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The Controversial Case of Metro C: Whose Failure?

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PhD Thesis submitted
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ABSTRACT

The city of Rome suffers a marked infrastructural deficit, if compared to other fellow European cities. The difficulty to organise a sound and capillary urban railway network in Rome is evident, and it is generally associated with archaeology problems in the city's underground.

The Metro C – the case study of this research – is the third underground line in Rome, now under construction. Its implementation has been so far slow, over budget, and featured suspect relationships among the actors involved.

Urban projects of this sort are outstanding elements for investigating decisional logics, institutional change and continuity, and ultimately the political economy of major cities. The aim of this thesis is to shed light on the reasons why the implementation of this important urban project (nearly 4 billion euros of public money to date) suffered so much for being implemented.

The multi-faceted explanation has been narrowed down to three main focuses. The case, as a consequence, is relevant for three disciplinary domains: decision-making, project management, and urban political economy.

Through a research approach inspired by the phronetic method of inquiry, and making use of in-depth interviews with key actors, the research gets to three main findings (developed autonomously in three papers). Firstly, the decisional process of the Metro C has been characterised by path dependency logics mostly evident in the choice to include the project in the Legge Obiettivo framework. Secondly, as a consequence of that key decision, the institutional environment in which the project was embedded gave as a result a fragmentation of the public actor in the governance and an over-sovereignty of the general contractor in the project management. Thirdly, and ultimately, I reckoned that the whole rationale behind the project's decision-making and institutional arrangement was to be researched in the preferential relationships between politics and economy in Rome. Through the analysis of the project's tender, the third paper argues that the case of the Metro C can suggest the existence of a particular form of 'urban regime', namely the 'maintenance regime': a type of alliance between the administration and local constructors aimed at the preservation of the status quo.

INTRODUCTION

A NECESSARY PREMISE

Rome is a city that displays an evident public transport deficit if compared to other fellow European (capital) cities (Corte dei conti, 2011). The grave difficulty of constructing a sound and reliable metropolitan rail network within the city is widely acknowledged, mostly for archaeological reasons. In particular, the poor endowment of metro underground railways is a distinctive character of the Italian capital city's public profile (Tab. 1).

The institutional governance of major projects, plans, and decisions sees Rome lagging behind if compared, for example, to other major Italian cities such as Turin and Milan, for example. Moreover, the ill relationships between Rome's city hall and local economic actors are often called into question for explaining the many difficulties that the city encounters when it comes to dealing with its strategic and daily agenda (d'Albergo & Moini, 2015; Pizzo & DiSalvo, 2015).

When an urban project implementation process is observed, such congenital characteristics occur in a more or less fixed array of outcomes such as poor operational results, delays in the delivery of the works, cost overrun, and corruption episodes; in one word, overall failure.

	Total lines' length (km)	Lines n.	Km/million Inh.	Operator type
Bilbao	38,9	2	114	Pub
Valencia	133,5	3	79,3	Pub
Milan	100	4	74	Pub
London	408	12	62,5	Pub
Madrid	233	13	38,1	Pub/Pri
Berlin	146,5	10	24,3	Pub
Barcelona	112,3	6	23,5	Pub
Paris	200	16	19	Pub
Rome	36,5	3	9,6	Pub

TABLE 1 – Metro lines' characteristics in selected European cities¹ (elaboration of the author on E.m.t.a., Barometer, and Istat data)

¹ This list has to be considered just as a descriptive comparison, useful to understanding the structural delay suffered by Rome as to infrastructural endowments. The cities cited in this Table, therefore, have been chosen with no precise categorisation for comparison.

The contingency of a new metro line construction in Rome – the Metro C, which started in 2006 – gave me the opportunity to observe the ‘work in progress’ *phenomenology* of such supposed deficits. The new line’s implementation today, 10 years from its outset, is affected by severe inefficiencies in each of the fields told earlier commonly associated with megaprojects’ failures. This opportunity was to be seized by trying to study what happened over the entire story (a quite long and controversial one) of this important urban infrastructure, and trying to isolate the elements that more than others determined the specific development and the results of this implementation process.

Such failure is aggravated by the fact that, contrary to the conventional ideal-type used in social sciences concerning megaprojects, the Metro C did not suffer significant social opposition. On the contrary, it was conceived – as we will see in the following pages – as a project necessary to solve some of the most urgent problems associated to the ‘right to the city’ of the most spatially penalised citizens of Rome (Tocci, 1993, 2015).

When it had been finally put to tender, three public bodies committed to financing the Metro C: the state through the Ministry for Transports and Infrastructures (70% of the budget), the Lazio Region (12%) and the Municipality of Rome (18%).

The disciplinary field of this thesis is at the crossroads between policy making, policy analysis, and urban politics. The thesis makes use of a major urban project – a new urban railway line in Rome, Italy – with a typical policy analysis objective: identifying the bottlenecks that hampered the smooth implementation of an urban project.

Having in mind these briefly exposed elements of context, the research question that stands at the basis of this doctoral thesis is the following: ***why is it that such a highly needed, socially welcomed, and heavily funded (with public money) mobility infrastructure suffered so much for being implemented?***

This thesis is articulated into, and presented through, three papers, which deepen three different aspects and also points of view related to the Metro C case. This introduction is meant to frame the three papers and their content. Moreover, it provides some general and preliminary information for allowing a basic understanding of the Metro C project.

The second section of this chapter contains a brief and schematic reconstruction of the Metro C story from the late 1920s, when it was firstly envisaged in Rome’s city planning, to 2015.

The third section illustrates the organisational structure of the thesis that means, first and foremost, what is the overall logic of the research work, and consequently how each paper is expected to contribute to answering to the research question. Moreover, the interrelations among the three papers and their ‘argumentative synergies’ are also highlighted. As each paper is grounded in a specific research field and makes use of a specific literature, in this section those specificities are anticipated, especially to explain to the reader what kind of question emerged from the engagement with each field of study.

The fourth section is dedicated to the methodology used (inspired by the *phronetic* method) and its practical application for the investigation of the case study of the Metro C: the interviews, the phases of the research, and the whole logic behind it is described.

Finally, in the last section of the chapter, the philosophy at the basis of phronetic research is discussed ending up codifying the *category* of the Metro C case.

THE METRO C CASE STUDY

Before getting to the brief description of the case study provided in this introductory chapter (a more detailed account of the story is provided in the first paper, as a reconstruction of the decisional process), we need to engage with a preliminary definition of the word “failure” recalled in the research question. Some might argue that this word has been employed, here, somehow improperly. In economic and political theory, a failure is generally understood as a condition of inefficient allocation of goods either produced by public or market apparatuses. Here, the nature of the public project delivered through a “turnkey” type of implementation (the detail of all this will be provided in the following sections) justifies the construction of the thesis’ title as a “dilemma” as to what, and also to whom (the public, the private, or possibly both) the project’s inefficient implementation should be related.

Moreover, then, the case might appear as a “failure of governance”, meaning that the obstacles are to be found in the joint action of the two realms that were working towards the (supposedly) same common objective: the construction of the infrastructure.

On a technical level, the Metro C is deemed as a failure because of the features summarised below in Table 2: budget overruns, corruption allegation, and a number of modifications that increased the cost of the infrastructure (*varianti in aumento*) for the public coffers make up a clear failure case. All the more so if we consider that this project has been run with the organisational arrangement of the turnkey project (*progetto chiavi in mano*) that, in principle, guarantees that all the risks are a direct responsibility of the contractor that, by contract, commits to the timely and in-budget delivery of the work.

<i>Delays</i>	<i>Cost Overrun</i>	<i>Modification</i>	<i>Judicial enquiries</i>
<p>Supposed to be entirely completed in 2011</p> <p>In terms of budget spent, only 57% is now completed to date (Sept. 2017)</p> <p>The 'fundamental section' (through the historical centre) has been completed only by 5%.</p>	<p>2006: 2,5 billion euros (award of the tender)</p> <p>2016: 3,8 billion euros</p> <p>To date 52% of cost overrun, with the most technically difficult part still to be undertaken. If the original cost of the line is considered (approved in 2001 by the CIPE deliberation no. 121), 1.9 billion euros, the cost overrun to date would be over 97%.</p> <p>The Italian Court of Audit in 2011 forecasted the budget to exceed 6 billion euros when the project will be fully completed.</p>	<p>45 modifications on the project's plan so far since 2006, 20% of which are for archaeological reasons</p> <p>33 out of 45 modifications increased the budget</p> <p>Those 33 modifications for archaeological discoveries alone account for over 320 million euros in cost overrun.</p>	<p>2015 by the Italian Anti-corruption Authority (ANAC)</p> <p>2011 by the Italian Court of Audit (treasury offense)</p> <p>Public Prosecutor's Office of Rome.</p>

TABLE 2 Why we talk about the Metro C project as a 'failure' (elaboration of the author)

In Table 3, an essential chronology of the Metro C case is provided in order to introduce the reader to the key turning points that have characterised the story of this difficult implementation. This 'basic' account will be further enriched in the first paper, in which the decisional process is reconstructed and analysed.

1929	<i>The G line</i>	Some of the most famous Italian architects and urbanists drafted GUR's proposal (1929) a first, ambitious plan of urban metro lines. The future Metro C is here outlined referring to it as the 'G line'.
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1957	<i>CET's plan proposal (1957)</i>	A group of planners was hired by the city to draft a master plan for Rome. "Line no. 7" was covering the same track of nowadays' Metro C.
1958	<i>Rejection of the Master-plan</i>	The City Assembly rejected the plan proposal of the CET.
1962	<i>The new PRG</i>	A new master plan (<i>Piano Regolatore Generale di Roma – PRG</i>) for the City of Rome (Comune di Roma, 1962) is approved. Metro C is here called metro line A.
1986	<i>The Intermetro proposal</i>	The company Intermetro (a consultancy) drafted a complete proposal of metropolitan underground railways. Here the Metro C is again 'line G'.
1992	<i>Partial funding with Law 211/1986</i>	The construction of the Metro C, for which the local government tried to gather funding, is substantially taken from Intermetro's line G. Financial funding for the construction of some sections of the line was found in Law 211/1986 that offered national co-funding for the renewal of old regional railways (the Metro C is, in fact, linked to the renewal of the regional railway Roma-Pantano, that will become the outer section of the line, from the station of Torrenova outwards)
1993	<i>New city government</i>	Rutelli is the new mayor of the city. His executive is deeply committed to solving the stalemate of Rome's public transport.
1995	<i>PROIMO and the 'Cura del ferro'</i>	New assessor for mobility Walter Tocci, together with a number of experts and consultants, envisaged the new mobility policy for the city (the <i>Cura del Ferro</i> , the 'Iron Therapy') and also launched the PROIMO (Integrated Mobility Programme) in which a new excavating model for constructing subway lines in case of archaeological interference was introduced (the <i>Modello Roma</i>) (Comune di Roma, 1995). In this document, the Metro C was indicated as an infrastructural policy priority.
2000	<i>Preliminary plan</i>	The municipality completes the planning for the whole Metro C line.
2001	<i>New City Government</i>	June 1 st : Walter Veltroni is elected mayor within a centre-left majority, in substantial continuity with Mayor Rutelli's executive.
2001	<i>CIPE 121/2001</i>	The Metro C, planned at the highest level of detail (operative planning), is sent to the CIPE for approval: its total cost of 1,92 million euros. The CIPE ratifies with deliberation no. 121.
2002	<i>Legge Obiettivo²</i>	The MIT, the Municipality of Rome and the Lazio Region approve the insertion of the Metro C project in the Strategic Infrastructures Programme (PIS), thus decreeing the employment of the Legge Obiettivo normative framework.
2003	<i>Financial shares</i>	The financial shares are now defined (70% from the State, 18% by the Municipality of Rome, 12% from the Lazio Region)
2004	<i>CIPE 105/2004</i>	The CIPE approves the preliminary plan for the renewal of the old Roma-Pantano regional railway.

² An account of the Legge Obiettivo prescriptions is provided in Appendix 2.

2005	<i>Private tender for the construction of the Metro C</i>	February 15 th : the contracting authority <i>Roma Metropolitana</i> launches the tender directed to the six firms invited by the municipality (the procedure chosen is, in fact, a private tender – <i>licitazione privata</i>). June 1 st : The city acquires the 6 bids for construction of the Metro C.
2006	<i>Metro C s.c.p.a.</i>	February 28 th the contracting authority Roma Metropolitana awards the work to ‘Metro C S.c.p.A.’.
2008	<i>New PRG</i>	February 12 th : the new PRG for the City of Rome is approved. The Metro C is indicated as a forthcoming construction.
2008	<i>New city government</i>	April 28 th : Gianni Alemanno is the new mayor of Rome. Elected with a centre-right majority, he succeeded Walter Veltroni, who prematurely left the post in order to run for prime minister in the Italian 2008 general elections.
2009	<i>CIPE 64/2009</i>	The CIPE approves modifications of various kinds for a total increase in costs of 194,6 million euros.
2010	<i>Cost overrun #1</i>	The parts of the work in the historical centre produced many variants on the project about stations removed/ transferred, increasing costs, modification in the layout and so on.
2010	<i>The ‘Modello Roma’ is dropped</i>	Change in the excavating technology in the historical centre: Roma Metropolitana and the CIPE approve an alternative excavating method proposed by the contractor: open air works instead of the previous “digging from below” (<i>Modello Roma</i>).
2011	<i>Cost overrun #2</i>	Archaeological discoveries stop the work in many spots of the central segments of the line, with ensuing increases in total cost.
2015	<i>The ANAC inquiry</i>	The Italian Anti-Corruption Authority issues an inquiry into Metro C process, with corruption allegations. Objects of the inquiry are the 33 modifications in value increase to the original project (2006) that have been, according to the Authority, non-legitimately accorded to the contractor by the municipality.

TABLE 3 – The history of the Metro C, in brief (elaboration of the author)

THE THESIS’ LOGICAL STRUCTURE

THE BIG PICTURE THROUGH THREE PAPERS

As I reckoned, the story of the Metro C and the flaws that have influenced its fallacious implementation can be reduced to three main areas of study:

- Decision-making;
- Institutional arrangements as to regulations and scale of government;
- Urban governance at large.

These are the three angles I chose to deepen in order to explain the Metro C project implementation failure, and therefore in order to answer this thesis' research question.

How these three aspects have dialogued with each other in the thesis is the focus of this section. The intention here is to clarify the logic of the thesis as to its formal organisation (the three-paper form), and to preliminarily present the literature used. Also, these different fields of study need to be connected together logically in order to facilitate the smooth reading of the thesis. Why this order (1st, 2nd, and 3rd paper), what function each paper has to the thesis as a whole, what kinds of questions each respective literature made emerge?

The idea at the basis of this thesis is that the explanation of the Metro C failure (and thus the answer to the research question) cannot be found in a single debate or discipline. On the contrary, I will try to explain here why the project's failure is understood as a mix of essentially three families of causes.

Firstly, the complex and lengthy process of consolidation of the infrastructure as a policy objective reveals some interesting features of the way in which the city of Rome has been managing decision-making and the way the administration has been maintaining relationships with other decision-making actors (namely the experts of archaeological conservation: the Superintendence). This process, as analysed in the first paper, had originated the incoherent institutional environment in which the project's implementation had been embedded. In other words, it has been the logic of the decisional process itself that determined the regulatory difficulties analysed in the second paper.

Secondly, the case gave me the opportunity to investigate public-private interactions within the complex domain of public works' legislation and institutional change (both in terms of public bodies' behavioural routines than in terms of inter-governmental relations) that have been intervening on the Metro C implementation – significantly influencing the quality of such implementation in terms of cost overrun, delivery delays and, ultimately, in terms of overall urban governance. In fact, last but not least, the Metro C, from the opaque (although completely legitimate) path towards the tender to the suspect correlation between the adoption of a waiving institutional-regulatory setting³ and the extremely costly (for public coffers) implementation, offered an important opportunity to speculate on possible preferential relationships between the public administration and well-established local developers: a way to scrutinise the existence of an urban regime in Rome at large.

³ I will use this expression “waiving” to signify the *institutional* setting established after the approval of the Legge Obiettivo: the law that constituted an exception in respect to the generally applied public works normative. The Legge Obiettivo, in fact, reforms parts of that normative architecture with respect to the national-interest public projects, introducing an exceptional institutional regime for that kind of cases.

The first paper, then, engages with a discussion of the main theories about decision-making and, in its analytical part, deals with the qualification of that long path to decision, finding the most resembling models in the ‘garbage-can’ family and in an *institutional* path dependency logic.

The second paper is a report of the implementation phase practice as it played out after the key decisions taken about the new infrastructure – namely its singling-out over the rest of the metro network imagined by mobility policy, and the adoption of the Legge Obiettivo as a tailored regulation that changed the institutional setting. The two domains in which the effects of that institutional arrangement impacted the most were:

- Territorial levels of government – for which the neglect of the metropolitan scale of government is taken as a corollary of institutional fragmentation;
- The new roles played by the private and public actors of the Metro C construction (e.g. the changing role of the construction manager, or the fragmented status of public controller). The paper, then, argues that for the Metro C execution, a confused institutional environment made the public sphere weak and unfit to keep control over the work’s implementation objectives.

The third paper has an overall speculative function to the thesis; it takes stock of the results of the previous two and advances a rather provocative interpretation. The case is deemed to reveal *in nuce* a particular type of urban governance: a possible *urban-regime*-like relationship that laid beneath the decision to change the regulatory regime (adoption of the Legge Obiettivo) in order to favour the roster of *local* firms that could have participated to the tender.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE THESIS: THE PAPERS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE LITERATURE

The intellectual path taken for investigating the case study has started with some early, tentative explanations. For the actual research to take place, I had to make a deliberate selection of the possible paths to follow.

Given the research question, one should first list some areas of study and interpretations that could substantially direct the methodology of empirical control itself. If I want to understand the reasons that brought to delays and cost overrun in the Metro C implementation, I might have some general candidate interpretations to be chosen or neglected.

The infrastructure’s problematic implementation was not narrowly the failure of the technical bodies put in place to physically realise the work; it was not even

a consequence of the unique historical and archaeological endowment of the city of Rome; as it is not a plain, universally understandable case of corruption; nor is it a failure to be fully attributed to a mistaken scalar government and poor institutional inter-governmental cooperation, or a consequence of a mediocre private sector as to technological skills. None of these features one by one – although all obviously present to various extents in the story – explain entirely the Metro C case. None of these domains can offer an exhaustive explanation.

This research – notwithstanding its will to not dismiss any aspect *a priori* – has had, since the beginning, a bias towards the relations between politics and the major economic actors that in the case of Rome are the long lasting groups of real estate developers. This penchant was and is still due also to a closeness to a stream of research dedicated to Rome (d'Albergo & Moini, 2015; d'Albergo & Moini, 2013; Moini & Pizzo, 2017) that inspired the early directions of the research. Investigating practically (that means narrating the rationales of public/private political exchange) the nature of rent-seeking groups' negotiation power is key to answering the research question.

The intention of this section is to explain how the literature used in this thesis helped me to raise (and answer) questions and to define the theoretical chain that binds the papers. Which debates and open questions in the literature helped me draw the borders of my own discussion about the failure of the Metro C.

Specifically:

- What the debates within the literature on the theory of decision (the scope of the first paper) had to offer in order to understand and categorise the non-linear decisional process of the Metro C?
- What direction among the many that the literatures on multi-level governance (and related project management – the scope of the second paper) took over the last decades was more useful in understanding what was going on in the institutional profile of the Metro C normative environment?
- How the (potentially huge) literature on the urban regimes (third paper) and urban governance guided me in order to establish coherence between Rome's urban governance in this particular public work and the categories defined in the literature about public-private type of relationships and urban regimes?

When the case study of this thesis began to be investigated, its long and intermittent decisional process was, at first glance, *the* outstanding element. What types of outcomes could come out of such a long, intermittent, and incoherent process? Is there a responsibility for the implementation failure of the Metro C to be attributed to its decisional process or, better, to the preferences of the deciding organisation's members?

To the alimentation of these questions the literature on the theory of decision gave significant fuel. If the vices of the bad implementation of the Metro C are identified mostly in the regulatory regime (the inefficient collaboration between the private and the public contractors), one step forward (or backwards) is to consider how and why that particular regulatory environment was decided for the Metro C.

The literature on the theory of decision calls for a discussion of the preferences of the key actors and to analyse their cognitive limits and guide-principles. In every policy decision is hidden a cultural battle between continuity and change (Dente, 2014) and by analysing the decisional context of a case study as that of this research one can discover which is the *culture* that “won that battle” – if any battle was ever fought. This step of the analysis is particularly important for this thesis because the path of the decisions connected to the Metro C process involved – possibly for the most part – a question about what type of institutional setting is more appropriate and more attuned to the urban cultural context (more power to the private contractor, more control on the public side, multi-level governance, metropolitan scale employment?). Policy analysis has generally acknowledged the fact that the style of decision-making in public administrations is getting more and more confusing and random (Bobbio, 1996; Dente, 2014; March, 1988), to the detriment of rational and consequential thinking.

However, although this transition can be explained by the different cognitive contexts in which actors develop and shape their preferences (Wildavsky, 1987), it is the analysis of the institutional context that helps us understand certain directions that decisions took. The institutional roots’ study is a central part of policy analysis (March & Olsen, 2010). This is even truer if the central decision that here is considered (the employment of the Legge Obiettivo) is itself a decision about a normative system to adopt in order to govern a project. Contemporary decision theory has also been applied to megaprojects (Williams & Samset, 2012) highlighting the possibility that decisions about a megaproject are taken in a political environment characterised both by path dependencies and garbage-can logics, a model that found lots of similarities with the decisional process of the Metro C.

The concept of path dependence is raised here to explain the structural (and historical) constraint that motivates a certain political collective to keep a pre-ordinate approach to policy action (Mahoney, 2000); contemporary governance of processes is informed by *inertia* and low interest for collective learning paths. Although there have been contributions that see path-dependency in a negative light (Pierson, 2000), others, on the other hand, consider the positive outcomes of such conditions for stability and overall performance (see Arrow, 2000 for instance).

The peculiar feature of this case study is that an *inertial* decision was taken and after that the agenda setting phase followed a supposedly garbage-can logic, therefore displaying a significant rationality deficit. Nevertheless, the final decision looks as coherent with institutional roots as it can be.

Regarding the institutional-regulatory analysis of the case study, the contemporary literature that applies economic and political geography to project management was particularly useful in examining the main defects of the project implementation. As the decisional process brought to the adoption of a regulation that is both relevant for private-public relationships and multi-level governance, the reading of the case study of the Metro C against the most important theories of nowadays' project management is also important to identify the origins of the project's failure.

On the one hand, projects, today, are believed (Grabher, 2002; Grabher & Ibert, 2012; Miller, Lessard, Michaud, & Floricel, 2001) to be moving away from their conventional image of closed entities and one-time-only set of relational routines and practices among stakeholders. Even if they keep their specificities as temporary organisations – as opposed to fixed and more durable institutional settings – projects are also seen as objects embedded in contextual conditions (and in diverse geographical scales) – an environment that has been called the “project ecology” (Grabher, 2002). Projects are indeed run in fuzzy scalar settings, as they do not seem to be embedded in a dominant *polity* level. According to the “networked polity” paradigm (Ansell, 2000), collective purpose policy undertakings are not led by a single level of government and hierarchically organised, and the leadership role is fragmented among various polity levels. However, the *heterarchical* organisation that would come out of this shift, in the case of the Metro C implementation, does not come from a deeper concern of central states for regional economic disparities or from a push by localities for political empowerment, as in Ansell's argument (also Jessop, 1997). On the contrary it is informed by an increasingly minoritarian role of the public sector as to public works' governance. Heterarchy is displayed here as the fragmentation of the public side and the reinforcement of the private side of the governance.

Moreover, although the primary focus of the ‘project ecology’ theoretical construct is the impact that such a multi-layered set of actors and geographical scales produces on learning patterns and knowledge accumulation, I chose to consider the effects that it had on the integrity of the institutional roles of the actors. Metro C's project ecology and networked polity shaped by the Legge Obiettivo provoked institutional fragmentation.

Such fragmentation of governmental scales and private-public relationships is suited in discussing the implementation failure as a function of such institutional “change”: the ‘networked polity’ and the ‘project ecology’ theoretical constructs are in fact used to maintain that the institutional and regulatory environment decided for the Metro C is more akin to a fragmentation of the public actor.

Analysing the conformation of the project's institutional framework is important for reflecting on the circumstances that reinforce the privileged relationships between actors and the path-dependency itself. A continuity, this one, that determines that those same dependence relationships feedback into other policy processes and domains, building the “lock-in” profile of governance.

The Metro C as it has been governed so far is appropriately examinable against these two paradigms because the changes in the normative environment influenced just these two aspects: the relational routines and roles of the private contractor-public client dialectic and, although to a slightly lesser extent, the cooperation between different levels of government.

Of course, governance path dependency and lock-in are commonly associated with cultural stratifications of privileged relationships between actors in the governance (the bureaucracy, the political leadership, the economic actors, portions of civil society, and so on). In public policy analysis and governance studies, such types of interactions are referred to as 'policy networks' (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000). These interactions define the preferential rapport that certain societal or bureaucratic actors maintain with governmental bodies. Policy networks are generally considered in scientific analyses to explain why and how certain policy objectives and output emerge in the policy agenda over alternatives (Marin & Mayntz, 1991).

However, being the agenda setting phase of the Metro C "tagged" as a garbage-can process (1st paper), such political-economy object of the policy network is here applied to (and, therefore, held responsible for) the decision to insert the Metro C in the Legge Obiettivo framework. Nevertheless, policy networks seldom have a *conservative* nature; their conceptualisation in the literature seems to depict more a relational orientation derived from the government-governance revolution rather than sedimented in lock-in constraints (MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999). The latter is, here, the hypothesised case underlying the Metro C implementation failure; therefore, *regime theory* has been chosen to discuss the case more appropriately. Clarence Stone (1989, 1993) defines *urban regimes* as stable processes and structures of cooperation between public and private realms in which non-governmental actors have a special ability to mobilise and access institutional resources. This conceptualisation explicitly refers to "governing decisions", and the power that societal actors has over them. I believed that this theoretical framework – besides already used for "tagging" Rome's political economy (d'Albergo & Moini, 2015) – works better for making sense of a purely institutional decision.

These are essentially the questions to which the literature on urban politics and governance calls for engagement. If regimes are «sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given issue area» (Bevir, 2007); *urban* regimes are thus defined broadly as those rules (formal and informal), practices, and institutional frameworks that enable private and public spheres to put together their respective spurious resources in order to increase the *capacity to act* towards shared policy objectives.

Has the failure of the Metro C implementation something to do with more general features of Rome's political economy? Was the private contractor the right choice for the Metro C construction or was it chosen according to an urban regime type of relation?

Have political and economic actors interacted according to a *competitive rationale* oriented to the achievement of the collective objectives, or rather

according to strong and long-lasting lock-in types of relationships between the city's administration and local businesses – that is, urban regimes?

The literature on urban regimes was born in the United States (Elkin, 1987; Stone, 1989) describing the conditions under which American cities approached the competition among each other in response to decreasing federal support. Nevertheless, while the American cases of urban regime have this (rather clear) *competitive* rationale at their basis (meaning that regimes formed in order to foster the competitiveness of a city to attract more investment than a rival city), the Roman case (that is the Metro C case), as it appeared to me, seemed a lot less centred at creating a competitive environment for incoming investment or for sustaining the competitive profile of the city; quite the contrary.

Therefore, the perspective to test the Roman governance case against the model of urban regimes was particularly interesting also given its *deviance* from the original model of the urban regimes itself.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: A PHRONETIC APPROACH

The Metro C case selection has been fairly “planned”. It has not been a random selection; on the contrary, it has been looked for, to satisfy some illustrative features that I needed in order to highlight those elements that are crucial for investigating the sides of the Metro C case that I decided to favour.

I reckoned that the most suitable method for researching the case study was the *phronetic research* that has been recently ‘rediscovered’ (Flyvbjerg, 2001) as a deeply valuable approach for making social sciences meaningful and immediately useful for policy change. As prescribed by this (highly inductive) methodology, the conception of the case study has been inevitably informed by particular sets of *values* and *interests* (that are treated as the principles taken forward by the researcher himself) that help answer one of the four value-rational questions of phronetic researchers (see Flyvbjerg, 2001) – namely «are these developments outlined by the research *desirable*?». The adjective ‘desirable’ refers to the system of *values* that underlies phronesis and that makes the results useful for practical knowledge.

Significantly, the other key question that belongs to the phronetic approach is “what “governmental rationalities” are at work when those who govern govern?” That means that the focus of this approach to social science research is oriented to how power and institutional roles in a given institutional context are *exercised*, and not merely explaining why power is distributed the way it is, or who holds it in a given socio-political order (Flyvbjerg, 2001, pp. 129-131). This particular way the concept of power is used, also, relieves the researcher from

the obligation to discuss the *nature* of power. I will take for granted the nature of power of every actor in the case of the Metro C. In this thesis, such a discussion will not be provided.

This is a fundamental distinction because the phronetic stance I am keeping is much more interested in understanding the *practice of project (policy) implementation* (as far as this thesis is concerned), and so to give to the research a ready practical usefulness towards the problem solving of complex issues (Flyvbjerg, 2004).

What brings to this usefulness is the value-rationality of the researcher; that is, his 'interest' or 'desire', to use Bent Flyvbjerg's vocabulary. I am interested, here in helping solve some of the most evident problems that affected a troubled project implementation.

In other words, the 'desire' of the researcher, here, is to provide a body of factual knowledge that can help to enhance the correct functioning of public megaproject governance in a locked-in, path dependent, or even corrupt city. As outlined by the phronetic methodology, with this specific value-rationality in mind, the researcher achieves the status of 'expert' for the class of social issues he is dealing with. The 'expert' status is the guarantee that social inquiry has the power to feedback into further policy processes – that is the true aim of *heuristics*.

What was the most eloquent class of *events* that could best depict a situation in which it is possible to ultimately shed light on governance orientations of a city and reveal something precious about the lock-ins that characterise city governance failures (the focus of the third paper of this thesis)? In Italy, this question is rather simple to be answered: traditionally, one possible class of phenomena is major public works committed by the state for which, transport infrastructures are an important share. Rome, since it has become the Italian capital city, has been historically dependent on public economy, and its (albeit relatively underdeveloped) entrepreneurial class thrived massively on public contracts (Fried, 1973).

It is noteworthy, moreover, that the Metro C case fatally escapes the typical category of a socially conflicted transportation project. Many of the available cases of project implementation in the field of urban and regional studies – particularly regarding mega infrastructures (see for instance Bobbio & Dansero, 2008; Calafati, 2006; Flyvbjerg, 2005; Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius, & Rothengatter, 2003) – focus on the social cost of huge investments, and denounce the systematic deception of local communities by local and central governments as to the social demand that the infrastructure would cover.

The Metro C is, instead, a highly needed public work that the city of Rome (particularly in his most disadvantaged strata) has been waiting for over decades. The questions raised and the problems this research wants to tackle are, therefore, referring mainly to the sphere of bureaucratic implementation capacity and public-private relations for effective public spending.

Therefore, the case to be chosen was rather evident in my eyes for the reasons of opportunity enounced earlier in this introductory chapter.

HOW THE CASE HAS BEEN CONCRETELY WORKED OUT

So, how the Metro C was practically investigated according to the phronetic approach? First of all, the whole research program has been divided into two main macro-stages: the research question definition phase and the empirical phase (Fig. 1).

Phase One followed the logic told earlier: from the interest about ill private-public relations in Rome and the value-rationality that stood at the basis of my research interest (that is the will to identify and spot the main defects of the major obstacles that hampered the implementation of a sound public transport network in Rome) to the choice of a case that had more to offer (in respect to other similar cases) to investigate these concerns.

After the case choice was made, I began to select the key concepts/notions I thought that could be more important to scientifically understand and categorise the Metro C case elements that began to emerge from informal talks with academics and scholars, media and literature reviews. The formulation of the research question was a result of this phase.

At the end of this stage I was able to name a number of societal and political contexts within which I should have picked testimonies:

- The bureaucratic context;
- The business context (the point of view of the private contractor);
- The political context;
- The archaeological safeguard context;
- The experts'/consultants' context.

These interviewees were the representatives of the (supposedly) *rationalities in conflict* that I identified during the «representation of reality» (Bryant & Oliver, 2009) emerged from a rich media review. The media review was developed as an archival research on the topic of the Metro C, and was used to spot the main turning points, the conflicts, and the most informed individuals involved in the process. The media reconstruction was conducted by reviewing the most important Italian newspapers in their national and local (Roman) editions. The reviewed papers were Il Fatto Quotidiano, La Repubblica (national and local editions), Corriere della Sera (national and local editions), Il Messaggero, Il Sole 24 Ore.

Phase Two started with the organisation of the single interviewees into a possibly coherent progression: I started off following this order: politics→bureaucracy →contractors→experts and consultants (unfortunately, it was not always possible to follow this programme). The bulk of the research is qualitative; it featured a number (7) of in-depth interviews with some of the most informed actors involved in different stages, and to different extents, in the Metro C implementation. The method used to select the interviewees was a mix of two sampling methods: the main areas of investigation (the 'contexts' of the bullet points of above) were chosen with a *targeted sampling* method, but

occasionally, single interviewees (namely Adriano La Regina and Giulio Fioravanti) were spotted following the indications of previous interviewees (*snowball* selection).

The interviewees were the following (in Appendix A, the reader can find the details of all the interviews conducted with relative outcomes):

- Andrea Sciotti, (Roma Metropolitane, contracting agency – Responsible for the Procedure for the Metro C);
- Antonio Tamburrino (Consultant for mayor Alemanno);
- Marco de Carolis (mayor of the Municipality of Monte Compatri);
- Giulio Fioravanti (Consultant of municipality of Rome)
- Adriano La Regina (former Head of the Archaeological Superintendence);
- Maurizio Canto (Roma Metropolitane, contracting agency);
- Walter Tocci (Municipality of Rome, various roles).

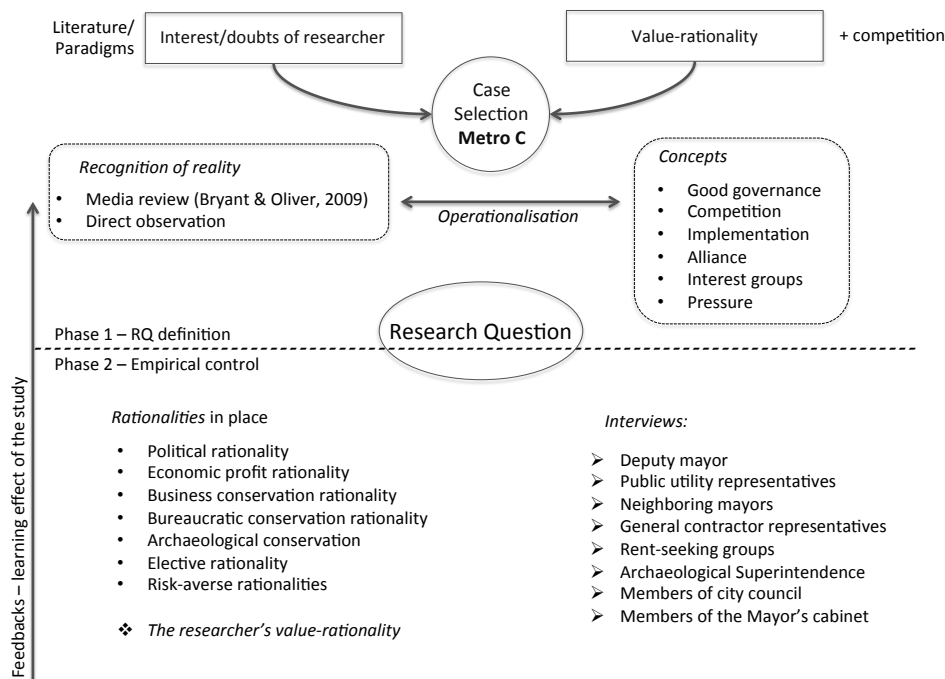


FIGURE 1 – The phronetic method for the Metro C case in practice (elaboration of the author)

The phase of empirical control takes into account the *multitude of rationalities* that each interviewee is the bearer of. The phronetic case study research calls for the description of the *realpolitik* behind the case and this is only possible through the understanding of the rationality carried by each actor involved.

Before the actual empirical analysis strategy is deployed, though, I needed to clarify the theoretical concepts that enter the research and that the research expects to come across any time as it unfolds. The research question itself

contains a few terms that need to be empirically translated; they need to be “operationalised”.

This stage could also be worked contextually to the qualitative investigation. It is very valuable, sometimes (especially when utilising a qualitative method of inquiry), to confront theoretical concepts – think about the notions of ‘alliance’, ‘coalition’, ‘path-dependency’, or ‘regime’ that can be widely misunderstood, exaggerated or confused with other forms of political-economic relations – with the actual phase of empirical analysis. The actors and interviewees themselves could provide the factual articulation of such complex concepts. Therefore, the operationalisation of concepts is understood here as both deskwork and fieldwork.

Last but not least, it is not to be neglected the interviewer’s rationality, that is the researcher’s value-rationality understood together as a concurrent inspirer of the case study selection, in this case, and the “narrative” device that allows further application of the study in other contexts – the ‘naturalistic generalisation’ mentioned in the following sections. If Bent Flyvbjerg’s concern was the improvement of the practices of democracy in Aalborg’s city planning (Flyvbjerg, 2002), in this study, the value-rationality is the *enhancement of fair competition* in Rome’s political economy, making the study matter for similar contexts of political economy. The interviews have been guided by this value rationality.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SINGLE CASE STUDY: AN EPISTEMOLOGY IN THE QUEST FOR REALITY

Case study research in social sciences has long been considered a minor way to investigate phenomena, at the most as a mere way to **generate hypotheses** but not suitable to test them (and, thus, of poor or no scientific use). A sizable part of this dismissal stems from the well-known inferiority complex that human (and social) sciences have before natural experimental sciences. Social sciences constantly run the risk of confining themselves in a self-constructed cage made of anti-practice biases. As John Dewey argued, it is to be challenged the very idea that «social inquiry is scientific only when a complete renunciation of any reference to practical affairs is made its precondition» (1938, p. 492)⁴.

⁴ The philosophical thought that, to various extents, dealt with the practical ultimate end of research and epistemology is potentially boundless. One might have considered the long tradition that from Immanuel Kant’s *practical reason* brought to 19th century’s American

When social sciences are exposed to natural sciences methods of inquiry, the case study (a typical social sciences method) loses any explanatory value as the exhaustive epistemic field of the research. Spinozian distinction between *normal* and *intuitive* sciences represents just this dual path to knowledge (Spinoza, 1670). *Intuition*-driven methodologies comprise the research for what is objectively happening in a given society, community or nation via an inquiry approach directed to the «recognition of the *factual reality* [...] that is to say the circumstances in which a given people is living» (Cristofolini, 2009, p. 144).

Nevertheless, the practical and tangible orientation of case study observation, and its usefulness as a method of social inquiry, could be found in the thought of ancient philosophers. Aristotles' original method of *phronesis* (Nicomachean Ethics) signifies that sort of practical knowledge that overcomes the narrower concept of *téchne*, to include a certain degree of 'wisdom' and 'virtue'– or even proto political scientists such as Niccolò Machiavelli (1513) or the above-mentioned Baruch Spinoza approached paths to knowledge via a variously defined method that kept together intellectual virtue and the pragmatic objective of problem-solving, which is ultimately the decision-maker's prerogative.

In the wake of John Dewey's pragmatist appreciation of social sciences, Hannah Arendt, who first re-discovered the great importance of *phronesis* as a virtue of the 'public individual', argued that the concept resolves most in the spirit of the politician – the man of action – rather than the philosopher; differently from the latter, the former, in fact, needs to get the most out of common sense for his action to be effective (Arendt, 1961).

This study originates from the broad interest in understanding the reasons for poor performances of public policies, and it tries to do this by analysing the detail of a public work implementation. This project implementation, though, is not understood exclusively as part of a particular policy (namely transportation policy); it rather embraces wider fields of discussion such as the dynamics of urban politics-economy relations, the leading role of public realms in urban development, and raises issues of inter-institutional territorial dynamics in governing metropolitan phenomena, policies and projects. Not least, the analysis of the Metro C implementation – the case study of this thesis – offers a viewpoint over the evolution of megaprojects' governance in Italy.

In order to achieve such a goal, one should be well aware of the fundamental divide between social and natural sciences: for social sciences to be useful in the real world, the researcher must come to terms with its unfitness to be purely theory-oriented (Flyvbjerg, 2001). That is clearer if we accept that human agency is fundamentally governed by interests, values, and routine power relations, as well as the researcher's conduct is guided and informed by value judgements, and thus "moral" advice as to what is good or bad for a given society.

pragmatism started by Ralph Waldo Emerson. In this introductory chapter, I chose to point out only those contributions that are more directly linked to Aristotelian *phronesis*.

In this thesis – with respect to methodology – my objective is to use the argument of Bent Flyvbjerg (who reassembled ancient thoughts on *practical wisdom*) to assume that the case I am investigating is able to depict a high knowledge-carrying case in a particular class of phenomena (namely the public failure in managing infrastructure implementation, particularly in conditions of national financial allocations and seemingly clear path as to as social demand). The demonstration that distinct and diverse cases could ultimately reinforce one another reveals the true meaning of case study as the primary tool of *phronesis*: the understanding of hard-factual practices to the benefit of practical knowledge to be used for solving complex socio-political problems. This is the original meaning of the term *realpolitik*.

ISSUES OF GENERALISATION: JUSTIFYING SINGLE CASE STUDY RESEARCH

The flaws that affect most social sciences methods lies primarily in their deemed inability to be part of a respectable inductive epistemology. That is to say that, according to the conventional view of social sciences, the margins for political studies through single cases to serve directly scientific advancements are narrow, or even non-existent.

As already said, despite his recent rediscover as the progenitor of practical philosophy, Aristotle himself expressed the famous opinion about the scientific significance of practical wisdom: «empirical particular does not give science», he wrote (quoted in Flyvbjerg, 1998). The critical point of generalisation is, therefore, what accredits pragmatism as science, and social sciences, apparently, cannot fulfil that requirement. The primary reason for such a bold statement is here explained. Doing social research means dealing with unreliable ‘experimental’ truths: natural sciences’ experiments, on the contrary, cannot deliberately reveal a false state. If correctly observed, physical nature cannot lie to the right question, whereas on the other hand human affairs’ investigations are dangerously prone to lies and reticence. Moreover, the researcher should acknowledge that, apart from very rare cases, social research cannot be conducted as a sheer project, in a totally controllable environment in which the scholar is able to stimulate the unit of analysis in order to provoke those reactions he needs to observe.

In economic science, though, these reality-oriented epistemological constraints are attributed also to other factors that could be considered as deriving from the speculative nature of human beings. Game theory is a perfect example of this because it deals with potentially hidden preferences of agents. Economist Paul Samuelson suggested considering purchasing behaviours (thus real facts) to highlight the “revealed preferences” of consumers instead of taking for granted those suggested by theoretical models (Samuelson, 1938). In other terms, the rational classical tenets of homo oeconomicus cannot predict theoretically, and

fully, human conduct; primarily because of the impossibility to get to an exhaustive knowledge of all the environmental information that one needs. Herbert Simon went so far as to call this paradigm bounded rationality to signify the cognitive limits of individuals when making decisions but also their more general inability to process an even sufficient amount of information (Simon, 1985). This paradigm shift opened the way to the study of the uncertainty of human affairs (Lawson, 1985) that brought to a turn in policy analysis too, policies (and therefore research) that imply the existence of practices of adjustment, negotiations, and satisfactory decisions as opposed to optimal decisions (see the seminal work of Lindblom, 1959). The developments described above legitimise, so to say, the crucial importance of single cases in-depth understanding as a way to inform policy processes with particular, context-dependent practical knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2004). These potential epistemological circumstances, though, seem to make social enquiry through a single case study unfit to be conventionally generalisable.

However, some bodies of literature in the field affirms that this is a false problem because the ultimate end of case study research is not to build theories or to be predictive about entire classes of phenomena, at least not in the traditional acceptance of the word 'generalisation'. As argued by Stake (1982) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), the responsibility of generalisation ought to be up to the reader instead of the researcher, just as the naturalist cannot ensure the future validity of his observations. That is to say that the extent of applicability of single cases (if any) is to be judged by the user, leaving to the researcher the task of illustrating that case in the most detailed way, highlighting possibly its unique characteristics.

In this way, the view of the in-depth case study as "a result in itself" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 25) is justified also because the trouble with case study analysis is that its representation as a method is caught between two opposing narratives: one that sees it as a generalising research method, and the other that confines it to the description of the unique. According to Lincoln and Guba (2000) those two narratives are to be overcome because one is too tied to deterministic assumptions that are simply inadequate to social reality, and the other is inaccurate because, in "naturalistic" case study, each case describing a unique situation, and studied just in its uniqueness, is not meant to remain an isolated area of useless knowledge. As said, it is up to the reader of that case study to evaluate possible paths of generalisation.

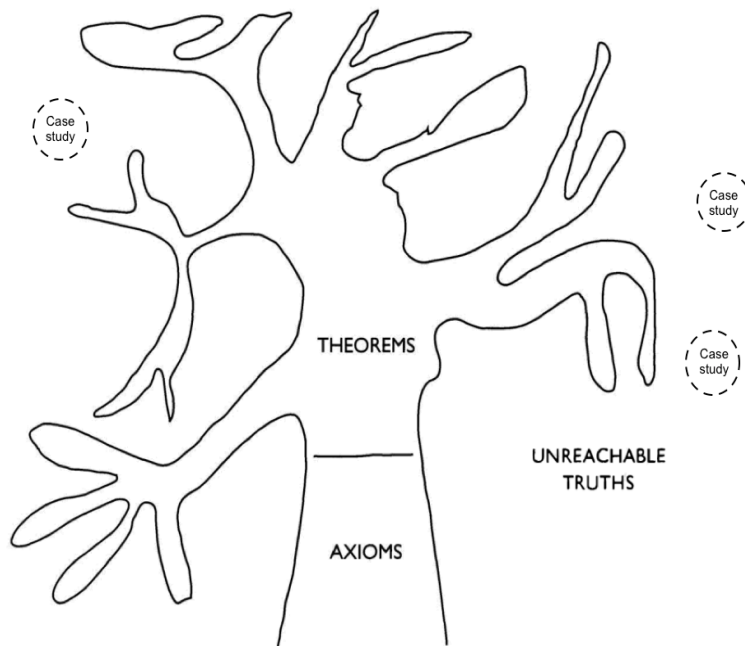


FIGURE 2 – Elaboration of Kurt Gödel's incompleteness theorem (elaboration of the author on Lincoln and Guba (2000))

In Figure 2, I edited a visual solution used by Lincoln & Guba (2000, p. 35) that was taken from Kurt Gödel's incompleteness theorems. If we imagine theories and paradigms as tree branches penetrating the territory of the unknown, case studies are represented like non-contiguous regions waiting to be reconnected to a theoretical tree. Meanwhile, the body of knowledge of the case study is not doomed to be wasted but it rather serves as *practical* know-how to inform mutual learning processes like policy processes (see fig. 1). That is, as it stands, the meaning of contemporary *phronesis*.

THE USEFULNESS OF THE METRO C CASE. A THEORY-VERIFYING, CRITICAL, AND DEVIANT CASE ALTOGETHER?

The case study as a research method automatically excludes the employment of other methods of empirical control, and, namely, the experimental method (as said, mainly a prerogative of natural sciences), the statistical method (a chiefly quantitative approach that presupposes the account of a numerous statistical population), and the comparative method that, although closer than others to the case analysis, is more variable-oriented, reducing the account of each case to a set of variables to be compared systematically without having to *narrate*

the story of the single case, and thus giving up the possibility of identifying and isolating new variables that are unique of that case.

The choice of the Metro C has been done – apart from its extremely diverse scope to which it can prove itself useful – having in mind some striking and utilised theories about urban governance and urban coalitions, and having as objective the enrichment of the phenomenology of these paradigms. How was it possible – this was my wonder – that all the theoretical constructs that city-applied political science could not fully (if at all) explain what has been going on in Rome with respect to land management, group pressure, and *élite* government in the last 20 years?

When a researcher has a concern, grows doubts about mainstream narratives, or is sceptical about a frequently employed explanatory theory, the first step to take is to widen his knowledge of the literature as much as pertinence and time allow. In this case, the mismanagement of public money and the huge delays for the realisation of a national scale infrastructure were the chosen units of analysis that in my view could shed light on the validity of frequently – mostly in a gossip-like fashion – discussed themes of corruption, group politics and urban governance. Such, in short, were the literature fields in which I initially directed my attention; and the initial intent was to use my case to second and accredit some of the enlightening theories I had come across during my PhD studies. I found, at first glance, a clear correspondence between the vague elitism often denounced to describe Rome's public affairs and some important theories in the field of urban politics like namely urban regime theory and the city as a growth machine paradigm. As my certainties in this regard were teetering, empirically, my methodological path started to change too. For the reasons explained in the literature discussion, the case could not be a fully falsifying case to any of the theories I mentioned, but not even a confirming one.

Having said all that, what kind of case is the Metro C? To use Lijphart's classification (1975), the implementation of the Metro C cannot be treated not even as a study of theory *verifying* but, rather, as a **deviant** case (Lijphart, 1971), one that is capable to refer its variables to an existing paradigm but also having as objective the enrichment of variables' characterisation or the enlargement of the taxonomic classes.

Likewise all the theory-verifying case studies, also the **critical** cases have the force to justify decent margins of generalisation, but according to a different rationale: whilst pure theory-verifying case studies do not imply the *will* of the researcher to get to a particular case pick up, the choice of the 'critical case' is **deliberate**. It betrays the underlying intention to explore a case that questions strikingly some commonly used paradigms. Therefore, the critical case – as Flyvbjerg understands it, for instance, and also as far as this particular case is concerned – has much to do with the phase of **case selection** compared to the generally chosen case. This quality has legitimised the critique of some scholars regarding the "bias towards verification" inherent to case study research. Its critical quality refers to the clear evidence that its results hold to related

existing theoretical propositions; such relevance makes some extent of generalisation unavoidable.

<i>Theory-verifying</i>	<i>Critical Case</i>	<i>Deviant Case</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High theoretical relevance ➤ Contests existing relations between variables ➤ It is both hypothesis generator and theory verifying ➤ Follows the Popperian corroboration / falsification itinerary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fairly deliberate selection of the case⁵ ➤ Markedly hypothesis-generator although not exclusively ➤ Needs a sound reference to the variables set existing in a given theoretical framework 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A case that stands as unique and, generally in fields where the literature has particularly rich explanatory propositions.

TABLE 4 Types of cases (elaboration of the author)

The difference between a critical case and a deviant case – as well as between these two and a purely ‘theory-verifying case’ such as a falsifying or a confirming case – are so subtle that the association of the Metro C to a single category would be inaccurate. In particular, the significance of this thesis’ case seems to be best captured if placed halfway between a critical and a deviant case (see Table 4 for a synoptic overview of their characteristics), and still keeping its (remote) belonging to the theory-verifying family.

We can say that the Metro C case draws attributes from all three categories without fully being any of them. It is a critical case because in the face of urban regime theory, the “alliance” that it supposed to show between the local administration and rent-seeking groups does not seem to be explained by a **growth** paradigm⁶; thus the variables (the protagonists of the alliance) are substantially the same although not featuring the same **relations**. Furthermore, the will that motivated me to pick up a case that features the most striking unique characteristics mirrored the bias towards the selection of a very eloquent case; the most eloquent possible with the theoretical references I had in mind. And this is another attribute that makes the Metro C case a critical case.

It is, more obviously, partly considered a deviant case because in the broad field of urban governance theories, observations, correlations and routines are many, and Rome’s case does stand as unique.

⁵ The classical example of a critical case in respect to this point is the Galileo Galilei’s choice to experiment with gravity by using the feather and the lead ball.

⁶ The research will be clearer on these points as the Metro C case proved not so consistent with the pro-growth urban regime. The growth paradigm is here opposed to a **conservation** paradigm.

It is, ultimately, a theory-verifying case primarily because of its hybrid nature of hypotheses generator and theory verifying. In Figure 3 the space occupied by the Metro C case is the central portion at the intersection of the three categories.

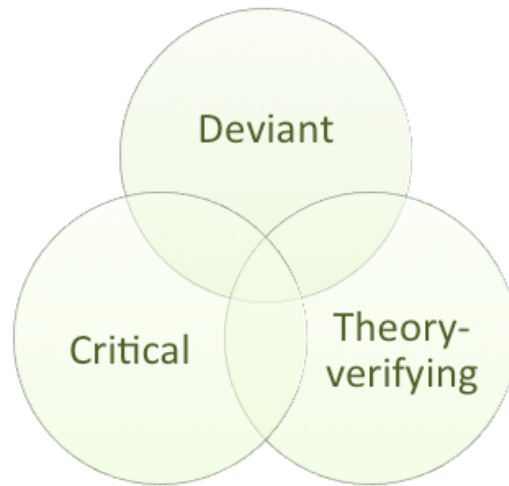


FIGURE 3 What case is the Metro C case? (Elaboration of the author)

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CHAPTER 1

GARBAGE-CANNED PATH DEPENDENCY: THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS OF METRO C IN ROME

ABSTRACT

The project for Metro C – the third subway line in construction in Rome – attracted a lot of attention from commentators but poor interest from the academic fields of policy analysis and decision-making. Projects, in particular, are an underplayed object for these fields of study.

This paper aims at covering this gap by using the case study of a new metro line in Rome: the Metro C, currently under construction.

The paper discusses two main decisions associated with the Metro C implementation: the insertion of the project into the city's policy agenda, and the choice of the Legge Obiettivo as the fundamental law that would govern its construction.

Shortly after the line was inserted in an organic mobility policy (the 'cura del ferro'), this choice of the administration is believed to have completely revolutionised the institutional setting.

Although the project's plans drafted by the administration in the mid-1990s were particularly demanding and innovative with respect to technological solutions and archaeology compatibility, the mayor's last binding decision (the choice to adopt a special regulatory regime for the Metro C's implementation – the "Legge Obiettivo") was an implicit renunciation to those same early innovative planning solutions, and showed a path dependency approach in order to govern public works as they always have.

INTRODUCTION

Italian urban policy analysis is seldom interested in projects. The success or failure of this particular segment of public policy is often believed to be a mere result of contractual arrangements or technical/organisational cultures. Nevertheless, as Grabher and Ibert have stated (Grabher & Ibert, 2012), projects increasingly represents peculiar environments within which relations between actors find a peculiar way to interplay, those relations are especially visible in the decision-making phase.

Mostly on the front-end of project management – planning and decision-making – the analysis of what happens helps us understand what happens next in project implementation.

This paper is an analysis of the style of decision adopted in the Metro C in Rome. Two main moments are identified for categorising this decisional logic, and two key decisions have been therefore considered: Firstly, the decision that brought the Metro C in Rome's policy agenda, in 1995 (its singling out as an autonomous project); secondly, the decision to adopt the special normative framework of the Legge Obiettivo for its construction.

The first section discusses the theoretical framework on decision-making – outlining the main theories and trying to spot the contributions in which such dimension of policy analysis encounters the literature on projects. After that, an account of the decisional process is reported, with the support of interviews. This is a detailed development of the essential chronology provided in the introduction to this thesis. Since the story of the Metro C goes through nearly 30 years of Rome's city administration, the chronological reconstruction is divided into five sub-paragraphs: covering the whole story of the infrastructure, from the early conceptualisation in the late 1920s to the moment it was finally put to tender, in 2005.

In the fourth section, the case is analysed against the paradigms presented in the literature review trying to organise the complex story of the case into clearer analytical categories.

The paper argues that the decision-making process of the Metro C, in its two key moments has been informed by garbage-can (until 1995) and path dependency logics (in 2001).

Lastly, the conclusions are drawn with an indication on further research.

LOGICS AND STYLES OF DECISION

Western world post-war period was characterised by a growing positivist outburst, and in policy analysis, the idea that policies could actually be informed by rational, low error margin inputs began to make inroads.

In the broad field of planning, this is known as *rational-comprehensive* model considered by Patrick Geddes in his seminal treaty on city planning (Geddes, 1915) and by Edward Banfield (1959). In this view the decision-maker is deemed capable to get to an optimal understanding of problems and, consequently, able to make a maximising choice based on a rational ranking of the alternatives. The economic science equivalent of such a decision-maker prototype is the *homo oeconomicus* model, upon which classical theories are built.

Studies on decision-making have long been referring to this 'optimistic' model. This model, though, is non-demonstrable (see Calafati, 2007) as it contradicts both the way in which decisions are really taken by political bodies in liberal democracies, and the cognitive limits of individuals as to the completeness of information one person can reasonably process (Simon, 1947, 1979, 1985).

A more realistic model of decision-making – stemming from the encounter between social sciences and psychology (see Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) – has been called by Herbert Simon "bounded rationality" and it addresses just the structural weaknesses of the previous. It is suggested that individuals are not able to take decisions on the basis of 'optimal' information, but rather on a *sufficing* basis. That means that the selection of an action over another is done when it represents a choice that is good enough in respect to the problem faced, and not the best possible.

This is a key turning point for the study of policies, also because it reproduces the shift from *elitism* to *pluralism* that applied social sciences were probing in Western societies (Dahl, 1961; Lipset, 1963).

Such a pluralist framework was bound to be further developed in an even more akin decisional model, that of *incrementalism*; the polyarchic nature of power described by Robert Dahl in his tale of New Haven's power structure needed to be more faithfully transferred into the decision-making arenas. And therefore, also the second key tenet of pre-incremental decision-making was put aside: namely the *compactness* of decisional bodies. Decisions were discovered to be not only taken by individuals with spurious cognitive capacities but also in pluralist arenas where decisional legitimacy is distributed more evenly than what previously imagined, and therefore partisanship and compromise are the rule of the game (Lindblom, 1959). One fundamental attribute of the decisions coming out of such fragmented systems is to be substantially *non-definitive* and tendentious.

The same concept, taken to the extreme, configures the garbage-can model of decision-making (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972; March, 1988) in which essentially:

- There are multiple decision-makers;
- Decision-makers have ambiguous and changing preferences;
- Actors' preferences are seldom shared completely with others;
- The contingency of the opportunity replaces consequential thinking.

'Decisional organisations' – meaning the pool of actors that are in charge for deciding on a given collective problem – operate, in fact, in so-called **organised anarchies** (Cohen et al., 1972; March, Cohen, Olsen, & Christensen, 1976), in which decisions (that is to say 'solutions') 'hover' in and out the political system without being previously connected to an actual problem to be solved. In organised anarchies, decision-makers follow an unclear logic to define problems, strategies, their own preferences, but they usually have a number of solutions at their disposal. Such ready-made solutions are attached to contingencies when the 'appropriate' new problem emerges.

John Kingdon's argument about public policies and problem solving (2014) is even more 'drastic' in portraying this non-rational process according to which public policy decisions are taken: collective problems can only make it in the political agenda (get "political attention", as he puts it) when candidate solutions to them are already there. Public policies (or projects, as the one we are considering here) might wait in line for a long time until a "policy window" or a "problem window" opens up. The 'architect' of the coupling between solutions and problems is the so-called **policy entrepreneur**, generally a politician who sponsors a type of policy linked to his/her name.

Moreover, as far as **megaprojects'** decision-making is concerned, the literature offers a great amount of contributions since this new and debated object has entered planning and policy studies (Flyvbjerg, 2005; Flyvbjerg, Bruzelius, & Rothengatter, 2003; Priemus, Flyvbjerg, & van Wee, 2008; Williams & Samset, 2010 just to name a few), and following an early definition of megaprojects as "temporary organisations" (Cherns & Bryant, 1984), we can maintain that there are styles and ways to decisions that are peculiar to megaprojects.

As recently theorised, there is a wide array of decision styles that stems from the traditional models of above but that hold specific importance for projects and megaprojects, with a special regard for major **public** projects. Decisions about public projects can happen following two main styles of decision called **instrumental** and **environmental** logics, in which it is evident the need of the decisional organisation to undergo certain roots and equilibria that are typical to that specific political-cultural environment (Williams & Samset, 2012). Decision of such nature, generally feature a prominent political leadership figure that carries the burden of the decision (Selznick, 2011); such decisions can be taken in order to support an historical sedimented way to approach

political-economy relationships, and with the ultimate objective of safeguarding conditions of interdependence between politics and non-governmental actors. That is to say that a public project of any nature is inevitably embedded in the institutional traditions of a given polity, and for the delivery of the work decision-makers should consider the constraints/peculiarity that partners could represent, if involved in the implementation.

THE DECISIONAL PROCESS OF THE METRO C

TRACING BACK THE METRO C GENESIS

Complete and capillary metro networks were first advanced in the early decades of the XX century (see Chiodi, 1929; GUR, 1929; Piacentini, 1916); all these studies contained, for the most part, an embryonic version of the Metro C.

For the matter of metropolitan railways, though, the most in-depth document – prior to the 1962-65 master plan – was a plan proposal advanced by the CET (*Comitato Elaborazione Tecnica*) – an occasional venture formed by some of the most distinguished Italian planners of the time hired by the municipality to elaborate a plan proposal. In 1957, these scholars, supported by a technical-political committee appointed by the municipality, came out with an all-encompassing proposal for a new master-plan (*Piano Regolatore Generale – PRG*) (CET, 1957) that, however, would have been turned down by the city's administration just a year later, in 1958. In this document, 9 metro lines were envisaged, together with the re-localisation of the existent railway stations in the city's outskirts to act as metropolitan gateways. CET's line number 7 (that was its name) resembled – at least as far as the outbound route is concerned – the current Metro C layout. It was meant to serve the south-eastern quadrant of 'greater Rome' «[...] running along the Via Casilina until the *borgate* of Alessandrino, Giardinetti, Torrenova, and Torre Gaia» (*ibidem* p. 74).

The 1962-65 city PRG, although having a different administrative force than the previous, advisory proposal, substantially traces the 1957 document's design, apart from a different central route. Below, in Figure 4, the layout for the future line C (named line A, in that plan – it has been traced in green)⁷.

⁷ It has not been possible, though, to confront this layout with 1957's line no. 7 because this latter came with no detailed drawing in the document.

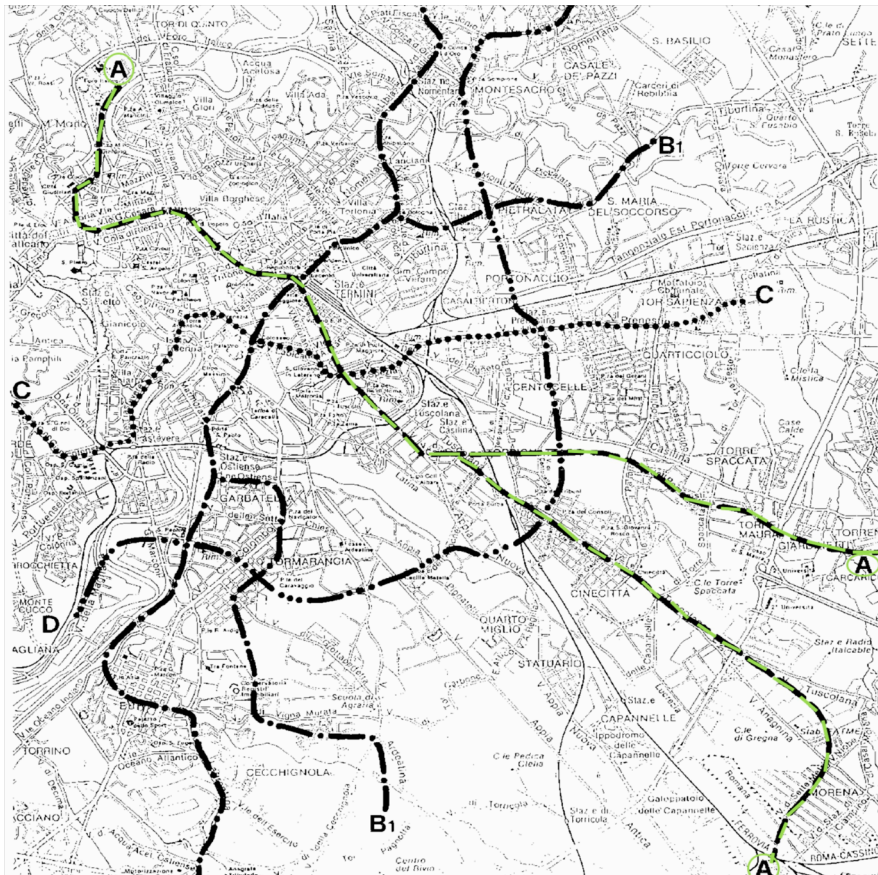


FIGURE 4 – The Metro A in the 1962 city PRG (Alej (2011))

From this moment on, and administratively speaking until the 1990s, the implementation of this infrastructure (likewise the entire network of metropolitan railways put forth until then) has been suspended, and shelved in the municipality’s technical offices, always lacking that final decision that would have put it on top of the city’s political agenda.

THE BORGATE: THE METRO C FINDS ONE OF ITS RATIONALES

After the early second after-war period, the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s represent for Roman politics a moment of profound torpor in public life, missed political and cultural turning points, and local mass media’s bewilderment. Despite the local Communist Party’s activism (mostly out of the institutional perimeter), collective services and public housing – in short, the ‘public city’ – were both confined at the margins of public debate. The local ruling class embraced totally the rhetoric of private motorisation, and sold it to the public opinion as a means

to emancipation (Insolera, 2010). To pay the consequences of this “*riflusso*”⁸ was first and foremost the city’s public transport (Insolera, 1993, pp. 293-296) that found itself caught between the somehow “hijacked” individual preferences about mobility and an outstanding low-density built environment and leapfrog housing development⁹. These factors, quite simply, contributed to the unviability of an economically sustainable urban railway network (Fried, 1973). In the meantime, though, during the 70s, the idea that public transports projects might be a policy gridlock for treating some of Rome’s most severe social deprivation emergencies began to spread among the then local ruling class. The many potential users of the south-east sector of Rome, in particular, justified a public infrastructure that could seam that portion of the city – massively hit by the phenomenon of illegal settlements (*abusivismo*) with central Rome (see Comune di Roma, 1962)¹⁰.

The local left’s political activity was huge in many domains: one of these took place in the very outskirts of Rome that developed as largely illegal and out-of-plan settlements: the so-called *borgate* (Martinelli & De Angelis, 1988). Particularly the extra-GRA (the suburban ring road that runs around the city) settlements in the south-east witnessed a capillary presence of the Roman Communist Party’s political activities in support of their struggle for housing rights (Coppola, 2008). Initially from an ‘opposition’ stance and eventually – during the 1970s and 1980s, under the long-lasting left’s city government of Giulio Carlo Argan, Luigi Petroselli and Ugo Vetere – as a political force in charge for administration, the action of the Roman Communist Party was key in order transform former illegal settlements in acknowledged politico-administrative entities. And, of course, in order to establish a trustful electoral rapport with a potentially huge social class (see Coppola, 2013)¹¹.

But something, during the 1980s began to change: the praxis of the amnesty for illegal settlements began to make inroads. Locally, the first one was introduced in 1980 (with regional law no. 28), and another national one followed, in 1985. These administrative devices made a great deal of pressure for inserting

⁸ The word “*riflusso*” is used in Italian to signify a social process of “roll back” into private affairs. It is typically used to refer to the late 70s and early 80s as a moment of profound disillusion with big political ideals and disengagement from public debate.

⁹ Infrastructural development as a whole had been hard to realise having to face the growing low density of the city’s settlements’.

¹⁰ It is worth noting that, regarding the east quadrant of the city, the strategic vision of the 1962 plan – but also the mentioned proposals put forth by the GUR in the late 1920s – provided a directional tertiary development with the realisation of the so-called SDO (*Sistema Direzionale Orientale*). That project was eventually given up also because the housing forecasts were partially turned upside down: law 167/1962 tackled heavily the problem of affordable housing shortage, and thus changed completely the face of Italian cities’ outskirts (see Insolera, 1993, p. 284).

¹¹ Traditionally, the phenomenon of the *borgate*, hit the ancient Roman roads (called *strade consolari*) almost exclusively. Among these, the areas surrounding the southern *consolari* (namely the Casilina and Appia) were the most covered by illegal housing. This is because of the massive migration from the then (from the after-war until the 70s) rural areas of central-southern Italy: the Abruzzo region and northern Campania. Not to mention the immigration from the rest of the Lazio region.

officially the physical and functional regeneration of those areas in the political agenda of Rome¹².

Therefore, the necessity to seam the south-east periphery (highly dispersed and isolated) to the more compact built environment of the city centre, together with the city government's orientation to restore the tools of the public city, began to establish as the chief political and planning justification of a new metropolitan line. On the other hand, that left city government – after a brief and unstable centrist interregnum in the late '80s – informed a lot the nascent centre-left administration that would finally unlock the mobility (and infrastructural) policy in the early 1990s (Insolera, Morandi, & Tocci, 2008; Tocci, 1993). At that time the project for the Metro C began to merge with Rome's far outskirts social emergency.

Over this same period, a few proposals regarding metropolitan railways were offered to the municipality. For the most part, these proposals were drafted by organisations and semi-public bodies that were directly interested in the dividends of a definitive breakthrough of a metropolitan railway network operative plan.

All these sketches (that in the totality of cases have not been implemented), came either from the broader galaxy of public consulting, from private companies, and from professional associations.

In Figure 5 is the original drawing of the proposal drafted in 1986 by the consortium Intermetro¹³. This new proposal featured a new line "G" (the line coloured in purple in the picture) which is in perfect consistency with today's Metro C. It is worth noting, here, that some of the companies that, back then, formed Intermetro S.p.A. (namely Ansaldo and Breda, now merged) will also take part in "Metro C S.c.p.A.", the consortium that will win the tender for the construction of Metro C in 2006.

¹² The important plan modification that in Rome introduced the zones "O" (former abusive settlements) was presented in 1978 and was a precious result of the political battle of the Communist Party that, back then, had the majority in the municipal assembly.

¹³ Intermetro S.p.A. was a consortium active in Italy and abroad formed, among other partners, by Ansaldo, Metroroma S.p.A. and Breda. Its complete composition was the following: Metroroma S.p.A., Italstat, Società Italiana per Condotte d'Acqua, IMI, Breda Costruzioni Ferroviarie, Fiat Ferroviaria, Fiat Impresit, and Ansaldo.

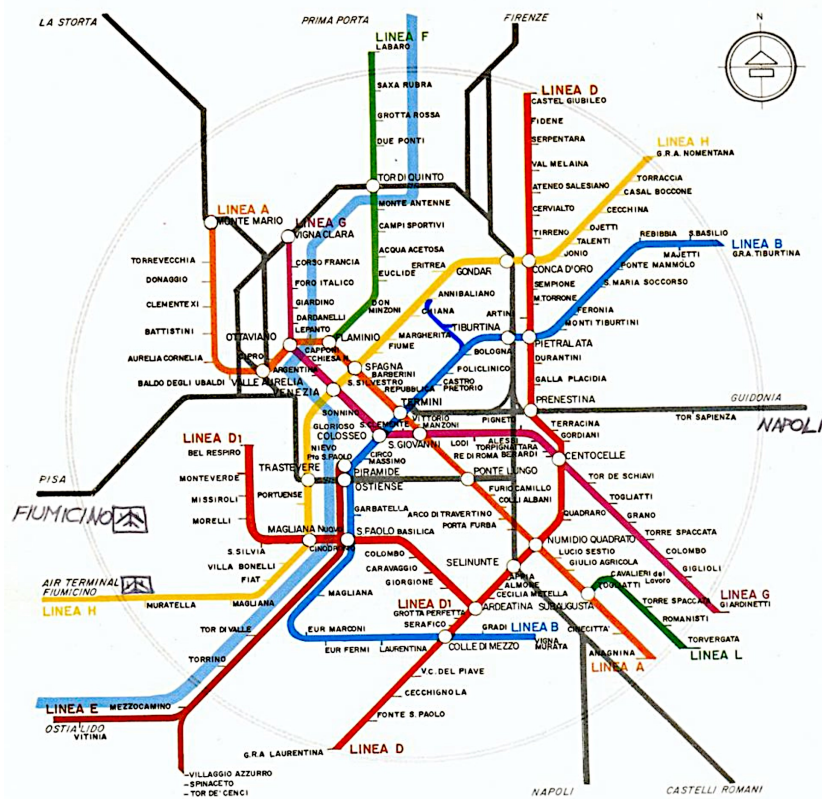


FIGURE 5 – Intermetro company proposal in 1986 (Intermetro)

Other elaborations drafted in this period prior to the 1990s all followed the Intermetro proposal template, as far as the Metro C was concerned. The 1986 blueprint remained the model for the following attempts to design the third line of Rome’s subway. In other words, this line’s layout was acknowledged to be the vector that would have ultimately linked the south-eastern periphery of the city with the north-western quadrant, intersecting the A line in the areas of the neighbourhood of Prati and the neighbourhood of San Giovanni.

1993-2001: FROM THE ADMINISTRATIVE KICK-OFF TO THE LEGGE OBIETTIVO

The new administration of Rome installed in 1993. Led by Francesco Rutelli, the new government was an unprecedented mix of green leftists, moderate democrats, and social Christians. It nevertheless promised to take on the heritage of the 70s and 80s Communist Party administrations in a number of issues. A large part of the enthusiasm that saluted such a political takeover was

given by the fact that the capital city (as well as the whole country) had just been struck by the most disrupting corruption scandal of the political elites in the country's after-war history (*Tangentopoli*, in 1992)¹⁴. The scandal of Tangentopoli consumed for a large part in the realm of public procurement and auctions for public projects.

The focus on the physical and functional reparation of the far-end peripheries, the will to connect the historical heritage of Rome to development and regeneration schemes, and the realisation of the whole paradigm that had been famously called the “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1972) were some of the most evident.

Among all these, the various policies of mobility were given a chief importance as they encompassed transversally and indirectly many of the city criticalities. The issue of mobility was believed to carry significant implications for public-private interactions, public tenders' rules update, historical heritage fruition, out-of-control property values streamline and other issues.

In the preliminary phases of the Metro C process, the new administration proved its primary virtue: the ability to combine an outstanding dynamism in gathering the necessary financial tools (also from national sources) for the implementation of policies, and a certain guile in involving institutional actors and expertise (Aronica, Rutelli, Menichini, & Veltroni, 2003) from where veto and conflict could have emerged eventually.

The offices of the municipality were put to work to analyse traffic flows of inward trips' demand. This process ended up with the prevision of a capillary network of metro lines and renewed metropolitan railways: the so-called *cura del ferro* (the “iron therapy”). The authorship of this programme is to be attributed almost entirely to the political vision of the then deputy mayor Walter Tocci. In 1994, a year after the assignment, the municipal council licensed a measure in which the city was making use of a national fund for dismissed railways renewal¹⁵ in order to implement part of the infrastructural plan (Comune di Roma, 1994). In this deliberation, the future Metro C was still referred to as “line G”, just as it has been over the previous 20 years.

In the meantime, a task force set up for the upcoming 2000 Catholic Jubilee was conducting a thorough analysis of the city's need for mobility, once again outputting the evidence about the south-east part of suburban Rome being one of the most needing of infrastructures¹⁶.

¹⁴ The Tangentopoli enquiry mostly dealt with public participations in industries and public works' related bribery. The city of Rome – as the seat of national politics –, together with Milan, was one of the epicentres of the scandal.

¹⁵ Law no. 211/1992. In fact, the future metro C will be a hybrid between a suburban line (in the style of the *S-Bahn* in Berlin – in its outward layout, renewing an old regional railway) and a subway line, in the city's more central part.

¹⁶ Of course, these outputs were partly determined by the fact that the main area for the Jubilee's mass gatherings was chosen to be Tor Vergata, in the South-East extra-GRA zone. These previsions are given further value by another important reason: post-war planning documents have been rather unanimous in reiterating the South and South-East sectors of the city as the main direction for residential development (see Comitato di consulenza, 1962, p. 8).

THE TANGLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The whole infrastructural policy thought for Rome was largely negotiated and discussed with a pool of intellectuals, historians and urbanists for a deliberate choice of the Mayor's cabinet. The *cura del ferro* was an all-encompassing policy effort thought to integrate new metro lines, old renewed railways¹⁷, and tramlines (a legacy of Rome's *belle époque* – massively dismissed by Mussolini's planning policies in the 1930s) in order to de-congest the historical centre from immoderate private mobility.

For the newly planned metro lines (line D – soon put aside for financial shortages – and line C) the municipality, again in the form of Walter Tocci, sought the contribution of Rome's Archaeological Superintendence in order to elaborate projects that could keep together policy objectives and cultural heritage safeguard.

With this intention, the archaeologists of the Superintendence and the engineers of the municipality¹⁸ were put to work together in order to come out with a proposal.

The dispersed south-eastern periphery had to have the opportunity to be directly connected to the city's most important historical beauties, and above all it means that the municipality wanted to *exploit* what has been always deemed to be an obstacle to subway infrastructures in Rome: archaeology.

The excavating technology prompted for the construction of the Metro C – the so-called *Modello Roma* – was centred on the idea of “digging from below” the line's tunnels, thus minimising the interference with the archaeological stratum (for more detail see Comune di Roma, 1995).

Also, for that purpose, the municipality decided to retrieve an integrated plan developed in 1985 on behalf of the Archaeological Superintendence that, like many others of the same type, remained a mere intellectual exercise ever since. Embellished by the collaboration of the most revered city planners of the time, this study was a project for the re-organisation of the practicability of the area of Rome's *Fori Imperiali* (Benevolo, 1985)¹⁹. Just like the other planning documents mentioned earlier in this paper, like the CET's proposal or the consultancies of the 1910s and 1920s, the ultimate objective of Rome's urban

¹⁷ Many of these railways were recently been freed from the national rail traffic because of the new high-speed rails.

¹⁸ About the professionals hired by the municipality, Walter Tocci told in an interview for this work that the cabinet had a strategy for changing the pattern of collaboration between the city administration and its engineers: «when we took over, the professionals used to work for the city only on a part-time basis. We told them “we know that in the afternoons you go and do your second job in some private office”, we wanted them to work full time for the city so they were formally hired and strongly motivated.»

¹⁹ As later maintained by Benevolo himself, it entailed deep reflections and administrative decisions on a number of issues that, variously, influence that good implementation of that plan; among these issues, the construction of a new metro line (Benevolo, 1985, pp. 99-108). The referred document is a private correspondence between the planner and the then assessor – Gianfranco Redavid in which a competition for the reorganisation of the *Fori*'s area is discussed.

planning and mobility policy was to prevent the historical centre from being targeted by private mobility flows²⁰.

So, in a way, in the context of mobility policy as a whole, the new Metro C project offered the cue for wider considerations on urban policy. Not least, the very technical aspects of the two endeavours began to finally converge.

The Metro C would have cut across the city centre below the archaeological stratum, offering to the user a unique overlook on the overhead evidences thanks to a complex system of boardwalk and elevators with a view. These solutions were put forward to perform a radical reorganisation of the city centre's drivability on the one hand, and to offer to the pedestrian an easier movement within the archaeological site.

TOWARDS THE TENDER: THE LEGGE OBIETTIVO DECISION

The years between 1995 and 2000 were employed in the drafting of the new city plan. Regarding the Metro C, those years featured the relations with the Superintendence, especially in respect to the inner layout of the line.

In 2001 Walter Veltroni succeeded Francesco Rutelli as Mayor. Meanwhile, at the national government Silvio Berlusconi installed again after an alternation period of centre-left and technocratic-coalitions executives, in June 2001.

A new regulation – the *Legge Obiettivo* (443/2001; and decree 190/2002) – was approved by the national Parliament; it was conceived with the declared objective of unlocking the construction of major public infrastructures. Mayor Veltroni decided to demand the insertion of the Metro C in the list of strategic works for Italy, with a following new financing and regulatory framework (see Appendix B). With that decision, the tender was launched for the public bid accompanied by the preliminary plan, a vague projection of what the municipality intended to achieve in the years ahead.

Therefore, by 2001, this document (the preliminary plan) remained the last prescriptive intervention of the public sphere into the process.

The line's construction would be put to tender according to this law on February 15th 2005, and officially awarded by the consortium "Metro C S.c.p.A." on March 24th 2006.

²⁰ On this strategic planning objective, the CET's proposal declares: «the metropolitan network (the metro lines, *editor's note*) is planned according to a scheme that skims the [city's] central nucleus defined by a perimeter to which external traffic will refer. On such perimeter will be a ring inside which no crossing line will be provided. The ring will be equipped with wide areas for parking from where public transport means will depart towards the most interesting cultural sites of the historical centre.» (CET, 1957, p. 32).

WHAT LOGICS OF DECISIONS

THE PRE-1995 GARBAGE CAN

From the 1950s to the 1970s, as it has been accounted, the Metro C was variously conceived and designed. Often in conditions of uncertainty as to financial allocation, its value for the city's agenda was none. Nevertheless, the very fact that the infrastructure was imagined (part of a capillary network) more or less as it is planned now confirms the power of it as a policy output, so powerful that it can transcend administrations, and, of course, policy aims.

Being the output there, one might wonder: to what *outcome*?

Born on the one hand with the aim of supporting the planned demographic expansions towards the *Castelli Romani*, and of liberating the historical centre (object of profound rearrangement by the fascist monumental rhetoric) on the other (GUR, 1929), it went on by being envisaged more as a complement for the city's metro network as a whole and as a service for the satellite town of Palestrina (CET, 1957) than with a peculiar policy aim on its own. It nonetheless kept on serving the primary planning policy purpose of creating a "no traffic" zone around the historical centre.

In 1995 the Metro C was retrieved from previous conceptualisations, and inserted in an operative programme (Comune di Roma, 1995) as a solution to two main issues:

- The poor accessibility of south-eastern peripheries into the city centre;
- The will to prove wrong the prejudice that Rome's transport infrastructures are hardly implemented because of the archaeology patrimony.

This period, then, respects no policy blueprint for such a fairly fixed idea of policy output, on the contrary, the appearance of the Metro C in the documents seems to be linked to contingencies of governments and varying policy pretexts. According to changing contingencies (see Bobbio, 1996), the "solution" was already there since years but the problem was yet to be found: the typical counter-consequentiality of the garbage-can model, according to which policy options frequently pre-exist to problems (Cohen et al., 1972). As the then deputy mayor Walter Tocci recalled, the idea of the Metro C was largely reconceptualised within the commitment of the city administration for social policy in the south-eastern part of Rome: a way to give right to the city to the most penalised periphery of the city.

The hierarchy of the metro lines was, in the mind of the first Rutelli administration, to be set just afterwards the old regional railways²¹ rearrangement.

Priorities as to metro lines were later narrowed down to line D and line C.

«The Metro D²² was even more interesting than line C as to engineering and route. Then, as it often happens, the prioritisation of the Metro C was done because the project was in consistency with the social emergency of the south-eastern periphery on the one hand, and because of the possibility to realise it thanks to a national law (law no. 211/92 that offered investment funds for new infrastructures if coupled with the renewal of old surface railways; editor's note)»

Walter Tocci

The Metro C was therefore officially launched as an administrative process, and prioritised over the other lines in the overall metro network of the *cura del ferro* mobility policy.

As Walter Tocci recalls, the above contingencies gave the administration the chance to finance the line and to socially justify it. If rational thinking would have directed the attention to line D, contingency – in the words of Cohen, March and Olsen – offered the opportunity to use an existent solution for solving problems «to which it might be the answer» (1972, p. 2).

Moreover, the Metro C project offered the opportunity to work on the functional reorganisation of the *Fori Imperiali*, for which the old study of Leonardo Benevolo was prepared in 1985. The Metro C was, ultimately, a pretext to establish a profitable collaboration with the Archaeological Superintendence, and to launch an innovative way to face archaeological problems during the construction of underground metro lines.

«It was a season of intense brainstorming and policy interplay. We were intentioned to carry on a process of de-isolation of one of the under-exploited public of the city: the experts of the Archaeological Superintendence²³. The common ground for such collaboration were the new metro lines.»

Walter Tocci

«The collegial effort for the central route of the Metro C happened uniquely thanks to Walter Tocci. I cannot say that the relationship with that administration as a whole was completely

²¹ The *cura del ferro* was constituted by new metro lines and, above all, by an extensive renewal of the urban parts of the old national railways recently cleared by national traffic due to the introduction of high-speed rail.

²² The Metro D was planned as crossing the city from North-East to South-West, it should have been built from scratch. This line was deemed more strategic than line C because of its systemic value.

²³ Rome's Superintendence for Archaeology and Cultural Goods of Rome (one of the most compelling bodies in the governance of urban transformations) got to be pointed at by an important Italian historian, Vittorio Vidotto, as responsible for Rome's structural adversity for modern urban transformations, protagonist of the so called "Archaeological Party" that features also certain sectors of the public opinion, all convinced that Rome is unfit to (and *must* be kept away from) major transformations (Vidotto, 2006, p. 359).

peaceful²⁴, but the chronicle of the Metro C was an experience of prolific collaboration – something we had not experience in other urban planning initiatives of that period, especially for greenfield developments schemes.

Walter Tocci asked me to put the Superintendence’s archaeologists at his disposal in order to plan – together with the city’s engineers – a well-balanced central route for the Metro C, treasuring the Superintendence’s deep knowledge of the city’s subsoil. He knew that Rome’s subsoil represents no surprise at all. I mean, we all know the thick archaeology below the centre but only the Superintendence can contribute with the most detailed account about its location and likelihood. ***This was conceived also to spare the project a potentially painful stop-and-go when it would have been implemented.***

But there was also another important reason: the municipality was intentioned to deliberately go towards latent archaeological evidence rather than avoiding it. Just like they did in Athens and later in Naples.»

Adriano La Regina

It is rather evident – not least from the interviews with key actors of that period – how crucial was the opening of these “policy windows” for the definitive release of the Metro C project. In John Kingdon’s words: «in contrast to a problem-solving model, in which people become aware of a problem and consider alternative solutions, solutions float around in and near governments, searching for problems to which to become attached or political events that increase their likelihood of adoption» (2014, p. 172).

Deputy mayor Walter Tocci, here, held the role of the policy entrepreneur, the sponsor of a solution (or policy) that operates the ultimate “coupling” between solutions and problems.

FROM GARBAGE-CAN TO PATH DEPENDENCY

In 2001, when the Legge Obiettivo was licensed by the national Parliament, mayor Veltroni – reinforced by his increased electoral mandate and leveraging on legal power – decided that the Metro C needed to be governed with that special regulatory framework. The ‘decisional organisation’ at the basis of this choice was formed by a number of actors (pictured in Figure 6 according to their weight in the decision):

- The public administration (both in the expressions of bureaucracy and executive);
- The Superintendence for archaeological safeguard;

²⁴ The arguments that Adriano La Regina had, almost daily, with Mayor Rutelli, belong to the story of that period. Rutelli was a *decisionist* mayor. He was often bothered by the vetoes and interruptions that the various non-governmental bodies moved against some urban policies that he championed (like underground parking spaces under the Pincio Belvedere and the housing development scheme proposed in the protected area of Tor Marancia).

- The national level of government in the forms of the national Ministry for Transports (MIT), the CIPE and national executive;
- The experts and consultants employed by the administration.

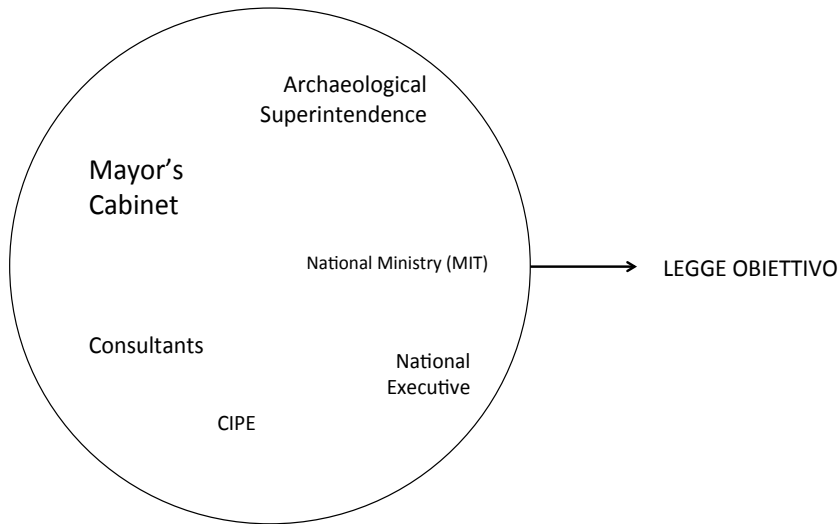


FIGURE 6 – The ‘Decisional Organisation’ of the Legge Obiettivo Decision (elaboration of the author)

«That was a very wrong decision – by all means dictated by reasons of distension between the city government and the national government from Veltroni’s side. Nevertheless, the preparation of the Legge Obiettivo itself was a huge lobby endeavour performed by those big engineering businesses that had been left aside in the post-Tangentopoli period. For them, an environment that is less bound to public prescriptions was more suitable.

The Legge Obiettivo, as we know, substantially hollows out the public capacity to keep control on public works it puts to tender²⁵.»

Walter Tocci

In order to understand the rationale of the Legge Obiettivo decision, one needs to acknowledge an important fact: according to Lowi (1972) each decision carries along some meta-decisions that reveal in more detail the nature, the content of such decision. If the decision is the insertion of the line within a new normative environment, meta-decisions would be:

- The introduction in the regulatory system of a new sovereignty: the general contractor
- The new allocation of tasks as to planning responsibilities (the two most detailed planning levels up to the private contractor)

²⁵ The *Legge Obiettivo* introduced what, internationally, are known as *turnkey* projects.

- The public multi-level governance.

Such a distinction helps us going into the actual contents of that decision. Once we performed such a subdivision, one can finally test the viability of the author's famous claim that *policy determines politics*. Meaning that a given actor's resources being equal, the probability for it to draw advantage from a policy decision depends on the *content* of the policy decision itself.

In the case here examined, and regarding this specific decision, the actual content of the decision (i.e. the three meta-decisions of above) suggest who will benefit from them. Changing the regulatory environment for the work's completion substantially means informing the cognitive process connected to the Metro C with different capabilities as to firms' technical and organisational capacity.

«As I see it, this decision (the inclusion of the Metro C in Legge Obiettivo, editor's note) might be also read in these terms: if I am the city government and I am launching an ambitious programme for such a huge public mobility infrastructure, I want to be sure that this is actually finalised (also for later electoral campaigns, editor's note), regardless who is in power after myself. I want to prevent the line from being modified – or worse, cancelled – by a new administration. Transferring a large share of responsibility to the private contractors is a way to secure its construction.»

Antonio Tamburrino

But, as we know, it is not only this the meaning of “policy content”: by this locution Lowi means more precisely the nature of the policy according to the taxonomy he provided (Lowi, *ibidem*). In this case we could classify this decision as belonging to the family of *constituent policies*. In the sense that it ultimately aims at introducing “rules on rules” (Dente, 2014), and thus the decision hold a peculiar *institutional* significance for the process as a whole. In fact, the introduction of a new sovereignty (the general contractor and its new attributions as to planning, for instance) is an institutional measure because it aims at changing the panorama of rules and relationships between actors.

But there is a second, more important reason why this decision conforms to the institutional paradigm. Institutions are intended as rules, routines and behaviours that are fairly stable over time. They are either formal or informal devices that describe the *culture* of a given society, and thus the system of meanings that actors give to things. Such inescapable elements built in the history influence the way public apparatus deals with present issues. This conception is summarised by the formula that *roots will determine routes* (Christensen, 2012, p. 260).

The decision we discuss in this section reflects the way the city of Rome has been historically used to deal with the private sector, and with the local construction industry in particular (Fried, 1973). The adoption of the Legge Obiettivo regime – the turnkey project type of work – is nothing but the old “*appalto in concessione*” that triggered the scandal of Tangentopoli.

«The *appalto in concessione* represent the only modality in which the private constructors in Rome are able to deliver public works»

Walter Tocci

The decision to adopt the Legge Obiettivo, therefore, might have been reflecting a sort of previous agreement between the city administration and the city's potential roster of firms that could have participated to the tender for the Metro C construction²⁶. That decision reveals the will of the political leadership (that is to say mayor Veltroni) to take that "critical decision" (Selznick, 2011) that could best go along with the relations of power embedded in the polity of Rome.

This is because the relatively low level of Roman construction entrepreneurship as to technology and innovation makes it much easier to organise major construction interventions by not complying with a plan made by public bodies (public officials could even draft a very demanding operative plan in order to reach out to innovative foreign businesses, for instance). Moreover, the municipality itself can benefit from such a decision: the responsibility for the whole Metro C work is now a prerogative of the private contractor, a move that can spare the local public coffers a sound but expensive engineering in-house sector. The same in-house team that assessor Tocci tried to set up in the 1990s. The will to launch a message of collaboration to the national government (an interpretation confirmed by the interviews) is only a superficial (yet totally well-founded) explanation of such an authoritative turn. On the contrary, looking at the meta-decisions, it confirms the institutional nature of the act, betraying an attempt to bring back public-private collaborations to a traditional channel, in a clear path dependency logic.

²⁶ It is worth reiterating here that the operative plan drafted by the municipality in 2000 (before the Legge Obiettivo was adopted (and therefore before the appointed firm was put in charge for the two most detailed levels of planning), the technology chosen by the municipality – and agreed upon with the superintendence – for the works' excavating was a low-impact one: it was made up on the idea of digging the tunnels (substantially wider than normal, so hosting the two directions of the metro) well below the archaeological stratum (about 20-30 meters – being the archaeological stratum about 10 meters deep). That would have ensured that the impact on the archaeology was minimal and only interested when the elevators are being constructed. As it is well known, the elevators are a rather flexible element in the construction of a metro line: they can be located where they least impact on a geological constraint. According to former assessor Tocci: «[...] international, rather than local, construction firms might have best mastered this technological solution».

CONCLUSIONS

This paper attempted a study of an urban infrastructure decision-making logic in order to trace back some of the flaws that have been affecting the current implementation of the work. In my opinion, in fact, the problems that have slowed down the construction of this infrastructure have to do mostly with endemic institutional path dependencies that characterises much of the city of Rome's development projects.

The article represented the troubled and extraordinarily long decisional process for the Metro C as fundamentally characterised by two key periods: pre-1995s and from 2001 on. These two decisional moments were governed respectively by a garbage can logic, in which the project for the Metro C was brought to surface as an occasional solution to contingent problems, and in which a purely path dependency final decision was taken.

After its official debut as a proper administrative process in the mid-1990s, after a very short and apparently rational attempt to policy integration and interplay, the logic of decision for the line followed an institutional path dependency orientation, culminating with the Legge Obiettivo decision, the key decision about the Metro C process, that obeyed to the traditional way to do business with private actors in Rome. *Roots* had determined *routes*, at last.

This insight justifies further investigations that from decision logics move towards urban governance; this field is left opened for further research. The third paper of this thesis will deal with these aspects more closely.

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CHAPTER 2

PUBLIC FRAGMENTATION IN MEGAPROJECTS: LESSONS FROM METRO C IN ROME

ABSTRACT

This paper draws upon a case study of a strategic infrastructural project in Rome, Italy ("Metro C"), to describe how institutional fragmentation (as to legal endowments and territorial rescaling incomplete reform on the one hand, and routines and practices among actors – in a nutshell, project management – on the other) can manifest itself in actual project implementation. These two fundamental acceptations of the institutional are developed, in this paper, by reconstructing the path of Italian territorial governance reform still underway (that has deep implications for the governance of projects too), and project management. Both these realms have been affected by the advent of the Legge Obiettivo, the special law that over the last 15 years has been governing strategic infrastructure projects in Italy – the Metro C included.

Via a thorough review of legal, administrative and regulatory measures and making use of two important theoretical constructs in the fields of governance and project management, I delved into what I reckoned as being the main reasons of the Metro C implementation failure as to cost overrun and delivery delays, and found the primary causes of these latter in the fragmented public governance stemmed from the Legge Obiettivo.

The metropolitan scale emerges as an unexploited opportunity – with all legal acts provided – to solve at least one of the two institutional problem, and thus to coalesce territorial government functions in a significant supra-municipal scale.

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of projects progresses according to institutional settings, which are the modalities in which the actors involved interact according to their roles and tasks defined by the law. Territorial governments are important parts of such institutional understanding of projects.

The question of rescaling has acquired a chief incidence for large and medium sized cities. Although having been a long debated issue in the academic fields of planning, law, regional economics and geography above all (Camagni, 1999; Lefèvre, 1998; Morgan, 2014; Salet & Kreukels, 2003; Tosics, 2007) – not to mention the policy reports and analyses at the European and international level (ESPON, 2013; OECD, 2004, 2011) –, in Italy, it lacked a clear political conceptualisation on the reorganisation of public functions' territorial articulation. Moreover, still in Italy, it is surprising how, apart from a few exceptions (e.g. d'Albergo, Moini, & Pizzo, 2016; Moini & Pizzo, 2017), scholars have so far neglected the reflections on the actual policies and projects that re-scaling localities face, at least in principle. As a consequence, practices that are shaped by an actual institutional reorganisation struggle to emerge. As far as Italian politics is concerned, metropolitanisation, federalism, devolution, and subsidiarity are all parts of the same institutional reform device stemming from two different trends; on the one hand the increasing power and significance of urban prominent localities (such as Rome, Milan Naples, Turin) for their respective hinterlands, and on the other hand, the national democratic and consensus crisis that motivated the reflections about the downscale of institutional powers from the central state to regions and large municipalities. Nonetheless, the national arena of policy making is still very important (at least in respect to the Italian context, and for a capital city such as Rome) if one wants to explain in full detail the success or failure of major territorial government reform projects.

Along with these trends, it is not marginal to remember that the Italian Constitution itself – in the reformed Fifth Title – gives enhanced autonomy to Regions, Municipalities and Metropolitan Cities. So far, the subdivision of tasks and competences among the different levels of government remains highly unclear, affecting the governance of certain policies and projects.

Infrastructural projects are outstanding ecosystems to research institutional interplay and its effects on the project implementation, especially when institutional actors' roles are reformed like they have been with the Legge Obiettivo in Italy.

This paper offers evidence of the effects of such institutional reorganisation on the governance of the Metro C project, effects that could be summarised in a fragmented public actor. This paper also argues that, although facing a policy issue that would have to be best treated at the metropolitan scale – a governmental level that would have conferred more unity to the public side of

project management – the project of the Metro C has been governed in an unclear institutional governance that stems from its intertwined scalar environment.

After having identified the appropriate stream of literature about rescaling, inter-governmental relations, and the most notable contributions that linked rescaling to project management, the paper discusses the recent legislative path to institutional devolution that brought to the creation of the city-regional government of the *Città Metropolitana*, in 2014. After this report, the main features of the Legge Obiettivo are outlined for the reader to appreciate how this projects' implementation case study is relevant for the issues framed in the literature review.

In the third section the case study of the Metro C is discussed in relation of two important theoretical constructs from the fields of governance and project management: namely the “networked polity” by Chris Ansell (2000) and the “project ecology” by Gernot Grabher (Grabher, 2002; Grabher & Ibert, 2012). Findings show on the one hand that the case study featured a marked *heterarchical* governance. On the other hand – in respect to the ‘project ecology’ concept –, in the governance of the project's implementation was evident the avoidance of a scalar preference.

Although this formal features respect such mentioned theoretical concepts, the main outcome that these produced in the project's implementation was hardly a smart way to govern (project) complexity escaping scalar traps – as optimistically foretold by Ansell (2000). Neither it was a way to unleash the knowledge and learning potential within the project, as argued by Grabher's project ecology (2012). The main outcome, on the contrary, was a fragmentation of the public actor's control function into scalar pulverisations. The neglect of the available (and suitable, according to the subsidiarity principle) metropolitan scale comes as a corollary of all this.

The paper concludes with some final remarks and indications on further research.

MEGA-PROJECTS AS A MATTER OF SCALE AND INSTITUTIONS

In the fields of planning and economic geography it is fairly acknowledged that geographical scales are not fixed territorial entities, but rather, in post-Fordist societies, economic and social relationships exist in variable scalar settings whose hierarchy can be stable for a period of time but easily subject to be changed under certain circumstances. For this paper I chose to consider only those aspects of the large literature on political rescaling that point at aspects of

governance arrangements. In particular, the concern here is on the (more or less explicit) conflicts on which is scale is the more appropriate in order to govern a particular problem (in this case, an important public infrastructural work). This implies a redefinition of the governance actors (Brenner, 1999, 2001; Swyngedouw, 1997).

The need to redesign city boundaries can be associated with the increasing complexity of spatial ecosystems (Brenner, 2004). Cities seek larger dimensions primarily to fulfil their governmental tasks through the coverage of key economic activities: a political endeavour that comes with the promise of enhanced control over local resources. Such a rescaling has great implications on the overall governance of policies and projects in cities and city regions: the creation of new institutional actors substantially crowds governance arrangements more, implies the entrance of new business and institutional actors, and multiplies the relations among them to an outstanding degree (Lefèvre, 1998).

Nonetheless, it can also act as an institutional concentrator as it streamlines the action of local governments through the creation of new, inclusive, more powerful governmental units (Sharpe, 1995).

Down-scaling processes determine change in the specific weight each *polity* actor enjoys in the governance scheme. Such redistribution, however, is likely to not neglect the state actor: states keep on being present in the governance arrangements and mingle with local civil societies. Chris Ansell called this type of relations «the networked polity», to signify the intertwined action in certain policy undertakings that features the non-hierarchical exchange between «non-state organisations, public agencies, and the macro-structural organisation of the state» (2000, p. 309).

The non-hierarchical property refers to the relational exchange between the components of the network: they can work either horizontally or vertically but with no particular chain of command. This process might intersect other processes that interest city governance like new public management: as the public apparatus develops as a less monolithic entity, the private actor might take its role in the delivery and planning of services (Lane, 2000). The division of labour determined by both rescaling (between different geographical scales) and public-private dynamics – in turn induced by new public management organization of the public – produces actors' equalization. For example, as we will see in the case analysis, the private contractor gets to play a very similar (if not superior) role to the public as to the key features that historically cut the divide between them: planning and control. But also, the non-hierarchical relationship between the city and the state is not only an achievement of collaboration between scales (as the subsidiarity and *adeguatezza* principles would provide for – see section 3 for discussion) but gets to the organizational output of lacking a leading role in the defence of the just and efficient delivery of public works.

The system described holds effects for the cost of action in such an equal pool of actors. In projects – that are collective-purpose undertakings and normally regulated by contractual agreements – these exchanges could be bad, useless

and time-consuming for the purpose which the governance is arranged for, and generate increasing transaction costs (Williamson, 1985). That is the case when the “mutual adjustment” explained by Charles Lindblom (1959) turns into institutional fragmentation and weakness of public action. When such a dynamic unfolds there is the risk to leave the governance of policies and projects to jumbled public-private relationships. This is understandable – especially in the case here described – because against the pulverisation of the public agent, the private contractor enjoyed an enhanced movement margin. Therefore, the nature of projects as «temporary multi-organisations» (Cherns & Bryant, 1984) gives an idea of how, during implementation, the project can emerge as a peculiar environment of ‘networked polity’ relationships; on the other hand, however, it does not stress the intra-organisational relations that the project maintains with its wider institutional environment. Such a complexity, as it has been observed, features increasingly non-hierarchical array of relationships, and has been famously termed “project ecology” (Grabher, 2002).

As Gernot Grabher argues, one should not fail to acknowledge that, inside this complexity of relations, an interplay of geographical layers is also at work. One of the collateral effects that can emerge from this geographical layers’ intersection is the fragmentation of the public actor in the urban policy agenda (Allulli & Tortorella, 2013; d’Albergo, 2010).

In this view – as far as Large Engineering Projects (LEPs) are concerned – the issues of the governance arrangements are treated mostly to explore how legal and regulatory institutions and project management influence one another (Michaud & Lessard, 2001). Along with legislative reforms comes the issue of the “cognitive distance” between actors in the project ecology (Grabher & Ibert, 2012) that can potentially increase as new territorial governments are created.

So far, however, the scientific literature has delivered little account of fragmentation in LEPs-based networks stemming from territorial government reform. The aim of this paper is to cover this gap by using a Large Engineering Project case study to explore how legislative and regulatory entropy on multi-level governance contributed crucially to the institutional fragmentation in project implementation. The Metro C in Rome has been implemented so far according to a new regulatory framework that after a decade or so of progressive governance down-scaling, formally brings back the state actor into the game. On the other hand, from an organizational point of view, it reforms the management of projects by placing greater responsibility on the private contractor’s role.

THE LEGAL REVIEW: A ROUGH PATH TO RESCALING

Since 1977 when the Regions were first given legislative powers, numerous reforms have reconfigured Italy's territorial governing institutions. The city of Rome has always benefitted a somewhat preferential treatment that went beyond subsidiarisation issues. A recent example is the law for Roma Capitale that reformed powers and the statute of the capital city.

This section deals with the legislative measures that have had an impact on the organizational and polity aspects at the local level as well as on the financial-related measures that determine funding for the Metro C. I feel that it is necessary to refer to and discuss single specific laws and decrees for an exhaustive and extensive discussion and understanding, even though it may result harder for the reader. The section is split into three different parts. The first one deals with the legislative reforms that affect the distribution of powers, administrative functions, responsibilities, and ultimately the institutional organization. The second part points at the legislation that deals with fiscal matters, sets out funding, and earmarks money for the Metro C. The third part describes in detail the new law that governed the implementation of the infrastructure.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

As regards administrative functions I will present the main changes that were introduced in Italy by three major reforms and focus on local transportation-related functions. The first in the years between 1997 and 2000. The second in 2001. The third in 2014. I will then briefly mention the special statute of the metropolitan city of Rome approved on 22 December 2014.

The first reform of 1997, known as Bassanini Act, introduced a devolution of government functions among the various levels of the sub-state powers (Maltoni, 2002). For the first time, following the Maastricht treaty, the Italian legislation introduced the subsidiarity principle²⁷ in the jurisprudence according to which administrative functions and competences should be better performed by the level of government most suited to the needs of citizenship. The Bassanini Act identified a clear list of functions that were explicitly assigned to the national government, whereas all the functions that were not mentioned in the Act were to be devolved to regional, provincial and local governments (Clarich, 2012). Among the national functions "transport of national relevance"

²⁷ A thorough review of the development of the subsidiarity principle is contained in Colombo (2004).

was listed, identifying, as a consequence, local transport as a matter of sub-national interest. This is confirmed by the decree n. 422 of 1997 which identified local public transportation as administrative competence of both local and provincial governments and later by law 42 of 2009 (art. 21). This is important to bear in mind in consideration of subsequent reforms which introduced *Città Metropolitane* (metropolitan cities) as a new level of government and of the specific role that over time the Province and metropolitan city of Rome have played in our case study. Decrees 112 of 1998 and 267 of 2000 identified other functions that were devolved to local authorities by the state.

The second reform of paramount importance is the 2001 reform of Part V of the Italian Constitution. The new Part V, which made fundamental changes to legislative powers of regions and state, was also important for the general designation of administrative competences to municipalities (Clarich, 2012) and the introduction of *Città Metropolitane*. The new Part V added to the concept of subsidiarity by stating that administrative functions are also assigned on the basis of principles of *adeguatezza* (suitability) and *differenziazione* (distinction). By the first one it is meant that the level of government must be suited to exercising the administrative functions it possesses, otherwise the higher tier of government should take over; while the second principle underpins a differentiation of functions based on the intrinsic characteristics of municipalities (e.g. population). As regards the new tier of government, *Città Metropolitane*, after some issues of constitutional legitimacy faced during the years, Act n. 56 of 2014 “Del Rio”, provided a more detailed identification of their administrative functions. The *Città Metropolitane* inherit the identical boundaries as the old Provinces²⁸ and in terms of administrative functions the new legislation states that the metropolitan cities inherit the fundamental functions of the provinces (among which local public transport) and adds new functions (among which mobility). It results that local public transport and mobility are functions shared by the municipality and the provincial/metropolitan level for which collaboration would be expected if the service and circumstances require it.

This is confirmed in the statute of the metropolitan city of Rome where it is stated that the metropolitan government plans, develops, and implements the metropolitan mobility network.

This is also in line with the new national fiscal legislation that confirmed that infrastructure planning and local transport are functions of the metropolitan and local level of government. The next sub-section deals with the regulations and reforms concerning the fiscal and financial autonomy of different levels of local government and with implementation regulations for infrastructural strategic projects.

²⁸ As the Del Rio Law no. 56/2014.

FISCAL REFORMS AND IMPLEMENTATION REGULATIONS

The first measure of fiscal nature to consider is the already mentioned law n. 42 of 2009. This law set out legislation for the fiscal and financial autonomy of municipalities, provinces, metropolitan cities and regions. From a fiscal point of view, it preceded the Del Rio Law and the actual establishment of Città Metropolitane, marking a clear strategy on the future organization of metropolitan cities. The law included "territorial and infrastructure planning" as fundamental functions of future Città Metropolitane (art. 23). It also defined a special and transitory status for Rome as capital city and confirmed that (art. 24) "organization and operation of urban services, with special reference to public transport and mobility" are administrative functions of the city of Rome until the metropolitan level of government (Città Metropolitana di Roma Capitale) is established (1 January 2015). This was confirmed by a following decree, n. 61/2012, which determined in a more detailed way the administrative functions of the city of Rome. Such functions were then to be assigned to the metropolitan government of Rome only upon and after its creation, while no reference was made meanwhile to the provincial level. The same decree went on to provide that for decisions on infrastructure investment and the subsequent implementation of projects, and use of financial resources, tight cooperation between different institutional levels was necessary. An *ad-hoc* agreement was to be signed between the city of Rome and the regional and national institutions, denying, in such a way, the importance of the metropolitan or provincial level of government and therefore the inclusion of the municipalities that are part of it in matters concerning the metropolitan scale. Such agreement was to be approved by the CIPE upon request of the prime minister and the projects and investments were thus included in the national investment plan of law 443/2001. Law 443/2001 assumes great relevance and importance for our discussion since it provided special legislation for large infrastructure projects and national financial resources earmarked through special laws and decrees (e.g. decree 159/2007; law 133/2014; CIPE decision 22 July 2010).

THE "LEGGE OBIETTIVO" REGIME

The new regulatory regime that governs the construction and implementation of strategic megaprojects has been introduced, in Italy, by law no. 443/2001 (publicly known as Legge Obiettivo) and respective operative decree no. 190/2002, and it changed completely the institutional setting of megaprojects' implementation. Such new organisation constitutes exception of the previous

framework law²⁹ about ordinary public works regarding a) the entrustment of the private contractor (the sponsor); b) the draft of the preliminary and final and executive plans; c) the tasks of both the local authorities and the contractor (the procurement rules); d) the provision of Environmental Impact Analysis (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA).

Moreover, the Legge Obiettivo introduces in Italy the figure of the *general contractor* that, until then, was mostly present in the Anglo-Saxon system; along with this new figure came the practice of *turnkey* public procurement³⁰ for large infrastructures. The new regime, though, only applies to those projects that hold national strategic importance; such a status is bestowed by the national Ministry for Transport through its technical-operative unit *Struttura Tecnica di Missione*. A work that awards this preferential status is inserted in the PIS (Strategic Infrastructures Programme); the PIS is periodically updated. The decision to insert a public infrastructure in the PIS can be either a national initiative or somehow (indirectly) invoked by the local authority³¹ in which the infrastructure is located. When the Ministry of Transport makes the decision official, the project automatically gets three levels of joint funding (from the state, the region and the municipality – the national state normally bears the major share).

Once the authorisation is received, the municipality has responsibility to design the tender terms, the awarding criteria, and the typology of the auction (i.e. how many firms to be admitted to the tender, the required characteristics and the like).

From the moment when the tender is won onwards, the general contractor has full operative responsibility over the work's turnkey delivery. Most importantly – for the sake of this paper – it finds a further institutional reference in the Ministry for Transport, possibly bypassing the local scale if needed. For instance, veto power, and negative advice about the work's modifications (also and often causing notable cost overruns) could be easily bypassed by the firm through turning to the Ministry's technical unit (though the act of changing the nature of the modification issued).

The tasks related to the infrastructure's implementation are allocated as follows; the general contractor:

²⁹ The framework law for public works – law no. 109/1994 – collects all the normative prescriptions on the matter and set the standards for ordinary public works. It has been validated by the Decree of the President of the Republic no. 207/2010.

³⁰ Turnkey projects are peculiar types of public procurements: a turnkey project is not only executed by the private contractor, but also planned and possibly entirely subcontracted by it. It represents a fundamental turning point for both public administrations and private sectors. The former are reduced in their control and planning roles, the latter is subject to higher profile competition that now involves issues of management and supply chain organisation.

³¹ In an interview with a prominent public servant of Roma Capitale I learnt that, as predictable, the decision over which projects are inserted in the draft is only formally a national one. Actually, at least in the case of Metro C, it has been a long negotiated one between the national government and the then mayor Walter Veltroni.

- Has full responsibility on the planning of the project³²;
- Has the duty to fully finance the work in advance;
- Exerts consultancy to the municipality on anti-corruption and anti-mafia infiltration measures;
- Appoints the construction manager³³;
- Has the power to freely subcontract the whole work³⁴
- Indirectly takes on the risk management as to construction.

The municipality:

- Is appointed with 'high surveillance' tasks over the work in progress³⁵;
- Chooses the private contractor via a *private* call for bids;
- Approves small-range modifications³⁶;
- Has a (normally minor) share on the project's funding;
- Receives the management of the work, when executed and put in operation.

The State, through its Ministry for Transport's technical unit (*Struttura Tecnica di Missione*) and through the inter-ministerial committee (the CIPE):

- Periodically monitors the implementation's work in progress;
- It is the main technical advisor of the national state;
- Approves – via *ad-hoc* deliberations – the modifications demanded by the constructor.

A special clarification has to be done for the role of the construction manager – now internal to the contractor. This role used to be expression of the administration, as a key planning and control prerogative. This role, for example, makes it possible for the general contractor to freely decide whether an archaeological evidence occurrence is worth a normal modification or a

³² Even though it is just optional, the general contractor can be appointed with tasks covering all three levels of planning: preliminary, final and executive.

³³ This role used to be an emanation of the municipality (with the previous law: 109/1994).

³⁴ According to the rules, a further tier of subcontracting is possible; for this third level, contracting firms are not easily accountable in the public records and this is one of the aspects that make corruption an actual possibility in Italian megaprojects.

³⁵ Note that this tasks overlaps with the ones of the construction manager (as said, appointed by the contractor). As a senior executive of the contracting agency Roma Metropolitane says: «taking over even occasional surveillance functions in the construction site means incurring in new costs for the PA and further delays».

³⁶ However, the decisive say about the approval of the modifications is held by the technical unit (*Struttura Tecnica di Missione*) inside the Ministry. The contractor can appeal to the national ministry for rejected modifications.

special one (*variante sostanziale*³⁷). This latter is called for when an unexpected event is to be followed by a budget increase: it is a key element of the project's cost overrun.

THE METRO C CASE ANALYSIS

Mobility infrastructures are ideal cases for researching multi-level governance and public-private alliances. Their huge costs determine frequently mixed finance allocations (Altshuler & Luberoff, 2003; Ponti, Moroni, & Ramella, 2015; Weiner, 1999). Large engineering projects bear systematic risk management for which exclusive public sector control appears to be insufficient and inefficient (Miller, Lessard, Michaud, & Floricel, 2001; Salamon & Elliott, 2002). All these aspects reveal crucial parts of the institutional context of a given territorial unit.

The Italian example with regard to infrastructure policy implementation has been examined in this work as it is particularly revealing about metropolitan government processes because of the territorially heterogeneous inventory of actors (Allulli & Tortorella, 2013). These actors enjoy diverse and overlapping competences in large projects implementation as these latter come under the different normative specifications: sectorial normative (construction sector), public procurement and public contracts (national and EU regulations), waiving regulations (Legge Obiettivo). Let alone the public bodies that superintend cultural, historical, archaeological and architectural property, that represent a further institutional level³⁸.

The Legge Obiettivo acts in this context as an *institution* itself, able to change radically the norms, relations and the routines in megaprojects' planning and delivery. The choice of the Metro C case situates in just this institutional argument (see Miller et al., 2001 for the significance of institutional arrangements), with some further key unique features.

³⁷ Note that, at the national level, a recent report on the Legge Obiettivo implementation from the Anticorruption Authority estimated the occurrence of modifications is around 70% of all the works present in the PIS. In 183 out of 263 cases (measured in work's parcels) the modifications increased the budget.

³⁸ Also the Superintendence for Archaeological and Cultural Heritage is fragmented between a national and a local actor. This division creates overlapping jurisdictions, as the *property* of a new archaeological discovery because it is not clear which body of the two is primarily responsible for its tutorship.

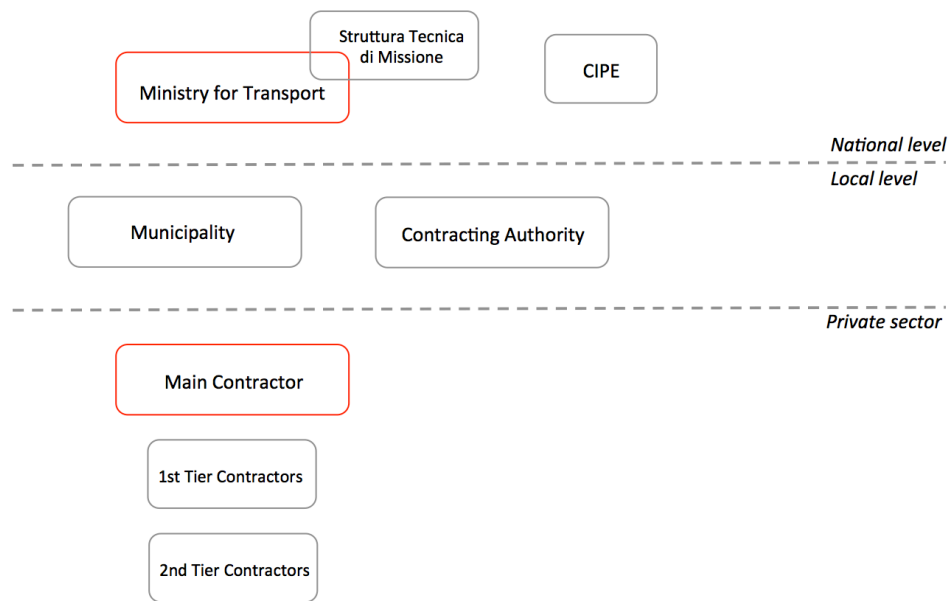


FIGURE 7 - The scheme of the Legge Obiettivo for the Metro C (elaboration of the author)

INSTITUTIONAL FRAGMENTATION IN THE NETWORKED POLITY OF METRO C'S IMPLEMENTATION

As discussed in the literature review section, this case study of a project implementation finds reflections in both governance and organizational research. As to the first point, the concept of 'networked polity' expresses that policy undertakings have become increasingly intergovernmental relational environments, the building actors of which are acting following an equal level of sovereignty and in which the institutions of the central state is back into actual function. The case of the Metro C is suitable for this concept's demonstration for a number of reasons.

First of all, the "schizophrenic" gait that the institutional reforms have been keeping in Italy to date as to polity definition (devolution of powers): the national state that had been finally put aside in the managements of big projects in the early 1990s came back with restoration brought up by the approval of the Legge Obiettivo.

The municipality, appointed with tasks of surveillance and modifications' approval can be (and has actually been) overcome by the executor by issuing a different type of modification, while its traditional tasks of control over construction sites is cancelled because the construction manager figure is now an *internal* to the firm itself. The firm is in fact on the same (if not higher) institutional level of the municipality.

Although the notion of 'networked polity' is conceived as a consequence of multi-scalar administrative empowerment that in turn is believed to have an

overall beneficial effect on democratisation and effectiveness of public policy action (Kassim & Le Galès, 2010; Morgan, 2004) the case of the Metro C is a demonstration of how in absence of a clear scalar leadership, with great dispersion of powers and in fluid jurisdictions, it is just the effectiveness of action to be affected. An unclear «chain of command» (Ansell, 2000) has determined the delays and cost overrun stemming from the broader manoeuvre margin enjoyed by the private executor.

A way for conflating institutional public action could have been the activation of the metropolitan scale by proceeding with giving content to the whole legislative framework already in place discussed in the previous sections. The failure of this approach is pictured in the words of the mayor of Rome's neighbouring municipality of Montecompatri, the municipality in which the Metro C ends.

«No request for an inter-municipal cooperation was ever advanced to my municipality to manage the critical aspects of this infrastructure; we (the Municipality of Montecompatri, authors' note) were formally taken in only because in the territory of Montecompatri is located the segment of the old railway line to be renovated in order to get the early state finance.

For instance, we had serious concerns as to the management of security in the surroundings of the station 'Pantano' but we had to sort the thing out ourselves. The "conferenze di servizi" (the Italian decisional body to make institutional actors cooperate, authors' note) were totally useless as they reflect the political weight of local institutions and we cannot compete with the political weight of the municipality of Rome».

Mr Marco de Carolis

The Responsible for the Procedure³⁹, Mr Andrea Sciotti, highlights the conflicts that systematically emerge when the public institutional side does not work monolithically. He stated in an interview:

«High surveillance' tasks retained by the municipality overlap with the sovereignty that the contractor has over the work's construction sites – through the figure of the construction manager. Note that controlling the everyday functioning of the construction sites is key for the fair evaluation of the modification issued when, for instance, an archaeological discovery is made. That was once a prerogative of the municipality, but with the Legge Obiettivo, the construction manager is internal to the constructor. Being responsible for 'high surveillance' is like coupling the same prerogative, but the actual control role is played by the one that is physically present on the site – the construction manager».

Mr Andrea Sciotti

To this ambiguous role game adds the national institutional level that reproduces the functions of approval of modifications: both the municipality (through the contracting agency) and the CIPE are formally involved in the evaluation and approval of the modifications. Not too paradoxically, two

³⁹ The responsible for the Procedure is a public juridical figure in Italy – in this case an employee of in-house company *Roma Metropolitane*. The responsibility for the procedure has been introduced in 1990 law 241/1990 and it guarantees the transparency of the administrative procedure.

institutional levels responsible for the same task make the same task rather difficult to fulfil.

This exemplifies the fragmentation of public control competences amongst institutional levels; a situation in which the public actor – broadly understood – is substantially «expelled from the process of realisation of public infrastructures» (Bortoli, 2011, p. 17). This paper argues that this expulsion is determined by diluting the public actor's functions into a leadership-free organisation, while conferring a prominent sovereignty over project management to the general contractor. This exclusion is evidently a direct consequence of the pulverisation of the public interest among the many actors involved in public works and public procurement.

Not surprisingly, the judicial inquiry of the Italian Anti-corruption Authority (ANAC, 2015) denounced that many modifications were illegitimately paid to the general contractor by the public sector, and I would advance the explanation that a modification (which is illegitimate *in principle* in a turnkey type of work) is correctly evaluated when a single body is accountable for it. In any other circumstance, the likelihood of benefit exchange between politics and economy are tremendously increased.

The above situation resembles what happened in Rome as to Metro C project development. The long effort of promotion⁴⁰ ended up in the decision to exploit the opportunity of the Legge Obiettivo, and that fatally jeopardised the ability of the public realm to keep the grip on the public interest side, and planning and control duties⁴¹.

THE METRO C PROJECT ECOLOGY

The 'ecology' of the Metro C project configured as a system where governance roles are distributed in increasingly irrelevant allocations among different geographical scales, and where the management of the project is instead compacted around the role of the private constructor (see Fig. 8). The management of projects, if structured like the Legge Obiettivo has done, makes possible a discretionary subcontracting of the whole work by the private contractor: Metro C s.c.p.a (the general contractor) subcontracted the whole work to first and second tier subcontractors.

As it stood in the Metro C facts, the two key aspects that provoked a reshaping of the institutional relations between actors are:

⁴⁰ Remember that the municipality of Rome committed to the project as a structural part of a broader metropolitan mobility policy in 1993.

⁴¹ It is my intention to make clear that this institutional context thrown up by the Legge Obiettivo can jeopardise the innovative and entrepreneurial skills of the private sector as well. Further research on this aspect might be produced to give the big picture of the political economy of megaprojects in Italy – in the third paper of this thesis.

- The insertion in the system of a new sovereignty (that of the General Contractor) that with its new attributions as to the management of the work creates an unprecedented imbalance in contracting;
- Not having taken into account that the new regime would have conflicted with existing sectorial norms (notably construction site regulations and subcontracting regulations).

Therefore, the public side of Metro C implementation became, almost paradoxically, at the same time fragmented and re-scaled. Meanwhile that lost unity in the institutional realm has been balanced with the strengthening of the general contractor role in a number of everyday practices (like the fierce conflict in the control over construction sites that resembles just the conflictuality between the governance and the management of projects) that are fundamental to project delivery. In these terms, the failure of the Metro C implementation (namely cost overrun and delays) is a result of the institutional reorganisation between the governance/management.

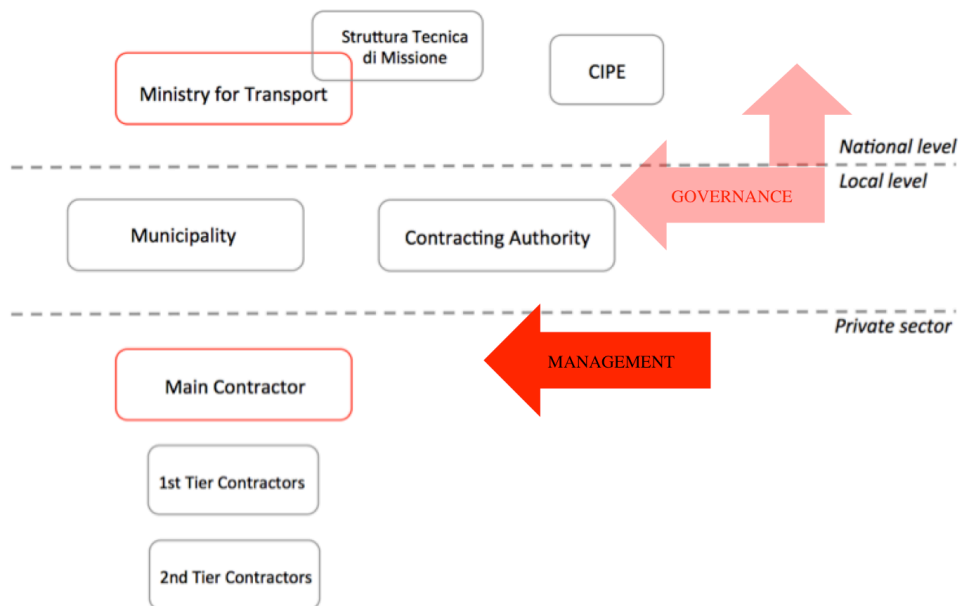


FIGURE 8 – Distributed governance vs. concentrated management (elaboration of the author)

Without going into the deepest detail of the project ecology theoretical construct, we might say that in the organisational/institutional context (both as to the multi-level governance and as to the management) sketched after the introduction of the Legge Obiettivo the Metro C as an organisational/decisional system lived a life of *heterarchical* order (Hedlund, 1986; Hedlund & Rolander, 1990) within its constituent parts (the actors in figures 7 and 8). That is to say

that no evidence of a leader body can be spotted; tasks are remixed and doubled among governmental scales and the private sector so that none of them could take the lead of the project control.

However, the “leadership-followership” relations implied by a hierarchical institutional architecture are instead re-established between the general contractor and the subcontractors to which the work has been fully entrusted. There it is where organisational hierarchy is recreated. In fact, it is important to keep in mind that the private contractor managed three key processes of project implementation: the construction site organisation, the planning of the infrastructure, the full management of subcontractors.

In this way, the *vis-à-vis* type of relations that the city-based general contractor could enjoy with the local entrepreneurial milieu of Rome is evident; the project’s management in which the general contractor moved was fairly local as to the relationships with the subcontractors whereas its project ecology was scale-indifferent regarding the relations with public institutions. Former deputy mayor Walter Tocci admitted in an interview that the rationale behind adopting the Legge Obiettivo as a new regulatory tool might be understood as a way to reach out to the *local* entrepreneurial community in the sector while keeping the discretion to resort to national contacts (in the Ministry for Transport and in the CIPE) when needed.

Therefore, the ‘scalar interpenetration’ that the Legge Obiettivo provoked in the Metro C governance turned the relational environment of the project into a new and *a*-spatial (see Grabher & Ibert, 2012) type of project ecology. The general contractor was able to entertain administrative relations with the national governmental level (the CIPE) as well as with the municipal level (Roma Metropolitana, often for similar – if not identical – matters). On the other hand it created another *sub*-ecology, so to speak, with the mostly local group of subcontractors to which the general contractor could fully subcontract the work. This sub-ecology involves relationships with the Archaeological Superintendence too: because the archaeologists were given – thanks to the sovereignty of the general contractor on the construction sites – wide discretionary prerogatives as to the time required for studying an archaeological discovery. The “preference” of the general contractor for a stop-and-go schedule happened to be in line with the archaeologists’ preference to devote as much time as they needed for evaluating and studying discoveries.

The overall effect of these two dynamics on the whole project (found akin to the networked polity and multi-scalar project ecology theoretical constructs) was that on the one hand *governance* functions resulted diffused among a number of public institutions with no clear leadership, and on the other hand the *management* functions were concentrated on the hands of the private contractor (Fig. 8).

Although a significant part of the newest literature on project management (Brady & Davies, 2014; Davies & Mackenzie, 2014; Grabher & Thiel, 2014) highly values the heterarchical institutional organisation of projects in circumstances of complexity, it seems that in the Metro C case this has only weakened the smooth and *accountable* progression of the project delivery. The

idea behind these ultimate conceptualisations of complex projects is that they cannot be confined to scalar silos; in this view, imposing limitations (be they geographical or technical) to projects would go to the detriment of its *learning* potential. This is certainly true for advanced projects embedded in fairly 'advanced' political-economic systems; the eloquent title of a monographic number of Regional Studies – *Cool Projects, Boring Institutions* – seems to suggest just this need to unleash knowledge potentials within project institutional environments. Nevertheless, one should also consider the possibility that re-institutionalisation might produce some sort of 'planned confusion' for projects that are embedded in poorly goal-oriented polities. In the words of an important consultant for the City of Rome in those days:

«Turnkey projects are run in lots of places all around the world – of course they are not bad in themselves. Nonetheless, it seems to me that in the end their failure or success is largely determined by the quality of the “performers”. The problem, here, were the actors».
Giulio Fioravanti

A hypothetical metropolitan governance of the project would have ensured a stronger public leadership that would have affected both the multi-level governance and the project management of the Metro C, possibly with no need to resort to a turnkey delivery project. On the other hand, even in the case of a turnkey project, many of the problems stemming from a fragmented public actor could have been avoided by a supra-municipal government able to coalesce tasks and competences.

The effects of the fragmented institutions are summarised below:

- Public governance duties and roles have been pulverised among the various bodies representing the national and the city level.
- These two levels are somehow discretionary interlocutors for the general contractor that inherits the bulk of project management functions and manages *directly* construction sites.
- The administrative form that would have enabled integrated public control functions (the metropolitan government) have been deliberately avoided.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper tried to picture the life of a large engineering project in terms of governmental coordination and public-private relationships. I started from the observation that, in Italy, actual practices shaped by institutional-governmental reorganisation struggle to emerge.

The paper described the complex (and incomplete) legal framework in which the governance of the project Metro C in Rome was embedded, and the ensuing fragmented and dispersed institutional environment.

Through the case study, the purpose of this paper was to outline the phenomenology of institutional fragmentation – produced by the adoption of a special regulatory regime – in a large engineering project's day-to-day practice.

The case study showed that, in presence of (although on-going) government institutional reform (metropolitan scale government), and in a heavily patched regulatory context, governance actors do not establish a set of relational routines aimed at making the work's completion a collective objective.

This paper might serve as a departure point for exploring the actual relationships between rescaling processes, the reconfiguration/redistribution of power in city government and governance, and the construction of major cities' global profile. State power, according to Bob Jessop (1997) is present across a number of governmental scales, and in such less *monolithic* scalar environment major cities ultimately long for projecting their governance into the international arena.

Possible future paths of research might explore the phenomenology of the opposite objective: that of taking advantage of such public re-institutionalisation for deliberately confining policies (projects, in this case) in closed and *global-averse* environments.

The third paper of this thesis aims at deepening just this aspect of the case study.

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CHAPTER 3

A 'STATUS QUO' URBAN REGIME: THE PUBLIC-PRIVATE INFORMAL COALITION FOR ROME'S METRO C

ABSTRACT

The new metro line – Metro C, now under construction – in Rome has had so far an incredibly difficult implementation featuring cost overruns and delays in delivery. This article is the final part of a three-paper thesis that delved into the causes of such a troubled implementation. The Metro C is treated here as a particularly revealing case as to urban governance: it is argued, in fact, that what emerged from the analysis justifies the signalling of an urban-regime-like type of governance relationships between the administration and the local construction sector.

More precisely, the use of a new national law (the Legge Obiettivo) that was introduced in 2001 for governing strategic projects in Italy was found to have been favouring, in the case of the Metro C, a preferential relationship between the administration of Rome and local constructors in order to secure the role of downtown business as general contractor in this very important urban turnkey project. This insight generated the hypothesis of the existence of a 'regime' type of urban governance, although a somewhat hybrid one, according to the usual taxonomy of urban regimes. The paper concludes that the Legge Obiettivo – considered in those characteristics that provoked a reallocation of planning responsibilities between private and public realms – has been used to substantially exclude extra-Roman businesses from the tender in accord with a type of relationship that had the objective to maintain the status quo in urban governance relations.

INTRODUCTION

This paper stresses the linkage between the Legge Obiettivo – the special law that governed the implementation of strategic infrastructures in Italy over the past 15 years – as an institutional device with an hypothesised form of urban regime in Rome (d'Albergo & Moini, 2015). What follows tries to give a complementary explanation (with a speculative intent) of the rationales behind (and the implication of) the Legge Obiettivo adoption for the Metro C.

The paper wants to find margins of consistency with the theory of urban regimes, with the intent to give substance to the special nature of the case of the Metro C as to its significance for being theoretically relevant in the face of the literature presented. The case of an urban infrastructural project is used to infer the existence of a particular form of a *maintenance* urban regime in Rome.

The actual moment of the tender (without forgetting to take stock of what have been discussed in the previous parts of this thesis) that awarded the work to the current executor – namely the Metro C S.c.p.A. consortium –, in my opinion, is the circumstance that mirrored the presence of the regime type of alliance between the local administration of Rome and local business élite.

The entry point chosen to substantiate such a hypothesis is an aspect of the Legge Obiettivo that has been so far poorly investigated, i.e. its usage as a device for public administrations to spot preferential private actors as to technical and organisational skills. That is to say that, in the years in which the Legge Obiettivo governed the most important Italian development projects, public administrations had the opportunity to select discretionally (and not according to an *efficiency* logic) the firms to work with (the division of labour that urban governance literature refers to); and this was possible thanks to the planning sovereignty that the Legge Obiettivo bestowed to the private sector (the general contractor).

The paper is organised as follows.

The first section deals with the theoretical framework against which the case will be confronted. The literature around urban governance and urban regime theory is presented and discussed in the aspects that most relate to the case of Rome, and some thorny issues of generalisation and cross-country comparison are raised. This part serves the purpose of outlining the *deviant* attribute that the case holds against the regime literature.

The second section introduces the (neglected, research-wise) role of the Legge Obiettivo as a tool for administrations to select private partners according to a narrow (or at least tailored and discretionary) understanding of technology. In other words, arguing that the municipality of Rome used the adoption of the new law as a way to secure the protagonist role of local business in the future implementation of Metro C. I shall then use this insight in order to advance a speculative interpretation according to which Rome displays a regime type of

public-private alliance taking inspiration of an application that has been already introduced by d'Albergo and Moini (2015).

The third part is an account of the actual circumstances in which the tender was issued and awarded, highlighting how the previous ambitious project for the new line⁴² had been abandoned targeting a lower quality level of implementation to favour local businesses.

In the fourth part, the findings are discussed referring to the most relevant elements pointed out in the literature discussion, with the objective of finding an adequate place in the taxonomy of regimes.

With this in mind, in the last section, I shall try to argue that the style of conducting public works' realisation (also as we saw in the first paper, follows an institutional path dependency in decision-making) betrays the presence of a public-private *preferential* relationship in the city of Rome that is very much (even if not entirely) akin to a *maintenance* regime (Stone, 1993) oriented to the conservation of the status quo.

Finally the conclusions are drawn by mentioning how the poor level of competition is considered in economic theory – remarking that what has been observed in the case analysis can be referred to as a public failure.

CONTEMPORARY URBAN GOVERNANCE AND URBAN REGIMES

The debate around the political economy of local policies presents a wide range of interpretations, cases and perspectives. Be they referred to the regional scale (Keating, 1998), or the urban scale (Le Gales, 1998; Molotch, 1976) they equally represent one of the main focuses of contemporary policy analysis.

Regardless of the geography (in the Western world, at least) it is now fairly understood that, from the 1970s on, command-and-control functions of local governments has been radically reshaped in favour of a new division of labour between the market and the state (Elkin, 1987); an exchange of resources between the private and the public sector that sees these two increasingly dependent on one another. Such a changed political economy landscape stems from two assumptions: on the one hand the decreasing *capacity to act* (Stone, 1989) of local public apparatuses, associated with their lesser ability to mobilise resources (technical, relational, and even political) in order to fulfil their policy agendas. On the other hand, local businesses are constantly (and for their very nature) in seek of solutions for channelling their capital in excess, what in the

⁴² See the historical reconstruction of the project in the first paper of the thesis.

field of urban studies has been famously called “the capital surplus absorption problem’ (Harvey, 2011). These very broad offer-and-demand trends encounters, so to say, in new arrangements of local governance that mirrors a political economy based on cooperation and mutual dependence between market and state. In a nutshell, large cities’ governments actually try to *incentivise* what it can no longer determine: investment (Savitch & Kantor, 2002; Savitch & Thomas, 1991).

Up to here, nothing particularly new, in general terms. What makes these reflections up-to-date for local polities is that the former began to apply to the latter because of the retreat of central states (speaking about ‘federal government’ would be more appropriate, as the debate started in the US) in delivering funds to solve large cities’ budget crises⁴³.

Particular forms of government-civil society preferential relationships can emerge depending on the contextual conditions or the strategic objective that such alliances seek to pursue. Contextual conditions as to the changing nature of the government practice – such as the government-governance shift – give birth to a more inclusive array of actors for policy formation, sponsorship, and implementation that are normally called *policy networks* (Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000; MacLeod & Goodwin, 1999). The policy network, in this way, can be considered as the natural outcome of the lower financial autonomy of public governments. Even if stemming from the same ‘epochal’ change of urban financial distress, a different form of alliance between public and private actors can emerge if the ultimate rationale is the pursuit of a specific (policy) objective. This is the case of urban regimes that are types of *convergence* constructed around a shared objective (between public and private realms) rather than generated by a changed institutional environment that could be the shift from the governmental verticality to governance’s horizontality.

If the *alliance* between private and public realms in a given policy or project is considered as appropriate for examining the case in question (the Metro C), different forms of private-public interpenetrations such as *hybrid* governance (Skelcher, 2005; Skelcher & Smith, 2015) are of little use here. The ‘problem’ with these conceptualisations is that somehow they are too *advanced* in practical terms; hybridity considers new *formal* organisations – private-public partnerships, PPPs – in which these two realms melt into. In such literature (see also Joldersma & Winter, 2002; Koppell, 2003), public and private sectors join in partnerships with a fundamental objective: sharing risk. This clearly does not apply to the Metro C case either for formal reasons (no PPP was ever put on) and because the very issue of project risk allocation is problematic.

Urban regime theory can, therefore, be considered as a theoretical device used for understanding a possible aftermath of the urban governance order (see

⁴³ The famous crisis that hit New York City in the mid-1970s is generally brought up to exemplify such a key turn in intergovernmental politics. The day when president Gerald Ford spectacularly refused to bailout New York City’s budget deficit with federal money – allegedly declaring he would have let the city “drop dead” – represent the moment where it all changed.

Pierre, 2011), it has been introduced with a seminal work (Stone, 1989) that studied the birth and endurance of the pro-growth urban coalition from 1946 to 1988 in Atlanta. Urban regimes are defined as «sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given issue area» (Bevir, 2007). Public and private actors put their (respective) spurious resources together in order to get to a shared objective; such objective can be of various kinds.

Regime theory, therefore, identify a specific rationale that stands at the basis of public-private alliances: resources, for example are understood more widely, meaning that an electoral victory for a local political coalition is not enough for securing the ability to make its policy agenda move forward; from this assumption derives the fact that **governing** coalitions are needed to overcome such deficiency and, most importantly, it might be **significantly different** from the political coalition that comes out of the electoral booth (Ferman, 1985). Another consequence of this condition is that a private actor in a given city is fairly stable and its relationship with the local government exists potentially under different political executives.

In this sense, the tenets of pluralism – that, overall, maintain the “**sufficiency** of the state” (meaning the political executive, in this case) – are partly contradicted.

In one of the articles in which he consolidates his conceptualisations about regimes, Clarence Stone (1993) identifies various types of regimes that, according to this discussion, reflect also the different rationales that can **inspire** them. Growth and urban development – the competition for investments that is generally associated with American-like types of urban regimes – is not the only driver of public-private urban alliances. On the contrary, **conservation** can be an important motivation for an urban alliance to perpetuate itself. This is the advanced rationale proposed by this paper for the Metro C case – i.e. the Roman case.

Technical capacity (all the more so for a engineering project implementation and for public works in general) is not an irrelevant issue if compared against the paradigm of regimes.

Furthermore, regime theory, if understood as a **model** rather than a theory (see Dowding, Dunleavy, King, Margetts, & Rydin, 1999) (given its scarce ability to predict or explain its changing nature across different contexts of applicability) it can be used for understanding a wide range of informal coalitions between administration and businesses in extra-US urban governances.

In the next section, the margins of exportability of this model are discussed.

A FRAME FOR THE CASE STUDY: ESTABLISHING A COMMON LANGUAGE WITH URBAN POLITICS LITERATURE

In order to establish an organic (yet spurious) relationship between theories of urban governance (that is regimes, in this case) and the case study in object, an exercise of “common language” discovery is necessary (see Mossberger & Stoker, 2001). This paper has been written being well aware of all the pitfalls and dangers of cross-country comparison, especially – among the ones pointed out by Giovanni Sartori (1991) – those of *parochialism* and *misclassification*. That is to say that, briefly, when a social concept – or worse, a theory – is imported from one context to another, it tends to acquire a whole lot of context-specific attributes (a direct researcher’s responsibility) that generally run the risk of invalidating the whole theoretical construct.

Nevertheless, remaining faithful to what has been declared in the introduction to this thesis, the ambivalence of the case (as to what *type* of case it is) allows, in my opinion, a little ‘concept stretching’ when it comes to a speculative interpretation⁴⁴. After all – regardless of the coincidence in the following citation – «governance, as described in the models will play out differently in different national contexts; pro-growth governance in Italy will, perhaps, be differently organised and conducted than similar governance in Finland» (Pierre, 2011, p. 7).

The reference literature cannot be but that of urban governance and urban regimes. In other words, even if the case will turn out to be (as it actually does) unfit to a full application of regime theory, it can be conceived as a local version of it. In accordance with the features of a *deviant* case (Lijphart, 1971, 1975), this single case study analysis presents some unique features that are here pointed out. In this section I will go through the schematic organisation for the case study to be inserted in the urban regime framework. Later on in this paper, I shall analyse this specific features in order to assess continuities and discontinuities with the paradigm.

⁴⁴ Also the phronesis method, as it has been developed in the introduction of this thesis (see the figure about the Gödel’s theorems of incompleteness), allows to treat this case study as an in-depth research waiting to be reconnected to a theoretical tree. In this perspective, I partly consider this paper as an indication for further research with this very aim. Note that, as Hayek taught (1945) knowledge is context-specific, and, according to Flyvbjerg and as we discussed in the introduction, the “context-specific” attribute is a key ingredient for the heuristic significance of a good phronetic research.

THE LEGGE OBIETTIVO AS A FILTER FOR MEDIOCRE ORGANISATIONAL - TECHNOLOGICAL CAPACITY

The Legge Obiettivo in Italy has been studied and assessed (especially indirectly) in a number of areas of study. Megaprojects' effects on democracy and participation (Bobbio, 2006), and intergovernmental relationships and environmental impact (Brambilla, Erba, & Ponti, 2003; Clarich & Fiorentino, 2007; Damonte, 2009) above all.

Nonetheless, among the various classes of effects that the Legge Obiettivo adoption can have in a given public work's decision-making and implementation, there is one that is particularly underrated. It is the impact that it might have on the quality of technology and the amount of innovation to be employed in the process of public-private cognitive exchange. More precisely, when a public work is put to tender, the public is implicitly looking for capacities and expertise out in the business community. The balance between the needs of the public as to social problem-solving and costs (demand-side), and the firms' capability as to technology (offer-side) is to be guaranteed by public procurement rules and regulations (Edler & Georghiou, 2007; Edquist, Vonortas, Zabala-Iturriagoitia, & Edler, 2015; European Commission, 2014). Although the Legge Obiettivo was not exactly a public procurement act, it had deep implications⁴⁵ for the control that the public realm is capable of as to the choices connected to the type of implementation it *intends* to pursue (or it needs to pursue in terms of economic, time, organisational, or political constraints). Recently the EU, for example, has been a notable player in re-editing demand-side policies for spurring innovation capacities⁴⁶ among the business community – in the wake of the well-known joint document presented by the governments of three major European countries in order to motivate a new approach to innovation through public procurement (French, German, & UK Governments, 2004).

If we think, as we did in the previous paper, of the Legge Obiettivo as an *institution* itself – in the sense of its inherent power to affect, change, shape or second rules, behaviours and relationships in a given community – we should also acknowledge its deep significance in affecting the quality of technology employed in the implementation phase. Therefore, the adoption of such a regulatory setting, in short – to use a locution that is dear to urban governance literature – broadly reforms the *division of labour between the market and the state*⁴⁷. The explanation for this is, again, to be retrieved from the *meta*-decisions triggered by the main decision (in this case the adoption of the Legge

⁴⁵ See the *meta-decisions* discussed in the first paper of this thesis.

⁴⁶ Investments in R&D sectors above all.

⁴⁷ Also, as we observed in the second paper, the division of labour between the different *publics* of the intergovernmental governance is reformed.

Obiettivo), a rapport that has been introduced in the first paper of this thesis. In fact, it is rather easy to appreciate, behind the reform of projects' *planning* responsibilities⁴⁸, the reallocation of tasks between the municipality and the private sector. In this perspective, the effect is two-fold: on the one hand the engineering⁴⁹ of the municipality is hollowed out (thus making, in the best hypothesis, the city's technical professionals simply part-time workers); on the other hand the public function of innovation catalyst, a function that would make of the public administration the pivotal player in establishing a decent level of competition among the firms in the market it addresses, is substantially erased.

THE ANALYSIS OF THE CASE OF METRO C

The case of the Metro C is here analysed hypothesising its interpretation as a type of urban regime – namely a *maintenance* regime, as it has been called in Clarence Stone taxonomy. Such type of regime is characterised by the absence of the innovative and competitive drive for the actors involved. Such aspect is understood best in the Metro C story taking into account the moment of the work's entrustment via a private tender between the public administration and the private sector.

THE AUCTION: LEGITIMATING A BAD CHOICE

The execution of the auction for the Metro C construction represents the moment in which the hypothesis enounced plays out. The administration, through the adoption of the Legge Obiettivo, is hypothesised to have deliberately tried to spot the *local* businesses in the private sector. The PROIMO (Comune di Roma, 1995), together with the joint infrastructural-archaeological project for the *Fori Imperiali* envisaged at the onset the new administration were totally put aside as a result of the Legge Obiettivo adoption. The project was not only too demanding in terms of technical capacities, it would also have required an organisational scheme of the work to which local construction companies simply could not comply. This is because the work, in its initial version, provided for a way of excavating that would have made viable the full

⁴⁸ See the characteristics of the Legge Obiettivo listed in the previous paper.

⁴⁹ Understood as the technical capacity of the public apparatus.

complementarity with possible archaeological evidence for the whole historical centre segment. That project version, here summarised, provided for:

- A single, two-ways tunnel (dug 30-40 meters deep, under the archaeological layer) running along the whole historical-centre part of the line.
- No street-level construction sites (allowing the simultaneous re-organisation – partial pedestrianisation – of the area of the *Fori Imperiali*).
- Underground construction sites cleared up of most of heavy equipment⁵⁰.
- Wide discretionality in deciding which way to go up and install the stations (being the work conducted from below).

As described in the second paper of this thesis, the instructions of the Legge Obiettivo prescribed the total discretionality of the general contractor as to subcontract organisation; one of the problems with the Legge Obiettivo is that it practically doubles the role of the contracting authority (one in the public administration realm: *Roma Metropolitana*, and the other on the construction site: the general contractor). Local heavy equipment is a manufacturing sector upon which local construction businesses are heavily dependent on (d'Albergo & Moini, 2015; Nocera, 2015; Toscano, 2011)⁵¹.

The work was put to tender via a private procedure allowed by the Legge Obiettivo itself (*licitazione privata*) and carrying this new regulation in respect to the previous framework law.

The contract was awarded in 2005 with the scores showed in Table 5 (note that all the participant bidders were Italian), featuring an economic offer from the future “Metro C S.c.p.A.”⁵² that outbid all the others by a remarkable margin. The Metro C S.c.p.A. consortium is formed, among other minor companies, by companies “Astaldi” and “Vianini”, two of the most important developers based in Rome⁵³.

⁵⁰ “Movimento terra” in Italian.

⁵¹ Note that it is just among the extremely messy subcontract environment (in the Metro C work more than 2000 subcontracting firms are operating) that - still underway, in all fairness – judicial enquiry named “Mafia Capitale” found evidence corruption and organised crime infiltrations.

⁵² An S.c.p.A. (*Società Consortile Per Azioni*) is an Italian type of consortium joint-stock company.

⁵³ The company named “Vianini”, in particular, is owned by the Caltagirone family, a very influential family in Rome and Italy, that controls also the “Messaggero”, the most important local newspaper.

<i>Bidders</i>	<i>Score of Technical Bid</i>	<i>Score of Economic Bid</i>	<i>Overall Score</i>
<i>Pizzarotti</i>	29.91	10.15	40.06
<i>T&T</i>	26.79	26.50	53.29
<i>Operae</i>	42.38	35.83	78.21
<i>Impregilo</i>	33.89	22.33	56.22
<i>SIS</i>	22.65	10.53	33.18
<i>Astaldi & Co.</i> <i>(future Metro C S.c.p.A)</i>	51.57	47.00	98.57

TABLE 5 – Results of the Metro C auction (elaboration of the author on Roma Metropolitana data)

Astaldi (the leader of the consortium that will later be named “Metro C S.c.p.A.”, highlighted in blue in Table 5), Vianini and other smaller companies confederated in a special-purpose consortium won the auction, getting real close to the full overall score (98.57 out of 100.00 points), 53% of which constituted by the technical bid and 47% by the economic bid. In the latter, the consortium got the full score. The auction was won by leveraging essentially on 4 elements:

- Guaranteeing that the first segment will be delivered almost 2 years before what initially estimated (technical bid);
- Lowering civil works’ initial price by 18% (economic bid);
- Lowering electro-rail machinery’s initial price by 16% (economic bid);
- Lowering rolling stock provision’s initial price by 14,5% (economic bid).

Note that the first element will be betrayed later in the implementation phase, as explained previously (see Table 2 in the introduction of the thesis) just because of the special regulatory regime that governed the work allowed the full control of the contractor on the construction site’s management (a sovereignty that was previously held by the public administration). This disposition consequently made possible for the contractor to discretionally issue requests (in many cases increasing the budget agreed) for modifications in front of archaeological unexpected events.

Therefore, being the cost of the work about 3 billion euros when put to tender, the winning bidders managed to guarantee that it would have cost about 2.5 billion euros. A significant share of the savings forecast in the economic bid was from the lowered prices of on-site equipment.

THE METRO C PUBLIC-PRIVATE EXCHANGE

This paper looks at the relationship between the then Administration of Rome with local business in the face of the construction of Metro C. But a clarification is necessary. The case of the Metro C implementation that is here addressed partially escapes the classes of phenomena that are typically taken into account for this type of urban political economy studies. Here, the unit of analysis is – although in a less “sophisticate” and broad acceptance than the one used currently in the project management literature – a *project*; a research object that has been deemed to be sometimes detached from a surrounding (and legitimating) policy, and also quite independent from an existing polity or governance order⁵⁴. Nonetheless, projects are still *parts*, more detailed segments of policy undertakings, and as such this one has been treated throughout this thesis.

Some may find the *size* and *nature* of this case as inconsistent with what is generally handled to delve into evidences of urban regimes. Public policies as a whole (and ensuing “big” political and economic objectives or implications like economic restructuring, communities’ social mobility, or administrative change to name a few) are traditionally the focus of urban governance studies (Dahl, 1961; Lowi, 1964; Stone, 1989).

The origin of an urban regime is typically indicated as a reciprocal call for lacking repertoires of *resources* in the political economy of a given polity. Administrators look for that wide spectrum of *enabling* requirements that it (more or less structurally) do not (or do not any longer) own or master (or it can no longer afford).

The analysis starts with what the then deputy mayor (and early promoter of the line) told in an interview. To the question «what would have happened if Metro C was governed under the previous framework act for public works⁵⁵?», Walter Tocci answered as follows:

«Had the current contractors to deal with the Metro C work under that law (the framework law, editor’s note), they probably would have gone bankrupt».

Walter Tocci

That is to say that, organisationally and technically speaking, local businesses could not keep up to the level of planning of an *ambitious* urban project. When they did – for example in the case of Renzo Piano’s Auditorium Parco della

⁵⁴ See the previous paper of this thesis.

⁵⁵ The framework law, *Legge Quadro* 109/1994 (known to the public as “Merloni law”, named after the member of Parliament that drafted it) was the act that governed public works in Italy from the post-Tangentopoli scandal to 2001. Its key disposition was that all public works’ planning stages was firmly in the hands of the public administrations that would put the work to tender with an *operative* (most detailed) plan.

Musica, the music complex built in Rome in the late 1990s⁵⁶ – the executor actually bankrupted. This assumption that sees local businesses in the construction sector as a “depository” of mediocre technical and organisational capacities is confirmed by data on the value added activities of Roman economic base that was, at least up to 2008, significantly low in respect to the value added of industry as a whole (see Toscano, 2011).

THE MUNICIPALITY’S (IN)CAPACITY TO GOVERN?

So, what were the advantages for both sides to decide in favour of this option of lock-in? Exclusive relationships that end up constituting urban regimes, in fact, normally entail reciprocal profit for actors. So the question might be told in this form too: how in the case of the Metro C the adoption of the Legge Obiettivo favoured the encounter of Rome’s public administration and local construction sector’s respective *rationalities*?

First of all, the municipality, technically speaking, enjoyed a lesser degree of financial commitment to the work. Only 18% of the total amount for the work’s financial allocation is now to be borne by the municipality. In this way, the administration is able to give to the city (maybe with some delays) a strategic infrastructure by paying far less than what it would have had to under the previous regulation. Not to mention the significant savings on the technical staff of the public apparatus, completely useless as it was relieved from detailed planning responsibilities: a simple draft of a very undetailed, preliminary tier of planning is no big deal to be entrusted to a heavy team of public-paid professionals.

More trivially, the support that the administration could count on from the local press (see footnote no. 12) was guaranteed by the fact that the Metro C – as a strategic and very advertised public infrastructure, a project on which the centre-left administrations had been binding their prestige to – was now perceived as a collective (in terms of local-found resources) endeavour⁵⁷. This could have had a remarkable electoral repercussion too, also given the prominent role that sub-contractors (mostly offered by local firms) had on the construction.

In the above-mentioned terms the case configures as a typical case of urban regime because the incapacity to act and to govern was dealt with through the partnership with “local ‘downtown’ business”.

⁵⁶ Note that in this case too, archaeological discoveries were made during execution.

⁵⁷ This insight is consistent with the violations observed by the Anticorruption Authority (ANAC, 2015), that denounced modifications paid by the municipality without the legal duty to do so. In this perspective, the municipality accepted to cover non-owed cost overruns consequent to stop-an-go implementation of the work with the objective to complete the project.

One needs to be careful, though, in separating the two concepts: ‘capacity to act’ and ‘capacity to govern’ are two different concepts, although strictly intertwined. If in the urban regime literature these are used more or less as synonyms, their difference is, in the case of the Metro C, particularly worth highlighting. The capacity to act, meaning the effectiveness of the public action to withstand the challenges of the implementation of the policy agenda is here represented by the decision to entrust the technical and organisational responsibility of the work to the local business, whereas the capacity to govern is here represented by the need of the administration to sustain publicly its action, with an eye on consensus building overall. On the other hand, though, and this is why the case is not a universally understandable case of urban regime, the (in)capacity to act was not such a compelling necessity for the administration, as the project was already partially planned and designed following a scheme of complete public control on the work (namely the first version contained in the PROIMO, in 1995, with the participation of the Archaeological Superintendence). So the rationale behind this decision – and this is the reason why the difference between the capacity to act and the capacity to govern had to be clarified in the first place – was rather more responding to a consensus need. Such logic might be spotted in the “superficial” reason interviewees were citing for Veltroni’s decision to adopt the new law: “a sign of *détente* to central politics in a period when centre-left administrations were, nationally, a minority”. Walter Veltroni was, in fact, preparing himself for the leap in national politics, culminating with the resonant defeat of the centre-left coalition in the general elections in 2008.

THE GENERAL CONTRACTOR’S BENEFIT

The private side of the exchange has a lot to do with the conditions guaranteed by the tender’s rules that informed the process with the inputs as to technical and organisational skills the public needed in order to get to an *efficient* implementation of the work.

The local construction sector, represented by the Metro C consortium, had the objective to secure its role in the implementation as executor, avoiding the ‘menace’ of international expertise, by calling for a re-design of the project according to those lower requirements that local businesses could more easily comply with. In this sense, the two more detailed level of planning left blank for the private to draft them according to the expertise it possesses confirms the existence of the alliance. In Clarence Stone’s words: «[...] participation in governance, especially for those who are not public officials, is based heavily on the goals they want to achieve» (Stone, 1993, p. 17). Therefore, the enhanced margins to win the tender were guaranteed by the tight relationships with local subcontractors (a sector, that of subcontracting, left unregulated by the Legge Obiettivo), a condition that allowed those price cuts that made Metro C

S.c.p.A.'s bid the successful one (maximum score in the economic bid: 47.00 points).

A STATUS-QUO URBAN REGIME?

The big picture of the case seems to portrait a system that, in its public and private components, tends to immobilism. None of the two components seems to have a genuine drive towards economic competition or sectorial improvement. It is rather clear that at the core of the decision to adopt the Legge Obiettivo was a *reductionist* intention to favour the local construction sector.

It is worth mentioning here that one of the most important decisions that determined the reductionist approach as to the technological significance of the work (namely the change in the excavating method) was made under the following administration led by Gianni Alemanno, in 2010. After that date, most of the modifications for archaeological discoveries were issued. This fact also confirms the *stability* of regime-type of relationships, that are rather indifferent to the administration in power.

Given all the factors discussed, the type of regime that this one seems to resemble best is the *maintenance regime* that Clarence Stone mentions in his taxonomy of regimes (Stone, 1993). This type of regime, on the other hand, is considered more like a default template against which to compare other, more dynamic types, like the 'developmental regime' (that is the pro-growth regime). The maintenance regime considers, among others, the following features as key:

- No substantial behavioural change (i.e. does not break the path-dependencies);
- No extensive mobilisation of private resources (i.e. reductionist approach);
- A routine level of service (from both sides);
- No particular motivational stimulus.

All these factors are clearly present in the case.

«For nongovernment actors, maintenance calls for *contentment* with things as they are, and *“as they are” may include a state of decline*. For public officials, maintenance means *foregoing opportunities* to make a mark on the world and names for themselves. Maintenance is appealing mostly to provincials who are content to operate in a small arena populated by *friends and neighbors*» (Stone, 1993, p. 18 emphases added).

Considered the fact that Rome is by any means «provincial», the case resonates with the conditions that wants the public realm as poorly ambitious overall (not interested in “making a mark on the world” and pursue prestige for promoters) and private actors “content” with mediocre skills preservation.

FINAL REMARKS: AN AID FROM ECONOMIC THINKING

The case analysed in this paper configures, broadly, as a case of ill relationships between the public sphere and the market. Dysfunctions of this sort are generally called ‘failures’, for their implications on resource mismanagement, and ensuing sub-optimal resource allocation. Tenders are a way for public apparatuses to *simulate* a fair competitive market, so that it can draw on the best (leaning to optimal) option.

The focal point here to discern between two types of failures: a market failure or a state failure? The analysis of the case shows that the ideal firms that would have complied with the early projects’ demanding and innovative requirements were there – probably outside the local and maybe also the national context (and we cannot be sure whether their participation would have occurred if within a different, or even the previous, legal order for public development projects) but the public actor was not able to identify them. On the other hand, this paper argued that although having at disposal a tool (the previous framework law for public works) that would have ensured an operative level of planning such that the *intentions* of the public client as to the correct implementation it had in mind⁵⁸ for the infrastructure could have been a lot clearer to the business community – and a spur for innovative thinking too. Such an opportunity, I argue, was deliberately not seized for the reasons hypothesised and that configure a regime-type of public-private alliance.

According to what we saw in this particular case, then, the norms contained in the Legge Obiettivo did not allow to properly *simulate* a competitive market among the firms in the market and that could have participated to the tender. Actually, they substantially rejected international participations (if any would have participated anyway) by trading innovation and higher technological skills for faster and cheaper implementation (a condition that was, however, largely betrayed). Those same rules, in fact, led to the selection of an *inadequate* firm with respect to the project’s requirements as and accidental evidence likelihood (archaeological discoveries – if archaeological remains can ever be interpreted as ‘accidental’ since there are complete maps that indicate their presence). The

⁵⁸ And the ensuing urban planning and urban design implication of the *Fori Imperiali* project, as discussed in the first paper of the thesis.

Legge Obiettivo system did not make the public decision-maker able to select the *right* contractor or, worse, it gave the administration wide discretionality in order to avoid a fair competition.

In these terms, the cost overrun and delays of the Metro C implementation are a result of a *public failure*.

On the other hand, the margins of the private responsibilities (and thus the extent to which we can speak about a “market failure”), of course, depend on the *size* of the market we are considering: moral, organisational, technological skills that this project’s early plan called for were certainly present on the market, but perhaps an international one. It was just this ‘global’, wider scope that has been carefully avoided.

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CONCLUSIONS

These pages are an attempt to advance possible explanations for the difficult implementation suffered by the Metro C project in Rome. The research question that the thesis wanted to give answers to is a straightforward one: “why is it that such a highly needed, socially welcomed, and heavily funded (with public money) mobility infrastructure suffered so much for being implemented?”

Despite the simplicity of the question, the answer is not an ‘easy’ one.

In order to answer to this fundamental question, I chose to follow:

- A peculiar research method – that is the phronetic approach – aimed at impacting directly on the actual practice of policy making and policy implementation:
- (As a consequence of the method above) a specific understanding of the Metro C case as a single case-study;
- Three particular points of view related to the history and to the features of the project, which have been deepened in the three main chapter of the thesis and that can be considered also as rather autonomous papers.
 - a) In chapter one, the focus is on history of the Metro C as a policy object. This issue is framed by theories on decision-making in order to comprehend what rationales brought the project to be firstly declared a policy priority, and secondly to be inserted in a special regulatory framework. The findings show that a garbage-can style of decision got the Metro C on top of the policy agenda, whereas a path dependency logic determined the decision to use the Legge Obiettivo as an institutional setting.
 - b) In chapter 2, the focus is on the actual functioning of the institutional setting of above as it applied to the Metro C case. Through the theoretical framing of the case within multi-level institutional governance and project management bodies of literature, the paper showed that the practical implementation of the project was affected by public fragmentation in the governance and over-discretionality of the general contractor in project management.
 - c) The third chapter deals with the fundamental type of relationship between the administration and local constructors that explains more deeply the findings of the previous papers. The Metro C is found to reveal a specific type of urban regime in Rome (a ‘maintenance regime’) that, contrarily to the conventional image of urban regimes, aims at preserving the

status quo rather than enhancing the competitive potential of the city.

We might say that the Metro C project – as the case study of a social science research – displayed some peculiar features that made it a rather problematic object to categorise. It fit quite uniquely also in its most evident conceptualisation as a megaproject, featuring cost overrun and organisational challenges, but lacking just as distinctive features as social conflict, community deception, and, last but not least, ambition.

As argued by Albert Hirschman, large development projects are (for their very nature) incubators of uncertainties, and those in charge for taking technical decisions about them are generally very ambitious individuals, intrigued by challenges so much that an ‘invisible hand’ hides major risks from their view. Yet, he argues, probably no development project would ever be achieved if it was not for that ‘optimistic bias’ in the first place.

The Metro C case study, however, can hardly be considered a tale of innovation, and even less marked by unexpected risk or unconscious optimism.

These peculiarities made of it an exciting case not least because of its unclear disciplinary position. It was – already initially, to my eyes – to be researched in technical malfunctions (of course), but also in *what* produced those malfunctions: firstly decision-making, and ultimately urban political economy.

Following a research method inspired by Aristotelian *phronesis* – aimed at re-establishing a problem-solving significance for social sciences –, and via a set of in-depth interviews with the actors involved, I selected three points of view, three disciplinary sectors that had more to offer to a better understanding of the Metro C case.

The analysis of the decisional process concerning the Metro C – key decisions were its prioritisation over other infrastructural projects in Rome, and the decision to use the Legge Obiettivo – showed that although the decisional process started under garbage-can premises, these transformed suddenly in path dependency, adopting the Legge Obiettivo as the normative framework of the project.

The Metro C as a policy objective emerged from the ‘magma’ of solutions within the decision-makers’ reach, and made its way on top of Rome’s policy agenda when an appropriate policy window opened up. Subsequently, the Legge Obiettivo decision mirrored a rationale for which the local construction sector ‘needed’ a congenial regulatory framework to work within, in line with what the conventional praxis of public-private relationships in public works in Rome has always been. Roots had determined routes.

Significantly, under the same city government political orientation (centre-left) the Metro C decisional process passed from being an unprecedented laboratory for innovation and actorial interplay (think about the early tight cooperation between the public administration and the Archaeological Superintendence) to being a policy decision sacrificed to path dependency logics.

The Metro C project was governed through a *turnkey* type of entrustment; the private contractor substantially in control of project management.

Following the Legge Obiettivo prescriptions, the project's implementation practice was radically reshaped in terms of multi-level governance too. Trying to add another brick to the multi-perspective explanation of the project's failure, this paper highlighted how this rescaling process produced, above all, a *fragmentation* of the public actor in the face of a reinforced management role of the general contractor.

Scale mattered here; the municipality of Rome had the opportunity to make Metro C the first important policy process to test the suitability of the newly established metropolitan scale of government. Nevertheless, the metropolitan scale – likewise it has been in other major Italian cities so far – remained a neglected opportunity to coalesce governmental functions and re-establish the balance between the private and the public sector in the governance. The renunciation to what appeared to be the most appropriate territorial scale (the *subsidiarity* principle) to steer the process of project implementation can be interpreted as a deliberate choice to pulverise public control functions among different territorial levels of government.

In this case, far from being a tool for prominent city-regions to achieve political empowerment and reach out for the international marketplace, rescaling only benefitted the private contractor that had been the actual barycentre of the project. Neither this re-institutionalised 'project ecology' – informed, as theorised by Gernot Grabher, by an interplay of geographical scales – seems to have expressed the will to unleash learning potentials within the project. The second paper of the thesis, in the end, advances the possibility that institutional reorganisations informed increasing *heterarchical* relations might be counter-productive, and lead to some sort of 'planned confusion' in poorly goal-oriented polities.

Given all this, the last step of this research was to test the hypothesis that the ultimate logic that informed the decision of the Legge Obiettivo was to secure the role of local construction firms in the entrustment of the Metro C works. Here, I aimed at answering to one of the fundamental questions of phronetic research: «what "governmental rationalities" are at work when those who govern govern?»

The third paper of the thesis started, in fact, with the consideration that the Legge Obiettivo – in the case of Metro C – could be interpreted as a tool for the public sector to identify potential contractors according to tailored (mediocre, in this case) technological capacity: an under-researched aspect of that law.

Via the examination of the tender's outcome, making use of interviews, and having presented the literature on urban regimes as the most appropriate body of research that could frame the research findings, the Metro C case is used to demonstrate the existence of a specific type of urban regime in Rome: namely a *maintenance* urban regime. Although urban regimes generally have a *competitive* rationale at their basis (see the pro-growth type that applies to the American cases), that of Rome seems, rather, to have been informed by a desire to conserve the status quo, and to realise a public work as it always had been in Italy and Rome: in the Metro C case, creating the conditions for the general contractor to delete the most demanding aspects of the project's plan.

The employment of the Legge Obiettivo allowed the private contractor to gradually nullify (two years after the work had been entrusted, it is worth noting) the most innovative technological aspects of the project (see the change in the excavating method, the *Modello Roma*). The savings presented by the contractor in the economic part of the bid were particularly competitive compared to other offers.

The quote by Walter Tocci mentioned in the third paper says a lot about the 'need' to reach a convergence between the administration and the local construction business community in order to create the most congenial conditions for the latter to earn the Metro C entrustment, working the project according to its own skills and capacities.

Also the Archaeological Superintendence had its share of advantages: its conservative rationality as an institutional actor went interestingly together with the total discretion that the general contractor had on the construction sites, to the detriment of the timely advancement of the work. In his interview, former Superintendent Adriano La Regina admitted the possibility that the proverbial zeal of archaeologists was "exploited" by the construction firm: verifying and researching every archaeological discovery requires time, and time was not a problem for the general contractor.

Read in these terms, the evidences of failure highlighted in the introductory chapter of this work are a direct consequence of the Legge Obiettivo prescriptions. Better: the *decision* to adopt the new normative system. Yet, actors' *agency* in the normative *structure* had been key: turnkey projects of this sort are employed everywhere in the world, and the reorganisation of tasks and sovereignties within project ecologies are frequent nowadays, and also believed to characterise the most ambitious and innovative projects. That is why I ultimately tried to shed light on political economic relation in Rome: in order to investigate the agency part of the case study and not merely its structural features.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A - The interviewees, their rationalities, and main outcomes

<u>Interviewee, date and duration of the interview</u>	<u>Role and actorial rationality</u>	<u>Scope of the interview and main outcomes</u>
<p>Andrea Sciotti</p> <p><u>Date:</u> May 3rd 2016 <u>Duration:</u> 1h 30 minutes</p>	<p>Roma Metropolitane’s engineer, Responsible of the Metro C’s procedure.</p> <p>His role suggests that he bears the type of rationality that belongs to the institution reference point of the public side. A reference point that – as we will see in the second paper if this thesis – is fatally hollowed out of any control prerogatives.</p>	<p>The interview with Mr. Sciotti was scheduled to investigate the point of view of the Contracting Agency (<i>stazione appaltante</i>) “Roma Metropolitane” over the Metro C administrative process and technical aspects. The point of view of the contracting agency was vital to understand in what aspects the Legge Obiettivo changed (and in what others was continuing) the institutional setting in Italy and Rome compared to the past. Also, the ‘fragmentation of the public actor’ argued in the second paper of the thesis was an outcome of this interview, after the discussion about the communicative routine between the general contractor and the municipality. Mr. Sciotti expressed a number of perplexities regarding the right fit of the Legge Obiettivo (as a regulatory tool) in the normative system for public contracts as a whole.</p>
<p>Antonio Tamburrino</p> <p>Two interviews 1) <u>Date:</u> July 11th 2016 (1 hour long) 2) <u>Date:</u> January 11th 2017 (2 hours long) Plus several other</p>	<p>Civil Engineer, former consultant of ex Mayor of Rome Gianni Alemanno (2008-2013) for mobility policy, and early consultant of the national Ministry of Infrastructures for the Metro C planning.</p> <p>His rationality is that of a consultant, and as such profoundly critical towards the work of every City</p>	<p>I asked Mr. Tamburrino for an interview because he was among the technical experts called by the Italian party 5 Star Movement to shed light on the Metro C implementation failure.</p> <p>During the various contacts with Mr Tamburrino, I had the opportunity to both review the Italian “style” of governing heavy infrastructure implementation (that brought to the</p>

<p>e-mails exchange.</p>	<p>administration he did not collaborate with. In other words, his could be pictured as a stance towards the perfect technical viability of the project, with no regard to political and opportunity aspects. Nevertheless, given his technical expertise and long career, he was very useful to help me re-elaborate some of the most technical details gathered during other interviews.</p>	<p>conception of a path dependency in the decision making), and discuss the rationales and the opportunity margins behind the adoption of the turnkey project (Legge Obiettivo) into the Italian normative system. He was particularly useful for me for evaluating the ‘political charge’ of the Metro C project, since he counselled for another city administration than the one that launched and championed the Metro project.</p>
<p>Marco De Carolis <u>Date:</u> February 26th 2016 <u>Duration:</u> 45 minutes</p>	<p>Mayor of Montecompatri, the neighbouring municipality of Rome where the Metro C’s eastern terminal is located. He represents a sheer political rationality: his priority is the political dividend of the Metro C participation, and he is mostly interested to be adequately considered in occasion of the decisional arenas like the Conferenze di Servizi.</p>	<p>The interview with Mayor De Carolis was initially scheduled to investigate the metropolitan scale politics of the Metro C. Namely the weight that the neighbouring municipality of Montecompatri had in the whole political-decisional process. The interview with him was useful not only to focus on the excessive political weight that the municipality of Rome had in the Conferenze di Servizi, but also to appreciate the how those decisional arenas were packed with representative bodies, stakeholders, and institutional actors that, basically, were only slowing down the process of getting to shared deliberations. He also introduced me to the “opportunity” that was seized by the Veltroni administration to link the construction of the Metro C to the renewal of the old Pantano regional railway. One of the outcomes of this interview was the perception (implicitly confirmed) that a lot of the decisions and aspects of the Metro C discussed in the Conferenze dei Servizi had been already agreed by key actors outside the institutional seats. Another one was the insight of the old Pantano railway, key to come</p>

		up with the hypothesis of the “garbage can path dependency” logic of decision discussed in the first paper.
<p>Giulio Fioravanti</p> <p><u>Date:</u> February 18th <u>Duration:</u> 1h 15 minutes</p>	<p>Architect of the first project of the Metro C and consultant of Walter Tocci for the PROIMO (<i>Programma Integrato della Mobilità</i> – Integrated Programme for Mobility).</p> <p>He represents another counselling rationality, but he specifically holds the paternity of the first plan for the metro C, the one that would have put together an efficient implementation of the line with a certain regard to archaeological discoveries.</p>	<p>The point of view of Architect Fioravanti was vital to understand in what technical aspects the first proposal for the Metro C project was to be deemed superior to the current project.</p> <p>He maintained that the matter with the Metro C was ‘human agency’ rather than the ‘normative structure’. He was deeply insightful as to the persuasiveness that the local/Italian cartel of constructors had over major infrastructural projects on the table back then in Italy (and in Rome in particular) as a whole.</p>
<p>Adriano La Regina</p> <p><u>Date:</u> January 19th 2017 <u>Duration:</u> 1h 15 minutes</p>	<p>Former Head of Rome’s Archaeological Superintendence (1976-2004).</p> <p>He carried the rationality of the historical <i>conservation</i>, his preference is for the respectfulness of Rome’s historical patrimony over the promptness of the infrastructure’s implementation. This rationality resulted to be not as monolithic as one could initially infer from the Superintendence’s institutional role: Mr La Regina expressed the genuine desire of a fully infrastructure Rome.</p> <p>As a matter of fact, he reveals the prerogatives of his professional “rationality” (namely the <i>conservation</i>) by talking about his successors rather than himself. In fact, he is known for the <i>discontinuity</i> he represented for the Archaeological Superintendence of Rome.</p>	<p>Ex superintendent La Regina outlined the salient parts of the first proposal for the Metro C construction, and offered a detailed chronicle of the period when the Superintendence under his responsibility, contributed to the collegial draft for the central part of the Metro C layout.</p> <p>He maintained the superiority of that version (<i>Modello Roma</i>) of the project because, according to him, it was the most suitable to prevent unexpected archaeological and geological risk.</p> <p>He stigmatised the actions of his successors at the Superintendence because he believes they were basically stranded in the narrow interests of their part: increase as much as possible the possibility to perform archaeological verifications (and thus to extend as much as possible the duration of the project: henceforth the delivery delays). He also maintained that there is a large part among the professionals of the</p>

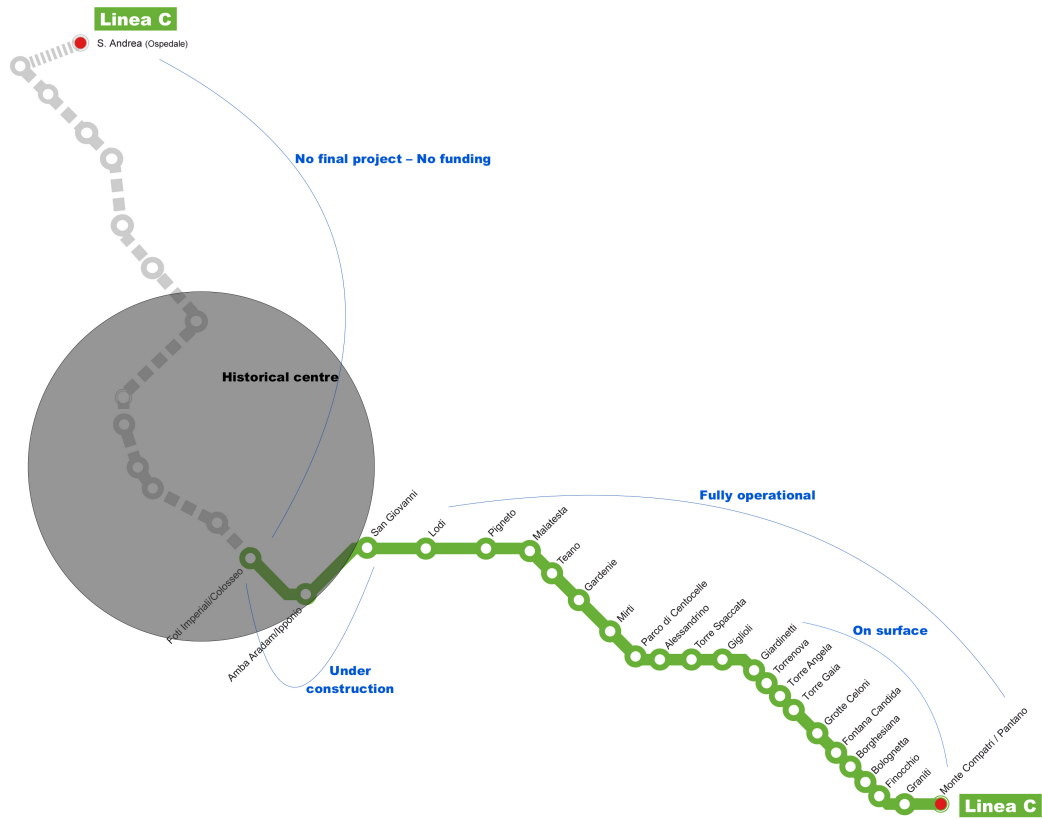
		<p>Archaeological Superintendence affected by «ingenuity», meaning that they could have been subjugated by the economic interest of the general contractor: the general contractor could have exploited the proverbial zeal of the Superintendence employees.</p> <p>The conservation rationality that this stance highlights is the one that an institutional body such as the Superintendence is capable of.</p>
<p>Maurizio Canto</p> <p><u>Date:</u> April 4th 2017 <u>Mode:</u> Open answers questionnaire by e-mail</p>	<p>Chief Engineer in “Roma Metropolitane” and member of the technical committee for the evaluation of the bids for the Metro C construction.</p> <p>His rationality is that of the project’s economic and technical viability, the best viability possible according to the institutional and legislative framework (Legge Obiettivo) chosen by the political sphere. To some extent, it is the most <i>bureaucratic</i> role encountered in this research.</p> <p>Since no General Contractor representative agreed to meet and discuss the subjects of this thesis, I considered the contribution of Mr Canto to the qualitative research as the closest possible to the General Contractor. After all he held an institutional responsibility towards the viability of the project and about the adequateness of the Contractor’s choice: this choice has been, in fact, firmly defended by him.</p>	<p>Engineer Maurizio Canto’s testimony was sought to shed light over the quality of the technical and economic offer of the “Metro C” consortium in respect to the other 5 bidders. He strongly supported the Legge Obiettivo procedure as to archaeological protection, and the value of the general contractor’s expertise in order to successfully run the project’s execution.</p>
<p>Walter Tocci</p> <p><u>Date:</u> November 10th 2015 (about 1h long), and another telephone</p>	<p>Former Deputy Mayor (under the Veltroni city administration 2001-2008) and former Assessor to Mobility (under the Rutelli city administrations 1993-2001). His primary rationality is</p>	<p>Mr Walter Tocci was the most important figure I came across in this thesis. Not for a particular reason but mostly because of his knowledge of political, cultural, and technical aspects of the matter.</p>

<p>interview in January 16th 2016 (30 minutes long)</p> <p>Plus several other telephone contacts.</p>	<p>political. He was among the main supporters and sponsors of the new Master Plan for the city of Rome adopted in 2006, in which a new network of metro lines, trams, and urban railways was envisaged.</p>	<p>I also found invaluable his capacity to direct me (and indicate the appropriate form to get in touch with) to the most informative contacts in the otherwise confusing actorial environment of the Metro C. In terms of energy rationalisation he was vital. I would define his contribution as a “multiplier of contacts”.</p> <p>He maintained that the adoption of the Legge Obiettivo was the “original sin”, the point where it all began to fall down.</p>
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Appendix B - The Legge Obiettivo summary of prescriptions

- Published on the Official Gazette on 21st December 2001, by an initiative of the then national executive Berlusconi II
- Its operative decree (no. 190/2002) published in the Official Gazette on August 26th 2002.
- Introduces in Italy the practice of turnkey projects: private contractors acquire the full responsibility of the construction of strategic infrastructures.
- In respect to the previous Framework Law (known as Legge Merloni, previously the reference law for public works' implementation) it retrieves the national level into public works' institutional governance.
- The two (out of three) most detailed levels of planning for a project – once to be drafted fully by the public – are now drafted by the private contractor. The municipality only retains responsibility for the preliminary plan: with this plan the work is put to tender.
- The Environmental Impact Assessment (VIA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (VAS) are no longer mandatory.
- The private contractor fully advances the expenses of the work, although the financial duties are all public.
(For the Metro C, 70% up to the central State (the Ministry for Transport), 18% up to the Municipality, 12% up to the Region).
- The private contractor is free to subcontract – fully or partly – the works to subcontractors. These latter, in turn, can resort to a 2nd tier of subcontracting.
- The private contractor appoints the construction manager: this figure manages the construction site and decides whether a modification (if impediments in the execution occur: for instance archaeological evidence) is to be issued as “substantial” (variante sostanziale) or not. If a modification is classified as “substantial” it means that some severe impediment is found and thus delays and cost overruns are likely to ensue.
- The General Contractor is expected to hold sound and reliable technical and organisational skills (a substantial entrepreneurial capability evolution in respect to the ‘mere execution’ of public works considered in the previous Framework Law)

Appendix C – The Metro C in brief.



Appendix Figure 1 – The layout of the Metro C in Rome (elaboration of the author on Roma Metropolitana figure)



Appendix Figure 2 – Rome's metro lines network. (Wikipedia)

- Contractor's composition: leader company **Vianini Lavori S.p.A.** (34,5%) ; Astaldi (34,5%); Ansaldo STS Finmeccanica (14%); CMB Cooperativa Muratori e Braccianti di Carpi (10%); Consorzio Cooperative Corstuzioni (7).
- 25,6 km long;
- 30 stations;
- Underground layout length: 16,9km;
- Open air layout length: 8,7km.
- Currently 24 stations in construction (13 underground, 1 on surface);
- Renewal of 10 existent stations on the outward layout.
- 2.400.000 m³ areas of excavation.
- Over 2000 subcontracting companies. Over 10.000 workers involved in total.