IMA reiteration; this means that mountain municipalities are no more likely than others to reiterate an IMA agreement.

‘Mountain municipality’ was chosen as the independent variable. The location of these municipalities has peculiar socio-economic features in comparison to the rest of the FVG Region as foreseen by the regional Law n.33/2002.¹⁴ Half of the municipalities in the FVG Region are labelled ‘mountain municipalities’ and are classified as ‘homogeneous mountain zones’ (Table 7).

	Count	%
Mountain municipalities	102	49%
Non-mountain municipalities	107	51%
Total municipalities	209	100%

Table 7. Classification of municipalities

The cross-tabulation between reiteration and mountain municipality (Table 8) shows no significant result, indicating that, contrary to what was expected, there is no direct relationship between reiteration of an IMA agreement and mountain status.

¹⁴ The Law n.33/2002 promotes the homogeneous development of the regional community. This goal passes through the safeguard and promotion of mountain areas and through the socio-economic development of mountain inhabitants. In Annex A, it classifies the ‘mountain homogeneous zones’ which include mountain and partially mountain areas.

		Mountain	Non- mountain	Total
Municipalities which reiterated IMA (RQ1 = 1)	Count	90	89	179
	%	88.2%	83.2%	85.6%
Municipalities which did not reiterate IMA (RQ1 = 0)	Count	12	18	30
	%	11.8%	16.8%	14.4%
Total municipalities	Count	102	107	209
	%	49%	51%	100%
Pearson's R correlation coefficient: 0.07 (not significant at 95% CI)				

Table 8. IMA reiteration and mountain status relation

6. Implications and discussion

The main question aimed at understanding whether temporary incentives to municipal coordination - and in particular IMAs – lead to lasting effects. The answer is positive: the incentives produced lasting effects in terms of agreements duration and agreements reiteration for most municipalities in the FVG Region. Population size and the number of municipalities present in an IMA represent the independent variable that influence the attitude to maintain the (or to remain in a form of) municipal coordination. Instead, features concerning the location of municipalities seem not to be relevant, specifically for the municipalities located in mountain areas.

The first result for RQ1 (namely the relation between temporary incentives and the consolidation of IMAs) is positive. As foreseen by the law, the compulsory duration of these agreements was six years. However, the analysis at disaggregate level – municipalities – shows

(1) a lasting effect over the six years from the first agreement with (2) a few changes in the composition of IMAs with only some municipalities which dropped out or changed IMA.

These results can be further explained in different ways.

- a. In 2014, the cooperation between municipalities reached a level of consolidation (in terms of shared services and jointed functions) which made disaggregation counter-productive in economic terms (Zanin, 2013: 77). We could then conclude that inter-municipal cooperation represents a better instrument for the management of functions and services than individual municipality management.
- b. In 2014 there were still services or functions, which had not yet been activated and that represented potential further financial resources in terms of ordinary incentives.

If the latter was the case, then IMAs could be at some point disbanded and therefore reiteration would not have implied institutionalization. If instead the former was true, then inter-municipal cooperation could represent or could become a stepping stone to stronger forms of cooperation.

As far as contextual factors are concerned, the analysis revealed some interesting findings. The relation explored by RQ2 (namely the influence of municipality population in relation to the attitude to remain in IMA) is negative. Not only on average the smaller municipalities are more likely to reiterate their IMA agreements, but also the presence of large municipalities seems fatal to IMAs: although larger municipalities receive higher incentives for IMA, they were less likely to reiterate their agreements.

Moreover, the analysis for RQ3 revealed that the number of municipalities involved is important: the more municipalities composed an IMA, the more likely that IMA was reiterated. This seems to suggest that an association of many small municipalities is more robust as they recognise the advantages offered by working together beyond the initial incentive. On the other hand, in a small network, especially if there is a large municipality, reiteration was less likely. These results seem to contradict some of the findings of other management studies on network efficiency and efficacy. For example, Hasnain-Wynia et al. (2003) find that the larger the network, the lower the degree of its perceived effectiveness, while Weiner et al. (1998) and Brown et al. (1998) determine that to achieve higher levels of

network performance it is necessary to cap the number of network members. Moreover, according to Provan and Milward (1995) the presence of a central core agency in a network should ensure better performance. Nevertheless, the IMA with a large municipality were less likely to be reiterated.

However, there are various arguments which could help explain our findings, including that few smaller municipalities feel overpowered in their IMA by a larger one or that the larger municipality does not appreciate why to reiterate an IMA agreement beyond the compulsory period necessary to get the regional incentives. Furthermore, the function of “network manager” implicitly assumed by large municipalities could imply a role of facilitator or mediator (Agranoff and McGuire, 2001: 318). This last point could help explain why large municipalities, such as Udine, prefer not reiterating IMAs composed by other small and medium municipalities or why large municipalities such as Trieste did not join the cooperation programme at all.

The analysis for RQ4 (namely the influence of territorial configuration of municipalities on the attitude to remain in IMA) reached no significant result. This means that disadvantaged mountain areas were no more likely than non-mountain municipalities to institutionalize IMC.

Considering the aims for which IMA incentives were designed, it is important to notice that small municipalities were more sensitive to those arguments, while mountain areas did not necessarily buy into the FVG Region’s strategy. Hence, for a CMO’s perspective the incentive mechanism worked better at reaching the hoped-for output, that is IMA reiteration and thus institutionalization, in certain context, i.e. small municipalities, than others, i.e. mountain areas. It needs to be remembered, though that small municipalities and mountain municipalities are often the same and there may be a correlation between these independent variables, which is difficult to establish with such small samples.

7. Limitations and further research

This work focused on the institutionalization, meant as reiteration, of IMA. It did not look at more specific management issues such as the control of costs or the number of functions and services activated by each IMA: the results do not show how many activities have been financed by ordinary incentives. This consideration lies outside the purpose of this research,

whose main objective was to understand the 'lasting effect' of inception incentives. However, considering the consolidation mechanism towards stronger forms of cooperation, further explanations could be drawn by analysing the effects of financial incentives obtained for specific functions and services.

The entire regional area has been covered by the financial mechanism (considering also the Unions) activated by the regional law 1/2006 with few exceptions.¹⁵ This implies two restrictions: geographical, since the results should be validated by the analysis of other locations, and temporal, since the mechanism refers specifically to law 1/2006 while other incentive regulations could have been more or less effective.

Lastly, RQ4 focused on a single territorial feature (mountain/non-mountain) to look at disadvantaged municipalities. The fact that the relationship between this variable and the attitude to remain in an IMA was not significant seems paradoxical, because IMC design and the related incentives could also favour socio-economically disadvantaged municipalities, which in its categorization corresponded to mountain areas. It had hoped to encourage through incentives mountain municipalities to reduce costs through the shared delivery of services. Yet, mountain/non-mountain might have been the wrong indicator to measure and distinguish between socio-economically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged areas. Hence, it is not a foregone conclusion that socio-economically disadvantaged municipalities are less likely to institutionalize cooperation.

8. Conclusions

The results of this research about the relation between incentives and inter-municipal cooperation in terms of agreement duration confirm that temporary incentives can be a valid mechanism towards the institutionalization of such practices. The lasting effect in terms of IMA duration produced by incentives can be explained at least in two ways: it represents a path to stronger forms of consolidation and/or that joint-service management and delivery is better than individual service management and delivery. Furthermore, disaggregation could be counter-productive in economic terms.

¹⁵ Dolegna del Collio, Grado, San Floriano del Collio, Tarcento, Trieste and Vito d'Asio.

When designing incentive schemes, the relative importance of specific context variables should be taken into consideration. This paper found that the size and number of municipalities influence the attitude to institutionalize municipal coordination over time. On the contrary, territorial configuration, another context variable on the basis of which incentives in the FVG Region were granted, does not have significant influence. Moreover, special attention should be placed on large municipalities. In the FVG Region they either did not join municipal coordination from the very beginning or, if they did, they did not institutionalise it after receiving the initial incentives. This phenomenon can be explained by the weight to become 'network managers'. Ways to counteract it need to be thought of, if IMC needs to appeal also to larger municipalities beyond initial incentives.

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Anti-corruption as a programme of government*

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Abstract. This work looks at programmes of government and their implementation through managerial translations. It expressly connects to a stream of literature that has been developed mostly in the public sector accounting field and published in top accounting journals in the last couple of the decades. This literature offers a particular interpretation of public management transformation by looking at the role of specific ‘technologies’ of governance, control and verification in translating abstract ideas of improvement into actual processes (Foucault, 1976, 1977; Rose and Miller, 1992; Rose, 1996; Panozzo, 2000; Newman, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004; Latour, 2005; Lascoumes and Le Gales, 2007; Sørensen and Torfing, 2007; Miller and Rose, 2008).

The first part of this work *‘Anti-corruption as a government programme’* assumes that programmes of government are not only sustained by political rationalities but also made visible and concrete by practices of calculation and measurement. We focus on one of these programmes - anti-corruption - in order to describe how this mechanism works at different levels. In particular, the question is the following: how does the translation mechanism of a programme of government work? In addition, what are the managerial tools that sustain its enactment? The first section outlines the contribution of an interdisciplinary approach to managerial literature. It deals with the moral matter (as part of moral form that sustains the political rationalities) and outlines its relation with anti-corruption development and “industrialization”. The documental research concentrates on anti-corruption programme in Italy considering some meaningful documents produced before the enactment of the Italian Law No.190/2012 and describing the perceived level of corruption.

The empirical part *‘Anti-corruption as a programme of government: local practices’* analyses the impact produced by this translation process at organizational level, in particular for the regional Administration of Friuli Venezia Giulia, an Italian autonomous region. During a period of economic crisis and (national) political de-legitimation, the main results show an improvement of bureaucratization and a progressive introduction of ‘integrity’ measures translated from international governance standards.

Key words: anti-corruption, international organizations, Italy, morality, translation.

Introduction and conceptual framework

This paper analyses the translation of programmes of government with particular attention to anti-corruption issue. It expressly connects to a stream of literature that has mostly been developed by public accounting scholars and published in top accounting journals in the last couple of the decades. This literature offers a peculiar interpretation of public management transformations by looking at the role of specific “technologies” of governance, control and verification in translating abstract ideas of improvement into actual processes (Foucault, 1976, 1977; Rose and Miller, 1992; Rose, 1996; Panozzo, 2000; Newman, 2001; Czarniawska, 2004; Latour, 2005; Lascoumes and Le Gales, 2007; Sørensen and Torfing, 2007; Miller and Rose, 2008). Following this research theme, we assume that government programmes are made visible and concrete by practices of calculation and measurement.

Government programmes arise from the failures of government and aim to fix problems. They are sustained by political rationalities: the consistencies of a political discourse that support the representation of reality. Political rationalities - which have a moral form, an epistemological character and a language – constitute the architecture that sustains the enactment of government programmes (Rose and Miller, 1992). Is there a relation between the translation mechanism and power? We assume that power is a widespread phenomenon: there are multiple centres of power (Miller and Rose, 2008).

The centres of calculation represent the centres of power through the inscription of reality (Rose and Miller, 1992). This is a form of transposition of the knowledge of the world through data. Specifically, the actors involved are the collectors, editors and mediators of specific information, knowledge and tools.

The main question is the following: how does the translation mechanism of a programme of government work and, what are the managerial instruments that sustain its enactment?

The first part of this paper outlines the moral form upon which an anti-corruption programme was conceptualized and describes what solutions have been preferred. It concentrates on how (and not specifically on “why”) this mechanism works through multiple centres of calculation and power (Miller and Rose, 2008). The “why” question and its reply could be derived by the “how” question: we do not search a causal explanation to this translations, but we rather describe a sequence of significant events, facts, documents, reports, behaviours (Foucault,

1976, 1977) which are connected to the translation mechanism. This significant ensemble represents another reading of reality through a managerial perspective.

Supported by the documental research, the first part unravels the translation of government programmes along international and national levels and through different centres of calculation.¹⁶

The empirical part, sustained by the documental research, the participant observation and the interviews, outlines the managerial and moral implications of this translation at local level.

1. Anti-corruption as a government programme

Occurrences of sleaze and bribery among public officers and officials are investigated and treated as corruption within the Public Administration. Corruption, according to the definition given by the Civil Law Convention on Corruption means ‘requesting, offering, giving or accepting, directly or indirectly, a bribe or any other undue advantage or prospect thereof, which distorts the proper performance of any duty or behavior required of the recipient of the bribe, the undue advantage or the prospect thereof’ (Council of Europe, 1999: 2).

A brief description of the evolution of anti-corruption discourse and practices is necessary to understand the dynamics that have influenced the creation of the government programmes in international settings as well as national realities. In particular, it is important to appreciate how an anti-corruption programme has changed the principles it rests upon over time, according to the different weight given to moral issues or to the technical nature of anti-corruption programmes themselves.¹⁷

¹⁶ A framework with different levels is useful in order to distinguish between the strategies of international and regional organizations. According to Alvesson, Bridgman and Willmott management and organization researchers ‘who draw extensively on critical realist thinking may need to guard against an overemphasis on structurally-based forms of explanation. But they remain convinced that the considerably enhanced explanatory power that critical realist principles and modes of analysis makes available to them in their efforts to construct and test “analytical narratives of emergence” are vitally necessary to our understanding of the dynamics (...).’ (Alvesson, Bridgman, Willmott, 2009: 69).

¹⁷ It is possible to observe this difference with reference to the main political discourse used in North America, for instance, the difference in the conception of anti-corruption practices is outlined between the liberal (or neo-liberal) and the republican discourse.

The description of this dynamics leads to a concrete case: the introduction of new anti-corruption measures in Italy in 2012. Countering corruption is an old battle in Italy. At the beginning of the '80s corruption problems became, for a while, a political – institutional moral problem (Scalfari, 2011). Ten years later *Mani pulite* ('Clean hands') era involved in judicial investigations public officers, politicians and entrepreneurs (Panozzo, 2000). After the great attention given to these judicial inquiries, media reports produced a sort of 'saturation effect' (Vannucci, 2009). Few years later from the beginning of the economic crisis (2008), trust in politicians and political institutions progressively decreased (Il Sole 24 Ore, 2013). The failure not only of the government of the day but of much of the political system (as mentioned in the introduction) needed restructuring measures.

According to international outfits - in particular the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Council of Europe - and non-governmental organizations such as Transparency International, the level of corruption - and perceived corruption - augmented in 2010 – 11 in Italy. A special Commission, appointed by the new technical government in 2012, was entrusted with the development of a report about corruption. In November 2012, Italian Law No.190 was enacted to strengthen the anti-corruption measures for Public Administration.

1.1 The anti-corruption (liberal) discourse

The discourse about anti-corruption has changed over the years (Polzer, 2001). After the Cold War, the transition to a neo-liberal economy was promoted and it included anti-corruption measures.¹⁸ The evidence shows the development and production, in international settings, of anti-corruption documents and a parallel growing academic attention to anti-corruption issues. In the '90s, the 'good governance' discourse arose in opposition to 'corruption' firstly in Third Countries economies: they were tied to Western Countries by aid specifications. Indeed, the institutional design, as pointed out by Andersson and Heywood (2009: 750) '(...)

¹⁸ The history of anti-corruption concerns assumed a great emphasis after the Cold War. It became, translating a definition of government by Rose and Miller, a 'problematizing activity' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 181). From the decolonization process, in the second half of XX Century, the relations between the Developed World and Third World countries, using the wording of that time, were multiple and sustained by foreign aids. 'But when the Cold War came to a close, so did the blanket tolerance for corruption. Corruption could now be confronted without threatening the loss of an ally' with reference to Third World dictators (Wedel, 2012: 460).

has been intimately linked with the idea of promoting 'good governance' as a means of combatting corruption'. International institutions strategies represent a sort of 'anti-corruption industry' (Kerkhoff and Wagenaar, 2015). As emphasised by Bukovansky, despite the diffusion of 'ethical terms and references to good governance' in pivotal anti-corruption documents of (international) institutions and academic discourses, 'the dominant rational for the anti-corruption consensus has been economic, and to a lesser extent institutional (...), rather than normative (...).' (Bukovansky, 2006: 194).

A distinction arises in Bukovansky's work between the republican and the liberal discourse. In particular, she outlines the shift from a traditional political morality, sustained in the republican discourse, and the role of institutions in the liberal – rationalist discourse about corruption. Bukovansky explains furthermore that:

'the republican discourse thus offers a richer and more resonant conception of corruption than does liberal-rationalist discourse. Richer, in its conception of institution as organic entities whose norms are capable of being internalized, and which are capable of evoking emotional attachment and moral commitment, rather than merely exogenous incentive structures channeling the activity of narrowly self-interested actors. (...) More resonant, in that it evokes the human capacity for moral agency in civil life.' (Bukovansky, 2006: 202).

Summarizing, when the republican discourse shifted in a more institutionalized way, the liberal discourse augmented its appeal.

We can hypothesize that, when corruption becomes a technical concern, the distance with moral issue increases - as well as its perception. Is it possible to observe this shift in Italy during the last economic crisis? To understand the shift from a moral concept (or discourse) to a technical implementation of anti-corruption efforts, it is necessary to observe the changes in government programmes.

2. The translation

The multiple centres of calculation are subjects and objects that compose the realm of designs: the programmatic 'is the realm of designs put forward by philosophers, political economists, physiocrats and philanthropists, government reports, committees of inquiry, White Papers, proposals and counterproposals, that seek to configure specific locales and relations in ways thought desirable' (Rose and Miller, 1992: 181).

The space where the programmes are formulated is a widespread system (of power) which involves the (not exclusively institutional) actors included in the translation process. For clarity, the levels and centres can be synthetically (and not exhaustively) classified as follows:

(a) international and regional organization, (b) national level decision-makers, (c) organizational levels. The present work considers levels (a) and (b) with attention to Italian case. In relevant literature, another level is represented by civil society. We quote for completeness but we not include in the translation process as 'level' but rather as recipient. Indeed, the anti-corruption conceptual approach, as Moroff and Schimdt-Pfister outline, is normally framed between two levels: national government (that is national level decision-makers) and international society (that is international and regional organizations). They suggest '(...) to adjust the general conceptual approach of studying anti-corruption efforts by moving from two to three levels of analysis: the levels of domestic civil society, national government, and international society' (Moroff and Schimdt-Pfister, 2010: 92). The formulation of programmes of government stems from the programmatic realm through the different levels. Along these levels and in-between, we can distinguish the multiples centres of calculation. Levels and centres of calculation usually overlap.

2.1 The role of international and regional organizations

The commitment to reform Italy seems essential in the discourse of international organizations, like the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012b).¹⁹ The structural reform process includes for instance market labour reform, fiscal consolidation, simplification and schedules the Italian anti-corruption bill. Before the enactment of Italian Law No.190 in 2012, the strengthening of public sector integrity represented a key point of the reform mechanism. The OECD (2012a) provided policy

¹⁹ See Speech of OECD Secretary-General.

recommendations to Italy challenging a 'reviving growth and productivity' for the country. Indeed, the Organization highlights that among 'OECD countries, Italy has a high level of perceived corruption (...), and indicators show a negative trend in the perception of corruption in Italy from 2008 to 2011, a gap confirmed by other available data' (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2012a: 19). During the biennium 2011-2012, as pointed out by Canestri, 'three in depth evaluations were conducted by international experts on the Italian anti-bribery system' (Canestri, 2014: 265). In May 2011, a Compliance Report about Italy was drawn up by the Group of States against Corruption instituted within the Council of Europe (GRECO). It showed relatively few progresses in the Italian anti-corruption system and called of a more consistent implementation. During the biennium 2011-2012 the results of international pressure became evident.

This progressive change started at least 15 years before in the international panorama. GRECO, established in 1999 by the Council of Europe, aims to enhance the capacity of its members to fight corruption.²⁰ In 2008, GRECO, in an Evaluation Report adopted in 2009 by the plenary meeting of the Group, asked the Italian competent authorities 'to develop and publicly articulate an anti-corruption policy that takes into consideration the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of corruption, and provides for monitoring and assessment of its effectiveness.' (Council of Europe, 2009: 58).

The 2011 GRECO Compliance Report concerning Italy stressed a new anti-corruption legal framework which, if adopted, should facilitate anti-corruption coordinated actions.

Furthermore, GRECO observed that regrettably 'certain areas have received no or insufficient attention so far, notably, with respect to, *inter alia*, the adoption of codes of conduct for members of the Government, the prevention of conflicts of interest, the protection of whistle-blowers, and the strengthening of anti-corruption provisions in the private sector.' (Council of Europe, 2011: 24).

In-between evaluations and recommendations, Italy ratified in 2009 the United Nations (UN) Convention against Corruption adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2003 (United Nations, 2003). Italy absorbed in its domestic normative system, as anticipated by this international

²⁰ Through evaluation mechanisms and peer reviews it wanted to identify gaps in anti-corruption policies and to fix them. Currently its members include 48 European States and the United States of America. Italy joined GRECO in June 2007.

treaty and other international documents, the need for Codes of Conduct for public officials. The mentioned UN Convention, as well as documents by GRECO, highlight the promotion of integrity among public officials (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1998, 2000; United Nations, 2003; Council of Europe, 2009).²¹ Rules were written and principles were translated in Codes of Ethics and Conduct.

2.2 The perception index

The shift from the 'First' to the 'Second Republic' was marked by outrage in public opinion; the shift to a technical government in 2011 was heralded by a deep economic crisis. The government mandate was twofold: 'to help restore growth and prod Europe to find a more comprehensive solution to the debt crisis' (Donadio and Povoledo, 2011).

Before 2012, the spread between Italian and German bonds became an index of confidence, the corruption perception a score to fix and, 'austerity' measures (Fonte, 2011) the solution against a deep crisis which constantly recalled the Greek failure within the European Union system. In the '90s, technocratic governments were appointed in Italy to support political parties while they approached some overall reforms. As pointed out by Culpepper, the government appointed in 2011 '(...) tried to develop policies autonomously, with little consultation of unions, organized employers, or political parties.' (Culpepper, 2014: 1265).

The prelude of this technical government was heralded by higher levels of perceived corruption. A wide discourse about corruption was promoted and supported by data.

In 2011, Transparency International registered in Italy a higher Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI): 3,9 in a range from 0 ('highly corrupt' countries) to 10 ('very clean' countries) as also described by the Italian newspaper *Il Sole 24 ore* (Transparency International, 2011a; *Il Sole 24 Ore*, 2011). As pointed out by Transparency International (2011b), the 2011 CPI 'draws on 17 data sources from 13 institutions. The information used for the 2011 CPI is survey data from these sources gathered between December 2009 and September 2011. The CPI includes only sources that provide a score for a set of countries/territories and which measure perceptions of corruption in the public sector.' In 2009 the Italian CPI score was 4.3 (Natoli, 2010).

²¹ In addition, the OECD (2010) fostered a culture of integrity in the 2010 Recommendation of the Council on Principles for Transparency and Integrity in Lobbying.

The resulting data is the average score for Italy's National Integrity System, that is 55.04% in a range from 0 (the lowest or the worst) to 100 (the highest or the best). This was the data presented in 2012 by Transparency International Italia when reviewing the period from 2010 to 2011 (Segato et al., 2012). This picture of Italy showed a problematic country. As Sargiacomo et al. outline, starting from 2009 'the anticorruption policy and practices were re-framed as being part of the campaign against "maladministration".' (Sargiacomo et al., 2015: 94). A Commission for the evaluation, transparency and integrity in Public Administration (CIVIT) was established in 2009.²²

As mentioned, the new Italian technical government sworn in November 2011 was born on expectations of, also moral, renewal (Forte, 2012). A Commission appointed by the same technical Government on corruption matters held its first meeting in January 2012 (Italy, Presidency of Council of Ministers, 2012).²³ The mandate of the Commission was twofold: on the one hand, it should present some improvements (amendments) to anti-corruption legislation to reinforce the measures against corruption. On the other, it was to prepare a report on anti-corruption issue, in order to identify policies and (general and sectorial) modalities to prevent corruption in the public sector. The Report represents one of the meaningful documents describing the corruption distribution, based on the evidence from judicial data, perceptions and qualitative data. It outlines the change of corruption phenomena over time, the corruption costs and the international context: it was a comprehensive (absorptive) document about translation mechanisms including some relevant proposals.²⁴ The Commission work considered the moral issue not a merely technical concern that could be solved with managerial tools, nor a simple judicial problem to be repressed. It explained that corruption was less extended in so far as personal convictions and social circles of identification supported a system of values as an element that supported compliance with the law (Italy, Presidency of Council of Ministers, 2012). Indeed, the diffusion of corruptive

²² CIVIT, *Commissione indipendente per la valutazione, la trasparenza e l'integrità delle amministrazioni pubbliche*.

²³ *Commissione per lo studio e l'elaborazione delle proposte in tema di trasparenza e prevenzione della corruzione nella pubblica amministrazione*.

²⁴ The Report outlines the metamorphosis of corruption and the need for integrated policies to tackle it and explains the phenomenon under an economic perspective, grounded in the literature, and counterbalanced by the socio-cultural dimension.

facts is less likely where there are high moral standards and a positive perception of the State by civil servants (Italy, Presidency of Council of Ministers, 2012). Looking at the international discourse (not the international recommendations or the international pressure) of anti-corruption policies makes ethical issue emerge. Ethical concerns, mainly moulded in international contexts of integrity management, are connected to the Code of conduct of public officers.

The strengthening of this ethical system by law seems confirmed by further policy developments. A technical implementation could thus be observed: the ethical concept was *managerialized* in a stronger form in the Codes of Conduct. However, the translation process presented in this Report does not represent a complete shift to a technical dimension of anti-corruption policies and mechanisms.

In November 2012, Italian Law No. 190 for the prevention and repression of corruption in Public Administration entered into force (Italy, Parliament, 2012). In September 2013, the Italian National Anti-corruption Authority approved the Anti-corruption National Plan in accordance with anti-corruption laws (Italy, Anti - Corruption National Authority, 2013). This Plan, with the strategical purpose of preventing corruption at central level, defines the main elements (including managerial tools) for the Public Administration to articulate a ‘three-year plan for corruption prevention’. ²⁵

3. Anti-corruption as a government programme: local practices

The first version of the Anti-corruption national plan, approved in 2013, describes the measures for corruption prevention: at central level there is a National Anti-corruption plan, at decentered level, each Public Administration defines a ‘three-year anti-corruption plan’. In accordance with these recommendations, the three-year anti-corruption plan of a Region contains the evaluation of specific corruption risks and a strategy for corruption prevention. The national programme included, in premises, a feed – back mechanism: the system should guarantee a return of information from de-centered Public Administration to improve the Plan. The results contribute to the sophistication and implementation of better measures to fight corruption in Public Administration.

²⁵ Further normative contents updated the Anti-corruption national plan.

The 7 October 2013, the Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention (Responsible) of Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region (FVG) was appointed (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2013a). The Responsible is a Director with special functions, assigned to this position after thirty – years of service in the regional administration and confirmed once again at the end of 2014 (Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache, 2014g). The first deadline for the three-year anti-corruption plan was fixed at national level on 31 January 2014. ‘The term was dramatically close’ states the Responsible during an interview (Interview with Mauro Vignini, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.).²⁶

The first three – year anti-corruption plan has been produced in the ‘better possible way’ in accordance with the timelines established by law (Interview with Mauro Vignini, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.). The new regional Office, led by the Responsible, elaborated a map of risks as stated by the National Anti-corruption Plan and its up-dated version (the technical follow-up of the Italian Law No. 190/2012).

The regional plan included a Code of Conduct for the civil servants of the Region and a three-year programme for integrity and transparency (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014: 4). It represented a programmatic document and a managerial instrument. It contained evaluation sheets that highlight the corruption exposition risks of regional processes as well as the evaluation of specific risks for each process. It proposed general and specific measures to reduce the risks (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014).

Is there a compliance attitude or a strategy for the development of this programme?

The anti-corruption policy at regional level considers the de-personalization and the re-engineerization of processes. Therefore, the risk of corruption and the de-personalized processes are related?

‘Is the first time that someone ask me this kind of question, but I can surely reply yes!’ responds the Responsible. ‘We could combine technical competences and procedures as standardized and aseptic as possible. The safer process gives less space to officer extemporary

²⁶ The interviews with the Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention has been held in his Office in Trieste (FVG) the 4 April 2016 (personal and private interview) and the 16 April 2016 (private interview).

initiatives. (...) For instance, if we receive a grant request and we have a protocol, a procedure for this document (...) and in particular we are aware of the time to treat it (...) we are creating a safe procedure against corruption.’ (Interview with Mauro Vigni, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.).

3.1 The public and political consistency of Anti-corruption Office

The analysis of press releases delivered by the regional press office of FVG Region (*Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache*) outlines the consistency given by political representatives to anti-corruption Office. In particular, how corruption and transparency problems are publicly managed.²⁷

The first time that the Office has been mentioned date back to mid-October 2013: the Responsible was charged to lead the Office. The President of the Region, during a meeting with the President of the Court of Auditors of FVG, mentioned the Office (*Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache*, 2013a).

One month later, during a conference about the ‘new’ national anti-corruption law, especially addressed to local administrators, the regional Councillor of Public Function (a member of the regional executive body) outlined the importance of the anti-corruption training. The Region assumed the task to assure, in cooperation with Local Autonomies, the governance and the founding of ‘this lever of strategic training’ as stated by the Councillor (*Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache*, 2013b).

In 2014, at the end of January, the President of the Region announced that the regional executive body approved the first anti-corruption plan, quoting indirectly the work of the Office. The President of FVG explained that the anti-corruption plan includes the Code of conduct for regional officers and the Programme for integrity and transparency. It has three-year duration with the possibility to be up-dated yearly and modified if necessary (*Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache*, 2014a).

²⁷ The press releases have been screened using the research engine provided by the institutional web site of the Region. The key words used are ‘*anticorruzione*’ (anticorruption) and ‘*prevenzione*’ plus ‘*corruzione*’ (‘corruption’ plus ‘prevention’). The timeline (October 2013 – July 2016) starts from the establishment of the regional anti-corruption and prevention Office.

Other Councillors mentioned the anti-corruption strategy of FVG, especially in sensible areas like the procurement sector (public works) and local police (Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache, 2014b; 2015a).

At the beginning of 2014, less than six months from the appointment of the Responsible, the 'transparency' theme became a central issue. The regional government opposition outlined a low performance (compared to other Italian Regions) in terms of institutional website transparency. The Responsible, without a political mediation, replied to opposition critiques (Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache, 2014c; 2014d).

In March 2014, FVG Region proposed at the Conference of Regions the institutionalization of a national round table, a sort of coordination instrument between each regional anti-corruption responsible.²⁸ As explained by the regional Councillor of Finance, the aim is to treat the most critical issues about corruption presenting the results at central level (Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache, 2014e).

The declarations of the President of FVG and her Deputy underline the relation with the national level, and in particular with the President of the Italian Anticorruption Authority (Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache, 2014f; 2015b).^{29,30} The President of the Anticorruption Authority visited the Region in November 2015 (Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache, 2015c).

Finally, the President of FVG, discussing the importance for the centralization procurements (Agenzia Quotidiana di Stampa Regione Cronache, 2016), recalled the corruption matter, but not the Office.

What is the relation between the Director and the main political representatives of the Region?

The Director reports to regional executive body two or more times per year about the transparency and anti-corruption activities. He directly depends to the President of the Region

²⁸ The Conference of Regions (*Conferenza delle Regioni*) was instituted in 1981 and is a political body for the coordination of the Presidents of Italian Regions and Autonomous Provinces.

²⁹ This can be explained by political internal factors as well as by imposing public works (namely regional infrastructures and the port recovery) which need strong preventive anti-corruption measures.

³⁰ *Agenzia Nazionale Anticorruzione* or ANAC.

and interacts with her. 'Usually I use reminders' adds the Responsible 'there are intense phases and others less demanding'. However, the support demonstrated by the President is 'total', concludes the Responsible (Interview with Mauro Vigni, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.).

4. Compliance and bureaucratization

In 2014, the first three-year anticorruption plan presented the map of risks as in the successive versions (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014a; 2015a; 2016). Yearly, the Responsible is entrusted to present a report resuming the anti-corruption policy development revising risks (Friuli Venezia Giulia Autonomous Region, 2014b; 2015b).

At the beginning of 2016, the compulsory anti-corruption practice progressively led to a new managerial development: the idea is to trace all regional processes to reduce their redundancy. This includes all the regional processes, not only those under alleged corruption risk.

During the spring of the same year, the Responsible, supported by the General Director of the Region, created an informal group composed by 18 regional public officers coming from different regional Departments. They were charged to become a sort of 'changing factor'. This strategy is a projection for 2016-2017.

'Could you explain me what do you mean by changing factor?' is the question directed to the Responsible during the personal interview. 'The national anti-corruption plan and its 2015 updated version (...) assumes that the Public Administration provides a map of processes for a seriously policy against corruption. Let's say: the anti-corruption model is that of ISO31000 of 2009.³¹ Essentially, it means that we have to activate a corruption prevention policy: preventing, anticipating and diminishing the corruption phenomenon.

The Responsible outlines that, in accordance with the European anti-corruption trend (for instance France or Great Britain or Slovenia) the strategy is based on defined process-forms that analyse the exposure and seriousness of corruption risk. 'Indeed, our anti-corruption plan' explains the Responsible 'is based on this four-five points. A map of processes, the

³¹ ISO31000:2009 provides principles and processes for managing risk. Internationally recognised benchmark are used for the analysis of risk management practices.

evaluation, the identification and the treatment.’ (Interview with Mauro Vigni, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.).

The ‘bureaucratization expansion’ leads the first phase of the anti-corruption programme of government. New procedures of control and technologies of verification have been introduced.

4.1 A managerial reform extent

The forecasted map of the processes will include the entire regional administration.

‘I’m part of the General Direction, as the colleagues of my Office, and we are all involved in the same match’ explains the Responsible. Quoting the General Director words, he explains the idea of a map of process for the Region “‘Good! Since the Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention needs a map of processes in anti-corruption terms (...) let’s analyse the regional procedures and simplify them (...)’”. The idea became a project, supported by the results obtained in another Italian context, the Veneto Region.

The project will become a strategical managerial tool to reduce the bureaucratization of procedures and to outline the differences between the different Directions. ‘I’m discussing in projection terms, this would be a historical result’ adds the Responsible. In addition, this activity will help the control of costs (of each unit) with the possibility to evaluate the exposition to corruption risk (Interview with Mauro Vigni, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.).

In April 2016 the first training session took place. Public servants composed the group: some officers and staff directors plus the members of anti-corruption Office and the Responsible. The group includes a psychologist (internal) and the training staff (an academic and a practitioner). The first session was open by an informal speech of the General Director of the Region.³² The General Director supported the idea of a complete map of processes for the entire regional system. Although he forecasted some ‘resistances’ during re-engineerization mechanism.

During the first day, the group explored the managerial framework and the tools provided by public management for the segmentation of processes. The second day (and the third)

³² The training session last three days: 20, 21 and 27 April 2016. The participatory observation analyses the meetings of 20 and 21 April 2016, FVG Region, Trieste.

practical examples were presented to involve the group. At the end of the second session, practical questions arose outlying the different professional backgrounds and functions of the officers involved in the managerial experiment. Practical examples underlined how difficult could be a 'detailed' examination of processes as well as the management of a heterogeneous group of civil servants ('in my Office...') dealing with different issues ('however this procedure is different...').

Is the corruption a problem of process standardization? The re-engineerization seems enhance the 'safe' procedure. Nevertheless, the corruption contains moral implications (Kant, 2014).

5. The integrity (culture)

After the enactment of the Italian Law No. 190/2012, periodical training courses for regional civil servants have been promoted in FVG. 'Due to my knowledge of the administration, and I know it from the 80s', we have a strong *culture of legitimacy*. With *culture of legality*, we refer to behaviors not unlawful, and this is take for granted. Beyond we have a *culture of legitimacy* (...) that means writing administrative acts in compliance with law. Whereas, in the Public Administration there is also a *culture of integrity*. Until few years ago, the culture of legitimacy was sufficient' argues the Responsible.

Legality, legitimacy and integrity refer to the same battle against corruption but the question 'what's about the *moral issue*? What's about the *moral issue* of 80s' (...)?' encourages a deeper reflection.³³

'With morality I refer to my private and personal sphere of values and no one can intervene' replies the Responsible. The explication denotes a forethought about the theme 'we can work on ethics, we can make an effort to identify rational values not supra natural that could be shared and could be asked by the Administration *to the officers* [last word added by the interviewer]. This can be more or less challenging' (Interview with Mauro Vigni, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.).

³³ At the beginning of 80s' in Italy, the *moral issue* mainly outlined the need of reviewing the relation between the political parties and the Public Administration.

The international principles for managing ethics in the public service reflect this approach. The ethical discourse is not negative but positive: it does not work on prohibition but on challenges.

In 1998, a recommendation of the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation promotes the principles for managing ethics in the public services. It highlights how government should concentrate on values and precisely '(M)anagement policies and practices should demonstrate an organisation's commitment to ethical standards. It is not sufficient for governments to have only rule-based or compliance-based structures. Compliance systems alone can inadvertently encourage some public servants simply to function on the edge of misconduct, arguing that if they are not violating the law they are acting ethically. Government policy should not only delineate the minimal standards below which a government official's actions will not be tolerated, but also clearly articulate a set of public service values that employees should aspire to.' (Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation, 1998: 9).

Behind these values, which can be called integrity or ethic principles, there is also a matter of 'prestige' accorded to the public officer by the function covered. This 'prestige' perception - as the historical path of morality and legitimacy - has profoundly change during the years. 'In 1985 no one need to tell me that I can't steal the paper for the photocopier. In 2016, the discourse mainly concerns collaboration between offices, motivation, identification with the institution, in particular for regional directors. (...) Norms works on a superficial ground, values at behavioral level not at belief level'. About the rational intention to set up a non-subjective morality the behavioral aptitude can be expressed, according to the Responsible, with this paraphrase 'I'm working good not because I'm convinced to not steal but because I'm working in a community of values' (Interview with Mauro Vigni, Responsible of transparency and corruption prevention, 16 April 2016. pers. comm.).

6. Technicalities of ethic in a moral country

In Italy, the *moral issue* has political roots that marked progressively during the '80s and '90s the need of a tidy distinction between political parties and Public Administration, between private interest and public function. Proposed with different consistency from time to time,

this political rationality (the *moral issue*) sustained the crosscutting political parties discourse between legality and corruption.

In the meantime, the cultural change within the Public Administration passed through the shift from a 'culture of legality' to a 'culture of legitimacy' until a 'culture of integrity'. New managerial instruments have been introduced simultaneously with these new cultural-ethical standards. These *technicalities of ethic* provide in a *technical* way, not in a political form, the new architecture of corruption prevention. In particular, the *technicalities of ethic* refine the edges of values that can be ask to civil servants.

These do not affect the private and personal sphere of values. They refer to 'ethics' not expressly to 'morality'. Gebel, describing the anti-corruption discourse of Transparency International defines *ethics* and *integrity* '(...) "ethics" do not mean any more than the rules and incentives that are formally set for public offices, institutions and business, whereas "integrity" does not mean any more than behavior according to those rules. The "moral elements" in [*International Anti-corruption*] discourse are just words that make it sound better because of their positive connotation.' (Gebel, 2012: 123).

The *moral issue*, on which the main anti-corruption discourse has been constructed during the time, seems 'isolated' as a subjective matter. It is externalized from the managerial sphere and substituted with technical concepts of ethics and integrity.

7. Conclusions and future research

The neo-liberal economy, in '90s, promoted the anti-corruption discourse and its 'industrialization'. This definition of reality was supported by the 'good governance' concepts, the transparency reasons and the performative transformation of Public Administration. Anti-corruption issues became a programme of government enacted through a translation between different centres of calculation, verification and control.

In Italy, normative and comprehensive documents allowed a gradual introduction of managerial measures to fight corruption in compliance with international standards. In a period of political disaffection and economic crisis, the compliance process represented a sort of unavoidable 'reformatory' effort requested by external actors, the regional and international organizations. This pressure leads to the introduction of new *technicalities*.

Ideally, these managerial instruments allow the corruption prevention, control and specification through the collection and 'inscription' of information, knowledge and data.

At the same time and, at least from 2011, we can observe a progressive shift from the moral form of political rationality to a technical dimension of the anti-corruption programme of government. A sort of compliance mechanism leads the 'reformatory effort', not the moral form.

The internationally 'corrective' pressure and the national compliance produce effects in local practices. The FVG empirical context shows the introduction of compulsory managerial instruments in line with the normative mechanism underling: 1) the expansion of bureaucratization, (2) the internalization of aseptic codes of conduct and ethics despite the political rationalities – mainly moral – on which these have been constructed and, (3) the isolation of 'morality' as an individual matter instead of a common-public value. Nevertheless, in this case, the unavoidable expansion of bureaucratization enables a re-examination of processes that involves the entire Region.

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