



Department of Management

Course of Corporate Strategy

Strategic Plan Implementation:

What is the impact of legislative continuity or discontinuity?

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since its first implementation, the drafting of the strategic plan has borne fruit in the private context, improving overall performance. Over time, in the 90s, the use of this tool started being implemented also within the public administration, with the aim of improving the results in the creation of public value through planning, as well as define a clearer process for the implementation of projects.

When it comes to the context of public administration, in a democratic country, it is inevitable that the relationship with the political context must also be included in the analysis. Therefore, even the drafting of a strategic plan within the public administration is influenced by this relationship.

During the drafting process, lawmakers may have to choose between conflicting agendas and ideologies to establish precise objectives, respecting the popular will and vote that elected them. This obviously has implications for the objectives identified in the plans.

Given the great link between politics and planning, the question at the basis of my research project is what the effect of political continuity and discontinuity is. Taking into account the ideological differences and consequently the identification of different strategic objectives with the advent of a new administration, what are the effects on the plans already approved and being implemented; how and why they are changed; and what are the real advantages of a legislative continuity on the progress of projects.

I chose business cases as the investigation method and the municipality of Rome as the area of investigation. The use of this methodology allowed me to investigate and find, through empirical evidence, the real impact of legislative continuity or discontinuity within the Roman municipality. I analyzed various plans, and the projects of which they are composed, carrying out transversal research on the various administrations that have presided over the Capitoline "Giunta" from the early 2000s to today. The aim was to identify the most diverse cases and to create an analysis as complete as possible.

From the study, carried out through the use of tools already present within the theoretical framework and literature, what the actual impacts of political discontinuity and continuity in the Roman public context do emerge. It was also possible to identify which are the characteristics of the plans that induce new administrations to implement changes to existing plans and which ones allow to continue with what was planned by the previous administration.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Strategic planning in Public Administration

2.1.1 Private and Public planning – a complex issue

In order to go into details about the use of strategic planning within a public administration and consequently how the planning effort interacts with politics, it is important to understand what the purpose of drafting a strategic plan is and in which contexts it is drafted.

The two basic groups into which management concerns may be divided are the commercial sector on one hand, which is in charge of economic outcomes, competitiveness, as well as state income, and the governmental or public sector on the other, each with its own goals, strategies, and challenges. (Nartisa, 2012; Putans, 2012; Murtavska, 2012).

In the private sector, planning is certainly defined by competition. The idea of a sustained competitive advantage is typically at the core of corporate strategy since businesses can only survive if they offer goods or services that at least match or are superior to those of their rivals. Furthermore, time is a crucial component in a private sector strategy and the time available for creating new products and bringing them to market is frequently very short, this being one of the key reasons why there is often a conflict between generating immediate financial gain vs. organizing and funding long-term strategy. (Williams, 2009).

The public sector, which carries out duties like tax collecting and public policies, has a different nature in defining planning. The sector is typically immune to the forces of competition, despite the fact that internal competition does occur, for example, when departments compete for cash from a limited government pool. Strategy in the public sector is often built on fulfilling goals to satisfy the political process and offering efficiency and value for money to reassure taxpayers (Maleka, 2014). In fact, in a public sector company, spending less than what was received is referred to as "surplus" rather than "profit." In order to win over voters, political pressure frequently results in objectives changing over time, and a short-term perspective can have an influence on longer-term strategic planning. (Williams, 2009)

Management "issues", in both the private and public administration context, are those factors that influence the creation of a goal, the in general refer to the co-management of organizational and community resources (tangible and intangible) through market and public policy processes. (Heath, 2018).

The careful management of resources and the intention of achieving specific goals leads to the definition of a plan, which has the objective to define actions that advance organizational interests by striking a cooperative balance of all the interested parties.

However, the identification and diagnosis of strategic and management challenges are subjective processes and are difficult to address. Due to their ambiguity, complexity, and fluidity, diagnosing them requires continual interpretation and is a contentious political endeavor (Dutton, Fahey and Narayanan, 1983)

2.1.2 Planning in the public sector

To develop effective plans and to direct an organization's growth and success, it is important to understand the organization's objectives of a strategic corporate plan (Root, 2014). In order to do so, keeping in mind the desire to advance the mentioned organization's interests, in the 1960s, the strategic planning approach was introduced to support this activity in the private rather than public domain. (Ravensway and Hamlin, 2015)

Fundamentally, strategic planning is a methodical, creative thinking process about how a company will seize or create possibilities in the present and future markets. It is drafted into a document in which the organization's objectives, the steps required to accomplish those objectives, and all other crucial information created throughout the planning process are shared with the organization. (Maleka, 2014). Strategic planning differs from more conventional planning in that it places an emphasis on action, takes into account a wide range of stakeholders, pays attention to external opportunities and threats as well as internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as taking into account current or potential competitors. (Bloom 1986, Kaufman and Jacobs, 1987).

At first glance, a strategic plan appears to be a necessity limited to private companies, while it is common to think of public administration as having some control over how governments choose to implement their policies and programs. Specific examples include organizing, directing, coordinating, and supervising government operations.

That is the reason why before the introduction of strategic planning in public administration, the government was perceived as not being effective enough, due to lack of perceived direction, strong leadership, and the restriction in creativity, in addition to the ever-present worries about efficiency in the narrow sense of output per unit. Citizens' worries about the disconnect between their demands for public services and the public's incentive to provide them have led to challenges with responsiveness.

In summary, the relationship between political demands and bureaucracy reaction has been seen as being weak and delayed, especially in representative democracies. (Ravensway and Hamlin, 2015)

These considerations clarify why and how the drafting of a plan, and the subsequent focus on the achievement of the objectives, has become fundamental in the context of the public administration.

In the early 1990s, principles of strategic planning were initially introduced to municipal government organizations in the US, with an emphasis on creating a strategic vision by completing an overall scan of

municipal activities. In the case of public administration of local entities, the emphasis today is more on integrating the plan with daily operations and aligning it with performance management, which refers to the continuous process of improving performance by setting individual and team goals that are aligned to the strategic goals. (Armstrong, 1994; Plant, 2006)

For more than twenty years, academics and professionals have been interested in strategic planning and management in the public sector (Bryson, 1988; Eadie, 1983; Ring and Perry, 1985). In the public sector, strategy is typically focused on achieving objectives to “please” the political process. Actually, strategic planning has generally been regarded as a fixed routine in public administration research, and most measures of strategy merely assess whether a set of procedures were undertaken (George, Desmidt, and De Moyer 2016; Poister, Pasha, and Edwards 2013).

Despite the old view and perception of the use of this tool in the public administration, it is now abundantly accepted that strategic planning is a tool for public management that enables public institutions to efficiently utilize their resources and accomplish their mission-aligned goals. (Bordean, Raileanu, and Turtureanu, 2000). The strategic plan knows how to find new opportunities for sustainable development generating, at the same time, a climate of solidarity and a higher level of social cohesion, on a territory that safeguards and enhances the environment (Progetto Millennium, 2011).

2.1.3 Focus and effectiveness of planning

This indicates that the strategic plan helps in establishing the objectives of the business or local organization. A hierarchy of means-and-ends chains, where lower-order ends are employed to attain higher-order ends, can be used to conceptualize a company's objectives. (Simon, 1997).

The objectives of the organizations must be identified in order to create a strategic plan and strategic goals through quantifiable targets that reveal an organization's long-term vision. What goals does the organization have? What mission and vision does it want to achieve? Those are the questions that need answers in order to set and develop an organization's strategic goals (Cantor, 1990; Huffman, Ratneshwar, & Mick, 2000; Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993; Simon, 1997).

In order to achieve an organization's long-term goal, operational goals must be defined as the daily benchmarks that must be met in order to attain the higher strategic goals. The organization must be very careful and able to distinguish between strategic and operational goals while creating its strategic vision, keeping in mind the company's values and long-term vision and objective.

It is crucial to have a forward-looking perspective in order to make sure that difficult goals may be set that can have a long-term effect on the organization. But on the other hand, according to goal setting theory,

situational considerations moderate the impact of a goal on performance. In the case of legislators, they may need to choose between conflicting agendas and ideologies in order to establish precise goals. This is due to the possibility that these lawmakers have a wider variety of stakeholders than managers in a private sector business. (Gary P. Latham, Laura Borgogni & Laura Petitta, 2008).

By establishing clear objectives and anticipated results, the plan aims to increase government focus on results and improve resource management for material, financial, and human resources. (Nartis, Putans and Muravska 2012).

Despite the limited impact that strategic planning has on the effectiveness of government operations (Nakrosis, 2008), according to studies, employing performance metrics to track the advancement of strategic objectives (Hendrick, 2003; Poister Streib, 2005) as well as connecting the strategic plan to the budget and the organization's entire performance management system (Poister, Streib, 2005; Poister, Van Slyke, 2002) improves outcomes (Poister, Pitts, Edwards, 2010).

In synthesis, nowadays strategic planning, by establishing a strategy and how to implement it, is an effective tool of public management that enables public institutions to efficiently utilize their resources and accomplish the goals set out in their purpose. (Bordean, Raileanu, and Turtureanu, 2000).

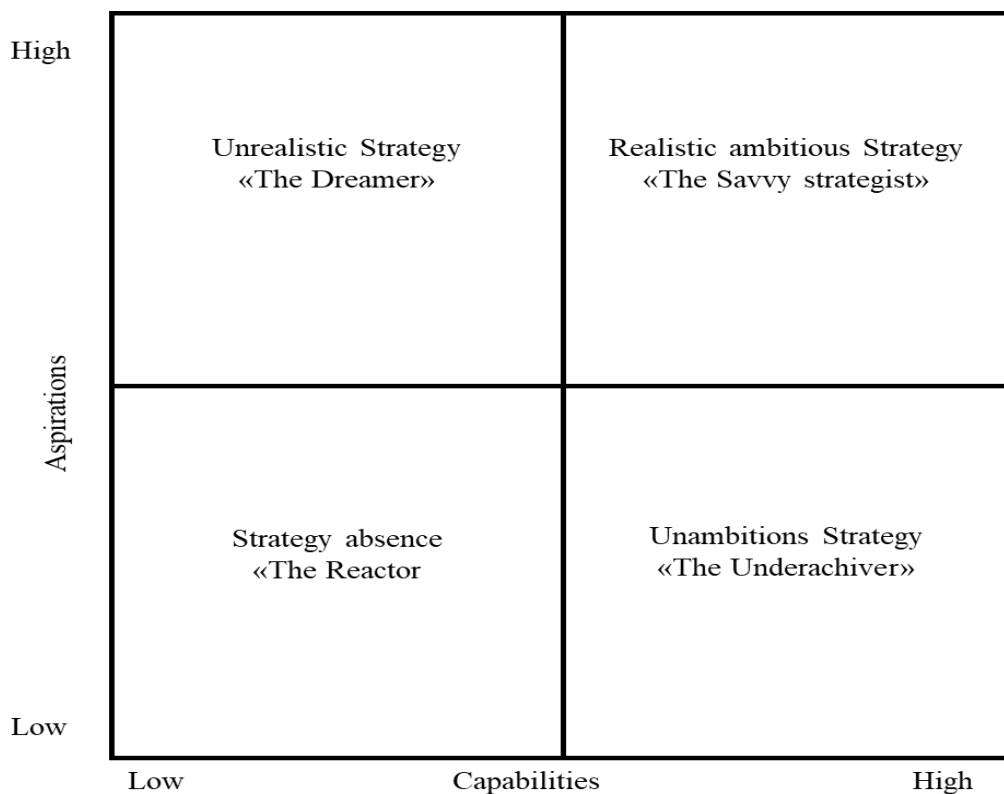


Figure I. The aspirations-capabiliteis matrix of strategy in public administration (Bryson, Ackermann and Eden, 2007).

Since strategies are required in all contexts (private and public), the quality of a strategy should be assessed in relation to the nature of the ambitions, the capabilities required to achieve the aspirations, and the degree to which the aspirations and capabilities are related in the particular environment (Bryson, Ackermann, & Eden, 2007)

The strategies in public administration can be aggregated in four general categories of strategists: the reactor (low aspirations, low capabilities), the dreamer (high aspirations, low capabilities), the underachiever (low aspirations, high capabilities), and the savvy strategist (high aspirations, high capabilities) (Bryson and George, 2020).

2.2 Politics and Strategic Planning

Now that we have clarified what a strategic plan is and how it has started to be incorporated in the public sector in the last forty years; we can concentrate towards the intervention and interaction of politics on the strategic planning in public administration, focusing on the advantages or disadvantages that arise from using strategic planning in a political environment.

In this project work we will take into consideration planning at municipal level, not public administration at national level.

As we have seen, setting strategies and goals is fundamental in public administration as it is in private sectors, but legislators may have to make decisions between competing ideologies and agendas in order to set clear objectives; something that is not required in private companies. (Laura Borgogni, Laura Petitta, and Gary P. Latham, 2008).

The “chief executive” of a city is the most evident administrative location for strategic planning. Every mayor has a different political agenda, and the planning process is mostly centralized and heavily concentrated on political concerns. (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020)

2.2.1 Advantages

In these situations, integrating a strategic planning process into the executive responsibilities offers specific advantages: first, the strategy can be implemented through executive-controlled incentives (Bailey, 1989), second, urban policies in planning and development aim to increase the value of the urban territory as a social space, a space of networks, of social and economic exchanges, and a space for the expression of self-organization dynamics. (Pinson, 2002)

Also, it would be simple to connect the strategic plan and the yearly executive budget of the municipality. Furthermore, the plan may also be implemented with the help of social and development incentives, boosting the most important elements of strategic planning. (Bailey, 1989)

Today, all large cities of developed countries apply the use of a strategic planning tool in their administration to achieve all the possible advantages, including the coherence in local development efforts, improved local governance, and the ability to access EU funds. (Hintea, Profiroiu and Ticlau, 2015).

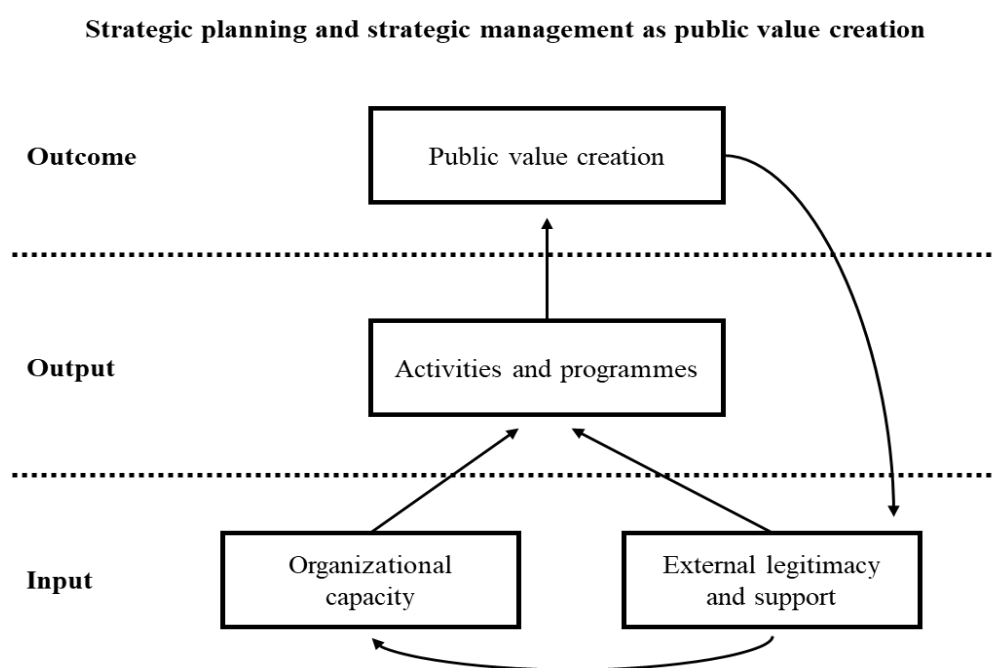


Figure II. Strategic planning and strategic management as public value creation (Moore, 2000)

Strategic planning can therefore facilitate the public administration to achieve its ultimate goal which is the satisfaction of the “city users” or the so-called “Public value creation” whose framework is represented in Figure II (Moore, 2000). It’s important to remind that even if the development of this instrument for political parties had a purpose connected to city administration and city users, aspects of private sector strategic management had to be merged with elements of public sector strategic management. (Van Den Berg, 2013)

The term "city" or “municipality” in its broadest legal sense, refers to all of the governmental entities that comprise a city's public sector, including the legislative, executive, auxiliary, and semi-autonomous bodies. (Bailey, 1989)

To facilitate the path to achieve cities' objectives, planning procedures and, to a lesser extent, performance outcomes, can both be improved by aligning political goals with strategic planning systems. (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020). Furthermore, the use of a strategic planning tool allows the political forces to look at their strategy from a different point of view with respect to the daily and operational vision, rather than only through a long-term lens, opening up new perspectives on the road to follow in the future. To achieve those advantages institutional capability, dedication, and concentration is needed. (Van Den Berg, 2013).

2.2.2 Challenges

However, the practical application and use of strategic plans in the public context is not without its challenges and drawbacks.

The first one is the executive's dependence on everyday policy dilemmas that come with running a large city. There will inevitably be pressure to include long-term planners in solving daily urgences for an executive (Bailey, 1989). Another issue is associated with the fact that the strategic plan is linked with the political agenda of the current mayor (Bailey, 1989), this is obviously at odds with the long-term nature of the plan because the mayor is supported by a particular coalition or political force usually for a limited time. We will see later in this paper how this has an impact on the application of the drafted and approved strategic plans.

Last but not least, adopting these efficient tools will allow for greater stakeholder involvement (stakeholder engagement in the process being a serious concern), as well as increasing experience and knowledge in this area. (Hintea, Profiroiu and Ticlau, 2015)

It is clear from the study of the advantages and disadvantages that there is a very close connection between the formulation and execution of the strategic plan and the political force currently in power in the municipality. Given how fluid, dynamic, and constantly prone to change the political environment is, particularly in the Capitoline city, this connection will be at the focus of my inquiry.

The shift in political party seats, the environment in which they are held, the executive branch, and the budget are only a few examples. (Van Den Berg, 2013). Recent management literature that stressed the significance of an organization's leader in enabling organizational transformation served as the foundation for the agency leadership cycle explanation. (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Kanter, 1983; Kouzes and Posner, 1987; Wilson, 1989).

All things considered, we can conclude that the alignment of a strategic planning system with political objectives may improve the performance outcomes of both the strategic planning processes and their overall

operation through the efficient mobilization of political and financial resources. (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020)

To conclude, through this first section, it was possible for us to identify the issues on which the literature has already extensively investigated, such as: the advantages and disadvantages attached to the introduction of the practice of drawing up strategic plans in the public administration, and which the factors that influence the success of a strategic plan and the creation of public value.

In addition to the strategic perspective, from the analysis of the theoretical background the close link between politics and the use of the strategic plan tool emerges.

This relationship is extensively investigated under the aspect of the alignment of the political will with the strategic directions. What has been investigated with a somewhat reduced depth within the literature is the effect of political continuity and discontinuity, in particular in the case of this research project on the Capitoline territory.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

After the definition of the theoretical background, we need to define the scientific process and the normative framework that affects our study. We will also introduce the different cases that have been used to demonstrate the reasoning behind what the effects of legislative continuity or discontinuity are.

This will bring empirical evidence related to the effect of the change in the political forces overseeing the territorial body on the implementation of strategic plans.

3.1 Normative framework on Strategic Planning

3.1.1 Regulation

In the political and public administration context, regulation is needed to protect the process and the good implementation of public management as well as the interests of the citizens who pay taxes. The environment benefits greatly from the stability and security that legislation offers (Mahon and Murray Jr, 1981), allowing the community and, in this study, the municipality, to achieve safe and more efficient progress.

There is a significant regulatory layer structure in the European environment that must be taken into consideration.

A first set of rules and directives are those from the European Union, which are adopted by the member states. The States then have their own regulatory framework, which may be even more specific at the regional or local level depending on the circumstances. In fact, even with regard to the drafting of strategic plans in the public administration, Europe intervenes with its regulation.

For instance, as a result of mounting growth pressure and the issues that resulted from dense and hazardous development, the first planning laws were created in several European member states in the early 20th century. (Albrechts, 2004) Nowadays, all of the EU's member nations employ thorough planning tools, with the exception of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland. (Albrechts, 2004). The law that Europe has implemented in this case is known as the EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies (Commission of the European Communities, 1997). It makes a distinction between land-use planning at the municipal and functional urban region levels and strategic planning at the regional or national level.

In Italy a key regulation is Law 56 of 2014, also known as the "Delrio" law, which broadly mandates that each metropolitan city adopts and annually updates a three-year strategic plan of the metropolitan area. The law mentions: "*The three-year strategic plan of the metropolitan area, constitutes an act of guidance for the*

body and for the exercise of the functions of the Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities included in the aforementioned territory, also in relation to the exercise of functions delegated or assigned by the regions, in compliance with the laws of the regions in the matters of their competence ". (Law "Delrio" n.56 art 1 comma 44, 2014)

This law aims to define the "vocation of the metropolitan city" (art. 1, c. 44, lett. e), the performance of the duties of the municipalities and unions of municipalities included in the aforementioned territory, as well as the performance of the duties delegated or assigned by the Regions in matters within their purview (art. 1, par. 44, letter a).

The approval and institutionalization of this law has given thrust to a more constant and concrete use of planning in Italy. In fact, significant activity is taking place right now at the municipal and urban agglomeration levels. (Albrechts, 2004). This approval's catalyst has an impact on public administrations. The benefit in this situation is that the legislature, which is divided into districts, may offer a more efficient means of advancing community concerns. (Bailey, 1989)

The existence of this law plays an important role in supporting this research project.

Given the nature of my study, which promises to investigate empirical evidence showing the effects of legislative continuity and discontinuity on the strategic plans of Roma Capitale, the "Delrio" law sets out the ways in which the public administration must interact with the plans. Therefore, in the event that the legislation has changed during these three years, the law binds the new political force governing the municipality to give continuity (continuing, modifying or extending) to the plans approved by the previous councils. This law is a key contributor to the dynamics of public plans revisions.

As we will see in the next paragraph, the "Madia" law also plays an important role in the interaction between the public and investee companies. As the latter are, in most cases, the implementers of strategic plans, it is necessary to understand which law governs their interaction.

3.1.2 One level down: public operating companies

It is important to point out that in the context of the public administration, the implementation of these strategic plans is carried out by publicly controlled operating companies. For example, the mobility plan, although approved by Roma Capitale, is drawn up and implemented by "Roma Servizi della Mobilità"; and the same applies to other investee companies. The subsidiaries therefore create the plans themselves and they will follow these plans in compliance with the law once approved by the local authority.

Although drawn up by the operating investee companies, the plans are not very different from the plans drawn up by the body, since even if the economic feasibility is taken into consideration with added

precision, they too are subject to political levers as they carry out public services. The purpose is therefore again directed towards the satisfaction of the citizen rather than towards the “market”.

The “Madia” law comes into play in this relationship between the entity and the subsidiaries companies. The provision aims at simplifying and recomposing the rules currently in force on investee companies. It introduced an organic discipline aimed at the efficient management of the shareholdings by identifying the types of companies in which public participation is possible (DL no. 175, art. 3, 2016) and the promotion of competition and the market. It also set rules for the reduction and rationalization of public spending, through the introduction of periodic rationalization and extraordinary review procedures (DL no. 175 articles 20 and 24.2016), specific financial rules for subsidiaries of local authorities (DL no. 175, art.21, 2016), and the promotion of transparency (DL no. 175, art. 22, 2016).

Summing up the law requires municipalities to entrust services to participated companies only if economically convenient or specific to some particular sectors.

A last important update of the regulatory framework in the public administration is the PIAO or Integrated Plan of Activities and Organization, which became operational only a few months ago, in July 2022.

A new, more straightforward method for public administrations is the PIAO, or Integrated Plan of Activities and Organization. The provision stated that administrations with more than 50 employees must combine all programs formerly contained in separate plans and related to human resource management, personnel organization in multiple offices, training, and techniques for avoiding corruption. Consequently, this document enables us to present a comprehensive picture. (Integrated Plan of Activities and Organization, 2022)

3.2 Business Cases

3.2.1 Approach

The use of case studies is a relevant research technique (Yin, 1981, 1984; McClintock et al., 1979) to obtain empirical evidence on the effect that political change has on strategic plans.

The central topic we will investigate is the “legislative continuity in public organizations”, To do so, we will go through the analysis of several business cases of strategic plans in public administration that will give us the empirical evidence to draw adequate conclusions.

Overall, the purpose of these cross-search strategies is to force investigators to go beyond their initial conclusions, particularly when using organized and varied objectives on the data. These strategies increase the possibility of accurate and reliable observation.

Choosing a few instances and then using multiple sources can ensure an accurate analysis between cases and more accurately identify the effect of political continuity and discontinuity on the implementation of strategic plans. (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The Municipality that I decided to investigate for this project with a single embedded case with sub cases (Eisenhardt, 1989) is Roma Capitale. I will also perform a high-level comparison between Milano and Roma in order to bring additional evidence to the project.

Rome's municipal territory is governed by Roma Capitale, a unique territorial organization with a high degree of autonomy. The entity, which was established in 2010 in accordance with Article 114, paragraph 3 of the Constitution, has replaced the pre-existing municipality of Rome while maintaining the same level of governance and administrative boundaries. It is clearly a large enterprise due to the number of its employees and the results of its economic balance. As a Public Administration company, it has a systematic management of resources for the accomplishment of governmental goals.

3.2.2 *The Cases*

For this paper I chose real cases that represent situations that will enable us to study the effect of legislative discontinuity over plans than span multiple administration changes, the effects of continuity vs. discontinuities in administration, and the implications tied to the very nature of the plans

The strategic plans that we will use for the analysis are RSM, PUMS, PAESC, and the zero-waste plan. We will also refer to the state of the art of the use of PNRR funds to help us focus the value of continuity vs. discontinuity in administration.

The first, RSM, is the Rome Smart City plan, which is a programmatic document that aims to provide a framework that is methodical and strategic for connecting and bringing together the top priorities in the many sectors of Rome Capital (mobility, environment and waste, social, culture, tourism, safety, etc.). The lines of direction for Roma Capitale's future that are outlined in the Rome Smart City plan are preliminary to the accomplishment of the Rome 2030 objectives, in a time frame that goes beyond the mandate of the Administration that is presently in power. (Piano Roma Smart City, 2021). By managing resources intelligently to be economically sustainable and energetically self-sufficient, smart cities aim to enhance quality of life and satisfy the needs of all city users. The endorsement of the Smart City concept and the

creation of ad hoc strategic plans already indicated that the development of the city from a "smart" perspective is a priority for intervention that cannot be evaded any longer.

The second, PUMS, is the Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan. It is a strategic plan that directs mobility in a sustainable manner over a five to ten years' time horizon. It provides a systemic vision of mobility and correlates and coordinates with sectoral plans and urban planning on an administrative and municipal level. By providing detailed recommendations in 2014, the European Union encouraged the implementation of Plans in local territorial systems for Urban Sustainable Mobility. The General Urban Traffic Plan (PGTU), a tool for short-term planning primarily aimed at optimizing current mobility services, and PUMS are complementary plans with the second one added and aggregated to the first one. PGTU needs to be aligned with the political guidelines of the new council. PUMS prioritizes people and the fact of meeting their mobility requirements, using a transparent and inclusive methodology that allows for the active participation of residents and all other city users from the very beginning of its definition process. (Piano Urbano Mobilità Sostenibile, 2019)

The third, PAESC, is the Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate, a tool crucial for planning, that establishes the climate mitigation and adaptation plans for the coming years in all facets of urban planning. Roma Capitale has joined the Covenant of Mayors on climate and energy on November 14, 2017, adopting the pledge to cut emissions in their own area by at least 40% by 2030. The PAESC's goal is to plan multi-sectoral, integrated, and strategic action policies that are consistent with the goals of reducing emissions that contribute to climate change and adapting to it. This includes calculating consumption savings through energy efficiency and increased use of renewable sources. (Piano di Azione per l'Energia Sostenibile e il Clima, 2017)

A fourth case used as a document to highlight how legislative continuity has an impact on the implementation of the plans is the Zero Waste Project. In the analysis of the Zero Waste Project, the resolution ("delibera") of the Raggi's council which mentions "the achievement of the legal objectives in the shortest possible time and, in any case, the achievement of 65% separate garbage collection by 2016 and 75% by 2020, with at least 50% of effective recycling and the new waste management plan" (Resolution n 129 of 16 of December 2014), will be taken into consideration further down in this paper together with the current plan drafted by the Special Commissioner in the phase of "VAS" ("Valutazione Ambientale Strategica").

In order to encourage sustainable development, we refer to the process of ensuring a high degree of environmental protection and including environmental concerns while developing and implementing specific plans and programs as "Vas." It is a planning tool that is aimed at facilitating the synthesis and mediation of environmental sustainability requirements, socio-economic and territorial development goals, and planning hypotheses while allowing for the research and examination of environmentally sound alternatives and

solutions during the decision-making process. It is necessary for the evaluation of the effects induced by the measures undertaken, as otherwise required by the European Directive 2001/42 / EC.

The comparison between the two cases will allow us to show what happens when there are great differences between one “Giunta” and another or between the political views within the same “Giunta”. On the other hand, also the effect that a more "generalist" plan has on the actions chosen by the new government or the new political force in charge

The last case used, stemming from a national level plan, is leveraged to take into account municipal projects derived from a national plan.

The Italian government has created a document called the PNRR (National Recovery and Resilience Plan) to present the European Commission how Italy plans to use the money that will be received under the Next Generation EU program, outlining all key initiatives. The plan also describes how these resources would be administered and includes a schedule of associated changes that are partly intended to carry out the plan's objectives and partly intended to modernize the nation. The plan aims to revive the economy after the COVID-19 pandemic, while allowing the country's green and digital development.

As we said previously, since it is a national plan, in order to make it treatable as a case study within the research project, it is necessary to deal with municipal projects and their state of progress. In the “Italiadomani” program the mayors of the various municipalities provided the audience and subsequently the citizens with updates on how the projects are progressing, what their current status is, and how the money has been allocated during the PNRR dialogues, which took place in the various Italian cities.

3.3 Data Collection

As we have said at the beginning of the research settings section the study followed an embedded design (Yin, 1984) considering several cases to be analyzed.

Using the guidelines for case-based research (Yin, 1984), the following sources of firm data were gathered in: Databases such as AIDA have been used to get useful qualitative and quantitative data helpful in the observation analysis, EBSCO open dissertation and Business source ultimate instead have been used to retrieve archival information. Also, business press archives, additional secondary sources as well as the direct analysis of the documents of the strategic plan have been used

3.3.1 Archive research

With the assistance of preliminary archival research in business magazines and other secondary sources, such as websites, corporate directories, strategic plans, and other publicly available files, I was able to create a public administration profile and trace the territorial body's recent history. As is typical in inductive research (Locke, 2001), new insights have been discovered through the data collection. Then, following previous research schemes about strategic planning theory I have identified the different actions and decisions for the strategic planning process, and collected documents such as municipal resolutions and actual strategic plans.

3.3.2 Data analysis

The paper encompasses a review of the structure and the political bureaucracy in order to provide the background knowledge needed to fully comprehend the processes that were observed. Next, I examine the different business cases of the implementation of a strategic plan in order to identify the links between politics continuity or stability and the successful conclusion of the implementation phase. Finally, in order to understand the practical consequences, I will underline the main differences and identify the connection between strategic plan and political environment.

I chose to use comparative case analysis and standard grounded theory building techniques in the data analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001) (Eisenhardt, 1989). As a result, data gathering, and analysis were done iteratively as fresh information was acquired to assess the validity of the reasoning regarding the impact of legislative continuity on the strategic plan of the public administration. I studied the strategic plans and their associated political activities in the early stages of the study with the goal of creating a rich analysis. Public administration' activities and plans of action were first content evaluated in accordance with Locke's (2001) guidelines for creating grounded theories, looking for recurring themes in different scenarios.

The first part of the analysis is based on the observation of the strategic plans in the different political context, defining the environment in which they are built, and the activities carried on by the public administration. The second step of the data analysis is to better investigate the actions taken in order to have an insight of the specific context and understand which are the actions that want to be taken by the politicians. The third step of the examination brings us to the cross-case comparison in order to identify and exploit the similarities and the differences in the decision-making progress and the final goal that the company wants to achieve. This will allow us to define context and decisions that have a recurrence in this context.

For further clarification I also referred to the existing literature in accordance with Eisenhardt's (1989) recommendations.

4. FINDINGS

In the section that follows, I move through the various business cases, starting with a brief introduction of Roma Capitale's business organization and decision-making processes.

This is necessary to have a greater understanding of the organizational plan of the institution and therefore to have a clearer idea of who are the agents involved and what are the processes underlying the theme of drafting, approval and implementation of strategic plans.

Furthermore, the following analysis of the cases allowed me to understand and test through empirical evidence what are the consequences on strategic plans of a frequent turnover at the political level, as did indeed happen in Rome in recent years, what positive impacts the legislative continuity has, which projects despite the political discontinuity are carried out, for which reasons and in which way.

4.1 Organization and Decision-making power

4.1.1 Organization

"Roma capitale" is a territorial body, whose current borders are those of the municipality of Rome, and has special statutory, administrative and financial autonomy, within the limits established by the Constitution. The Roma Capitale system is aimed at guaranteeing the best structure of the functions that Rome is called to perform as the seat of the country's Constitutional Bodies, as well as the location for diplomatic representations of foreign states, present both for the Italian Republic, as well as the Vatican City State, plus the diverse presence of international institutions." (Law n. 42, art. 24 c. 2, 2009)

The Act approved in 2013 establishes the entity's administrative structure. The mayor is at the top of this governmental institution. The metropolitan mayor, a territorial authority that became effective in Italy on January 1st, 2015, is the only one at the top of the government of a metropolitan city under Italian law (Statutory Decree n. 267, 18 of August, 2000). The residents of the city elect the mayor through a general election. In Figure V we can see a high-level view of the structure of the institution.

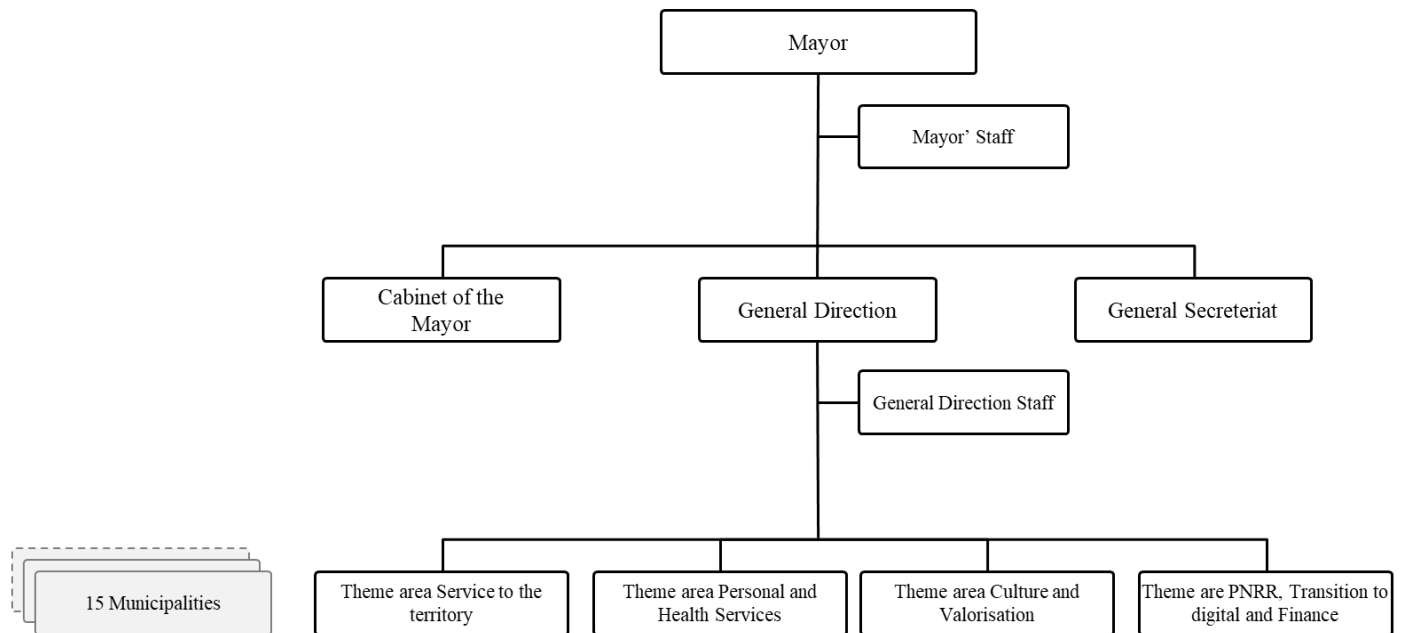


Figure III. Roma Capitale structure (Roma Capitale, 2022)

As we can see, the Secretariat, the Cabinet, and the Director General are the three entities that sit right below the mayor.

An important element is the necessary co-existence of two cultural approaches; an “executive management” culture of non-elected managers in charge of city operations, and an “elected official” culture representing the political parties involved.

The Cabinet is made up of the Head of Cabinet who is the mayor's contact in the municipal council (also called “Giunta”), and the councilors, figures selected by the mayor as part of his team, and not elected by popular will. The wide responsibility of senior management, and particularly that of the mayor a.k.a. the Chief Executive Officer of the city, includes interpreting environmental needs and then revising organizational direction to increase value for the public as well as possibly get re-elected. This part of the management of public affairs is referred to as Executive Management Culture. (Gabris 1992). The councilors, in Italian “Assessori”, are divided by thematic area, for example the councilor for mobility, the councilor for urban planning etc. To make a comparison, the “Giunta” is the board of directors of a private company while the mayor is the CEO.

Another key branch below the mayor, is the Director General. The Director General heads the various departments that constitute the technical and operational apparatus of Rome Capital. These as well, like the councilors, are divided by thematic area. For example, the thematic area for people and health or the thematic area for digital transition and finance. In turn, these areas are divided into departments that operate within the thematic area but manage specific operations within their competence.

The last important body that we have to take into consideration is the Assembly, which is referred to within the literature as the Elected-Official Culture. It means that municipal elected officials see their roles as trustees for the entire community rather than as “narrow vision” politicians (Gabris, 1992).

The assembly is elected by the citizens and has a central role in the decision making about the tasks that are outside of the “Documento unico di Programmazione” or DUP. The DUP is the medium-term planning document that specifies guidelines for the management of the municipal entity for a number of financial years equal to those covered by the multi-year budget.

The comparison between the focal points of two “cultural” approaches are summarized in table I.

Table I. Cultural Values of Elected Officials and Appointed Executives in Local Government (Gabris, 1992)

Focal Point	Value Perspective	
	Elected	Appointed
Formal role	Policy formation	Policy Implementaion
Problems	Completely solvable	Require tradeoffs
Issues	Community - based	Department - based
Time reference	Short - term	Medium to long - term
Current resources	More than enough	Insufficient
Bureaucratic structure	Inefficient	Professionaly competent
Management	Need direction	Highly autonomous
What counts	Political demands	Professionalism

4.1.2 Decision Process

Now that we have defined the structure of the institutional entity, and we have clear in mind which agents are called in action, we will focus on the management approach and how guidelines and strategies plans are set, voted and approved in order to start the implementation phase, or updating it.

The formal path of the institution of Roma Capitale, aimed at the approval of the key elements of the strategic plans follows a typical set up: the head of the department designs the lines and presents them to the councilor of reference who then brings them to the attention of the “Giunta” through the "Memoria di Giunta" (council’s memory). If the guidelines are approved, the department will then draw up the real

strategic plan. Once completed, it is presented again to the councilor of the thematic area, who presents it again to the Capitoline “Giunta”. In this case we speak of an "Atto di Giunta" (council’s act).

The Capitoline “Giunta” has full executive power over all those actions that fall within the single planning document. In the event that the actions in the strategic plan do not fall within the already existing planning document (DUP), the assembly is called upon to decide whether and how to make changes or reject certain points of the plan. Through this process the actual management of the city, and the political will, come together in a final decision. As a reference to literature this can be identified as Political Management Style (Hart, 1992; Bailey and Johnson, 1995)

4.2 Legislative Discontinuity

4.2.1 Effects

After setting a framework with the analysis of the regulatory context, the definition of the structure of the entity, an overview of the roles of the agents and the bureaucratic processes, we can move into the actual analysis of what are the effects of legislative continuity and discontinuity on the strategic plan. We will see how this affects both the establishment of new plans and the updating of existing plans.

With regard to the updating of pre-existing plans, we will see how the new "Giunta", at the time of its establishment, can make three distinct choices: carry out the plan as predetermined, modify it, or not execute it. This last possibility is theoretically impossible, but through the extension of the plan deadline by the "Giunta" it is indeed possible to obtain the same effect.

Let's start by asking: what happens when a new mayor is elected, and a new political force is established following the political elections?

Usually, if the mayor is not reconfirmed or if the same political force or coalition does not remain in charge, a fracture is created with respect to what was previously done by the public administration.

Such fracture typically generates two effects.

The first, is the introduction of new projects linked to the electoral campaign carried out by the winning political force. Agencies are least likely to adopt strategic planning in the year and in the year following the election of a new governor, or in the year immediately following a governor's re-election. (Berry, 1994)

The second is the change versus the priorities imposed by the previous administration. In this context, a selection process is carried out on the previous projects, determining which ones to keep as a priority, which ones to overshadow, which ones to update and which ones to abandon.

Summing up, the institution may undergo changes when a new leader takes the helm, either as a mark of that person's authority or as a means of carrying out the new priorities that the political party has set for the municipality. (Berry, 1994). Additionally, the strategic plan's development of the new political orientation should be seen as a turning point, giving local authorities a means of establishing more political goals in line with the complexity of the social actors that operate in metropolitan regions (Salvia, 2016).

So, considering the framework of the possible actions that the new political force can take in respect of the already existing strategic plans, a question arises: which projects remain active and a priority? and why?

The first answer, the most obvious one, is the alignment with the electoral program carried out during the campaign. The second, on the other hand, is more complex, because it is inherent to the structure of the organization.

As previously explained, the departments represent the operational part of Rome. The departments therefore have a fundamental role in the implementation of strategic plans as they relate to the implementing bodies and operational companies controlled by the municipality. The projects that are maintained despite the political change in the leadership of the city, are those that are held "dear" to the departments. It is therefore necessary to understand how much has been invested in a given project, both in financial and time terms, and to determine the degree of its progress.

Previous projects, in which a significant number of resources has already been invested, and which are close to completion, will not be "abandoned"; at the most updated if the political interest deems it possible, and the time and the resources needed are available to the department.

4.2.2 Empirical Evidence

A number of empirical evidence that provide proof of the above considerations can be extrapolated from the Single Programming Document ("Documento Unico di Programmazione"), where, even today, the projects of previous "Giunte" and past political forces are still being implemented.

A first striking example of a project in which resources have been invested by the department and which is close to completion is the planning on the SIMOP ("Sistema Informativo di Monitoring delle Partecipate ") authorized by the resolution of the Veltroni's "Giunta" n. 165 of 2005. In 2005 this project was launched to establish a technological support for the strategic coordination of the investee companies of Roma Capitale through the creation of a centralized digital platform. As the "DUP" ("Documento unico di programmazione") mentions, this system has "been tested, as per regulatory provisions with particular reference to the resolution of the "Giunta" n165 of 2005."(Council's resolution n.172, 29 of July 2021). This specific multi-year project, despite the multiple turnovers of political forces in the municipality of Rome, has been carried out as planned over the years following the commitment and time invested by the competent department.

A second interesting example is related to the monitoring and update of planning of urban redevelopment programs or commonly known as "PRU", ("Urban redevelopment programs"). In the case of this project, the council under the direction of mayor Raggi, the one prior to the one in charge currently, proceeded to remodel the preliminary urban planning program of 2006 through resolution n. 8 of January 15th, 2021. The mayor in this case modified a choice made by the Veltroni's "Giunta". This change, as mentioned above, is important evidence, as it shows how a multi-year project, already started and underway, cannot in fact be eliminated but can only be updated according to the guidelines of the new mayor and consequently of the new political force overseeing the municipality. However, updating a plan or a project is an expensive process, especially in terms of timing. In fact, although the mayor changed again in October 2021, the modification and updating procedure required by resolution n.8 of the Raggi's "Giunta" is still in progress.

This picture can be described and understood using the Bryson Ackermann e Eden matrix. Within the matrix we note how the strategy distinguishes between a "dreamer" and an "ambitious but realistic" one. The strategy is defined between the two cases depending on the degree of aspirations present, in this case, within the department.

The aspiration of wanting to conclude and carry out a multi-year project rooted within the department means that the strategy becomes realistic and that it is implemented through the various administrations.

Furthermore, in the event that the mayor and consequently the composition of the "Giunta" changes the projects that have not advanced and have not arrived under the responsibility of the departments are born and die directly within the council. The change in political force and the new guidelines undermine its implementation.

A third plan that can be included in the analysis, is the one relating to the PAESC, the Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate. The plan was approved shortly before the end of the last legislature (Council's resolution n. 106, 14 of May 2021) but there is no confirmation of it in the new political force governing the city. The plan in fact was devised with limited involvement and sharing between the departments and this resulted in its partial abandonment. As we have said, updating a plan is expensive and the feeling of belonging of individual projects within the departments plays a fundamental role in the passing of the baton of projects from one administration to another.

Also, in this case, as in the previous one, the matrix provides us with an excellent theoretical model to explain why the strategy, depending on how deeply rooted it is within the department, is implemented or not.

As for the PAESC, in contrast to what has been demonstrated above, we note that the aspirations by the department, towards the plan, are particularly low and this means that the strategy is not carried out and implemented but remains a "dream" strategy.

As a concluding remark on this first analysis on the effect of the legislative discontinuity in the strategic plans of the municipality, we can mention a fourth example; the Roma Smart City plan. A practical, current

and ongoing example of what the impact is on the plans that are at its core. The plan, which aims to provide a "method" to encourage the development of digital projects, is made up of all projects that have already started and are not prospective. The composition of the projects defines it as being of a "communicative" and "reporting" nature and the plan therefore gives a sense of alignment to all the agents involved: institutions, market and citizens. The new legislation will have to decide, upon the update of the plan which should take place about three years after the resolution of the previous council of February 4, 2020, how much of the previous projects have had an adequate success, which are to continue being carried out in the new or previous departments, which ones have to be replaced in favor of new projects, or which new projects have to be added to the existing framework.

Table II. Mayors and political forces elected by the citizens since in Rome

Since 1993		
Mayor	Political Party	Mandate
Francesco Rutelli	Federazione dei Verdi – I Democratici	05/12/1993 – 08/01/2001
Enzo Mosino	- Commissario Straordinario -	09/01/2001 – 27/05/2001
Walter Veltroni	Democratici di Sinistra – Partito Democratico	28/05/2001 – 13/02/2008
Mario Morcone	- Commissario Straordinario -	14/02/2009 – 28/04/2008
Gianni Alemanno	Alleanza Nazionale – Popolo della Libertà	29/14/2008 – 11/06/2013
Ignazio Marino	Partito Democratico	12/06/2013 – 31/10/2015
Francesco Paolo Tronca	- Commissario Straordinario -	01/11/2015 – 22/06/2016
Virginia Raggi	Movimento 5 Stelle	22/06/2016 – 21/10/2021
Roberto Gualtieri	Partito Democratico	21/10/2021 – In charge

4.3 Legislative continuity

The previous paragraphs highlighted the effects of the political change on the strategic plans being implemented. We therefore observed how political discontinuity has an impact on projects and how this impact can occur depending on the state of the art of the projects, how deeply they are rooted within the departments (primarily responsible for their implementation) and the political will.

With the intention of continuing the research, creating the most complete picture possible, in the following section we see instead what the effects of legislative continuity on the plans are; identifying, through empirical evidence, if continuity has a positive or negative effect on the public administration and on the continuation of projects.

4.3.1 Effects

In the last thirty years, various and numerous political forces have followed one another in the municipality of Rome. Usually in Rome a change of Mayor, was also linked to a change in the leading political force. This kind of succession is therefore, with regard to the parameters of our research, an excellent source of analysis on the effect that political discontinuity has on planning.

The question at this point, however is; What are the advantages that may derive from a continuity in the government of the city?

The answer to the question can be investigated by looking at the process between input output and outcome presented in the context of the creation of public value (Moore, 2000). According to the theoretical framework devised by Moore at the basis of the creation of value in public administration, two inputs play a central role, the organizational capacity (or input from the internal environment) and the level of legitimacy and support (or input from the external environment). Both determine how much value the plans are able to produce and are a necessary condition for the implementation of programs and plans perceived as useful and satisfactory to the citizen user: (Van Den Berg, 2013).

Therefore, to fully understand what the effect of legislative continuity is, it is possible to overturn the characteristics of the scenarios analyzed within the aforementioned framework, identifying the differences between their inputs and outputs.

In a discontinuity scenario in which a change in the political force overseeing the municipality takes place, the input concerning political support and external legitimacy is certainly strong and solid as it follows an election that took place recently. On the other hand, organizational capacity is not a "stable" input. It can be defined as such because, having recently settled, the new administration will need time to enter the bureaucratic and operational mechanisms of the municipality.

On the other hand, in the scenario in which the mayor, at the end of his first term, is re-elected this provides legislative continuity to the municipality. Following the reconfirmation by the voters, also in this case, external support and legitimacy will be strong and solid. The big difference lies in the second input. In the event of a re-election, the local public administration will have already acquired relevant knowledge and expertise regarding the organizational capacity and operational processes within the local authority.

This difference in inputs is obviously also reflected in the output. Not surprisingly, as we will see, the best organizational and management capacity of the available resources allows a more effective implementation of projects, and consequently, the possibility of obtaining the final outcome more quickly and more effectively: the creation of public value.

4.3.2 Empirical Evidence – Rome vs. Milan

As we mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph and as can be seen from table II, in the municipality of Rome, since the early 90s, numerous political forces, both right and left, have followed one another, generating a large turnover of mayors at the helm of the city.

It is therefore more complex, given the recent change in the council and the mayor, to judge the impact of legislative continuity by taking the Capitoline territory as a reference. In order to carry out the analysis, I therefore decided to consider another city to be compared with Rome. The municipality in question is that of Milan, where, since 12 June 2016, Giuseppe Sala is mayor, re-elected in 2021 and still in office today.

The comparison, as anticipated in the chapter on methodological research, will therefore be carried out thanks to the "Italiadomani" conventions, in which the mayors of Italian cities presented the state of the art of the projects of the national recovery and resilience plan, defining which progress was made and which were the projects financed.

As said before, the analysis of these empirical evidence seems a little bit removed from the municipal strategic plans that are at the center of this research, but in reality, the strategic plans are nothing more than the union of distinct projects, such as those presented in the case of the PNRR. Not surprisingly, the strategic plan can also be defined as a meta-project, which provides for the creation of a common cognitive framework for the various actors, through the diagnosis and interactive interpretation of the territory, and therefore the setting of high-level guidelines. and guidelines for the development of the area. This meta-project is made up of a series of operational projects, and this is what can be called the second dimension or second scale of the project.

From the presentation of the two mayors during the convention, it emerges clearly that the projects in the Milanese area are “more advanced” than those in the Capitoline area.

During Gualtieri's presentation, it is clear how the planning and the allocation of resources are still in an embryonic phase. The mayor, introducing the various areas, such as those of urban regeneration, provides

only a general guideline of which are the priority areas on which the municipality will invest, and what methods will be used. Furthermore, the presentation does not provide any technical and operational details on the progress of the tenders and the actual start of the projects.

Instead, in the presentation by the mayor of Milan, Giuseppe Sala, detailed information on the characteristic of the interventions or on the timetables for awarding the tenders was shared.

To give a concrete example on the projects relating to urban redevelopment, the presentation by the mayor of Milan expressly mentions "The tenders are not yet closed but the ranking will be drawn up before Christmas" (Comune di Milano, 2022). While the Capitoline embryonic state is clear since the only information provided by mayor Gualtieri are those relating to the nature of the investment and the overall objective. For example, the redevelopment is described as: a "250 million Euro project for a widespread integrated strategy of interventions throughout Rome, from city museums to the Aurelian Walls" (Roma Capitale, 2022)

The question therefore arises spontaneously: why are the projects of the municipality of Milan more precise or "ahead" of those of Rome?

Another excellent tool, in addition to Moore's framework, to understand why the Milanese PNRR activities are already in an operational phase compared to the Roman ones, is the strategic matrix conceived in 2007 by Bryson, Ackermann and Eden. This matrix combines two elements necessary in public administration to understand the feasibility of a strategy and what its outcome is.

The two factors are aspirations and capabilities. In both cases the aspirations are at a high level: in the case of Giuseppe Sala thanks to the re-election and confirmation of his work by the citizens, and in the case of the "Giunta" Gualtieri for the recent election. The second factor of the matrix therefore plays the fundamental role, this is where the differences are between the two public administrations.

As we have seen through the framework conceived by Moore, the continuity in the organizational capacity, in the knowledge of the municipality and in the experience gained in the local public administration, allow to generate, from a more solid input, a more concrete output, as well as a pragmatic and operational strategy.

Therefore, within the matrix we introduced a few pages ago, it is possible to identify the current positioning of Rome in "The dreamer" quadrant. Obviously, the capabilities of the Roman municipality are not equal to zero, so despite the matrix defining the quadrant as an "Unrealistic Strategy" (Bryson Ackermann and Eden, 2007), in reality the Capitoline public administration is expected to move into a Realistic ambitious strategy, due to the lack of expertise that it will be able to obtain only a few months after taking office.

On the other hand, the Milanese strategy can be currently identified as "The savvy Strategist" or a "Realistic ambitious strategy" (Bryson Ackermann and Eden, 2007) as it is already rich in both capabilities and aspirations.

4.4 Relationship between Strategic plans characteristics and plan continuity

In the previous sections, we were able to find empirical evidence that proved the impact of legislative continuity or discontinuity on the administration of the company, from the drafting to the implementation of the plans, passing through the individual projects within the plan.

However, there is another factor that links the actions of the public administration to strategic plans, the very nature of the plans themselves. Within this last sub-chapter, we will see how the nature of the plan can vary and how this affects which actions are carried out by the “Giunta” currently overseeing the municipality.

To carry out this analysis and show the evidence through empirical evidence we will exploit the strategic plans of Rome as the capital cited in the second chapter. Through this sample I will be able to show that the plans can be enclosed in two macro categories in the context of public administration.

4.4.1 Generalist plans

The first category of plans is the “generalist” one. Generalist plans are those plans that do not have clear and well-defined guidelines for achieving the final objective of the plan.

The empirical evidence taken in analysis, and representative for the more generalist category, is the "PUMS" or the urban plan for sustainable mobility.

This plan has a long and rooted history within the Capitoline administrations. The first approach by the municipality took place in February 2008, before the settlement of the Alemanno "Giunta" (center-right coalition), which, a year later, defined the guidelines (September 2009). At the time the plan was called PSMS or "Strategic plan for sustainable mobility".

Only in May 2014 following the European guidelines on how to develop and implement an urban plan of sustainable mobility did it acquire the acronym of PUMS.

The change took place under the following municipal legislature presided over by Ignazio Marino (center-left coalition).

In the following years, other updates were added such as the document drawn up by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport in April 2016, and the identification of the guidelines for urban sustainable mobility plans, which happened in August 2017. The latter integration took place under yet another "Giunta" versus the one of mayor Marino, the one of mayor Raggi (5-star movement) as well as further integrations that took place in June 2019. Until reaching implementation in 2020.

As we can see from the evidence, the plan has been carried out over the years, so the succession of resolutions on this plan can be defined as "cross administration", and the path for the implementation of this plan, although with some additions made necessary over the years, is being adopted by all political forces regardless of political ideology.

This is because the plan, being of a more generalist nature and leaving great room for maneuver to current and past administrations, has allowed it to be carried out despite different programs and ideas, making the vision of mobility in Rome and the large infrastructures that concern it a continuum between the various administrations.

4.4.2 Rigid plans

The second category of plans is instead represented by a very "rigid" strategic plan both in the guidelines and consequently in the use or development of the infrastructures necessary for the realization of the projects and consequently of the plan. To represent the second category, I decided to analyze the planning of the zero-waste project approved by the Capitoline assembly under the "Giunta" of mayor Raggi.

The approved project envisaged that "specific objectives in the field of urban waste management should be achieved, starting with the start of the path towards the "Zero Waste" goal with the achievement of 75% of separate waste collection by 2020, with at least 50% of effective recycling. " (Resolution n 129 of 16 of December 2014)

The project also takes into consideration a series of plant solutions to enhance the differentiated waste, such as the conversion of mechanical biological treatment plants, eliminating the production of fuel derived from waste and the use of incinerators.

The strategic and programmatic lines associated with the zero-waste project are in this case very clear, inflexible and modifiable with a well-defined process.

In the face of this rigidity, the new administration of the mayor Gualtieri (Democratic Party), in which he also plays a role as extraordinary government commissioner, considering the plan unrealistic and unfeasible, decided to establish a new strategic plan for waste management in Rome.

The mayor therefore replaced the zero-waste project plan with a new plan accompanied by Ama's industrial plan that was consistent with the new vision.

It is therefore clear how the characteristics of the plan affect the actions of the public administration. The processes of modification or establishment of new plans are not simple or immediate procedures, which is why, in the face of a generalist project, the new political force established in the municipality prefers to keep the same project by integrating changes that do not distort the plan, but which are deemed necessary.

5. DISCUSSION

Along the research project, it was possible to re-affirm how crucial it is, also for public administrations, to draw up and use strategic plans to achieve objectives and improve performance. However, it was also possible how to understand that the function of a strategic plan is not only operational, but also a useful tool to be combined with the political dynamics that involve the municipality, in this specific case those of Roma Capitale. Indeed, both city goals and performance outcomes can be improved by aligning policy goals with strategic planning systems. (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020).

The behavior of the administration towards strategic plans, as evidenced by the empirical evidence discussed throughout the research project, is very varied. The interaction that politics has with plans, and therefore the decisions to implement the plans, modify them or not follow them, changes according to many factors.

Factors such as the characteristics of the plan, and how deeply rooted a project is within the Capitoline departments are extremely relevant to the fate of the plan. But above all the impact of legislative continuity and discontinuity.

The analysis carried out in this work confirms how the connection and alignment of political will with strategic planning, in a framework of continuity, facilitates the achievement of objectives (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020) and improves the results of public administration. (Poister, Pitts, Edwards, 2010) through the efficient mobilization of political and financial resources. (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020).

Paradoxically, the strategic and performance limits inherent in the democratic turnover system should be noted, such as having to choose between agendas and ideologies that over time contrast with the establishment of precise objectives (Gary P. Latham, Laura Borgogni & Laura Petitta, 2008) versus the necessarily long-term nature of many plans: the plans, at the time of their deliberation, are supported by a particular coalition or political force, which however, may no longer be present in the future to support their implementation

Looking at the complete picture, thanks to the analysis carried out and thanks to the theoretical frameworks previously introduced in the literature and used as a study tool, I was able to identify the difference between the two scenarios, which of these allows for a better implementation of the plan and consequently a better and more effective creation of public value, what impacts the political ideologies of the presiding force have and, above all, how this is reflected on the implementation of new plans or on the modification of already deliberated and existing plans.

Given the nature of the issue, that links operational elements with the highly subjective nature of political views in the evolution of public affairs, it is very difficult to find a solution to advise professionals that could improve the process. Although the alternation of political forces is necessary and a positive event from the point of view of the democratic process, the best solution would clearly be to obtain a fairer dialogue,

between the successive political forces, on the strategic nature of the most important projects to ensure continuity in their implementation.

Another element that can stimulate the cross-administration continuity of projects is the drafting of strategic plans that have the right balance between generality, which allows the new administration to be flexible in what to carry out compatibly with its political ideology, and a correct definition operational objective. This balance would support the implementation of the projects, since, as emerged from the study, the general plans are less subject to changes or extensions.

Another idea would be to require – by law – that the fate of the most relevant projects of the administration be clearly presented and discussed during the election campaign. This would better qualify and legitimate a transition, while at the same time refocus the citizens on the key plans for the city.

The analysis in this paper focused on a varied group of strategic plans, of different nature, and of different administrations over time in a large and complex municipality under a well-defined legislative framework, namely the Capitoline, Italian and European ones. Ideas for additional research could be to carry out a similar study on small municipalities, and/or in different legislative contexts to see if the outcomes and behaviors are the same

6. CONCLUSION

In my study I examined the effects of political continuity and discontinuity on strategic plans in the public administration. The results of my study show in detail what the impact is in the context of Rome Capital, thus continuing the studies already present in the literature but contextualizing the analysis within a specific municipality. Thanks to the analysis of the cases, I was able to confirm the importance of the association between strategic plan and program / political will and investigate what its implications are on the creation of public value.

To conclude, the results enrich the existing picture of the pros and cons of the use of strategic plans in the public administration, adding the analysis of what behaviors are within the Capitoline municipality in relation to political continuity or discontinuity and what are the implications of such dynamism on the strategic plans themselves.

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SUMMARY

Theoretical Background

Planning in the public sector and effectiveness of planning

Since its first implementation, the drafting of the strategic plan has borne fruit in the private context, improving overall performance. The careful management of resources and the intention of achieving specific goals leads to the definition of a plan, which has the objective to define actions that advance organizational interests by striking a cooperative balance of all the interested parties.

Fundamentally, strategic planning is a methodical, creative thinking process about how a company will seize or create possibilities in the present and future markets. Strategic planning differs from more conventional planning in that it places an emphasis on action, takes into account a wide range of stakeholders, pays attention to external opportunities and threats as well as internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as taking into account current or potential competitors. (Bloom 1986, Kaufman and Jacobs, 1987).

At first glance, a strategic plan appears to be a necessity limited to private companies, while it is common to think of public administration as having some control over how governments choose to implement their policies and programs. That is the reason why before the introduction of strategic planning in public administration, the government was perceived as not being effective enough, due to lack of perceived direction, strong leadership, and the restriction in creativity.

In summary, the relationship between political demands and bureaucracy reaction has been seen as being weak and delayed, especially in representative democracies. (Ravensway and Hamlin, 2015)

In the early 1990s, principles of strategic planning were initially introduced to municipal government organizations in the US, with an emphasis on creating a strategic vision by completing an overall scan of municipal activities.

For more than twenty years, academics and professionals have been interested in strategic planning and management in the public sector (Bryson, 1988; Eadie, 1983; Ring and Perry, 1985). In the public sector, strategy is typically focused on achieving objectives to “please” the political process.

Despite the old view and perception of the use of this tool in the public administration, it is now abundantly accepted that strategic planning is a tool for public management that enables public institutions to efficiently utilize their resources and accomplish their mission-aligned goals. (Bordean, Raileanu, and Turtureanu, 2000).

Despite the limited impact that strategic planning has on the effectiveness of government operations (Nakrosis, 2008), according to studies, employing performance metrics to track the advancement of strategic objectives (Hendrick, 2003; Poister Streib, 2005) as well as connecting the strategic plan to the budget and the organization's entire performance management system (Poister, Streib, 2005; Poister, Van Slyke, 2002) improves outcomes (Poister, Pitts, Edwards, 2010).

In synthesis, nowadays strategic planning, by establishing a strategy and how to implement it, is an effective tool of public management that enables public institutions to efficiently utilize their resources and accomplish the goals set out in their purpose. (Bordean, Raileanu, and Turtureanu, 2000).

Since strategies are required in all contexts (private and public), the quality of a strategy should be assessed in relation to the nature of the ambitions, the capabilities required to achieve the aspirations, and the degree to which the aspirations and capabilities are related in the particular environment (Bryson, Ackermann, & Eden, 2007)

The strategies in public administration can be aggregated in four general categories of strategists: the reactor (low aspirations, low capabilities), the dreamer (high aspirations, low capabilities), the underachiever (low aspirations, high capabilities), and the savvy strategist (high aspirations, high capabilities). (Bryson and George, 2020).

Politics and Strategic planning

Now that we have clarified what a strategic plan is and how it has started to be incorporated in the public sector in the last forty years; we can concentrate towards the intervention and interaction of politics on the strategic planning in public administration, focusing on the advantages or disadvantages that arise from using strategic planning in a political environment.

Today, all large cities of developed countries apply the use of a strategic planning tool in their administration to achieve all the possible advantages, including the coherence in local development efforts, improved local governance, and the ability to access EU funds. (Hintea, Profiroiu and Ticlau, 2015).

Strategic planning can therefore facilitate the public administration to achieve its ultimate goal which is the satisfaction of the “city users” or the so-called “Public value creation”. (Moore, 2000)

Furthermore, the use of a strategic planning tool allows the political forces to look at their strategy from a different point of view with respect to the daily and operational vision, rather than only through a long-term lens, opening up new perspectives on the road to follow in the future. (Van Den Berg, 2013).

However, the practical application and use of strategic plans in the public context is not without its challenges and drawbacks.

The first one is the executive's dependence on everyday policy dilemmas that come with running a large city. There will inevitably be pressure to include long-term planners in solving daily urgences for an executive (Bailey, 1989). Another issue is associated with the fact that the strategic plan is linked with the political agenda of the current mayor (Bailey, 1989), this is obviously at odds with the long-term nature of the plan because the mayor is supported by a particular coalition or political force usually for a limited time.

It is clear from the study of the advantages and disadvantages that there is a very close connection between the formulation and execution of the strategic plan and the political force currently in power in the municipality. Given how fluid, dynamic, and constantly prone to change the political environment is, particularly in the Capitoline city, this connection will be at the focus of my inquiry. The shift in political party seats, the environment in which they are held, the executive branch, and the budget are only a few examples. (Van Den Berg, 2013).

To conclude, through this first section, it was possible for us to identify the issues on which the literature has already extensively investigated, such as: the advantages and disadvantages attached to the introduction of the practice of drawing up strategic plans in the public administration, and which the factors that influence the success of a strategic plan and the creation of public value. In addition to the strategic perspective, from the analysis of the theoretical background the close link between politics and the use of the strategic plan tool emerges.

Research Method

Normative framework on Strategic planning

In the political and public administration context, regulation is needed to protect the process and the good implementation of public management as well as the interests of the citizens who pays taxes. The environment benefits greatly from the stability and security that legislation offers (Mahon and Murray Jr, 1981).

A first set of rules and directives are those from the European Union, which are adopted by the member states. The law that Europe has implemented in this case is known as the EU Compendium of Spatial Planning Systems and Policies (CEC, 1997). It makes a distinction between land-use planning at the municipal and functional urban region levels and strategic planning at the regional or national level.

In Italy a key regulation is Law 56 of 2014, also known as the "Delrio" law, which broadly mandates that each metropolitan city adopts and annually updates a three-year strategic plan of the metropolitan area. The

approval and institutionalization of this law has given thrust to a more constant and concrete use of planning in Italy.

It is important to point out that in the context of the public administration, the implementation of these strategic plans is carried out by publicly controlled operating companies

The subsidiaries therefore create the plans themselves and they will follow these plans in compliance with the law once approved by the local authority. The “Madia” law comes into play in this relationship between the entity and the subsidiaries companies. The provision aims at simplifying and recomposing the rules currently in force on investee companies

Summing up the law requires municipalities to entrust services to participated companies only if economically convenient or specific to some particular sectors.

Normative framework on Strategic planning

The use of case studies is a relevant research technique (Yin, 1981, 1984; McClintock et al., 1979) to obtain empirical evidence on the effect that political change has on strategic plans.

The central topic we will investigate is the “legislative continuity in public organizations”, To do so, we will go through the analysis of several business cases of strategic plans in public administration that will give us the empirical evidence to draw adequate conclusions.

The strategic plans that we will use for the analysis are RSM, PUMS, PAESC, and the zero-waste plan. We will also refer to the state of the art of the use of PNRR funds to help us focus the value of continuity vs. discontinuity in administration.

The first, RSM, is the Rome Smart City plan, which is a programmatic document that aims to provide a framework that is methodical and strategic for connecting and bringing together the top priorities in the many sectors of Rome Capital

The second, PUMS, is the Urban Sustainable Mobility Plan. It is a strategic plan that directs mobility in a sustainable manner over a five to ten years’ time horizon. It provides a systemic vision of mobility and correlates and coordinates with sectoral plans and urban planning on an administrative and municipal level.

The third, PAESC, is the Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate, a tool crucial for planning, that establishes the climate mitigation and adaptation plans for the coming years in all facets of urban planning.

A fourth case used as a document to highlight how legislative continuity has an impact on the implementation of the plans is the Zero Waste Project approved by Raggi’s council.

The last case used, stemming from a national level plan, is leveraged to take into account municipal projects derived from a national plan. In the “Italiadomani” program the mayors of the various municipalities provided the audience and subsequently the citizens with updates on how the projects are progressing, what their current status is, and how the money has been allocated during the PNRR dialogues, which took place in the various Italian cities.

Data Collection and Analysis

As we have said at the beginning of the research settings section the study followed an embedded design (Yin, 1984) considering several cases to be analyzed.

Using the guidelines for case-based research (Yin, 1984), the following sources of firm data were gathered in: Databases such as AIDA have been used to get useful qualitative and quantitative data helpful in the observation analysis, EBSCO open dissertation and Business source ultimate instead have been used to retrieve archival information. Also, business press archives, additional secondary sources as well as the direct analysis of the documents of the strategic plan have been used

I chose to use comparative case analysis and standard grounded theory building techniques in the data analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001) (Eisenhardt, 1989). As a result, data gathering, and analysis were done iteratively as fresh information was acquired to assess the validity of the reasoning regarding the impact of legislative continuity on the strategic plan of the public administration.

Findings

Organization and Decision-making power

“Roma capitale” is a territorial body, whose current borders are those of the municipality of Rome, and has special statutory, administrative and financial autonomy, within the limits established by the Constitution”

The mayor is at the top of this governmental institution and the Secretariat, the Cabinet, and the Director General are the three entities that sit right below the mayor.

The Cabinet is made up of the Head of Cabinet who is the mayor's contact in the municipal council (also called “Giunta”), and the councilors, figures selected by the mayor as part of his team, and not elected by popular will. The wide responsibility of senior management, and particularly that of the mayor a.k.a. the Chief Executive Officer of the city, includes interpreting environmental needs and then revising organizational direction to increase value for the public as well as possibly get re-elected. This part of the management of public affairs is referred to as Executive Management Culture. (Gabris 1992). The councilors, in Italian “Assessori”, are divided by thematic area, for example the councilor for mobility, the

councilor for urban planning etc. To make a comparison, the “Giunta” is the board of directors of a private company while the mayor is the CEO.

Another key branch below the mayor, is the Director General. The Director General heads the various departments that constitute the technical and operational apparatus of Rome Capital. These as well, like the councilors, are divided by thematic area.

The last important body that we have to take into consideration is the Assembly, which is referred to within the literature as the Elected-Official Culture. It means that municipal elected officials see their roles as trustees for the entire community rather than as “narrow vision” politicians (Gabris, 1992).

The assembly is elected by the citizens and has a central role in the decision making about the tasks that are outside of the “Documento unico di Programmazione” or DUP. The DUP is the medium-term planning document that specifies guidelines for the management of the municipal entity for a number of financial years equal to those covered by the multi-year budget.

Now that we have defined the structure of the institutional entity, and we have clear in mind which agents are called in action, we will focus on the management approach and how guidelines and strategies plans are set, voted and approved in order to start the implementation phase, or updating it.

The formal path of the institution of Roma Capitale, aimed at the approval of the key elements of the strategic plans follows a typical set up: the head of the department designs the lines and presents them to the councilor of reference who then brings them to the attention of the “Giunta” through the "Memoria di Giunta" (council’s memory). If the guidelines are approved, the department will then draw up the real strategic plan. Once completed, it is presented again to the councilor of the thematic area, who presents it again to the Capitoline “Giunta”. In this case we speak of an "Atto di Giunta" (council’s act).

The Capitoline “Giunta” has full executive power over all those actions that fall within the single planning document. In the event that the actions in the strategic plan do not fall within the already existing planning document (DUP), the assembly is called upon to decide whether and how to make changes or reject certain points of the plan. Through this process the actual management of the city, and the political will, come together in a final decision.

Legislative Discontinuity

After setting a framework with the analysis of the regulatory context, the definition of the structure of the entity, an overview of the roles of the agents and the bureaucratic processes, we can move into the actual analysis of what are the effects of legislative continuity and discontinuity on the strategic plan.

With regard to the updating of pre-existing plans, we will see how the new "Giunta", at the time of its establishment, can make three distinct choices: carry out the plan as predetermined, modify it, or not execute it.

Let's start by asking: what happens when a new mayor is elected, and a new political force is established following the political elections?

Usually, if the mayor is not reconfirmed or if the same political force or coalition does not remain in charge, a fracture is created with respect to what was previously done by the public administration.

Such fracture typically generates two effects.

The first, is the introduction of new projects linked to the electoral campaign carried out by the winning political force. Agencies are least likely to adopt strategic planning in the year and in the year following the election of a new governor, or in the year immediately following a governor's re-election. (Berry, 1994)

The second is the change versus the priorities imposed by the previous administration. In this context, a selection process is carried out on the previous projects, determining which ones to keep as a priority, which ones to overshadow, which ones to update and which ones to abandon.

So, considering the framework of the possible actions that the new political force can take in respect of the already existing strategic plans, a question arises: which projects remain active and a priority? and why?

The first answer, the most obvious one, is the alignment with the electoral program carried out during the campaign. The second, on the other hand, is more complex, because it is inherent to the structure of the organization. The projects that are maintained despite the political change in the leadership of the city, are those that are held "dear" to the departments.

A first striking example of a project in which resources have been invested by the department and which is close to completion is the planning on the SIMOP ("Sistema Informativo di Monitoring delle Partecipate ") authorized by the resolution of the Veltroni's "Giunta" (n. 165 of 2005).

As the "DUP" ("Documento unico di programmazione") mentions, this system has "been tested, as per regulatory provisions with particular reference to the resolution of the "Giunta" n.165 of 2005." This specific multi-year project, despite the multiple turnovers of political forces in the municipality of Rome, has been carried out as planned over the years following the commitment and time invested by the competent department.

A second interesting example is related to the monitoring and update of planning of urban redevelopment programs or commonly known as "PRU", ("Urban redevelopment programs").

The mayor in this case modified a choice made by the "Giunta" Veltroni. This change, as mentioned above, is important evidence, as it shows how a multi-year project, already started and underway, cannot in fact be

eliminated but can only be updated according to the guidelines of the new mayor and consequently of the new political force overseeing the municipality.

This picture can be described and understood using the Bryson Ackermann e Eden matrix. The aspiration of wanting to conclude and carry out a multi-year project rooted within the department means that the strategy becomes realistic and that it is implemented through the various administrations.

A third plan that can be included in the analysis, is the one relating to the PAESC, the Action Plan for Sustainable Energy and Climate. The plan was approved shortly before the end of the last legislature (Council's resolution n. 106, 14 of May 2021) but there is no confirmation of it in the new political force governing the city

Also, in this case, as in the previous one, the matrix provides us with an excellent theoretical model to explain why the strategy, depending on how deeply rooted it is within the department, is implemented or not.

Legislative Continuity

With the intention of continuing the research, creating the most complete picture possible, in the following section we see instead what the effects of legislative continuity on the plans are.

According to the theoretical framework devised by Moore at the basis of the creation of value in public administration, two inputs play a central role, the organizational capacity (or input from the internal environment) and the level of legitimacy and support (or input from the external environment). Both determine how much value the plans are able to produce and are a necessary condition for the implementation of programs and plans perceived as useful and satisfactory to the citizen user: (Van Den Berg, 2013).

In a discontinuity scenario in which a change in the political force overseeing the municipality takes place, the input concerning political support and external legitimacy is certainly strong and solid as it follows an election that took place recently. On the other side, organizational capacity is not a "stable" input.

In the scenario in which the mayor, at the end of his first term, is re-elected this provides legislative continuity to the municipality. Following the reconfirmation by the voters, also in this case, external support and legitimacy will be strong and solid. The big difference lies in the second input. In the event of a re-election, the local public administration will have already acquired relevant knowledge and expertise regarding the organizational capacity and operational processes within the local authority.

This difference in inputs is obviously also reflected in the output.

Empirical Evidence – Rome vs. Milan

As we mentioned at the beginning of the paragraph and as can be seen from table II, in the municipality of Rome, since the early 90s, numerous political forces, both right and left, have followed one another, generating a large turnover of mayors at the helm of the city.

It is therefore more complex, given the recent change in the council and the mayor, to judge the impact of legislative continuity by taking the Capitoline territory as a reference. In order to carry out the analysis, I therefore decided to consider another city to be compared with Rome. The municipality in question is that of Milan, where, since 12 June 2016, Giuseppe Sala is mayor, re-elected in 2021 and still in office today.

The comparison, as anticipated in the chapter on methodological research, will therefore be carried out thanks to the "Italiadomani" conventions

From the presentation of the two mayors during the convention, it emerges clearly that the projects in the Milanese area are “more advanced” than those in the Capitoline area.

During Gualtieri's presentation, it is clear how the planning and the allocation of resources are still in an embryonic phase. The mayor, introducing the various areas, such as those of urban regeneration, provides only a general guideline of which are the priority areas on which the municipality will invest, and what methods will be used. Furthermore, the presentation does not provide any technical and operational details on the progress of the tenders and the actual start of the projects.

Instead, in the presentation by the mayor of Milan, Giuseppe Sala, detailed information on the characteristic of the interventions or on the timetables for awarding the tenders was shared.

Another excellent tool, in addition to Moore's framework, to understand why the Milanese PNRR activities are already in an operational phase compared to the Roman ones, is the strategic matrix conceived in 2007 by Bryson, Ackermann and Eden. Within the matrix we introduced a few pages ago, it is possible to identify the current positioning of Rome in "The dreamer" quadrant. Obviously, the capabilities of the Roman municipality are not equal to zero, so despite the matrix defining the quadrant as an "Unrealistic Strategy" (Bryson Ackermann and Eden, 2007), in reality the Capitoline public administration is expected to move into a Realistic ambitious strategy, due to the lack of expertise that it will be able to obtain only a few months after taking office.

On the other hand, the Milanese strategy can be currently identified as "The savvy Strategist" or a "Realistic ambitious strategy" (Bryson Ackermann and Eden, 2007) as it is already rich in both capabilities and aspirations.

Relationship between Strategic plan characteristics (Generalist vs. Rigid) and plan continuity

There is another factor that links the actions of the public administration to strategic plans, the very nature of the plans themselves. Within this last sub-chapter, we will see how the nature of the plan can vary and how this affects which actions are carried out by the “Giunta” currently overseeing the municipality.

The first category of plans is the “generalist” one. Generalist plans are those plans that do not have clear and well-defined guidelines for achieving the final objective of the plan.

The empirical evidence taken in analysis, and representative for the more generalist category, is the "PUMS" or the urban plan for sustainable mobility. This plan has a long and rooted history within the Capitoline administrations

As we can see from the evidence, the plan has been carried out over the years, so the succession of resolutions on this plan can be defined as "cross administration", and the path for the implementation of this plan, although with some additions made necessary over the years, is being adopted by all political forces regardless of political ideology.

This is because the plan, being of a more generalist nature and leaving great room for maneuver to current and past administrations, has allowed it to be carried out despite different programs and ideas, making the vision of mobility in Rome and the large infrastructures that concern it a continuum between the various administrations.

The second category of plans is instead represented by a very "rigid" strategic plan both in the guidelines and consequently in the use or development of the infrastructures necessary for the realization of the projects and consequently of the plan. To represent the second category, I decided to analyze the planning of the zero-waste project

The strategic and programmatic lines associated with the zero-waste project are in this case very clear, inflexible and modifiable with a well-defined process. In the face of this rigidity, the new administration of the mayor Gualtieri (Democratic Party), considering the plan unrealistic and unfeasible, decided to establish a new strategic plan for waste management in Rome.

It is therefore clear how the characteristics of the plan affect the actions of the public administration.

Discussion

The analysis carried out in this work confirms how the connection and alignment of political will with strategic planning, in a framework of continuity, facilitates the achievement of objectives (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020) and improves the results of public administration. (Poister, Pitts, Edwards, 2010) through the efficient mobilization of political and financial resources. (Nakrosis, Siugzdiniene and Antanaite, 2020).

Paradoxically, the strategic and performance limits inherent in the democratic turnover system should be noted, such as having to choose between agendas and ideologies that over time contrast with the establishment of precise objectives (Gary P. Latham, Laura Borgogni & Laura Petitta, 2008) versus the necessarily long-term nature of many plans: the plans, at the time of their deliberation, are supported by a particular coalition or political force, which however, may no longer be present in the future to support their implementation

Given the nature of the issue, that links operational elements with the highly subjective nature of political views in the evolution of public affairs, it is very difficult to find a solution to advise professionals that could improve the process. Although the alternation of political forces is necessary and a positive event from the point of view of the democratic process, the best solution would clearly be to obtain a fairer dialogue, between the successive political forces, on the strategic nature of the most important projects to ensure continuity in their implementation.

An element that can stimulate the cross-administration continuity of projects is the drafting of strategic plans that have the right balance between generality, which allows the new administration to be flexible in what to carry out compatibly with its political ideology, and a correct definition operational objective.

Another idea would be to require – by law – that the fate of the most relevant projects of the administration be clearly presented and discussed during the election campaign. This would better qualify and legitimate a transition, while at the same time refocus the citizens on the key plans for the city.

The analysis in this paper focused on a varied group of strategic plans, of different nature, and of different administrations over time in a large and complex municipality under a well-defined legislative framework, namely the Capitoline, Italian and European ones. Ideas for additional research could be to carry out a similar study on small municipalities, and/or in different legislative contexts to see if the outcomes and behaviors are the same

Conclusion

In my study I examined the effects of political continuity and discontinuity on strategic plans in the public administration. The results of my study show in detail what the impact is in the context of Rome Capital, thus continuing the studies already present in the literature but contextualizing the analysis within a specific municipality. Thanks to the analysis of the cases, I was able to confirm the importance of the association between strategic plan and program / political will and investigate what its implications are on the creation of public value.

To conclude, the results enrich the existing picture of the pros and cons of the use of strategic plans in the public administration, adding the analysis of what behaviors are within the Capitoline municipality in

relation to political continuity or discontinuity and what are the implications of such dynamism on the strategic plans themselves.