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Strategic Planning at the Local Level of Government: Evidence from Florida

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STRATEGIC PLANNING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT: EVIDENCE FROM FLORIDA

by

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ABSTRACT

This study's main question is as follows: *What are the effects of internal and external environmental factors on public value expressions found within Florida county and municipal governments' strategic plans?* This study uses Moore's (1995) Public Value Theory and its main propositions, as Dong (2015) described. This study also adheres to the tradition established by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) by focusing on homogeneity, not variation, between strategic plans under study. Data for this dissertation were obtained from 77 official strategic plans of Floridian counties and municipalities.

Furthermore, the dissertation proceeded in two distinctive phases. The first phase relied on content analysis to prove the presence of public value theory's main components of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness in 785 excerpts from almost all the 77 official strategic plans understudy. The second phase of the study was built on the findings from Phase One. The second phase quantifies the findings from the first phase to examine the within-group and between-group isomorphic tendencies among Floridian counties and municipalities' strategic plans under similar internal and external environmental conditions. The dissertation calculated the differences between the average and actual percentages of public value theory components in each strategic plan understudy to calculate the within-group isomorphic tendencies. Isomorphic tendencies were found in the strategic plans of Florida's counties and municipalities with extreme fiscal health, in the Southeast region, and with a population size between 200,000 and 500,000 residents. To calculate the between-group isomorphic tendencies, this dissertation relied on the Kruskal-Wallis H test. The Kruskal- Wallis H test results

between groups were all insignificance, which indicated similar isomorphic tendencies between groups with similar internal and external environmental conditions. The findings of this dissertation will expand the knowledge base on its topic.

Keywords: Local government, strategic planning, strategic plan, content analysis

My dad, Dakhilallah. Thank you for installing in me the value of education and for inspiring me to be Dr. Faisal. Dad, I hope that you are proud.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context of the Study

The popularity of strategic planning within the public administration field started in the 1980s in response to increased uncertainty in the environment in which public organizations operate and function, coupled with a significant reduction in federal spending. These factors inspired public officials and professional career managers to look to the private sector for answers. As a result of this process, public organizations borrowed the idea of strategic planning from the private sector to encourage strategic thinking, acting and learning in order to best fit their environments (Berry, 1994; Bryson, 2011; Bryson, Berry, & Yang, 2010; Bryson & Edwards, 2017; Leonard & Moore, 2012; Poister, 2010; Poister, Pitts, & Edwards, 2010). To this end, Poister (2010) stated that strategic planning "will need to play a more critical role in 2020 than it does at present if public managers are to anticipate and manage change adroitly and effectively address new issues that are likely to emerge with increasing rapidity" (p. S246).

Public organizations practice strategic planning and adopt strategic plans for different reasons (Bryson & Edwards, 2017; Bryson, Edwards & Van Slyke, 2018). Possible explanations include normative mimicry (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Tama, 2015). According to this view, public organizations seek to establish their legitimacy by replicating the practices of leaders or peer organizations (Tama, 2015). Another explanation is to encourage citizens' input and active participation in the decision-making process within their communities (Wheeland, 2003). Furthermore, Percoco (2016) found that strategic plans are more likely to be adopted by local governments with previous experience with strategic planning or with a more extensive stock of social capital which promote trust and cooperation among different participants (p.153). Some

public administration scholars saw strategic planning as a trend tool that could eventually fade away for other trends (Edwards, 2012; Kaufman & Jacobs, 1987). Other scholars argued that public organizations adopt strategic planning simply because it seems a useful administrative tool that assesses decision-makers in figuring out what their organization should do (Bryson, Crosby & Bryson, 2009; Bryson & Edwards, 2017).

However, according to the public value theory, the main reason public officials and managers deploy strategic planning is to create public value (Benington & Moore, 2011; Bryson, 2011; Bryson, Crosby, & Bloomberg, 2014; Moore, 1995, 2000, 2013). According to Moore (1995), public officials and managers create public value by providing services and goods that citizens value, as expressed through a representative democracy. Also, Moore (1995) noted that public officials and managers create public value by establishing and maintaining public organizations that are properly managed to create a well-ordered society that is just, efficient, and responsive to the people's needs and desires.

As an overview of the history of strategic planning at the different levels of governments in the United States and with a particular focus on the state of Florida, first at the federal level, the Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 (public law 103-62) has been the most crucial factor in establishing the practice of strategic planning (Al-Garni, 1997, p. 8; Cohen, 2006, p. 6; Nyhan & Martin, 1999, p. 348; Roberts, 2000, p. 297). The GPRA was part of the Reinventing the Government movement of the 1990s, requiring the implementation of strategic planning by all federal agencies (Bryson, 2010, p. S258; Bryson et al., 2010, p. 496). For example, Section 3 of the GPRA requires every federal agency to prepare a strategic plan that includes the following:

- A mission statement, goals, and objectives;
- The means to achieve the designated goals;
- Goals that are linked to the strategic plan;
- The identification of the critical factors that could impact the implementation of the strategic plan;
- A five-year performance plan; and
- The establishment of an annual performance report to assess the success of the strategic plan. (Al-Garni, 1997, p. 8; Cohen, 2006, p. 9).

In the 2000s, the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA; Public Law 111-352) revised some of the requirements that were established by the original bill. For instance, federal agencies were required to develop a strategic plan every three years that covered the following five years; however, under the new rule, federal agencies must produce a strategic plan that covers the following four years (Kamensky, 2011). Furthermore, the GPRAMA requires every federal agency to align its goals with the federal government's goals. Also, every federal agency is required to identify how it collaborates with other agencies to achieve its own goals and objectives and the goals and objectives of the federal government (Kamensky, 2011).

At the state level, the state of Florida's interest in strategic planning started in the 1980s with the enactment of the State and Regional Planning Act of 1984 (Huang, 1997). The act required the state and its different agencies to develop a comprehensive plan used mostly for budgeting purposes. According to Bradley (1994), this early effort was "an enormous failure" since it produced extremely lengthy documents that are mostly internally focused (as cited in

Huang, 1997, p. 6). Florida's interests in strategic planning were reignited in the 1990s with the election of Lawton Chiles as a Florida Governor (Huang, 1997). Governor Chiles established a Strategic Planning Unit primarily based on Bryson's concept of Strategy Chang Cycle (Huang, 1997). Furthermore, in 1992, Governor Chiles established the Strategic Planning System (SPA), which required Florida state agencies to engage in the practice of strategic planning, to develop a clear vision and mission statements, to perform a SWOT analysis, and to identify strategic issues (Huang, 1997, p. 9). Florida's governments at the local level (counties and municipalities) were required by the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act (Florida Statues 163.3164) only to produce comprehensive plans that work as a top-down guide for future growth and land development.

Soon after, strategic planning has reached almost all levels of governments in the United States (Berry, 1994; Berry & Wechsler, 1995; Bryson, 2010; Hendrick, 2004; Kissler et al., 1998; Kwon, Berry & Jang, 2013; Lee, McGuire & Kim, 2018; Pasha, Poister & Edwards, 2015; Poister & Strieb 1999, 2005). Florida's local government level (counties and municipalities) is required by the Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act (Florida Statues 163.3164) to produce Comprehensive Plans that work as a top guide future growth and land development. However, even when there is no mandatory requirement for Florida county and municipal governments to have strategic planning and plans, they are still highly regarded by local governments (Kwon et al., 2013).

Halachmi (1986) indicated that strategic concepts suffer from a severe semantic problem (p. 36). The professional and academic literature contains numerous definitions and

interpretations of strategic concepts; every expert on the subject has defined and redefined these concepts (Kabir, 2007; Wildavsky, 1973).

Byson (2011) defined strategic planning as "a deliberative, disciplined approach to producing fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why" (p.42). Strategic planning that fits the previous definition has become a well-known practice within public organizations (Bryson, Edwards & Van Slyke, 2018). Strategic planning is being performed by local governments to achieve and sustain strategic goals and objectives (Lee, McGuire & Kim, 2018). Furthermore, Bryson et al. (2009) described strategic planning as follows:

> [Strategic planning is] a complex cognitive, behavioral, social, and political practice in which thinking, acting, learning, and knowing matter, and in which some associations are reinforced, others are created, and still, others are dropped in the process of formulating and implementing strategies and plans. (p. 176)

More recently, strategic planning is being considered not as a single thing but as a multi-dimensional administrative phenomenon which consists of a family of concepts, procedures, tools, and practices that must be applied sensitively and contingently in order to be beneficial (Bryson & Edwards, 2017; Bryson, Edwards & Van Slyke, 2018; Kwon et al., 2013).

Bryson (2010) cites the following benefits that public organizations gain from the implementation of strategic planning:

- The promotion of strategic thinking, acting, and learning;
- Improved decision-making processes by focusing attention on the crucial issues and challenges facing the organization;

- Enhanced organizational effectiveness, responsiveness, and resiliency;
- Enhanced organizational legitimacy by addressing the concerns of different stakeholders;
- Enhanced intellectual capacity and social capital of both the organization and the society;
- Direct benefits to public officials involved in the strategic planning process by helping them fulfill their responsibilities and increase their human, social, political, and intellectual capital through the successful implementation of the strategic plan. (p. S255)

1.2 Statement of the Problem

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) acknowledged that isomorphic pressures often lead organizations to have similar reactions to similar environmental conditions. In their seminal article "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," DiMaggio and Powell (1983) observed that "strategies that are rational for individual organizations may not be rational if adopted by large numbers. Yet the very fact that they are normatively sanctioned increases the likelihood of their adoption" (p. 148). There has not been enough research in the field of public administration that empirically tests the manifestation of isomorphic tendencies in local governments' strategic plans. This study examines isomorphic tendencies within the strategic plans of local governments through the lens of Moore's (1995) public value theory. As recommended by Bryson, Crosby, and Bryson (2009), this study focuses on institutional vision, mission statements, and strategic goals. Bryson et al.

(2009) emphasized that strategic plans, mission statements, and vision statements, along with strategic goals, are crucial to any study of public organizations' strategic planning.

This study examined several Florida counties and municipal governments' strategic plans through qualitative content analysis (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Krippendroff, 2019; Saldaña, 2016). The reason behind focusing solely on county and municipal governments within the state of Florida is to ensure comparable units of analysis. In his seminal study, Peterson (1981) discovered that local governments in the United States vary significantly from one state to another. Even when they are at similar levels, local governments' differences undermine their comparability as a unit of analysis (p. 10).

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Embracing the theoretical frameworks of Moore (1995) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) as a guide, this study examined Florida county and municipal governments' strategic plans using qualitative content analysis. The findings of this current study can inform the decisions of Florida county and municipal managers as they create public value through strategic planning and strategic plans. By focusing on the creation of public value, these public officials and managers will be more responsive to citizens' needs and more willing to collaborate vertically and horizontally (Dong, 2015). Similarly, this study's findings can inform Florida county and municipal governments' responses to isomorphic forces (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Acknowledging and understanding such isomorphic forces will improve public officials' and managers' strategic thinking, acting, and learning.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This study builds upon the academic literature and makes several of its own contributions. First, this study advances the theoretical foundation of strategic planning at the county and municipal government level by examining their strategic plans from the perspective of public value theory. As indicated by Benington and Moore (2011), academic research on public value theory has "lagged behind the emerging practice" (p. 16). Also, this study contributes to the academic literature regarding strategic planning by examining strategic plans produced by local officials and managers. These strategic plans constitute organizational products that, through careful examination, shed light on the processes, interests, and values of public organizations and the officials that produced them (Altheide, 1996; Saldaña, 2016). There is a similar paucity of research regarding isomorphism at the county and municipal levels of government. The literature is almost silent on the impact of isomorphic forces on the strategic planning of county and municipal governments. Therefore, this study examines the influence of isomorphism on county and municipal governments' strategic plans within the state of Florida.

Second, even though there are many studies on strategic planning at the local level of government, there is a dearth of research that systematically focuses on strategic plans (Cornut, Giroux, & Langley, 2012; Giraudeau, 2008; Pälli, Vaara, & Sorsa, 2009; Vaara, Sorsa, & Pälli, 2010). Therefore, this study addressed this gap in the literature by utilizing qualitative content analysis to examine the strategic plans of several Florida county and municipal governments. John M. Bryson, a prominent scholar of the field of strategic planning, urges scholars to acknowledge the importance of utilizing content analysis to examine official strategic plans (Bryson, 2010; Bryson & Edwards, 2017; Bryson et al., 2018). This study's reliance on content

analysis is an attempt to raise public administrators' awareness of the applicability of content analysis as a reliable tool to investigate administrative phenomena. Bowen and Bowen (2008) asserted that public administrators tend to lack the proper appreciation of content analysis as a robust research method.

Finally, this study attempted to move the field of strategic planning research beyond case studies (e.g., Barzelay & Campbell, 2003; Wheeland, 2004). Bryson (2010) criticized the over-reliance on the case study as a method of inquiry in strategic planning studies. Case studies offer limited learning opportunities because they lack any causal mechanism that can explain specific strategic planning outcomes (Bryson, 2010, p. S260). Instead, Bryson et al. (2010) urge scholars to conduct studies with large-*N*s to establish the validity of any findings.

1.5 Research Question and Propositions

RQ. *What are the effects of internal and external environmental factors on the expressions of public value found within Florida county and municipal governments' strategic plans?*

1.5.1 Propositions

Proposition 1: In Florida, county, and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Proposition 2: In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Proposition 3: In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Proposition 4: In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

1.6 Overview of the Study

This study consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 explains the need to study isomorphic tendencies within local governments' strategic plans, introduces the context and scope of the study, and identifies the research question and propositions. Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical underpinnings of the study; this chapter brings together several theoretical streams of thought, including public value theory, isomorphism, and institutional isomorphism theory. These theories contribute to the development of a framework that identifies factors that may impact the isomorphic tendencies within the strategic plans at the local level of government. Chapter 3 identifies this study's research methodology, design, data sources, and method of analysis (content analysis; Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Krippendorff, 2019: Saldaña, 2016). Content analysis qualifies as both qualitative and quantitative data; it is qualitative because it allows for the coding and interpretation of the concepts within the data, and it is quantitative because the data can be expressed as a quantitative component. Content analysis allows for the deductive identification of concepts using actual examples from local governments' strategic plans and the identification of different percentages of each concept within the local governments' strategic plans. Chapter 4 presents the results and analysis of the study. Chapter 5 discusses the outcome of the study's results by examining those results in relation to the research propositions. Finally, chapter 6 includes the conclusion and implications of the research study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by explaining the conceptual frameworks and theories (i.e., public value theory and institutional isomorphism theory) used to inform the study of strategic planning in this dissertation. Strategic planning is one of the oldest management innovations used by local governments (Berry, 1994; Kwon, 2006; Kwon et al., 2013).

Moreover, the need for strategic planning in public organizations has never been more pressing than in recent times (Poister, 2010). Local governments are in a tight spot and must do "more with less," especially after the great recession of 2008, which created a significant gap between shrinking resources and ever-increasing demands for public goods and services (Benington & Moore, 2011; Martin et al., 2012; Mitchell, 2019). According to Poister (2010):

> Strategic planning will need to play a more critical role in 2020 than it does at present if public managers are to anticipate and manage change adroitly and effectively address new issues that are likely to emerge with increasing rapidity. (p. S246)

The present study suggests that strategic planning can help elected officials and managers at the local level of government to successfully create public value by addressing the primary issues and challenges faced by their jurisdictions efficiently and effectively. Public value theory is a conceptual framework created by Moore (1995) to help public managers make sense of the strategic challenges they face, like the way in which private value has provided strategic purpose for private managers. Public value theory encourages strategic thinking and acting among public managers working with complex problems in their communities (Benington & Moore, 2011, p. 1).

2.2 Public Value Theory

Seventy-years ago, Dwight Waldo stated that the normative nature of public administration as a field of study made it suffused with questions of value (Waldo, 2007, p. 182). According to Waldo, public administration should focus on "What should be done" questions (Waldo, 2007, p. 181).

Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) agreed, noting that "there is no more important research in public administration and policy than public values"(p. 355). Mark Moore first developed the public value theory in the 1990s as a response to neoliberal ideas about the role of government in Western democratic societies (Benington & Moore, 2011; Moore, 1995).

The concept of public value can be ambiguous and unstable (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007). For instance, Moore (1995), indicated that "public managers create public value. The problem is that they cannot be sure what that is" (p. 57). Furthermore, Alford and Hughes (2008), described any attempt to define the concept of public value as a "hazardous enterprise" (p. 131). Public value is a contested concept that is open to numerous interpretations (Benington, 2011; Horner & Hutton, 2011). However, Bryson (2011) in his influential *Strategic Planning for Public and Non-Profit Organization*s, described the creation of public value as the production of "enterprises, policies, programs, projects, services or physical, technological, social, political, and cultural infrastructure that advance the public interest and common good at a reasonable price" (p. 47).

According to public value theory, citizens in a representative democracy determine which public purposes are valuable enough to be produced through appropriated taxes (Bryson et al., 2014; Moore, 1995; 2000; 2013; 2014).

Public value is anything of worth that is collectively consumed by the public; therefore, the only way to assess created public value is through an extensive dialogue among citizens, their representatives, and public officials concerning which services and goods are provided and at what cost (Alford & Hughes, 2008; Gains & Stoker, 2009).

Moore (2000, 2013) argued that, unlike in the private sector, where the primary value is maximizing shareholders' financial return, primary values of government include achieving politically mandated goals and responding to citizens' aspirations. Public value theory promotes a positivist methodology that seeks the construction of organizational patterns that enable public organizations and their officials to create public value (Dong, 2015). Elected officials and public managers must continuously ask themselves if their actions are bringing a net benefit to society at large (Stoker, 2006, p. 49). According to Dong (2015), public value theory allows researchers in the field of public administration to understand the purposes and goals that public organizations need to accomplish in order to produce a good and just society.

Moore (2014) indicates that although the contexts of private and government sectors are vastly different, managerial tasks in each are surprisingly similar. In the private sector, managers are required to use private assets under their control to produce private value. Like their private counterparts, public managers are obligated to use public resources held under a democratic governing system to create public value. Thus, it is logical for managers in the public sector to utilize the concept of strategic planning just as their private counterparts do (Moore, 1995, p.70; Dong, 2015, p. 229).

Public value theory and the strategic triangle (discussed below) provide an ideal conceptual framework for the present study because the ultimate purpose of strategic planning in

public organizations is to create an enduring and ever-lasting public value. Public value theory and the strategic triangle, as described below, help public managers answer the following question: What should be done to create public value? The answer to this question is twofold: (1) public leaders and managers must be vigilant of any changes in the political, economic, and social conditions that might affect their authorizing environment and alter what citizens and their representatives considered to be public value; (2) public leaders and managers must search continuously for innovative ways to produce public value efficiently and effectively. As indicated by Horner and Hutton (2011), public value theory encourages public officials and managers to decide the best deployment of publicly owned assets through strategic planning. Benington (2011) argued that public value theory is not only a conceptual tool for the creation of strategic plans but also a heuristic devise to stimulate public dialogue within the community about ways to improve provided goods and services.

2.2.1 The Strategic Triangle

The strategic triangle is a tool for creating public value that emphasizes three primary factors (Heymann, 1987; Moore, 1995). A practical framework that is based on the theory of public value, the strategic triangle contains three concepts. The first concept is public value, defined in this context as the clarification of strategic goals that are valued by citizens and their representatives in democracies. The second concept, legitimacy and support, is the maintenance of the legitimacy and support of the authorized environment (i.e., the elected officials and influential persons who have the legal authority to appropriate tax revenue to public organizations; Moore, 2000, p. 185). The third concept, operational capacity, refers to the

maintenance of managerial capacity that enables the creation of public value by public organizations.

Moore (1995) argues that public managers must integrate politics, substance, and administration in order to create public value (p. 22). Therefore, Moore introduces the strategic triangle as a valuable heuristic framework that enables public managers to make such integration. According to this view, the strategic triangle framework helps public managers to manage *outward* and *upward* to create public value and *inward* and *downward* to ensure that public organizations acquire the needed administrative capacities to produce public value (Moore, 1995, p. 73). The concept of strategy in the public sector satisfies the following requirements: (1) a declaration of the overall mission or purpose of the organization; (2) an account of the sources of support and legitimacy that sustain society's commitment to the organization; and (3) an explanation of how the organization must be structured and operated to achieve its declared objectives (Moore, 1995, p. 71).

The strategic triangle (Figure 1) helps public managers build and mobilize legitimate support and manage administrative and operational capacities to produce products and services that are publicly valued by the citizens and their representatives.

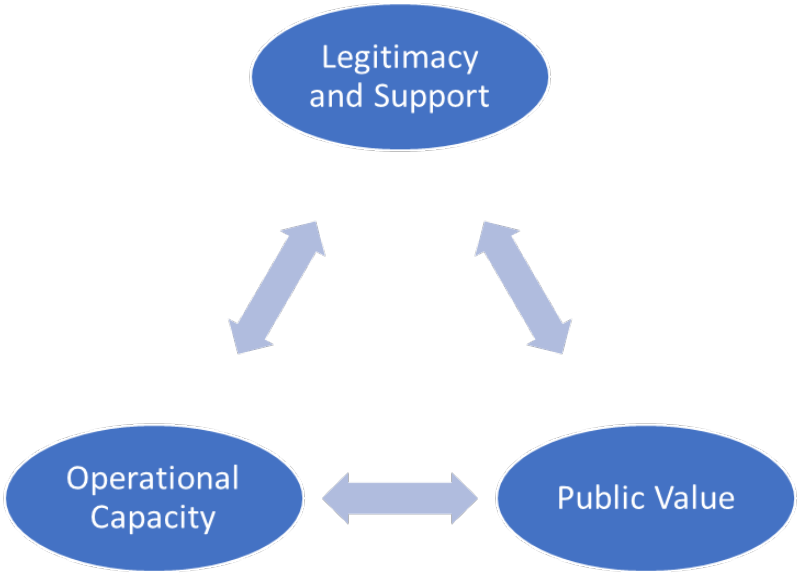


Figure 1. The strategic triangle. Adapted from *Recognizing Public Value*, by M. H. Moore, 2013, p. 103. Copyright 2013 by Harvard University Press.

Moore (1995) considers public managers to be chief strategists, whose sole responsibility is to create public value. Previous scholars echoed similar ideas about public managers' role as creators of public value; however, Moore (1995) generally is credited for the theory (Bryson et al., 2014; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2007; Heymann, 1987; Reich, 1988). Moore (1995) envisioned public officials and managers creating public value by resourcefully using the resources entrusted to them by the "authorized environment" (p. 120). Through strategic plans and planning, public officials and managers can commit themselves and their organizations to a specific vision and mission that would enable them to create public value and ensure their legitimacy and future existence (Moore, 2000). Public officials and managers are *stewards* of

public resources who are *responsive* to various public needs (Horner & Hutton, 2011; Stout, 2013).

The need to change public managers' role from mere bureaucrats to that of explorers, creators, and stewards of public value is the central thesis of Moore's *Creating Public Value* (1995). Furthermore, Bryson (2011) argued for the inclusion of citizens, organizations, communities, and the entire society as potential creators of public value (p. 46). Bryson (2011) defined the creation of public value in American context, as "enhancing life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for all, while also fostering a more perfect union" (p. 46).

In Western liberal societies, the prevailing political philosophy considers the private sector to be the epitome of efficiency, efficacy, and adaptability. In an article that established public administration as a distinct field of study, Woodrow Wilson (1887) stated, "there should be a science of administration which shall seek to straighten the paths of government, to make its business less unbusinesslike, to strengthen and purify its organization" (p. 201).

Therefore, public managers have borrowed heavily from the private sector, and one often borrowed technique is strategic planning (Benington & Moore, 2011; Bryson, 2011; Moore, 1995; Osborne & Gaebler, 1993). Moore (1995, 2013) assumed that, like their private counterparts, public managers needed strategic planning to create public value and thus urged public managers to adopt it. Bryson (2011) indicates that strategic planning enables public managers and their organizations to create mission and vision statements, establish winning coalitions, and build the organizational capacity to learn and act strategically. "Public organizations are *externally justified*…these organizations must find ways to show that their

operations do indeed create public value, or they risk losing their social justification for their existence" (Bryson, 2011, p. 117, italics in the original).

Bryson and his associates argue that for public organizations to produce public value, they must focus on being: (a) service-oriented, (b) efficient and effective, and (c) fair and just when dealing with the society at large (Bryson et al., 2014, p. 449).

Bryson (2011) indicates that the ultimate goal of strategic planning and strategic plans is to enable the public organization to create public value at a reasonable cost. Strategic plans in public organizations, to be effective, must satisfy three requirements:

- Strategic plans must assist public organizations in producing products and services that are valued by citizens and their representatives,
- Strategic plans must have the support of the citizenry and their representatives, and
- Public organizations must have the administrative and operational capacities to implement their strategic plans (Moore, 1995).

Furthermore, strategic planning can be helpful for local governments for the following purposes:

- Gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing information about their internal and external environments along with possible strategic options;
- Producing agreement among key decision-makers and stakeholders about the desirable mission, goals, and future direction;
- Addressing key issues and challenges must be dealt with now and in the future;
- Enhancing organizational learning capacity; and
- Creating significant and enduring public value (Bryson, 2011, p. 43).

Bryson (2011) focused on the public value side of Moore's (1995, 2013) strategic triangle (Figure 1). Bryson (2011) indicated that the creation of public value by any particular public organization could be investigated through the careful examination of the organization's vision, mission, and strategic issues. The inclusion of organizational mission, vision statement, and strategic issues, has become a common practice in the strategic plans of any public organization. These three elements enable the public officials and managers to establish public organizations that can strategically think, act, and learn within their current context to produce decisions that are responsive to public needs and create lasting public value (Bryson, 2011). Therefore, the present study analyzes content from vision statements, mission statements, and strategic goals of local governments in Florida.

This study conceptualizes public value as specific values associated with sound governance systems (Alford, Douglas, Geuijen, & Hart, 2017). Dong (2015) proposed collaboration, collectiveness, responsiveness and democracy as primary components of public value theory (p. 240). In their inventory of public values, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) identified collaboration, collectiveness, responsiveness and democracy as public values which exist in various settings or "constellations":

- The transformation of interests to decisions
- The relationship between administrators and politicians
- The relationship between public administrators and their environment
- Intraorganizational aspects of public administrations
- The relationship between public administration and the citizens

This study thus analyzes the content of vision, mission, and goals statements within the strategic plans of local governments in Florida, coding for the presence of specific values of collaboration, collectiveness, responsiveness and democracy to be the primary signs of public value theory.

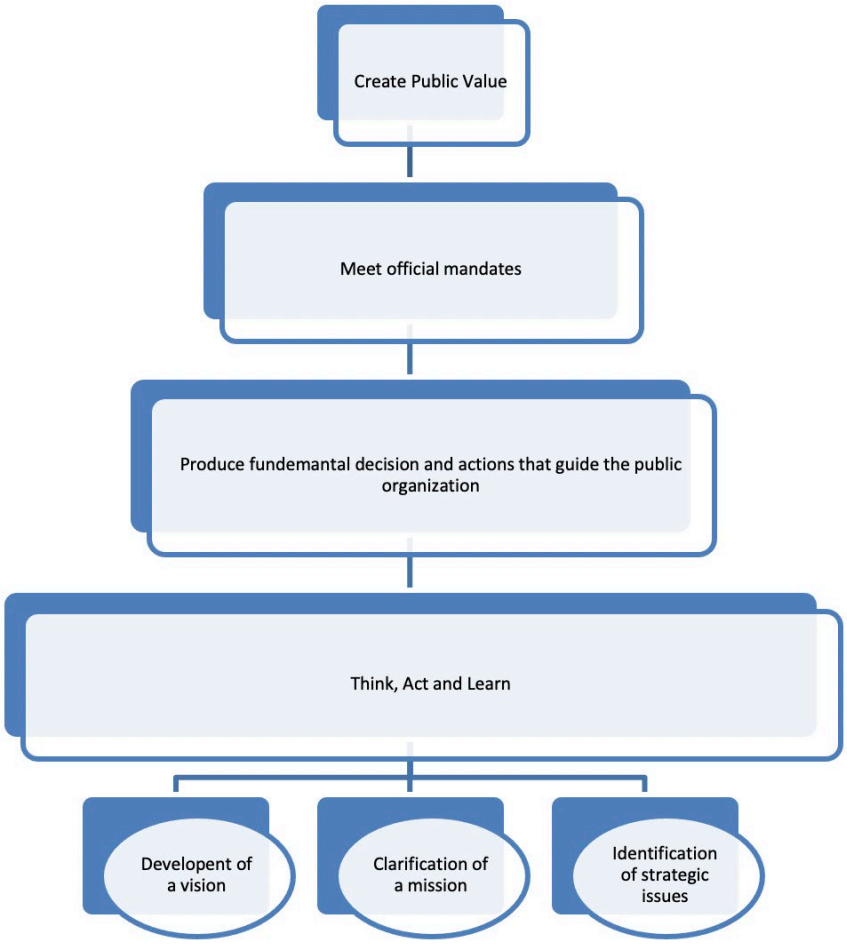


Figure 2: Strategic planning processes and outcome. Adapted from Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations: A Guide to Strengthening and Sustaining Organizational Achievement, 2011, by J. M. Bryson, 2011, p. 78. Copyright 2011 by Jossey-Bass.

2.2.2 Collaboration

Collaboration has become a buzzword in the public administration literature (Thomson, Perry & Miller, 2008; McGuire, 2006). Recent changes in the working environment of public organizations have led to an increasing interest in studying collaboration. First, challenges faced by public organizations are becoming too extensive and complicated to be solved unilaterally. Second, the advancement of information technology (IT) has allowed public organizations to reduce the cost of sharing and integrating interoperable information. Third, the increased emphasis on ensuring the effectiveness of publicly funded programs has increased inter-organizational collaboration. Fourth, citizens are expecting and demanding more significant roles in their engagement with public organizations; they also are expecting more choices of public services provided with less bureaucratic activity (McGuire, 2006; O'Leary & Vig, 2012; Pina & Avellaneda, 2018; Thomson & Perry, 2006). Public organizations seek collaboration when dealing with complex problems and when problems "don't fit neatly" within the jurisdiction of a single public organization (Milward & Provan, 2006, p. 8). Furthermore, Donahue and Zeckhauser (2011) wrote that public organizations enter into collaboration to enhance their productivity, to acquire information, to gain legitimacy, and to obtain scare resources.

The literature on collaboration within public administration is fragmented and without much concordance (O'Leary & Vig, 2012; Thomson & Perry, 2006). According to O'Leary and Vig (2006), the literature of public administration has around 101 different definitions for collaboration (p.508). For instance, Bardach (1998) defined collaboration as "any joint activity by two or more agencies working together that is intended to increase public value by their working together rather than separately" (as cited in O'Leary & Vig, 2006, p. 508). Similarly,

Bryson et al. (2015) and Agranoff (2007) state that adding public value should be the main reason for creating and sustaining any collaborative effort between public organizations. Thomson et al. (2008) defined collaboration as follows:

> A process in which autonomous or semi-autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions. (p. 98)

The literature of public administration views collaboration as a multidimensional construct composed of the structural dimensions of governance and administration and the social capital dimensions of mutuality and norms combined with a single agency dimension of organizational autonomy (Thomson & Perry, 2006; Thomson et al., 2008). Contrarily, another stream within the literature of public administration views collaboration as the midrange of a continuum. At one end are organizations that hardly relate to each other and at the other end organizations that have merged to become a single entity (Bryson et al., 2015; Mandell & Steelman, 2003).

In the American school of public administration, collaboration is embedded in the political traditions of classical liberalism and civic republicanism. Perry and Thomson (2004, as cited in Thomson & Perry, 2006) suggested that classical liberalism sees collaboration as a process that emphasizes private preferences when choosing collective actions. According to this view, public organizations enter collaboration to achieve their own goals and objectives. On the other hand, the civic republican view of collaboration is that of an essential process that enables the recognition of differences as the basis for deliberation to arrive at a mutual understanding.

The simplest type of coordination is intermittent coordination, which occurs when two or more organizations adjust their policies and procedures to achieve a common goal (Mandell & Steelman, 2003; McGuire, 2006). The second type of collaboration is the temporary task force, which formulates to work on a specific goal and is usually disbanded when the goal is accomplished. The third type of collaboration, according to Mandell and Steelman (2003), is regular coordination, which involves a formal agreement between multiple organizations to achieve a specific purpose. Mandell and Steelman (2003) identify coalition as the fourth type of coordination, requiring long-term commitment from all participants taking strategic actions to achieve narrowly defined goals. Finally, Mandell and Steelman (2003) identify networks as the last type of coordination within their typology. Networks require broad missions and strategically independent actions to accomplish tasks that "reach beyond the simultaneous actions of independently operating organizations" (p. 204).

These collaborative arrangements are not authoritative top-down schemes. Thomson and Perry (2006) wrote that in a collaboration arrangement:

- Decisions are reached and imposed by the members of the coordination,
- All members have a legitimate interest in the collaboration, and
- All members of coordination must be eager to negotiate, respect openness, especially when sharing information and respect the different opinions of other members of the collaboration (p. 24).

The relationship between strategic planning and collaboration is mutually beneficial. As indicated by Lee, McGuire, and Kim (2018), strategic plans would be more effective in the presence of collaboration, and collaboration within public organizations would benefit

significantly from the practice of strategic planning (p. 361). However, Bryson, Berry, and Yang (2010) declared that strategic planning literature that focuses on collaboration is very thin and superfluous (p. 504).

2.2.3 Collectiveness

Nothing is more important for public organizations than to work diligently to provide the citizenry with collective goods and services (Olson, 1965; Vigoda-Gadot, 2004). Ostrom (1972, as cited in Craw, 2017, p. 707) stated that the primary concern of public administration is to study the institutional arrangements proposed to solve collective problems. Citizens tend to have a relatively stable set of common needs and preferences which public administrations must fulfill (Marfolla & D'Amico, 2016; Mwase, 2005; Olson, 1965). Publicly provided goods and services should be equally accessible and equitably distributed to all citizens (Vigoda-Gadot, 2004).

Public organizations create public value through the development and the enactment of strategies that are politically legitimate, administratively feasible, and with substantial value to the citizenry (Moore, 1995). As indicated by Ostrom and Ostrom (1971), elected officials and public managers, when addressing public needs and demands, tend to focus on satisfying the median position of citizen preferences. This situation may create a gap in the democratic legitimacy between what the public organization is willing to provide and the citizens' perception of valuable public goods and services.

Through its history, the field of public administration has provided different answers to the problem of democratic legitimization of public organizations' actions. The first attempt was by Wilson (1887), who stated that "administration lies outside the proper sphere of politics.

Administrative questions are not political questions. Although politics sets the tasks for administration, it should not be suffered to manipulate its offices" (p. 210). Wilson sought representative democracy as the sufficient place for debating and deciding essential questions affecting the collective will of the citizenry. Moore and Fung (2012) argued that Wilson (1887) tried to sweep the problem of democratic legitimization "under the rug" (p. 181).

About a century later, the field of public administration provided its second attempt to address the democratic legitimacy problem. The New Public Management (NPM) movement tried to skip the question altogether. In their seminal *Reinventing the Government*, Osborne and Gaebler (1993) promoted the idea of customer-driven public administration. "People today expect to be valued customers – even by government" (Osborne & Gaebler, 1993, p. 167). Moore and Fung (2012) contend that NPM looks at politics not as a collective articulation of collectively defined public value but as a collection of individuals who decided what is of value for them as individuals.

Moore (2014) argued that public value theory provides the solution to the democratic legitimacy problem. Public value theory has two key assumptions. First, an empirical assumption that individuals acting as citizens of a democratic society have values that include individual prosperity and the satisfaction of well-being as well as concern for the welfare of other members of the society. In a democratic political system, citizens tend to seek a good and just society. Second, there is a normative assumption that democratic societies grant and protect individual's rights to form their own opinions and views about how citizens understand their duties and obligations to have a good and just society (Moore, 2014).

Furthermore, Moore (2014) proposed two theoretical frameworks that would assist in the allocation of government money and authority to create a collective, just, and fair society. The first theoretical model is utilitarianism, which is the idea of the "greatest good for the greatest numbers" (Bentham, 1890, as cited in Moore, 2014, p. 472). Moore (2014) indicated that utilitarianism's primary concern is to create a good society. Under such theoretical framework, government actions are good if they produce results that are desired by individual citizens. The second theoretical framework is deontology, emphasizing the collective relationship between citizens in the broader society. As with utilitarianism, deontological philosophy focuses on creating a fair and just society. Government is obligated to act fairly and justly toward any individual under its jurisdiction and to help bring into existence a just, collective, and good society.

In a similar vein, Dong (2015) stated that attention to citizens' collective preferences is one of the main components of public value theory, along with collaboration and responsiveness. According to Dong (2015), governments should respond to collective rather than individual preferences. The collectiveness concept is viewing citizens as legitimate "shareholders" who are entitled to collective goods and services that are equally accessible and fairly distributed (Dong, 2015, p. 240). Ostrom and Ostrom (1971) saw local governments as a means for allocating decision-making capabilities to provide public goods and services responsive to the community's preferences. Furthermore, Ostrom and Ostrom (1971) emphasized the notion that in a democratic society, the rationale for establishing and maintaining public organizations can be sustained when they address the collective choices and preferences individuals in the community. Bryson (2011) indicated that strategic planning fosters collective thinking and action, and by doing so,

strategic planning as a deliberative practice is the answer to unresolvable analytical questions regarding the collective purpose of individuals as members of the broader community (Bryson, 2011, p. 58).

2.2.4 Responsiveness

Responsiveness is a multifaceted administrative concept (Bryer, 2007; Bryer & Prysmakova-Rivera, 2018; Carnegie, 2019; Liao, 2018; Yang, 2007; Yang & Pandey, 2007). Public organizations must deal with multiple stakeholders and, most often, with conflicting demands (Bryer 2007; Bryer & Cooper, 2007). Ostrom (1975, as cited in Yang & Pandey, 2007, p. 216) defined responsiveness as "the capacity to satisfy the preferences of citizens. Bryer (2007) considered responsiveness as the actions taken by public organizations to balance the needs and demands of different stakeholders. Responsiveness has a very long history within the field of public administration. For example, Stivers (1994) traced responsiveness to Woodrow Wilson's "The Study of Administration" in which he advocated for public organizations which "enable us to offer suggestions which will practicably combine openness and vigor in the administration of such governments with ready docility to all serious, well-sustained public criticism" (Wilson, 1887, p. 222). The Finer-Friedrich debate of the 1940s is another example of responsiveness having a long history within the public administration field. In that debate, Finer argued for a controlled public administration that is responsive to its political masters. On the other hand, Friedrich argued that in democratic societies, public organizations ought to have the discretion to respond to the people (Bryer, 2007; Hill & Lynn, 2016). With all that long history, responsiveness is still relevant today. "Any effort to build a theory of public administration has

to propose a conception of responsiveness" (Yang, 2007, p. 133). However, despite the importance of the concept and its long history of study, the field of public administration lacks any operational consensus concerning responsiveness (Saltzstein, 1992; Yang & Pandey, 2007)

Yang (2007) proposed four dimensions of responsiveness: "its subjects/objects (who), contents (what), processes, and mode (offline/online)" (p. 132). Bryer (2007) asserted that any single conceptual construct would fail to capture the complexity and variation of responsiveness. Instead, Bryer (2007) proposed to divide responsiveness into six different variations:

- Dictated responsiveness to elected officials,
- Constrained responsiveness to bureaucratic rules, norms, structures, and cultures,
- Purposive responsiveness to citizens' needs and demands,
- Entrepreneurial responsiveness to citizens in their role as customers of government,
- Collaborative responsiveness to the public as partners in collaboration efforts, and
- Negotiated responsiveness to balance potentially competing demands within collaboration efforts.

The concept of responsiveness utilized in the present study is most strongly aligned with that of Bryer's (2007) purposive responsiveness, which relates to the goals of public organizations and their employees to address their constituencies' needs and demands. The concept of the public's needs can be seen from two different perspectives. First, is the need from citizens' perspective: "what the people want they should get." The second focuses on the alleviation of undesirable social conditions in the community (Mladenka, 1981).

According to Liao (2018), there are three different models of public responsiveness. The first model is citizen-driven, which sees the role of public administrators as a docile servant of

public needs (Wilson, 1887). Verba and Nie (1972, as cited in Liao, 2018, p. 160) indicated that responsiveness "refers to a relationship between citizens and government, one in which the citizen articulates certain preferences and/or applies pressure on the government and the government in turn—if it is responsive—attempts to satisfy these preferences." The citizen-driven model emphasizes public administrators' role as subordinate to elected officials' directions and citizens' demands (Wheeland, 2000). According to Liao (2018), the second model of public responsiveness is the expertise-driven model in which public administrators respond to collective social needs. Adams and Balfour (2015) urged public administrators to use their discretion and application of rules to pursue the greater good for society. In the last few decades, public administrators were successful in gaining their freedom ("discretion") from a rigid bureaucracy bent on rules-following (Stivers, 2000). Vigoda-Gadot (2004) supported the notion that public administrators are less concerned with citizens' demands since the latter "do not have a real exit alternative" (p. 212) to the collective goods produced by public organizations.

Public administrators powered by their expertise, professionalism, and sense of duty have become Platonic guardians who use professional values to guard bureaucratic autonomy and power (Stivers, 1994). Stivers (1994) also indicated that the expertise-driven model had been criticized because it puts too much emphasis on public administrators' discretion to decide what is in the public interest. The final model of public responsiveness, according to Liao (2018), is the pragmatic model. The purpose of this model is to ease the tensions between the two previous models. The citizen-driven view sees responsiveness as the subordination to public demands. In contrast, the expertise-driven model sees responsiveness as a privilege of the public administrators' professionalism and sense of duty. The pragmatic model of public responsiveness

acknowledges the importance of citizens' demands and the expertise of professional public administrators to understand the responsiveness of public administrators (Liao, 2018). According to Adams and Balfour (2015), "the 'good' public servant should avoid both the extremes of rule-bound behavior and the undermining of the rule of law with individual judgments and interests" (p. 154). In the pragmatic model of public responsiveness, Liao (2018) advocated deliberation and collaboration between public administrators and citizens as a solution to ease the tension between citizens' demands and public administrators' professionalism. Liao's (2018) suggestion is very close to Bryer's (2007) collaborative responsiveness, where public administrators are "open to new ways of thinking and behaving and to which they change their thoughts and behaviors according to census-based decisions of their stakeholders" (p. 487). The pragmatic model of public responsiveness proposes new roles for a responsive public administrator as an "advocate" (Bryer, 2007, p. 490); "spokesperson" (Liao, 2018, p. 162); "facilitator" (Wheeland, 2000, p. 263), and "skillful listener" (Stivers, 1994, p. 376).

Responsiveness is a significant public value (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007; Prysmakova, 2019; Rutgers, 2008). Bozeman (2007, as cited in Jørgensen & Rutgers, 2015, p. 5) indicated that "values are difficult to change, and change can be brought only after careful deliberation." In Waldo's (1992) conception, values may be hard (such as economy and efficiency), or they may be soft (such as those related to the community; cited in Rutgers, 2008). Prysmakova (2019) argued that as a public value, responsiveness has morphed from a hard value under the old paradigms of traditional public administration and New Public Management (NPM) to a soft value under the new paradigm of Public Value Theory. Bryson (2011) declared that strategic planning enhances public organizations’ responsiveness to internal and external demands (p. 51).

2.2.5 Democracy

The concept of democracy is embedded in the process of creating public value (Dong, 2015) and, in democratic societies, the authority to create public value is collectively owned by the people (Moore, 2014; Stivers, 2008). As indicated by Moore (2014), in democracy, the proper arbiter of what constitutes public value are the people who value the welfare of others as well as the overall condition of society (p. 466).

The literature of democracy as it relates to public value theory is divided into two main camps: (1) democracy as a prerequisite for creating any public value (Bozeman & Johnson, 2015) and (2) democracy as a public value in itself. According to the first view, democracy's chief value is rooted in citizens/shareholders' ability to communicate openly and freely about their different desired values to reach agreed-upon values collectively. According to the second view, democracy provides benefits unrelated to any outcome other than that of participatory government. Jørgensen and Bozeman's (2007) argument that democracy as a public value ranks second, fourth, and seventh in the constellation of public values places them firmly if the first camp. For Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007), democracy, as a public value, is associated with transforming interests into decisions. Moore (2015) saw representative democracy as the main mechanism to create a condition under which individual members of the society can assemble and collectively decide what to achieve without forgoing their individual desires (p. 30).

Bryer (2007) criticized representative democracy as a loop model of democracy in which elected officials dictate the services and the delivery mechanisms which public administrators are obligated to follow; if the citizen does not like these services or their delivery mechanism, they can voice their complaints to their elected officials or they can wait until the next election cycle

to vote against them. Nabatchi (2007) argued that representative democracy tends to "limit citizen participation to voting, leaving the main work of governance to professional political elite" (p. 81). Instead, Nabatchi (2007) advocated for deliberative democracy, which is defined as "a method to infuse legitimate government decision-making with citizens' reasoned discussions and collective judgment" (p. 16). Nabatchi (2007) considered deliberative democracy to be both an intrinsic value and an instrument (p. 75).

Furthermore, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) argued that democracy, as a public value, is associated with values related to the relationship between public administration and the environment. According to this view, democracy ensures and facilitates the citizens' collective control of public administration (Jørgensen & Bozeman, 2007, p. 365). Also, Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007) saw democracy as a public value associated with citizens' self-development, which enhances the relationship between citizens and public administration.

2.3 Institutional Isomorphism Theory

Institutional isomorphism theory treats organizations as open systems strongly influenced by their environments (Frederickson et al., 2016; Kwon, 2006; March & Olsen, 1984; Scott, 2003). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) defined isomorphism as "a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions" (p. 149). The theory of institutional isomorphism has shifted the focus toward examining why diverse organizations share so many similarities (Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2004). In their seminal article, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) have identified coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures that drive institutional isomorphism.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) noted that coercive isomorphism "results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectation in the society within which organizations function" (p. 150). Coercive isomorphism emphasizes the role of political rather than technical influences on organizations (Ashworth, Boyne, & Delbridge, 2009). Furthermore, coercive isomorphism in the "organizational field" of local governments comes in the form of formal regulations and legislative requirements that local governments are obligated by law to comply with (George et al., 2020).

Mimetic isomorphism pressures organizations to emulate other organizations in their activities, systems, and structures (Ashworth et al., 2009; Caravella, 2011; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). As indicated by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), when facing ambiguous goals and uncertain environments, organizations react by copying what other organizations perceived to be successful. These practices of mimetic isomorphism occur even when there is no clear evidence of their benefits (Ashworth et al., 2009; Perry, Engbers, & Jun, 2009). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) noticed that the history of management reform in American public organizations is "almost a textbook case" of mimetic isomorphism (p. 152).

Finally, normative isomorphism is a force that emerges "primarily from professionalism" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 152). Normative isomorphism is "the collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy" (George et al., 2020, p. 18). As indicated by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), the typology of institutional isomorphism is "an analytical one: the types are not always empirically distinct" (p. 150). Furthermore, these

isomorphic pressures can overlap and intermingle; however, they often derive from different conditions and effect organizations in different ways (Caravella, 2011; Frumkin & Galaskiewicz, 2009).

The present study proposed that public organizations, due to isomorphic tendencies, would have similar responses to environmental pressures. This study tested DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) assertion that although individual organization's strategies are rational, mimetic and normative isomorphic pressures cause local governments to develop similar strategies regardless of their effectiveness or rationality. Furthermore, this research attempts to move the research on strategic planning at the local level of governments from its usual focus on adaptation and implementation toward shedding the light on the actual content of the of strategic plans (Bryson, 2010; Bryson & Edwards, 2017; Bryson, Edwards & Van Slyke, 2018).

The utilization of content analysis to examine plans' content has a long history within the plan evaluation literature. For instance, Lyles and Stevens (2014) indicated that it is a common practice for scholars of planning to use content analysis to code items in order to "assess the presence or absence of specific content, akin to survey researches using questions or prompts to elicit responses" (p. 435). Evans (2011) also said that scholars of planning lacked a theoretical framework for assessing the link between strategic plans and their adaptions (p.461). Evans (2011) proposed to focus on isomorphic processes related to strategic plans since strategic planning and narratives might reflect preconceived views on how organizations act under similar environmental conditions. Local governments' strategic plans suffer from a dichotomization between content versus context (Gilg & Kelly, 1997; Neman, 1998). Neuman (1998) proposed to focus on both the content and strategic plans' environmental context. Similarly, Berke and

Godschalk (2009) urged future research to connect strategic plans' internal quality (e.g., vision statement, mission statement, and strategic goals) to the public organizations' understudy's external environment.

Similarly, scholars' writings from the institutional tradition within the literature of public administration have explored the idea that institutional statements can reveal much information about the institutions themselves. Institutional statements are "shared linguistic constraint or opportunity that prescribes, permits or advice actions or outcomes for individual and organizational actors" (Crawford & Ostrom, 1995, p. 583). Meyer and Rowan (1977) indicated that the most aspect of institutional isomorphism is present in the evolution of an organizational language that contained a specific set of vocabularies that organizations shared to delineate organizational strategies and goals. This shared language with is specific vocabularies are assumed to be oriented toward collective defined ends (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Similarly, and within the same institutional tradition, Crawford and Ostrom (1995; 2005) proposed *the institution's grammar* as an analytical tool to examine and analyze institutional statements' content. Crawford and Ostrom (1995) defined institutional statements as rules, norms, or organizational strategies. Crawford and Ostrom (1995; 2005) provided the ADICO syntax with five subcomponents of the attribute (A), deontic (D), aim (I), condition (C), and or else (O). Every institutional statement has its grammatical syntax. For instance, organizational strategies include only attribute, aim, and condition (AIC; Crawford & Ostrom, 1995, p. 584).

This study utilized four different internal and external environmental factors to test DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) assertion. These four environmental factors were the focus of previous research on the adoption of strategic planning by Florida's local governments (Kwon,

2006; Kwon et al., 2013). The first factor is fiscal health, which constrains or enhance the capabilities of local governments. Local governments try to imitate other organizations with similar levels of economic health. The second factor is geography; public organizations within a particular geographic region tend to compete for scarce resources. The third factor is the population size, which, as with fiscal health, can permit or constrain local governments; therefore, local governments try to imitate other local governments serving a similarly sized population. Finally, the governmental structure is a factor that influences managerial thoughts and actions. Public organizations with similar structures are expected to have similar goals and actions incorporated into their strategic plans. A discussion about these four internal and external environmental factors is being provided. To test the initial propositions, this study first utilized a variance analysis to determine if a relationship exists between any of four internal and external environmental conditions and similarity (or dissimilarity) within the strategic plans of Florida's local governments strategic implementation.

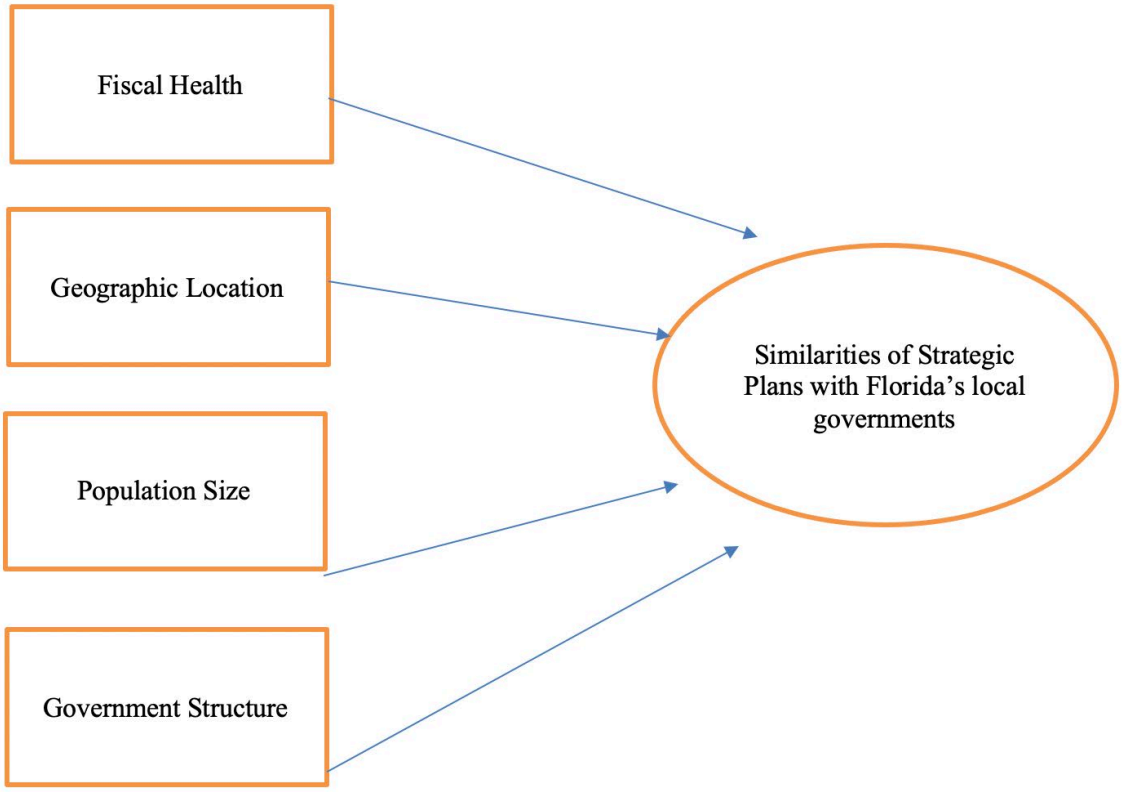


Figure 3. Factors anticipated to determine strategic plans similarities of Florida's local governments. Source: *Adapted from Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*, by H. Van de Ven, 2007. Copyright 2007 by Oxford University Press.

2.3.1 Fiscal Health

The fiscal health by local governments is of vital importance, especially after the great recession of 2008, which has created a "chronic gap" between shrinking revenues and ever-expanding expenditures (Martin et al., 2012, p.195). The concept of fiscal health is complex and multidimensional with no single correct way to measure it (Bird, 2015; Hendrick, 2004; McDonald, 2015, 2017). Some scholars have defined fiscal health as "the ratio of the difference between the total revenue and the total expenditure to the total expenditure of the local government" (Berry, 1994, p. 325; Kwon, 2006, p. 37). The size of the primary surplus of

revenues minus expenditures is of vital importance to the fiscal health of local governments (Tanner, 2013).

There are two significant veins within the literature of public administration that explain the relationship between the local governments' fiscal health and their adoption of strategic planning. First, strategic management literature states that local governments with poor fiscal health are more willing to adopt strategic planning as a measure to solve their financial hardships. During times of financial stress, strategic planning becomes a resistance mechanism to achieve internal agreement concerning what to cut from the budget and to identify the highest priorities of the local government (Berry, 1994; Kwon, 2006; Levine, 1978). On the other hand, the innovation literature indicates that during times of fiscal abundance, local governments with "slack resources" are more likely to be innovative and to adopt strategic planning as an administrative tool for defining mission statements and strategies (Berry, 1994; Cyert & March 1963).

The present study proposes that Florida's local governments that have similar levels of fiscal health are pushed by the isomorphic forces to imitate one another. Research detailed in this study implies that the fiscal health of county and municipal governments in Florida triggers isomorphic forces that manifest in their strategic plans, as summarized in the following proposition:

Proposition I: *In Florida county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

2.3.2 Geographic Location

This study argues that spatial proximity between Florida's local governments increases the mimetic isomorphism between adjacent local governments. This section relies on arguments developed by the diffusion of innovation framework within the literature of public administration (e.g., Berry & Berry, 2007; Walker, 1969). This framework focuses on the spatial effect of the spread of new ideas and managerial practices (Knoke, 1982).

Florida's local governments operate in an unstable, concentrated environment (Emery & Trist, 1956). Aldrich (2008) reported that, in such an environment, similar organizations are competing for the same resources, including consumer-voters (Tiebout, 1956). According to this idea, the population can move to the local government that is more able to satisfy their needs and preferences for public goods. Walker (1969) argued that public decision-makers tend to monitor each other in search of guidance for different actions. Walker (1969), while speaking about American states, noticed that "this process of regional competition, emulation, or cue-taking is an important phenomenon" (p. 890). Following the first law of geography, which states that "everything is related to everything else, but near things are more related than distant things" (Tobler, 1970, p. 236); Walker (1969), indicated that this phenomenon of emulation and competition depends upon geographic contiguity (p. 892). Other scholars have agreed that regional competition and emulation occur at the local level of government (Frederickson, Johnson, & Wood, 2004; Mooney & Lee, 1995). "Decision-makers and citizens more easily analogize to cities nearby than cities far away" (Kwon, 2006, p. 42; Mooney & Lee, p. 605). Frederickson et al. (2004) stated that geographic proximity is the main factor determining the diffusion of information and managerial practices between local governments. Brown and Cox

(1971) argued that neighborhood effect is an empirical regularity where the probability of mimicking adjacent municipalities decreases with increasing distance (p. 552).

The present study suggests that spatially proximate local governments compete within similar environments and face the same uncertainties, leading to increase similarities in their strategic plans. Within the present study, local governments share spatial proximity if they are within the same geographic region, as defined by the Florida Association of Counties (FAC). The FAC recognizes six different geographic regions within the state of Florida: Northwest, Northeast, West Central, East Central, Southwest, and Southeast Regions. The present study suggests that the geographic proximity of county and municipal governments in Florida triggers an isomorphic force that is manifested in their strategic plans, as summarized in the following proposition:

> Proposition 2: *In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

2.3.3 Population Size

Population size is an important community attribute that is positively related to the adaptation of strategic planning by municipal governments (Kwon, 2006; Kwon et al., 2009: Poister & Strieb, 1989, 2005; Strieb & Poister, 1990). As indicated by Kwon, Berry, and Jang (2014), local governments serving large populations have greater administrative capacities and superior resources as compared with local governments serving smaller communities (p. 169).

Furthermore, the International City Management Association (ICMA) conducted two studies (in 1994 and 2002), which found that approximately 50% of municipal governments

serving populations of less than 25,000 had initiated strategic planning, as compared with 70% of municipal governments serving populations greater than 25,000 (Kwon et al., 2009, p. 972). Poister and Strieb (1989) found that 54% of municipal governments serving populations between 25,000-50,000 had reported having a strategic plan, compared with 78% of municipal governments serving cities with between 500,000-1 million inhabitants (p. 243).

Local governments of cities with populations less than 25,000 tend not to conduct strategic planning. In such jurisdictions, elected officials and most of the citizenry think that strategic planning is unnecessary since it requires substantial time and resources without producing any immediate benefits.

In the present study, municipal population sizes range from 8,041 (Palm Beach) to 861,252 (Jacksonville). This study proposes that the pressure of mimetic isomorphism compels local governments to model their strategic plans to resemble those of others with similar population sizes. Research detailed in this study implies that similarity of population sizes among Florida counties and municipalities triggers isomorphic forces that manifest in their strategic plans, as summarized in the following proposition:

> Proposition 3: *In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

2.3.4 Government Structure

Poister and Strieb (1989) found that 25% of elected officials in municipal government rated strategic planning as an effective tool, as compared with 40% of city managers. Similarly, in a study of 135 Florida cities, Kown (2006) reported that 20% of municipalities with a mayor-

council form of government used strategic planning, as compared with 60% of cities with a council-manager form of government (p. 64). The structure of local governments shapes political pressures and considerations under which these governments operate. Local governments with a mayor-council structure are less likely to adopt strategic planning because they tend to focus on short term goals that serve their electoral interests (Feiock, Jeong, & Kim, 2003; Kwon et al., 2013, 2014). This political orientation of the decision-making means that cities with a mayor-council form of government find strategic planning very challenging (Kwon et al., 2013).

Alternatively, municipalities with the council-manager form of government, with a professional city manager that is not an elected politician, face pressures of normative isomorphism to implement strategic planning (Feiock et al., 2003; Kwon, 2006; Kwon et al., 2009; Kwon et al., 2013; Poister & Strieb, 1989, 1994, 2005).

Research detailed in this study implies that Florida counties and cities with similar governmental structure face isomorphic forces that manifest in their strategic plans, as summarized in the following proposition:

> Proposition 4: *In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

2.4 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 introduced public value theory (PVT) and institutional isomorphism theory; together, these two theories serve as the theoretical foundation for this study. Moore (1995) created PVT as a conceptual framework to give elected officials and public managers a strategic

purpose to guide them in dealing with complex situations and wicked public problems. This theory (PVT) includes Moore's (1995) Strategic Triangle as a practical framework to assist elected officials and public managers in the creation of public value. The chapter also revisited Dong's (2015) components of Moore's (1995) PVT within the literature of public administration. According to Dong (2015), the concepts of collaboration, collectiveness, responsiveness, and democracy represent the components of Moore's (1995) PVT. Institutional isomorphism theory provides the theoretical justification for any observed similarities between the strategic plans of Florida's local governments. According to institutional isomorphism theory, organizations tend to act similarly when dealing with similar environmental conditions. This chapter emphasized the environmental factors that were the focus of previous research on the adoption of strategic planning by Florida's local governments (Kwon, 2006; Kwon et al., 2013). The environmental factors of fiscal health, geographic location, population, and government structure were identified as factors in the adaption of strategic planning by Florida's local governments. However, this study followed the advice of Bryson and his associates in moving from the adaptation process toward the actual content of strategic plans (Bryson, 2010; Bryson & Edwards, 2017; Bryson, Edwards & Van Slyke, 2018).

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodology used in this study and explains why this qualitative approach was selected. This chapter also provides details concerning the research design and procedures, the source of data, and the collection method. Next, the author explains the process of data analysis and the standards for assessing the quality of the interpretive findings. The last section of this chapter discusses the feasibility, timeline, and ethics of this study, followed by a brief conclusion.

3.2 Research Question

This study investigates the effects of different internal and external environmental conditions on the expressions of public values found in Florida's local governments' strategic plans at the county and municipal levels. This study is exploratory in nature, and it focused on the effect of fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and government format. The following research question and propositions guided it:

RQ: *What are the effects of internal and external environmental factors on public value expressions found within Florida county and municipal governments' strategic plans?*

3.3 Research Propositions

Proposition 1: *In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

Proposition 2: *In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

Proposition 3: *In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

Proposition 4: *In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.*

3.4 Qualitative Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach to examine strategic planning as practiced by Florida's local governments. The author examined the strategic plans of local Florida governments to test the primary task of Moore's (1995) public value theory, which suggests that the primary responsibility of public officials and managers is to produce public value. This study also examined DiMaggio abd Powell's (1983) assertion that, due to normative and mimetic isomorphic pressures, public organizations facing similar environmental conditions tend to adopt similar strategic plans. Furthermore, this study observed the qualitative tradition established by the Chicago School, where data are accessed, analyzed, and illustrated through a text-based mode of inquiry (Yanow, 2003). Although both qualitative and quantitative researchers "think that they know something about society worth telling" (Becker, 1986, as cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8), qualitative research differs from quantitative research. Qualitative research's contribution to scientific knowledge and progress lies in such differences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011**;** LeCompt &Goetz, 1982).

Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that qualitative methodologies are inherently robust because they focus on studying different social phenomena in naturally occurring settings. Qualitative researchers can, therefore, generate thick and vivid data from the real world. Also, qualitative methodologies are well-suited for locating the meaning people place on events or processes. Qualitative methodologies are the best approach to explore the black box of social phenomena with great potential for generating and testing different hypotheses (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10).

There are five key differences between qualitative and quantitative research. First, both approaches have a distinct ontological perception about the nature of reality. On the one hand, qualitative research relies on postpositivism, which contends that it is almost impossible to comprehend reality fully. On the other hand, quantitative research relies on positivism, which argues that reality is out there, ready to be studied and understood. Second, qualitative research corresponds more closely to postmodern sensibilities. Third, qualitative research can access to a deeper degree the subject of the study. At the same time, the quantitative approach prefers to maintain a detachment of spirit and remain more remote from the study's subject. Fourth, qualitative research is action-oriented and closer to the subject of the study, while quantitative research emphasizes the monoethnic view of science that sees the world as an abstract that could not be studied directly. Finally, the focus of the qualitative view is to provide rich and vivid data about the human world. Quantitative research, conversely, mainly focuses on randomly selected data to assess the generalizability of findings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8-10).

There is no consensus regarding the precise meaning of qualitative research (Gabrielian, Yang, & Spice, 2008; Van Maanen, 1979). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) emphasize that

qualitative research is an interpretive and naturalistic approach that observes phenomena in their natural environment. Starting with Dilthey (1911), this naturalistic line of inquiry has a long intellectual history that promotes the human activity of text generation as laden with meaning and symbols (as cited in Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 8). Most often, scholars of public administration conceptualize qualitative methods as:

- Non-positivist,
- An interpretative search for meaning rather than generalized causality, and
- Characterized by non-numerical research methods (Gabrielian et al., 2008).

Nagy Hesse-Biber (2017) identified three paradigms to support the application of qualitative research: (a) positivism, (b) interpretive, and (c) critical. Positivism seeks out causal explanations through hypotheses testing to conform to well-established theories. A fundamental ontological and epistemological assumption of positivism is the idea that reality is available and accessible (Burrell & Morgan, 1979; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With its emphasis on theory testing as the central goal, positivism is more clearly aligned with the deductive model of logic (Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2017). The second paradigm is interpretive, where human activities and actions may be studied as text **(**Berg, 2009; Berg & Lune, 2012; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The third paradigm (Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2017) is the critical paradigm, consisting of an interdisciplinary umbrella that includes several theories and methods such as postmodernism, post-structuralism, critical race theory, and feminism. The interpretive paradigm has evolved dramatically from the standpoint that organizations do not exist (Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 260) to Bittner 's (1965) position that organizations are social worlds "created by the actor involved" (as cited in Burrell & Morgan, 1979, p. 263).

Most qualitative studies in public administration apply the second paradigm (the interpretive paradigm; Browr, Abolafia, & Carr, 2000). In the interpretive paradigm, meaning is socially constructed through the interaction of humans and non-human (e.g., artifacts; Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2017, p. 23). According to this view, organizations express agency with not only human agents but also through non-human counterparts (e.g., documents, technology, and machines). Thus, examining documents produced by organizations allows the reconceptualization of organizational ontology to understand what organizational documents can or cannot do (Cooren, 2004, p. 380). Qualitative investigators also tend to describe the unfolding of social processes rather than the social structures, which are often the focus of quantitative researchers (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 520). By relying on qualitative methodology, this study sought to develop a vivid and thick description of the social world that Florida county and municipal governments create in their strategic plans. Public organizations' official documents are "a site of claims to power, legitimacy, and reality" (Lindolf & Taylor, 2011, as cited in Saldana, 2016, p. 61). Moreover, official documents are organizational products that must be examined carefully and critically to provide vivid and thick descriptions of the processes, interests, and values of public organizations and their officials (Altheide, 1996; Saldana, 2016). Qualitative methodology is most suitable for providing the desired thick and vivid description of the social reality created by Florida county and municipal governments in their strategic plans (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Documents (e.g., strategic plans) and their interpretations are vital sources of data in qualitative research (Bowen 2009; Yanow, 2003). In qualitative methods, documents are identified, located, retrieved, and analyzed for their meaning, relevance, and significance to the

phenomenon under study (Altheide, 1996, p. 2). Altheide (1996) recognizes three different types of documents that are relevant to qualitative research:

- Primary documents, which are the object of the study;
- Secondary documents, which provide details about the primary documents and other artifacts of the study; and
- Supporting documents, which are neither the prime source of the data nor the focus of the research; however, they can add to the study.

This study focused on primary documents, which consisted of 77 local governments' strategic plans within the state of Florida.

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative method to examine strategic plans created by several local governments within the state of Florida; it relies on texts (strategic plans) as the source of data. Texts provide "social spaces in which two fundamental social processes simultaneously occur: cognition and representation of the world and social interaction" (Donohue, 2008, p. 50). Halliday (1978) noted that texts are inherently multi-functional; they represent aspects of the physical and social worlds. Also, texts promote social relations between actors within a social setting. Finally, texts link different parts of the passage together, along with their situational contexts. Organizational contexts provide the frame of action that can facilitate and constrain social activities, which ultimately would affect the produced texts (Donohue, 2008; e.g., strategic plans).

From an epistemological point of view, texts are unique as they carry meaning beyond those who created or studied them. First, texts have no *reader-independent quality,* the meaning of any text brought to it by someone (Krippendroff, 2019, 28 Italic in the original). Second, the

meanings invoked by texts need not be shared; there are multiple uses for, and meanings of, any text, nourished by the variety of experiences readers or actors bring to it. Third, texts have no single meaning; instead, texts have multiple interpretations, and each reading can yield a different meaning or understanding. Fourth, texts link their readers to something else other than the given text. Finally, texts are meaningful within their contexts. Differences in interpretation do not prevent agreements within a specific context (Krippendroff, 2019, p 27-28).

3.5 Data Analysis

This study utilizes a non-experimental qualitative exploratory research design to extract data from multiple documents. Broadly defined, content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use" (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 24). As indicated by Holsti (1969), content analysis is a multipurpose research method developed to investigate any phenomenon in which texts are the basis for inferences. Studies using content analysis rely solely on available text-based artifacts to answer research questions (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 87; Schreier, 2012, p. 4). The main task of content analysis is to identify a group of documents and to carefully study them to answer the research questions (Krippendroff, 2019; Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2017).

Content analysis is a very established tool to study and evaluate plans within the is being used as the primary tool of analysis within the plan evaluation tradition in the field of urban planning (e.g., Berke & Godschalk, 2009; Lyles & Stevens, 2014; Norton, 2008; Stevens, Lyles & Berke, 2014). The literature of urban planning distinguished between plan content analysis as being practiced with the field of public administration (which this dissertation is an addition to)

and plan evaluation. Urban planning literature defined plan evaluation as the "systematic assessment of plans, planning processes and outcomes compared with explicit standards and indicators" (Guyadeen & Seasons, 2016, p. 216).

The literature of urban planning defines strategic planning as a "social process through which a range of people in diverse institutional relations and positions come together to design plan-making processes and develop content and strategies for urban development" (Healey, 1997, p.5 as cited in Grassini, Monno, & Khakee, 2018, p. 1686). There is an agreement between the two fields of public administration and urban planning that strategic planning is a tool to manage change (Albrechts & Balducci, 2013; Bryson, 2011; Grassini et al., 2018; Mitchell, 2018). However, each field tends to deal with strategic planning separately, and common citations are very rare (e.g., Bryson, 1988; Bryson & Roering, 1987 cited in Albrechts & Balducci, 2013, p. 18). From the urban planning point of view, local governments adopt strategic planning to rationalize their responses to local challenges, improve social cohesion, and deal with the opportunities and challenges that globalization and economic development can bring (Grassini et al., 2018).

There is no agreement on the best method to evaluate strategic plans since such plans usually serve as a frame of reference and do not influence actions directly (Healey, Khakee, Motte, & Needham, 1999). However, the literature agrees that plan evaluation can occur during two different phases: first, ex-ante when plans are being evaluated to select the most suitable plan; second, ex-post to determine if the plan achieved its stated objectives (Guyadeen & Seasons, 2016; Khakee, 2000, Oliveira & Pinho, 2009). Khakee (2000) proposed the rational approach and the communicative approach to plan evaluation. The rational approach is closely associated

with the rational planning theory, where planning is considered a linear and well-ordered process. The rational planning theory assumes a direct causal relationship between planning processes and the plan's actual achievement (Khakee, 2000).

On the other hand, the communicative approach is more related to the communicative plan theory, which envisions planning as a fluid and overlapping process (Khakee, 2000). The communicative plan theory is built on Guba and Lincoln's (1989) concept of responsive, constructive evaluation where plan evaluation involves interactive, inclusive, and negotiated processes. According to Khakee (2000), plan evaluations that apply the responsive constructive evaluation tend to go beyond the traditional focus on effectiveness and efficiency to include focusing on integrity, fairness, and equality (p.134).

Stevens (2013), building on the work of other scholars (e.g., Baer, 1997; Berke & Godschalk, 2009; Norton, 2008) proposed eight different dimensions to consider when conducting a plan evaluation:

1. Fact base: this dimension should provide an empirical foundation about the current situation and also should provide future projections of the future situation in the absence of the plan.
2. Goals: this dimension should focus on answering the "where we want to be?" question. Plans should describe goals based on local value and aspiration to deal with a specific set of problems.
3. Policies: this dimension represents the mechanism that is being used to achieve the desired goals. Therefore, policies should be clear and specific.

4. Implementation: this dimension focuses on answering "where we want to be?" by having a clear timeline and a clear assignment of responsibilities, plans can increase their chances of being successfully implemented and achieved their desired impact.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation: this dimension allows for measuring the progress of the plan's implementation. It also should assess the current plan in order to identify any desired changes or adjustments.
6. Interorganizational Coordination: the importance of this dimension arises from the fact that strategic planning is a complex, dynamic, and fluid process that usually involves different sets of interdependencies required for the strategic plan to have a positive impact.
7. Public Participation: this dimension is required to ensure that the public's values and desires are considered in every part of the planning process. Greater public participation produces stronger and successfully implemented strategic plans.
8. Organization and Presentation: strategic plans should be written and organized in a matter to inspire and motivate the people in a manner that would produce public value.

Furthermore, Content analysis is a very suitable technique for studying public documents and documents produced within organizational settings (US General Accounting Office [GAO], 1989, p. 9; Neuendrof, 2002, p. 20). This study is siding with Krippendroff (2019), who insisted that all content analysis studies are qualitative even when "certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers" (p. 21). Through systematic content analysis, the study deduced Dong's (2015) components of Moore's (1995) PVT from Florida's local governments' strategic plans understudy. instead of counting an actual frequency, the presence of each of Dong's (2015)

components of Moore's (1995) PVT were calculated as a percentage to other codes. Also, the averages were calculated for each of Dong's (2015) components of Moore's (1995) PVT. For this study, the effect of four independent variables of fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and government structures of Florida's local governments were examined on Dong's (2015) three components of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness of Moore's (1995) public value theory. The study examined within groups similarity using a calculation that relied on calculating the percentage differences between the three codes of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness. To examine the similarity between groups, the study relied on the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis H test (Berman & Wang, 2018; Lund & Lund, 2018; Towns, 2015).

Furthermore, in dealing with the strategic planning at the local governmental level (counties/municipalities), this study took a different approach than that found in previous studies (e.g., Berman & West, 1995, 1998; Berman, 1996; Poister & Streib, 1989, 1994, 2005). First, this study utilized content analysis to study strategic planning. As indicated by Holsti (1969), content analysis is an instrumental technique for studies that are limited to documentary evidence (p. 16), especially when direct approaches (e.g., interviews or questionnaires) are not an option. Second, previously mentioned studies focused on a nation-wide sample of municipalities with a population size of 25,000 persons or more.

This study focused solely on Florida's municipal governments with populations of 8,000 persons or more. The logic behind this inclusion criterion is two-fold. First, by focusing on local governments (counties and municipalities) within the state of Florida, this researcher obtained a comparable unit of analysis. As indicated by Peterson (1981), local governments in the United

States vary significantly from one state to another, rendering them poor subjects of comparison (p. 10). Second, this inclusion criterion gives a voice to Florida's local governments (counties and municipalities) that are less populated. In Florida, around 22% of its counties and 64% of its municipalities have populations of less than 25,000 persons (Kwon et al., 2013, p. 445). Researchers in the discipline of public administration tend to neglect small local governments (counties and municipalities) in favor of large ones (Williams & Adrian, 1963, p. 13).

3.6 Data Source

In content analysis, data are made, not found, and researchers are obligated to show their replicable method of generating their data (Krippendroff, 2019, p.86). The researcher constructs such data by the continuous interaction between the researcher and the source(s) of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schreier, 2012). The data for this study was constructed from various strategic plans of Florida's local governments at the county and municipal levels. The sampling units in this study are Florida local governments' (counties and municipalities) strategic plans that are available on their official websites. If Florida's local governments (counties and municipalities) do not post their strategic plans on their official websites, the researcher did not include them in this study. This inclusion criterion might introduce some level of bias into the study since there is a possibility that local governments (counties and municipalities) may have strategic plans even if they are not available on their official websites (Donohue, 2008).

This qualitative study did not encounter a sampling problem (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 117), as all the official websites of Florida's county and municipal governments were examined. This study examined the official websites all 67 Floridian counties and 412 municipalities

searching for publicly available strategic plans. However, this study focused on investigating the official strategic plans of Florida municipalities with populations of 8,000 persons or more. This limiting criterion (population size of 8,000 persons or more) ultimately proved to be moot as Florida municipalities with populations of less than 8,000 persons did not share their strategic plans (if available) on their official websites. The study searched the official websites of municipalities with population size below the 8,000 persons but could not find any posted strategic plans during the data collection phase.

These sampling criteria rendered a sample of 77 strategic plans (22 county plans and 55 municipality plans). These strategic plans represent 32.8% of Florida's counties and 34.28% of municipalities with population sizes of more than 8,000 persons.

3.7 Units of Analyses

Studies that include content analysis primarily utilize three types of units of analysis. The first type - sampling units - consists of "units that are distinguished for the selective inclusion in the analysis" (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 103). The sampling units for this study were the strategic plans of Florida local governments (counties and municipalities) that were posted on their official websites. The second type of units - recording units are "the units that are distinguished for separate description, transcription, recording and coding" (Krippendroff, 2019, p.104; Kuckartz, 2014, p. 45). As indicated by Kuckartz (2014), recording units are part of the sampling units and never extend beyond them. In this study, recording units consist of vision statements, mission statements, and strategic goals that are included in the strategic plans of Florida local governments (counties and municipalities) that were included as sampling units. The final type

of unit is a context unit, which qualifies as "the largest unit[s] that need[s] to be included in order to record and categorize the text under analysis" (Kuckartz, 2014, p. 45). The context units for this study are phrases and sentences that emerge from the vision statements, mission statements, and strategic goals from recording units.

3.8 Research Plan

Krippendorff (2019) recommends the following plan for qualitative research studies employing content analysis. This plan involves the following steps:

1. Identification of the different units of analysis;
2. Creation of data-collection procedures;
3. Coding for the phenomenon being observed in the data;
4. Inferring the phenomenon from the text, and
5. Reporting on the data in response to the research questions posed.

The research plan proposed by Krippendorff (2019) was adopted for this study. Figure 4 visually depicts the research plan for this study.

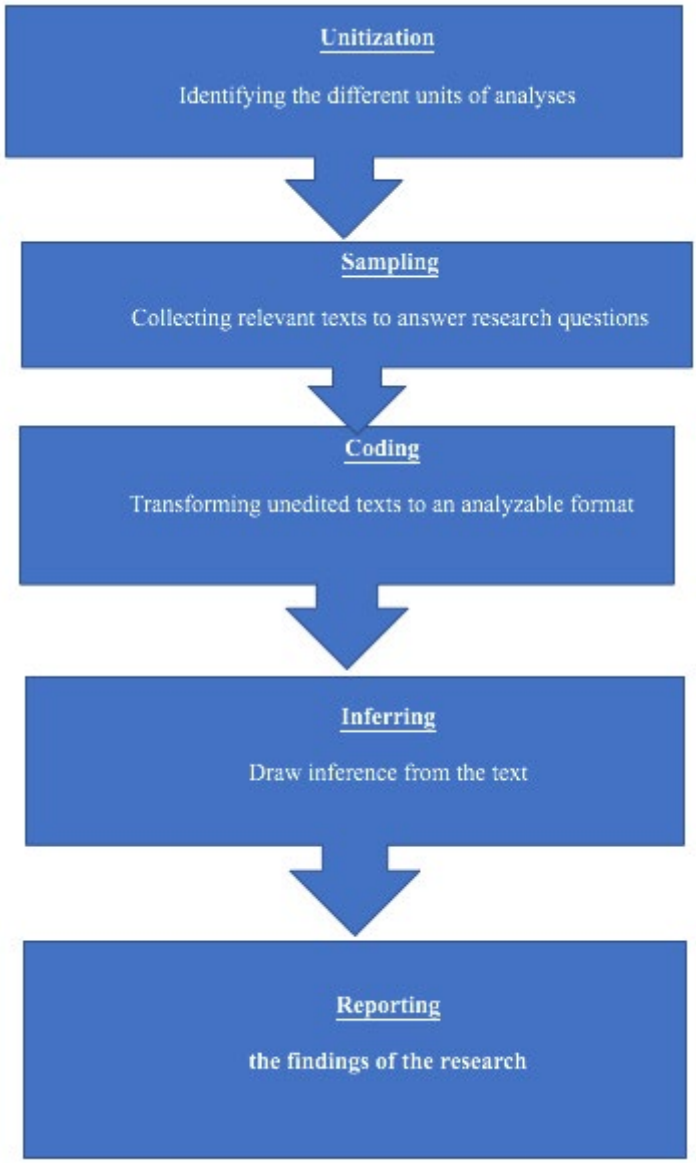


Figure 4. General research plan. Adapted from Krippendroff, 2019. Source: *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*, by Klaus Krippendoff, 2019. Copyright 2019 by SAGE Publications, I

3.9 Research Tools

The adoption of digital tools is a significant contributor to increasing acceptance of qualitative research and the growth in its credibility. Digital tools ease immersion into the data and facilitate the analytical process. The data analysis platform Dedoose was used to organize, code, and synthesize the qualitative data collected for this study (Salmona, Lieber, & Kaczynski, 2020). Dedoose is a cloud-based qualitative data analysis software that is commercially available for researchers. Researchers affiliated with The Fieldwork and Qualitative Research Laboratory developed the program within the Semel Institute Center for Culture and Health at UCLA (Hill, 2013; Salmona et al., 2020). Dedoose is capable of managing, analyzing, and connecting emerging themes within the data (Salmona & Kaczynki, 2016). This platform is very flexible, which allows the attachment of codes to data in its natural format (Hill, 2013; Salmona et al., 2020).

Dedoose offers a stable platform that increases the understanding and the transparency of complex data analysis (Prysmakova, 2019; Salmona et al., 2020). However, Dedoose is not a panacea. The researcher is still the one who drives the analysis process, not the other way around. Qualitative research a messy process that relies on complicated data that becomes even more complicated after the analysis. Therefore, there is always a risk that researchers may lose focus and becomes entangled in their analysis (Bryman & Burgess,1994; Salmona & Kaczynski, 2016; Salmona et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Kruskal-Wallis H test was performed through IBM® SPSS Statistical Subscription.

3.10 Content Analysis

The vision and mission statements along with strategic goals of Florida's local governments strategic plans were analyzed (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Krippendroff, 2019; Saldaña, 2016). The coding process was deducted following Moore's (1995) public value theory. Elo and Kyngas (2008) suggest a deductive approach for analyses based upon previous knowledge; Marshall and Rossman (1995 as cited in Elo & Kyngas, 2008) stated that the deductive approach to content analysis is appropriate to examine previous categories, concepts, or theoretical models. Dong (2015) proposed that collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness are the three main components of Moore's (1995) public value theory.

Florida has 67 counties and 412 municipalities (Florida Association of Counties, 2020; Florida League of Cities, 2020). Between April 2019 and January 2020, strategic plans were collected from the official websites of all 67 counties and 175 municipalities in Florida with a population of at least 8,000. Of these, 21 counties and 55 municipalities with strategic plans publicly available on their official websites (the only characteristic they held in common) were included in the final sample. Selected counties and municipalities vary significantly in their fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and governmental structure. The final sample represents 33% of counties and 31% of municipalities with a population greater than 8,000 in Florida.

This study's primary focus was an analysis of the vision statement, mission statement, and strategic goals in each of the 77 official strategic plans. Data were coded in their natural setting. Each strategic plan was downloaded from the official website of Florida's counties and municipalities, then uploaded to and stored in Dedoose. Occasional technical difficulties in

uploading were solved through the creation of a Microsoft Word file (containing the same information as the website), which was then uploaded to Dedoose. The official websites of each of the 77 local governments were visited every month to ensure that the obtained official strategic plans were the most recent available. If an updated version was available, it was uploaded to Dedoose, and the older version omitted.

3.11 Human Subject Issue

The human subject issue is not applicable to this study as there are no human subjects involved.

3.12 Standards for Evaluating Research Quality

Several standards can be used to examine the quality of this study. Some of these standards are unique to content analysis, while others are with qualitative research in general. There is a fundamental bias against qualitative research that characterizes it as soft and lacking scientific rigor (Bailey, 1992). In their seminal work, Lincoln and Guba (1985) proposed four different standards to assess the quality of qualitative research. These standards include (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability that act as equivalents to internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity, respectively, within the positivist tradition.

The first criterion, credibility, refers to the degree to which a study is conducted to enhance its findings. The credibility of this study is supported by persistent observations that

enhance the depth of the data and allows the researcher to "sort out irrelevancies" from the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 304).

The second criterion, transferability, is equivalent to the concept of external validity within the positivist paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (1985) indicated that naturalistic inquiry could not satisfy the standard of external validity as conceptualized by the positivist paradigm. Instead, the naturalistic model produces a database of "thick description" that enables experts to judge "whether the transfer can be contemplated as a possibility" (p. 316).

The two other criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), dependability and confirmability, are confirmed through an audit trail that allows external auditors to cross-check results to confirm the credibility of the procedures and findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Janesick, 2000). The audit trail focuses on documenting "how the study was conducted, including what was done, when, and why" (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorenson, 2006, as cited in Hill, 2013, p. 90).

Other scholars promoted the standards of authenticity, plausibility, and criticality to assess the value of qualitative research (Brower, Abolafia, & Carr, 2000; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). In this context, authenticity refers to the ability to convey a sense of genuineness (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). Thick description data can also serve to establish the authenticity of qualitative studies (Donohue, 2008). For example, Brower et al. (2000) proposed that thick description and in-depth analysis of administrative texts "reveal the special cultural features that characterize public bureaucracies" (p. 378). This study adheres to the standard of authenticity by using content analysis to produce thick descriptions of local governments' strategic plans in the state of Florida.

Plausibility is the next important criterion for assessing the quality of qualitative research (Brower et al., 2000; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). Plausibility refers to the understandability and the reasonability of the study's findings (Bower et al., 2000). According to Donohue (2008), the plausibility of findings that emerge from qualitative research is established by emphasizing the study's uniqueness and significance. This study meets the standard of plausibility as it sheds light on the actual practice of strategic planning as conducted by local Florida governments through the systematic analysis of the contents of their official strategic plans.

Criticality is the final criterion for assessing the quality of qualitative research (Brower et al., 2000; Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1993). As indicated by Brower et al. (2000), robust qualitative research challenges its readers to think critically about the assumptions that they may take for granted (p. 382). Hopefully, this study challenges its readers to critically rethink their assumptions about strategic planning as practiced by Florida's local governments.

3.13 Study Feasibility

This study's feasibility is supported by the relatively manageable number of strategic plans available online (n = 77). The publicly available data sources (i.e., official websites of Florida's local governments) results in low-overall costs associated with this study. According to Babbie (2016), economy is the most significant advantage of content analysis. Content analysis studies usually require smaller numbers of staff and can be conducted with limited financial resources. Therefore, content analysis is one of the most suitable scientific methods for fledgling researchers with limited financial resources (Babbie, 2016; Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018).

The monthly subscription of the *computer-assisted qualitative data analysis* (CAQDA) program Dedoose was reasonable ($10.95) in comparison to other (CAQDA) programs.

3.14 Strengths of the Study

The researcher considers content analysis a strength if this study; it follows a detailed account of the strengths and benefits associated with content analysis as a method of data generation.

3.14.1 Unobtrusive Method

Content analysis is an unobtrusive scientific method that tends to examine its subjects within their natural setting (Babbie, 2016; Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018; Holsti, 1969; Krippendroff, 2019; Weber, 1990). Content analysis, as a method, rarely has any effect on the content understudies or with the actors who produced them. "Content analysis is the only technique that does not directly deal with people" (Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018, p. 187). As indicated by Krippendroff (2019), content analysis as an unobtrusive method is less likely to obtained distorted data or being manipulated by the producers of these data (p. 47).

3.14.2 Unique Method

As indicated by Besen-Cassino and Cassino (2018), much of the other methods in social sciences (e.g., survey research and experiments) indirectly study individuals' socialization, communication, and persuasion. However, this is not the case with the content analysis method. It can directly explore how individuals think, act, and communicate even when these processes are mostly opaque to the people who perform them.

3.14.3 Flexible Method

Content analysis is a very flexible research method that supports the easy correction of any mistakes. This ease of correction is not the case with other scientific methods (e.g., survey research, experimental research), where it is challenging to correct errors in survey research or experiments (Babbie, 2016; Besen-Cassino & Cassino, 2018). Another advantage of content analysis, according to Besen-Cassino and Cassino (2018), is its replicability; flexible replicability is found in few other scientific methods of inquiry. Besen-Cassino and Cassino (2018) advised other researchers to use this replicability as a measure to ensure the reliability of content analysis outcomes.

3.15 Chapter Summary

The researcher selected a non-experimental, exploratory qualitative comparative content analysis research approach to examine the similarity, if any, between the strategic plans of selected local governments in Florida. The deployment of comparative content analysis facilitates a holistic and in-depth examination of Florida's local governments' strategic plans. The use of a deductive qualitative comparative content analysis allows for the deduction of any isomorphic tendencies within Florida's local governments' strategic plans through the lens of Moore's (1995) PVT and Dong (2015) proposed components of PVT. This chapter explained the rationale for choosing a qualitative content analysis methodology for this study and described the data analysis procedures, data source, unit of analysis, research plan, and the utilized CAQDA program. This chapter discussed the usage of Kruskal-Wallis H non-parametric test to examine the study four propositions. Finally, this chapter discussed the issue of human subject research

(or lack of it), along with the proposed standard for evaluating the current study, its feasibility, and the strengths of the methodology.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The present study examined isomorphic tendencies of Florida's count county and municipal governments, as seen in their strategic plans. The single inclusion criterion for counties was to have an official strategic plan available and publicly accessible on their official websites. Dual inclusion criteria for municipalities were that they have strategic plans publicly available on their official websites and having a minimum population of 8,000.

This study encompassed data on the 77 counties and municipalities within the state of Florida. Most previous research on strategic planning at the local government level tends to focus on local governments with a population size of 25,000 persons or more (e.g., Berman & West, 1995, 1998; Berman, 1996; Poister & Streib, 1989, 1994, 2005). Thus, this study attempts to give a voice to Florida's local governments with smaller populations, as they represent the majority of municipalities in Florida and tend to be excluded from academic research (Kwon, Berry, & Jang, 2013; Williams & Adrian, 1963). However, this study could not find strategic plans in municipalities' official websites with populations of less than 8,000 persons rendering to their exclusion from this study.

This chapter is in two parts (sections): (1) Qualitative Content Analysis and (2) Testing Research Hypotheses. In the first section, the content analysis procedures are described, along with the three major components deduced from the data. The first section interprets Florida's county and municipal governments' strategic plans in light of the theoretical construct of Moore's (1995) public value theory. Codes were obtained through the utilization of Moore's (1995) public value theory and Dong's (2015) components of the public value theory, leading to further development

and understanding of the theoretical construct (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). The second section builds upon results obtained from the first, analyzing the effects of four different internal and external environmental conditions of fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and governmental structure on the within-group and between-group similarity (or dissimilarity) on Dong's (2015) components of Moore's (1995) public value theory as being expressed in the official strategic plans of 77 Florida's county and municipal governments. Finally, this chapter concludes with a summary of this study's findings.

4.2 Part One: Qualitative Content Analysis

The coding of the data was deduced from Dong's (2015) components for Moore's (1995) public value theory. The first code is collaboration, which indicates any sentence in the vision statement, mission statement, and strategic goals that mention involvement in a collaborative effort. Practitioners tend to use labels such as collaboration, partnership, and network interchangeably (Mandell & Steelman, 2003); these terms were considered synonymous in the present study. Collaboration occurs both vertically and horizontally. In vertical collaboration, a local government works with governments at different levels (such as state or federal). In horizontal collaboration, a local government works with another at the same level (O'Toole, Meier, & Nicholson-Crotty, 2005; McGuire, 2006).

The second code is collectiveness. Collectiveness occurs when the local government addresses a collective need and ensures that it is equally accessible and fairly distributed within the community. For example, the city of Fort Lauderdale made one of its strategic goals the creation of "playful areas for all ages, considering families, active and passive sports, and pets"

(City of Fort Lauderdale, 2017, p.37). This strategic plan is inclusive of all ages and even pets. The third code is responsiveness. Dong (2015) indicated that local governments should treat their citizens not as customers, but as valuable stakeholders. Due to the very small percentage of excerpts that were coded for democracy (3.325%), this code (democracy) was omitted from further analysis. Thus, strategic plans in the present std were coded for collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness based on definitions reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Operational Definitions of Categories

Code	Definition/Description	Key Phrases/Words
Collaboration	The local government is involved in collaborative efforts with non-profit, private or with other governmental organizations at the same or higher levels.	• Collaboration • Collaborative effort • Public/Private Partnership • Partnership • Alliance • Leader of a Coordination • Network • Cooperation
Collectiveness	The local government is addressing a collective need.	• Addressing the needs of residents, visitors, and businesses. • Addressing the need throughout the community • Addressing the need for all generations. • Addressing the need for all
Responsiveness	The local government being responsive to its citizens' needs	• Responsiveness • Responsive • 2-way communication • Reassuring citizens' satisfaction • Seek public input • Open communication. • Conduct Citizen Survey.

This elaborative procedure produced 785 coded excerpts from the 77 strategic plans under study. To ensure reliability, the researcher re-coded the data one month after the initial coding. The two iterations had 95.15% agreement. Collaboration was the frequently encountered component, appearing in 368 excerpts (46.88% of the total). Collectiveness was intermediate in frequency (219 excerpts, 27.90% of the total). Lastly, responsiveness occurred in 198 excerpts, 25.22% of the total.

4.2.1 Collaboration

Florida's local governments' interest in collaboration is consistent with the literature of public administration. McGuire (2006) indicated that public organizations see collaboration as a positive administrative practice. Collaboration is an independent administrative phenomenon (Stout, 2013). Florida's local governments tend to collaborate when they face a complex problem that cannot be solved unilaterally or when problems "don't fit neatly" within the boundaries of a single organization (Milward & Provan, 2006, p.8). Table 2 provides examples of excerpts related to collaboration from the strategic plans.

Table 2

Selected Data Excerpts Describing Collaboration

Selected Data Excerpts
Collaboration
• "To partner with community organizations and businesses to create and preserve affordable housing options to meet the needs of gulf county citizens and enhance economic development opportunities" (Gulf County strategic plan). • "Engage in collaboration to share risk, planning, or financial resources or accelerate outcomes and solve complex problems" (Pasco County strategic plan). • "Working partnerships among village residents, community organizations and institutions for community benefit" (village of Royal Palm Beach strategic plan). • "Fostering positive local inter-governmental partnership" (Volusia county strategic plan). • "Develop private partnership to be identified to cover operational costs: example: YMCA, fiu" (city of Doral strategic plan). • "To build and maintain strong relationship with government partners (national, state and local) and other key stakeholders to support the city's direction and to advance the city's strategic initiatives" (city of Ormond Beach strategic plan). • "Hernando county will build cooperative reciprocal partnerships with educational institutions, not-for-profit, hospitals, and business constituents" (Hernando county strategic plan). • "Collaborate with local artists, educational institutions, associations, and businesses to enliven public places with multicultural art" (Fort Lauderdale strategic plan). • "Create playful areas for all ages, considering families, active and passive sports, and pets" (city of Fort Lauderdale strategic plan

4.2.2 Collectiveness

The essence of collectiveness is the idea of inclusion. Olson (1965) argued that "a state is, first of all, an organization that provides public goods for its members, the citizens" (p. 15). Citizens, as members of a non-market inclusive group, benefit most when collective goods are provided to an expanded membership because "the increase[d] size of the group do not bring competition to anyone but may lead to lower costs for those already in the group" (Olson, 1965, p. 37). Publicly provided collective goods should be equally accessible and equitably distributed to all citizens (Vigoda-Gadot, 2004). Florida's local governments differed significantly on what they considered to be collective public goods. Table 3 provides examples of excerpts related to collectiveness from the strategic plans.

Table 3

Excerpts Describing Collectiveness

Selected Data Excerpts
Collectiveness
• "Provide our multi-generational community with a rich civic, cultural, recreational and educational opportunities for children, youth, adults, and seniors" (Village of Key Biscayne strategic plan). • "Variety of ways to enjoy our beach and waterways that are open to the community" (City of Boca Raton strategic plan). • "Every Individual feels welcome regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, handicap, family status, national origin or sexual orientation" (City of Kissimmee strategic plan). • "We will continue to focus on a high quality of life for all members of our diverse population" (Hernando County strategic plan). • "Maintain and improve the aesthetic appearance throughout the city and its gateways" (City of DeLand strategic plan). • "Inviting recreational and cultural venues that provide world-class enrichment opportunities throughout Miami-Dade County" (Miami Dade County strategic plan). • "Create recreational opportunities that are inclusive to all citizens and visitors" (City of Sarasota strategic plan). • "offer a diverse range of youth, adult and senior recreational programs" (City of Cape Coral strategic plan)

4.2.3 Responsiveness

In the present study, responsiveness is defined so as to align with what Bryer (2007) termed purposive responsiveness. Purposive responsiveness involves the "goals of a collective of administrators or individual administrators to achieve a good for a population or constituency they feel deserves services" (Bryer, 2007, p. 486). Responsiveness is viewed in the present study as a public value residing in Jørgensen and Bozeman's (2007) fourth constellation (associated

with the relationship between public administration and its environment). According to Jørgensen and Bozeman (2007), responsiveness implies that public administrators comply with public demands and actively listen and respond to public opinions and inquiries. There is a near consensus among Florida's local governments about their obligation to meet citizens' needs and demands. Table 4 provides examples of excerpts related to responsiveness from the strategic plans.

4.3 Relation Between Part One and Part Two

The qualitative content analysis technique utilized in Part One represents the foundation in which the Second Part is built. Both parts complemented each other to provide a much clearer picture of any isomorphic tendencies in the expression of public values within Florida's local governments under similar internal and external environmental conditions. Part One of the research is dedicated to providing textual evidence to demonstrate the presence of Dong's (2015) components of Moore's (1995) public value theory in almost all 77 official strategic plans of Florida's local governments at the county and municipal level. The second part is devoted to testing the study four propositions, focusing on examining the within-group and between-group similarity (or dissimilarity). This research is qualitative in its essence, and any quantification of the content analysis results does not change or alter the qualitative nature of this study (Krippendroff, 2019).

Table 4

Excerpts Describing Responsiveness

Selected Data Excerpts
Responsiveness
• "City Listening to you and your input" (City of Boca Raton strategic plan). • "St. Johns County will have a responsive, efficient, effective, and accountable government" (St. Johns County strategic plan). • "Support and enhance open, 2-way communication between the town and its residents and businesses" (Town of Jupiter strategic plan). • "Create avenues to capture and integrate community feedback into all stages of programming" (City of Miami strategic plan). • "To enhance quality of life by providing outstanding public service responsive to the needs of our citizens, our unique community and our environment" (Monroe County strategic plan). • "Promote a nimble, responsive culture that will adjust quickly to changes in customer requirements, the market, or legislative/regulatory mandates" (Pasco County strategic plan). • "The mission of the Village of Royal Palm Beach is to provide caring, municipal services in the most cost-effective manner, that are responsive to our community" (Village of Royal Palm Beach strategic plan). • "Providing first class facilities responding to Parkland residents' needs" (City of Parkland strategic plan). • "Responding to the different needs of each neighborhood" (City of Fort Myers strategic plan).

4.4 Part Two: Testing Research Propositions

The present study examined the institutional isomorphic tendencies among Florida's local governments, as expressed through the lenses of Moore's (1995) public value theory. This research focused on four different institutional conditions that vary among the local governments: fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and governmental structure. Four research propositions based on these conditions were examined:

Proposition 1: In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Proposition 2: In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Proposition 3: In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Proposition 4: In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

4.4.1 Fiscal Health

The fiscal health of Florida's local governments is measured by "the ratio of the differences between local revenue and total spending to total spending" (Kwon, 2006, p. 50). The source of the data is publicly available from the Florida Auditor General website. Per Section 218.39(7) of Florida Statutes, county and municipality governments must file audit reports. Fiscal health data are for the year 2018, the year represented by the most complete data.

4.4.2 Geographic Location

As a proxy for geographic proximity, the present study utilized six regional categories recognized by the Florida Association of Counties (FLC; fl-counties.com): Northwest, Northeast, West Central, East Central, Southwest, and Southeast. (A map of these regions and a list of counties within each are provided in the Appendix). These regions were used to assess mutual proximity of municipal and county governments.

4.4.3 Population Size

The population size served by Florida's local governments were obtained from the University of Florida Bureau of Economic and Business Research (www.bebr.ufl.edu). All population data were for the year 2018 to ensure apt comparisons (as was done for fiscal health). The present study places governments into the following population size categories:

- Local governments with populations greater than or equal to 500,000 residents
- Local governments with a population size between 200,000 and 499,999
- Local governments with a population size between 100,000 and 199,999
- Local governments with a population size between 50,000 and 99,999, and
- Local governments with a population size of fewer than 50,000

4.4.4 Government Structure

The researcher categorized governmental structures as either Mayor-Council or Council-Manager. Data concerning municipalities' governmental structure were obtained from the Florida League of Cities (FLC); data related to counties' governmental structure were obtained from the

Florida Association of Counties (FAC). The FLC lists three forms of governmental structure: Council-Manager, Council-Strong Mayor, and Council-Weak Mayor. The FAC report three forms of governments at the county level: Commission-Manager, Traditional, and Mayor-Commission. Data were pooled by merging similar structures into categories. Council-Strong Mayor and Council-Weak Mayor (both municipal structures) were merged with the Mayor-Commission county structure. Council-Manager (municipal) and Commission-Manager (county) were likewise merged. The rare Traditional county structure was included as a Mayor-Council county structure (e.g., Jefferson County).

4.5 Testing Within Groups Similarity

Florida's local governments' strategic plans vary widely in length and format. For example, Jefferson County has a three-volume strategic plan. Other local governments (Pinellas County and the City of Clearwater) were able to fit their strategic plans on one page. Some municipalities like Village of North Palm Beach and Town of Palm Beach have produced their strategic plans as a section within their annual budgets. To ensure credibility and consistency of results, coded excerpt data (Part One) were quantified through the following steps. First, instead of reporting the frequencies of each code in the 77 strategic plans, the percentages of each of the three codes were calculated. The study calculated the percentage of appearance of each code to the other codes. Second, in to calculate the within-groups similarity the study calculated the percentage of appearance of each code to the other codes. Then, the averages of these percentages were calculated for each code: Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness.

In this step, the extreme values of 0.0% and 100.0% were omitted from calculations. Third, differences between the percentages from steps (1) and (2) were calculated. Absolute values of these percentages were then multiplied by 100 to produce numbers assigned to the following categories:

- 0 – 5.99: Strong similarity,
- 6 – 15.99: Mild similarity,
- 16 – 20: Weak similarity, and
- > 20: No similarity.

4.5.1 Fiscal Health

Table 5 shows the degree of similarity in Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Representativeness for local governments with negative fiscal health. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (44.44%), followed by Mild similarity (38.89%), Weak similarity (16.67%), and Strong similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, no similarity was again the most frequent category (44.44%) followed by Mild similarity (38.89%), Strong similarity (11.11%), and Weak similarity (5.56%). For Responsiveness, Weak similarity was the most frequent category (38.89%) followed by Mild similarity (27.77%); Strong similarity and No similarity each contained 16.67% of observations. When adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 5 shows that mild similarity and no similarity had the same percentages of (35.183%).

Table 5

The Degree of Similarity Between Local Governments with Negative Fiscal Health

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	0	11.11	16.67	27.78	9.26
Mild	38.89	38.89	27.77	105.55	35.18333333
Weak	16.67	5.56	38.89	61.12	20.37333333
No Similarity	44.44	44.44	16.67	105.55	35.18333333
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note. All figures are percentages.

Table 6 shows the degree of similarity in Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness between Florida local governments with fiscal health greater than 0 (inclusive) and less than 5 (exclusive). For Collaboration, No Similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild and Weak similarities (21.43% each), and Strong similarity (7.14%). For Collectiveness, Mild similarity was the most frequent category (42.85%), followed by No similarity (28.57%), and then Strong and Weak similarities (14.29% each). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (42.86%), Weak similarity (7.14%), and Strong similarity (0.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 6 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 42.856%.

Table 6

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Fiscal Health 0 < 5

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	7.14	14.29	0.00	21.43	7.143333333
Mild	21.43	42.85	42.86	107.14	35.71333333
Weak	21.43	14.29	7.14	42.86	14.28666667
No Similarity	50	28.57	50	128.57	42.85666667
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 7 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness between Florida local governments with fiscal health greater than or equal to 5 and less than 10. For Collaboration, No Similarity was the most frequent category (56.25%), followed by Strong and Mild similarities (18.75% each), and Weak similarity (6.25%). For Collectiveness, No Similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (31.25%), Weak similarity (12.50%), and Strong similarity (6.25%). For Responsiveness, the most frequent category was Mild similarity (43.75%), followed by Strong and No similarities (25.00% each), and Weak similarity (6.25%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 7 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 43.75%.

Table 7

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Fiscal Health 5 ≤ 10

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	18.75	6.25	25.00	50.00	16.66666667
Mild	18.75	31.25	43.75	93.75	31.25
Weak	6.25	12.50	6.25	25.00	8.333333333
No Similarity	56.25	50.00	25.00	131.25	43.75
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 8 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Representativeness for local governments with fiscal health values greater than or equal to 10 and less than 15. For Collaboration, No Similarity was the most frequent category (70.00%), followed by Strong similarity (20.00%), Weak similarity (10.00%), and Mild similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, Mild similarity was the most frequent category (40.00%), followed by Strong similarity (30.00%), No similarity (20.00%), and Weak similarity (10.00%). For Responsiveness, the most frequent category was No similarity (50.00%), followed Mild similarity (43.75%), Weak similarity (6.25%), and Strong similarity (0.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 8 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 46.667%

Table 8

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Fiscal Health 10 ≤ 15

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	20.00	30.00	0	50.00	16.66666667
Mild	0	40.00	43.75	83.75	27.91666667
Weak	10.00	10.00	6.25	26.25	8.75
No Similarity	70.00	20.00	50.00	140.00	46.66666667
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 9 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments with fiscal health greater than 15. For Collaboration, No Similarity was the most frequent category (42.86%), followed by Mild similarity (28.57%), Strong similarity (21.43%), and Weak similarity (7.14%). For Collectiveness, Weak similarity was the most frequent category (35.71%), followed by No similarity (28.57%), Mild similarity (21.43%), and Strong similarity (14.29%). For Responsiveness, Mild similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by No similarity (28.57%), Weak similarity (14.29%), and Strong similarity (7.14%). When adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 9 shows that mild similarity and no similarity had the same percentages of (33.33%).

Table 9

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Fiscal Health 15 <

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	21.43	14.29	7.14	42.86	14.28666667
Mild	28.57	21.43	50.00	100.00	33.33333333
Weak	7.14	35.71	14.29	57.14	19.04666667
No Similarity	42.86	28.57	28.57	100.00	33.33333333
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

4.5.2 Geographic Location

Table 10 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in the Northwest Region of Florida. For Collaboration, No Similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (33.33%), Weak similarity (16.67%), and Strong similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, No Similarity was the most frequent category (66.66%), followed by Mild and Weak similarities (16.67% each), and Strong similarity (0.00%). For Responsiveness, the most frequent category was No similarity (50.00%), followed Mild similarity (33.33%), Weak similarity (16.67%), and Strong similarity (0.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 10 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 55.55%.

Table 10

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments in the Northwest Region

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Mild	33.33	16.67	33.33	83.33	27.7766667
Weak	16.67	16.67	16.67	50.01	16.67
No Similarity	50.00	66.66	50.00	166.66	55.5533333
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 11 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in the Northeast Region of Florida. For Collaboration, No Similarity was the most frequent category (66.66%), followed by Mild and Weak similarities (16.67% each), and Strong similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, Mild Similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by No Similarity (33.33%), Strong similarity (16.67%), and Weak similarity (0.00%). For Responsiveness, the most frequent category was Strong similarity (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (33.33%), No similarity (16.67%), and Weak similarity (0.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 11 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 38.886% and with mild similarity not far behind with 33.33%.

Table 11

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments in the Northwest Region

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	0.00	16.67	50.00	66.67	22.2233333
Mild	16.67	50.00	33.33	100	33.3333333
Weak	16.67	0.00	0.00	16.67	5.55666667
No Similarity	66.66	33.33	16.67	116.66	38.8866667
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 12 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in the West Central region of Florida. For Collaboration, Mild similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by No similarity (33.33%), Weak similarity (16.67%), and Strong similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (33.33%), and Strong and Weak similarities (8.33%). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (58.33%), followed by Strong and Mild similarities (16.67% each), and Weak similarity (8.33%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 12 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 47.22%**.**

Table 12

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments in the West Central Region

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	0.00	8.33	16.67	25.00	8.33333333
Mild	50.00	33.34	16.67	100.01	33.3366667
Weak	16.67	8.33	8.33	33.33	11.11
No Similarity	33.33	50.00	58.33	141.66	47.22
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 13 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in the East Central region of Florida. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (57.15%), followed by Strong similarity (28.57%), and Mild and Weak similarities (7.14% each). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (71.43%), followed by Mild similarity (21.43%), Weak similarity (7.14%), and Strong similarity (0.00%). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Strong similarity (35.71%), Mild similarity (14.29% each), and Weak similarity (0.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 13 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 59.5267%, which is by far the greatest percentage in any of Florida's geographic regions.

Table 13

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments in the East Central Region

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	28.57	0.00	35.71	64.28	21.4266667
Mild	7.14	21.43	14.29	42.86	14.2866667
Weak	7.14	7.14	0.00	14.28	4.76
No Similarity	57.15	71.43	50.00	178.58	59.5266667
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 14 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in the Southwest region of Florida. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (55.56%), followed by Mild similarity (22.22%), and Strong and Weak similarities (11.11% each). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (44.45%), followed by Strong and Mild similarities (22.22% each), and Weak similarity (11.11%). For Responsiveness, Strong similarity was the most frequent category (44.45%), followed by Weak similarity (33.33%), Mild similarity (22.22%), and No similarity (0.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 14 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 33.336%.

Table 14

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments in the Southwest Region

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	11.11	22.22	44.45	77.78	25.9266667
Mild	22.22	22.22	22.22	66.66	22.22
Weak	11.11	11.11	33.33	55.55	18.5166667
No Similarity	55.56	44.45	0.00	100.01	33.3366667
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 15 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in the Southeast region of Florida. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (36.00%), followed by Strong and Mild similarities (24.00% each), and Weak similarity (16.00%). For Collectiveness, Mild similarity was the most frequent category (32.00%), followed by Strong and Weak similarities (24.00% each), and No similarity (20.00%). For Responsiveness, Mild and No similarities were the most frequent categories (36.00% each), followed by Strong similarity (24.00%), and Weak similarity (4.00%). When adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 15 shows that mild similarity and no similarity had the same percentages of (30.667%).

Table 15

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments in the Southeast Region

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	24.00	24.00	24.00	72.00	24.00
Mild	24.00	32.00	36.00	92.00	30.6666667
Weak	16.00	24.00	4.00	44.00	14.6666667
No Similarity	36.00	20.00	36.00	92.00	30.6666667
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

4.5.3 Population Size

Table 16 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in Florida with populations greater than 500,000. For Collaboration, Weak and No similarities were the most frequent categories (40.00 each%), followed by Strong similarity (20.00%), and Mild similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (40.00%), followed by Strong, Mild, and Weak similarities (20.0% each). For Responsiveness, Mild and No similarities were the most frequent categories (40.00 each%), followed by Strong similarity (20.00%), and Weak similarity (0.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 16 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 40.00%.

Table 16

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Population Size 500,000 ≤

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	20.00	20.00	20.00	60.00	20.00
Mild	0.00	20.00	40.00	60.00	20.00
Weak	40.00	20.00	0.00	60.00	20.00
No Similarity	40.00	40.00	40.00	120.00	40.00
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 17 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in Florida with populations greater than or equal to 200,000 and less than 500,000. For Collaboration, Mild similarity was the most frequent category (66.66%), followed by Strong and No similarities (16.67% each), and Weak similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (33.33%), Strong similarity (16.67%), and Weak similarity (0.00%). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (33.33%), Strong similarity (16.67%), and Weak similarity (0.00%). When adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 17 shows that mild similarity had the percentages of (44.44%).

Table 17

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Population Size 200,000 ≤ X ≥ 500,000

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	16.67	16.67	16.67	50.01	16.67
Mild	66.66	33.33	33.33	133.32	44.44
Weak	0.00	00.00	0.00	00.00	0.00
No Similarity	16.67	50.00	50.00	116.67	38.89
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 18 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in Florida with populations greater than or equal to 100,000 and less than 200,000. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (60.10%), followed by Strong, Mild, and Weak similarities (13.33% each). For Collectiveness, Mild similarity was the most frequent category (60.00%), followed by No similarity (33.33%), Strong similarity (6.67%), and Weak Similarity (0.00%). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (44.67%), followed by Mild and Weak similarities (20.00% each), and Strong similarity (13.33%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 18 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 46.67%.

Table 18

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Population Size 100,000 ≤ X ≥ 200,000

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	13.33	6.67	13.33	33.33	11.11
Mild	13.33	60.00	20.00	93.33	31.11
Weak	13.33	00.00	20.00	33.33	11.11
No Similarity	60.01	33.33	46.67	140.01	46.67
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 19 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in Florida with populations greater than or equal to 50,000 and less than 100,000. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (50.00%), followed by Mild similarity (20.00%), and Strong and Weak similarities (15.00% each). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (60.00%), followed by Mild similarity (30.00%), Weak similarity (10.00%), and Strong similarity (00.00%). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (35.00%), followed by Mild similarity (30.00%), Strong similarity (20.00%), and Weak similarity (15.00%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 19 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 48.33%.

Table 19

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Population Size 50,000 ≤ X ≥ 100,000

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	15.00	0.00	20.00	35.00	11.6666667
Mild	20.00	30.00	30.00	80.00	26.6666667
Weak	15.00	10.00	15.00	40.00	13.3333333
No Similarity	50.00	60.00	35.00	145.00	48.3333333
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 20 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in Florida with populations less than 50,000. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (53.85%), followed by Mild similarity (38.46%), Strong similarity (7.69%), and Weak similarity (0.00%). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (42.31%), followed by Mild similarity (30.77%), Weak similarity (15.38%), and Strong similarity (11.54%). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (34.63%), followed by Mild similarity (26.92%), Strong similarity (23.07%), and Weak similarity (15.38%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 20 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 43.596%.

Table 20

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with Population Size X <50,000

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	7.69	11.54	23.07	42.3	14.1
Mild	38.46	30.77	26.92	96.15	32.05
Weak	0.00	15.38	15.38	30.76	10.2533333
No Similarity	53.85	42.31	34.63	130.79	43.5966667
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

4.5.4 Government Structure

Table 21 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in Florida with Mayor-Council/ Mayor-Commission structure. For Collaboration, Mild similarity and No similarity were the most frequent categories (38.46% each), followed by Weak similarity (15.39%), and Strong similarity (7.69%). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (61.54%), followed by Strong similarity (23.07%), Mild similarity (15.39%), and Weak similarity (0.00%). For Responsiveness, Mild similarity and No similarity were the most frequent categories (30.77%), followed by Weak similarity (23.07%), and Strong similarity (15.39%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 21 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 43.59%.

Table 21

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with a Mayor-Council/Mayor-Commissioner Structure of Government

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	7.69	23.07	15.39	46.15	15.3833333
Mild	38.46	15.39	30.77	84.62	28.2066667
Weak	15.39	0.00	23.07	38.46	12.82
No Similarity	38.46	61.54	30.77	130.77	43.59
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

Table 22 shows the degree of similarity for Collaboration, Collectiveness, and Responsiveness for local governments in Florida with Council-Manager/Commission-Manager structure. For Collaboration, No similarity was the most frequent category (51.72%), followed by Mild similarity (27.60%), and Strong and Weak similarities (10.34% each). For Collectiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (41.38%), followed by Mild similarity (31.03%), Weak similarity (15.52%), and Strong similarity (12.07%). For Responsiveness, No similarity was the most frequent category (43.10%), followed by Mild similarity (32.76%), Strong similarity (15.52%), and Weak similarity (15.39%). Adding up the percentages of the codes, collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness according to the different degrees of similarities (strong, mild, and weak) or no similarity. Table 22 shows that no similarity had the greatest percentage of 45.40%.

Table 22

The Similarity of Florida Local Governments with a Council-Manager/Commissioner-Manager Form of Government

Degree of Similarity	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness	Total	Total %
Strong	10.34	12.07	15.52	37.93	12.6433333
Mild	27.60	31.03	32.76	91.39	30.4633333
Weak	10.34	15.52	8.62	34.48	11.4933333
No Similarity	51.72	41.38	43.10	136.20	45.4
Total	100	100	100	300	100

Note: All figures are percentages.

4.6 Testing Between Groups Similarity

The Kruskal-Wallis H test, sometimes referred to as the "one-way ANOVA on ranks" (Towns, 2015, p. 97) is a non-parametric alternative test to ANOVA (Berman & Wang, 2018; Lund & Lund, 2018). The Kruskal-Wallis H test "can be used to determine if there are statistically significant differences between two or more groups of an independent variable on a continuous or ordinal dependent variable" (Lund & Lund, 2018). This study had four independent variables of fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and government structure. Furthermore, the dependent variables are Dong's (2015) three components of Moore's (1995) public value theory (Table 23). The three components of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness were qualitatively deduced and coded through the systematic utilization of content analysis of the strategic plans f 77 local governments within the state of Florida (Dong, 2015, p. 240). The null hypothesis and alternative hypothesis for each dependent variable in reference to the four groups of independent variables are as follows.

H0 (Fiscal Health): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

H0 (Geographic Location): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

H0 (Population Size): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

H0 (Government Structure): In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

The associated alternative hypothesis (HA) is that In Florida, county and municipal governments will not have similar expressions of public values within their strategic plans across the different categories of fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and government structure.

To run the Kruskal-Wallis H test, three different assumptions must be met (Lund & Lund, 2018). These assumptions are as follow:

- Assumption No. 1**.** The dependent variables are measured at ordinal or continuous level (Lund & Lund, 2018). In this study the dependent variables of collaboration, collectiveness and responsiveness are all measured as continuous.
- Assumption No. 2. One independent variable that consists of two or more categorical independent groups (Lund & Lund, 2018). This study had four different independent variables that consist of two or more categorical independent groups.

- Assumptions No. 3. Independence of observations (Lund & Lund, 2018). In this study there was no relationship between the observation in each group.

Table 23

Operationalization of Variables

Variable Name	Source	Data Type	Measurement
Collaboration	Content Analysis of 77 strategic plans of	Dependent	Continuous "Percentages"
Collectiveness	Content Analysis of 77 strategic plans of	Dependent	Continuous "Percentages"
Responsiveness	Content Analysis of 77 strategic plans of	Dependent	Continuous "Percentages"
Fiscal Health	Florida Auditor General website	Independent	Categorical Negative = 1 0 < 4.99 = 2 5 < 9.99 = 3 10 <15 = 4 15 < = 5
Geographic Location	Florida Association of Counties websites	Independent	Categorical Northwest = 1 Northeast=2 West Central= 3 East Central= 4 Southwest= 5 Southeast= 6
Population Size	BEBR, UF website	Independent	50k or less = 1 50k – 99,999= 2 100k- 199,999= 3 200k-499,999= 4 500k or more= 5
Government Structure	Florida Association of Counties & Florida League of Cities websites	Independent	Council-Manager=1 Mayor-Council=2

Following are the findings of the Kruskal-Wallis H test.

4.6.1 Fiscal Health

The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis are stated as follows:

H0 (Fiscal Health): In Florida county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

H1 (Fiscal Health): In Florida county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will not have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans (Tables 24-25).

Table 24

Kruskal-Wallis H Test for Fiscal Health

	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness
Chi-Square	4.365	8.009	2.727
df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.359	.091	.604

Table 25

Hypothesis Test Summary for Fiscal Health

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Collaboration is the same across categories of Fiscal Health.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.359	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Collectiveness is the same across categories of Fiscal Health.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.091	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Responsiveness is the same across categories of Fiscal Health.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.604	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .05.
b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

4.6.2 Geographic Location

The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis are stated as follows:

H0 (Geographic Location): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

H1 (Geographic Location): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will not have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans (Tables 26-27).

Table 26

Kruskal-Wallis H Test for Geographic Location

	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness
Chi-Square	7.809	6.870	3.618
df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.099	.143	.460

Table 27

Hypothesis Test Summary for Geographic Location

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Collaboration is the same across categories of Geographic Location.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.133	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Collectiveness is the same across categories of Geographic Location.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.199	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Responsiveness is the same across categories of Geographic Location.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.485	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.
b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

4.6.3 Population Size

The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis are stated as follows:

H0 (Population Size): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

H1 (Population Size): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will not have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans (Tables 28-29).

Table 28

Kruskal-Wallis H Test for Population Size

	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness
Chi-Square	4.065	3.740	1.524
df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.397	.442	.822

Table 29

Hypothesis Test Summary for Population Size

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Collaboration is the same across categories of Population Size.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.397	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Collectiveness is the same across categories of Population Size.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.442	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Responsiveness is the same across categories of Population Size.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.822	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

4.6.4 Government Structure

The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis are stated as follows:

H0 (Government Structure): In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

H1(Government Structure): In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will not have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans (Tables 30-31).

Table 30

Kruskal-Wallis H Test for Government Structure

	Collaboration	Collectiveness	Responsiveness
Kruskal-Wallis H Test	.589	.013	.114
df	1	1	1
Asymp. Sig.	.443	.909	.735

Table 31

Hypothesis Test Summary for Government Structure

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Collaboration is the same across categories of Government Structure.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.443	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Collectiveness is the same across categories of Government Structure.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.909	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of Responsiveness is the same across categories of Government Structure.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.735	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050
b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

4.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 included the qualitative content analysis that showed the presence of Dong's (2015) components of Moore's (1995) PVT in Florida's local governments' strategic plans understudy. The results obtained through content analysis served as the foundation of the quantification procedures as performed in the second part. This chapter presented the findings of within-group and between group similarities. The within-groups similarities where calculated through examining the differences of between the appearance of the Dong's (2015) components of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness to the average appearance of each code. Furthermore, to examine the between-groups similarity this study relied on Kruskal-Wallis H test as a non-parametric alternative test to ANOVA (Berman & Wang, 2018; Lund & Lund, 2018). The results produced in this chapter will be discussed fully in the next chapter (Chapter 5).

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

"We argue that public value thinking and action is now even more relevant in helping to make sense of the new complexities and tough challenges facing governments and communities, and public policymakers and managers" (Benington & Moore, 2011, p. 11). Public value theory (PVT) guides public organizations to strategically think, act, learn to manage, and create value, especially in the current situation with its profound and rapid changes in the political, economic, and social landscapes (Benington & Moore, 2011; Bryson, 2011; Bryson et al., 2010). Building on the framework of the strategic triangle, Moore (1995) saw that strategic planning for public organizations simultaneously provides the following:

- Mission statements, vision statements, and strategic goals that clarify the organization's purpose, future directions, and outcomes;
- An account of the sources for legitimacy and support that will be tapped to gain community support; and
- An explanation of how organizations will be arranged to achieve the declared objectives (Moore, 1995, p. 71).

Governments at all levels (federal, state, and local) are mandated to *lead* the creation of public value as "the only representative, democratically elected bod[ies] with a remit and responsibility to act on behalf of the entire community" (Benington, 2011, p. 50). The role of local governments in creating public value is vital because they are the frontline for public value creation and in direct contact and interaction with the community.

As indicated by Stoker (2006), the focus on creating public value is an emerging paradigm that:

> "[D]oes blend together features of traditional public administration and new public management. However, in its key objectives, attitude to democracy, and ideas about the role of public managers, it goes beyond either of the previous paradigms into territory that marks a clear break with past understanding of the way that governmental actors, both official and elected, should behave" (p. 43).

Importantly, public value theory (PVT) is the new paradigm in public administration in the United States; it has largely replaced the older traditional public administration (TPA) and new public management (NPM) models, which have proven inadequate in addressing the many *wicked problems* facing society (Benington, 2011; Geuijen, Moore, Cederquist, Ronning, & van Twist, 2017; Rittle & Webber, 1973). A review of these three main paradigms follows.

Traditional public administration (TPA) emerged in the US at the beginning of the 20th century as a governmental response to the "modern world" (Waldo, 2007, p. 3). The TPA model invented the politics-administration dichotomy (Wilson, 1887) as a guide to decision making. In this dichotomized system, elected politicians set the goals for public administrators to accomplish for the *voters*' benefit. Practitioners of TPA valued the principles of scientific management at the expense of political democracy (Miller, 2007, p. xi). Stoker (2006) argued that TPA, with its Weberian perception of the world, implies that participatory democratic values and principles are at odds with optimal decision-making. TPA encouraged a bureaucratic system where technocrats refined the goals and objectives made by elected representatives (Bryson et al., 2014; Stoker, 2006).

The new public management (NPM) paradigm started to supplant the older TPA in the US during the 1980s and 90s (Bryer & Prysmakova-Rivera, 2018; Bryson et al., 2014). The NPM model purportedly was a solution to government failure that encouraged public administrators to steer rather than to row (Bryson et al., 2014; Osborne & Gaebler, 1993; Peters, 2011). Practitioners of NPM advocated for the neoliberal belief that the free market is the most efficient and effective means of producing collective goods for *customers* and that the state should serve only as a safety net "of last resort" (Benington & Moore, 2011, p. 14).

On the other hand, public value theory, in which citizens and citizenship play central roles in decision-making, is the most recent administrative paradigm to emerge (Bryson et al., 2014; Stoker, 2006). The PVT model is "more contingent and pragmatic" than the previous two (Bryson et al., 2014, p. 447). Stoker (2006) saw that PVT bears similarities to TPA and NPM but differs in its "attitude toward democracy" (p. 43). Stoker (2006) argued that both TPA and NPM view politics as an input to the system of management, in contrast, PVT views politics as an *élan vital* to permeating the management process. In this sense, politics encompasses Dong's (2015) main components of Moore's (1995) public value theory: collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness. In PVT, people are *citizen-shareholders* desiring a fair and just society where collective goods are equally accessible and distributed fairly (Dong, 2015, p. 240).

Borrowing Hirschman's (1970) concepts of exit, voice, and loyalty, Benington (2011) argued that the paradigm of TPA is built around *voters' collective voice.* Hirschman (1970) pointed out that instead of taking Tiebout's (1956) decision to move/exit, dissatisfied voters can "kick up a fuss" and force their opinions upon what they see as a local government delinquent in its managerial practices (Hirschman, 1970, p. 30). In this sense, voice is an interest articulation

with the attempt to promote change through individual and collective action, most often through the mobilization of public opinion (Hirschman, 1970).

In contrast, NPM emerged from neoliberal ideas that markets are the preeminent distributor (and often producer) of the collective good, and that citizens are customers that may freely choose to exit disagreeable circumstances. As noted by Hirschman (1970), the "full exit [from the state] is impossible" since only a few can afford shopping around for collective goods through the market (p. 100). Although some private citizens may "exit" a public-school system, for example, by sending their children to a private school, they cannot wholly exit public education. Public education is a collective good, affecting all the community members who interact with private citizens even thus with the means to exit (Hirschman, 1970).

Under the paradigm of TPA, management is regulated by voice, especially when it emerges from the elites (Hirschman, 1970, p.32). Under NPM, administrative decisions are primarily regulated by exit (Benington, 2011). However, under PVT administrative decisions and the interaction with citizens is regulated by loyalty. As indicated by Benington (2011), loyalty acts as a social glue that allows public organizations to collaborate, provide collective goods, and be responsive in order to create public value for their citizens/shareholders. Benington (2009) noted that "voice and exit are increasingly recognized to be forms of regulation which are too crude and inflexible to respond adequately to the continuous fluctuations in the ecological, political, economic, social and technological context" (p. 243). As the newly emerging paradigm, PVT can make sense of such rapid changes by conceptualizing public organizations not as machines or structures, but as "complex adaptive systems" that can think and act strategically to solve complex, cross-cutting problems (Bonington & Moore, 2013).

5.2 Findings from Part One

Findings from Part One of the present study confirm Benington and Moore's (2011) observation that practitioners in the field are already embracing PVT as the new governance paradigm that allows them to grapple with much more complex and wicked problems. Additionally, the findings confirm the presence of Dong's (2015) propositions (collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness) of Moore's (1995) PVT, with 785 different excerpts retrieved from the 77 official strategic plans of Florida's local governments under study. Results were judged reliable, as strong agreement (95.15%) was found between two iterations of the coding scheme applied one month apart. Dong's (2015) three propositions are highly intermingled, both in the literature and in practice; their strict separation herein served analytical purposes. Findings associated with the three components of PVT follow.

5.2.1 Collaboration

Findings concerning the code of collaboration in the present study are in agreement with the literature of public administration. As indicated by direct excerpts from official strategic plans, Florida's local governments collaborate to improve productivity, legitimacy, and the availability of information and resources (Donahue & Zeckhauser, 2011). Pasco County provides an example of collaboration for productivity, stating a strategic goal to be to "engage in collaborations to share the risk, planning, or financial resources to improve or accelerate outcomes and to solve complex problems" (Pasco County strategic plan). The City of Gainesville provides another example of collaboration for productivity; the city's strategic goal is to "develop a long-term collaboration plan with the Board of County Commissioners and

School Board of Alachua County that focuses on efficient delivery of high-quality services" (City of Gainesville strategic plan). In an example of collaboration for information, the City of Cocoa, under its strategic goal of reducing crime rates, wrote that it would establish a "monthly 'faith-based alliance' meeting with all Cocoa area faith-based organizations to facilitate the coordination of efforts and information sharing" (City of Cocoa strategic plan). Another example is from the City of Sarasota, writing of collaboration with "regional counterparts to jointly fund an environmental monitoring program that will provide regularly collected data detailing our coastal condition…" (City of Sarasota strategic plan).

Furthermore, Florida's local governments collaborated to gain legitimacy. For example, Hillsborough County, under its strategic goal of facilitative leadership, wrote that it would "host discussion of strategic plan with other public entities" (Hillsborough County strategic plan). Similarly, to gain legitimacy for its Economic Development Plan, the Town of Cutler Bay is proposing to "explore partnerships with local universities/colleges for collaboration efforts…." (Town of Cutler Bay strategic plan).

Finally, Florida local governments collaborated to leverage new resources or to save their resources. An example of the former comes from the City of St. Cloud, which stated under the strategic goal of financial sustainability it would "pursue financial partnerships with other governments and private institutions to leverage the city's financial resources toward enhanced infrastructure, tax-based and economic activity" (City of St. Cloud strategic plan). An example of collaboration to save financial resources comes from the City of Fort Myers, which stated its strategic goal of being a financially sound city would include "partnering with the community and others to reduce the cost of government" (City of Fort Myers strategic plan).

All cited excerpts provide well-established rationales for collaboration by local governments. However, Stivers (2008) pointed out that sometimes beneath the veneer of rhetoric surrounding collaboration, some local governments see collaboration as a means to distance themselves from the responsibility for solving messy and insoluble problems. Homelessness due to the lack of affordable housing is just one example of the wicked problems facing Florida local governments. The City of Fort Lauderdale indicated under the strategic goal of public places that it would "work with partners to reduce homelessness by promoting independence and self-worth through advocacy, housing, and comprehensive services" (City of Fort Lauderdale strategic plan). Regarding the availability of affordable housing, St. Johns County stated a solution would be to "develop governmental partnership to apply for State, Federal, and private subsidies and grants resources" (St. Johns County strategic plan).

5.2.2 Collectiveness

Findings concerning the code of collectiveness in the present study agreed with the literature of public administration. Local governments are obligated to produce public value by providing collective goods that are equally accessible and equitably distributed to all citizens (Alford, 2016; Dong, 2015; Eriksson et al., 2020; Vigoda-Gadot, 2004). Citizens desire a just and fair society founded on moral and social norms (Alford & Yates, 2014; Dong, 2015).

There is an agreement among Florida's local governments to consider recreation and leisure as a collective good that should be equally accessible and distributed throughout the community. For instance, the City of Parkland, under its strategic goal of *First-Class Leisure and Culture Amenities*, promised to "evaluate first-class recreation options to meet different

generational needs" (City of Parkland strategic plan). Similarly, Jefferson County, under its strategic goal of protecting and enhancing the natural environment, stated that it would "improve recreational access for the enjoyment of residents and visitors [by] increasing the number of public access sites and improving current sites" (Jefferson County strategic plan). The City of Key West promised under its strategic *plan* to provide "parks and recreation areas distributed through the community which offer safe, healthy and constructive recreational opportunities for children, youth and adults" (City of Key West strategic plan).

Similarly, Miami-Dade County stated in its strategic area of *Recreation and Culture* that it would create "inviting recreational and cultural venues that provide world-class enrichment opportunities throughout Miami-Dade County" (Miami-Dade strategic plan). The Town of Cutler Bay promised to have "a variety of facilities/amenities that meet the social and recreational needs of residents of all ages, and to attract residents from surrounding communities" (Community Identity, Unity and Pride Goal 5.3, Cutler Bay strategic plan). Recreation is not limited to parks and cultural amenities but includes free access to beaches and waterways. For example, the City of Boca Raton under "Beach and Waterways" promised to provide a "variety of ways to enjoy our beaches and waterways that are open to the community" (City of Boca Raton strategic plan). Another example that considered beaches to be a collective good is from the City of Deerfield Beach's strategic priority of cultivating quality of life, which promises "developing new and expanding existing high-impact amenities (e.g., parks, beaches, green spaces)" (City of Deerfield Beach strategic plan).

Florida's local governments tend to consider improvement of quality of life to be another collective good that all citizens should have equal access to. However, not all communities are

committed to the same quality standards. At one end of the spectrum, the City of St. Augustine upholds bare minimum standards with the following statement to "our homeless population" that the city would "ensure that all of St. Augustine's residents have the basic necessities of life" (St. Augustine strategic plan).

On the other end of the continuum stands the City of North Port's mission statement marking its intention "to provide exceptional service to our entire community for the continuous enrichment of quality of life" (City of North Port strategic plan).

The enhancement of the Quality-of-Life is a very persistent collective good among different counties and municipalities within the state of Florida, and mostly it appears as their mission statement or part of it. Hernando County, under its ″Neighborhood Vision,″ promised that it "will continue to focus on a high quality of life for all members of our diverse population" (Hernando County strategic plan). In its mission statement, Gulf County promised to "deliver outstanding leadership and service that enhances the quality of life for all Gulf County citizens" (Gulf County strategic plan). Monroe County declared its mission "to enhance the quality of life by providing outstanding public service responsive to the need of our citizens, our unique community and our environment" (Monroe County strategic plan). The City of Coral Gables, in its mission statement, promised to "honor our history by providing exceptional services that enhance the quality of life for our community" (City of Coral Gables strategic plan). The City of West Palm Beach's mission statement asserts, "in partnership with our communities, West Palm Beach delivers exceptional customer service that enhances the quality of life" (City of West Palm Beach strategic plan). The City of Hallandale Beach provides another example through its mission statement:

> The City of Hallandale Beach is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life in our community in a fiscally responsible manner by providing superior services that meet the needs of our community as well as plan for their future needs through continued communication. (City of Hallandale Beach strategic plan)

In *The Logic of Collective Action*, Olson (1965) warned against the tendency toward exploitation of the great many by the privileged few. After analyzing the content of Florida's local governments' strategic plans, no explicit evidence of governments addressing exploitation was found. However, the City of Palm Bay's strategic plan stands out in that it focuses solely on addressing the needs of low- to moderate-income areas. The strategic plan never addresses its residents as a collective body of citizens regardless of income.

5.2.3 Responsiveness

Finally, regarding the code of responsiveness, Stivers (2008) argued that some public organizations and employees tend to see responsiveness to, and dialogue with, the general public as a threat to their "administrative tranquility," especially when they are not obligated by law or statutes (p.4). Fortunately, this is not the case with Florida's local governments. For instance, Village of Royal Palm Beach, under its strategic goal of ″Responsive Village Services," promised to understand "the service needs of residents and families in context of Village service responsibilities and capacity" (Village of Royal Palm Beach strategic plan). The Village of Royal Palm Beach has embraced Stivers' (1994) concept of listening to enhance public employees' responsiveness to residents' needs and demands. Furthermore, the City of Wilton Manors responds to citizens' needs by actively participating in both neighborhood and business

association meetings "to gather information related to their concerns, needs, interests and priorities" (City of Wilton Manors strategic plan).

On the other hand, the City of Doral saw the needs of residents and businesses to be in conflict. The city proposed in its vision statement to "balance the needs of businesses with those of residents and that [to] provide a full range of public services to meet the needs and expectations of its residents and businesses" (City of Doral strategic plan). Other local governments attempted to increase their responsiveness by seeking and incorporating citizens' input. For instance, Gulf County, under its strategic goals for neighborhood and unincorporated area services, promised to establish "a structure and process to obtain community opinions on relevant community issues and [to] provide timely response to issues raised" (Gulf County strategic plan). Similarly, the Town of Jupiter, under its strategic goal of communication, promised that "citizens and community inputs [will be] captured and responded to in a timely manner" (Town of Jupiter strategic plan). Other local governments saw the usage of social media platforms as a means to increase their responsiveness. The city of Cape Coral provides an excellent example, promising to "use social media tools to provide information and access to the citizens (Facebook, online chat, and Upstream)" (City of Cape Coral strategic plan). Under its strategic goal of "Resident Friendly and Responsive Town Government," the town of Cutler Bay promised to establish responsiveness through the development of a "social media campaign to keep residents informed. This could also include Town Manager chat, Committee meetings, discussion with the Mayor and individual council members" (Town of Cutler Bay strategic plan). Other local governments proposed responsiveness to their citizens' current and future needs. For example, the City of Hallandale Beach promised to provide "superior services that meet the

needs of our community and plan for their future needs through continued communication" (City of Hallandale strategic plan). However, some Florida local governments are anxious about the price tag associated with responsiveness. Thus, they make sure that their responsiveness is conditioned to what their citizens are willing to support financially. Both Bay County and the City of Cocoa Beach indicated that they are will deliver what their citizens "need, want, and are willing to support" (Bay County & City of Cocoa Beach strategic plans).

5.3 Findings from Part Two

The study population used in the present analysis represents 22 counties and 55 municipalities within the state of Florida. To be included in the study, a local government had to have a strategic plan that is publicly available online. A total of 785 data excerpts were collected during the study, with emphasis placed on Dong's (2015) components of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness within Moore's (1995) public value theory.

5.3.1 Fiscal Health

In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

The result of the within groups indicated that mild and no similarity scored the same percentages in Florida's counties and municipalities with negative (35.183%) and with fiscal health above 15 (33.33%).

Furthermore, to test the between group similarity this dissertation utilized the Kruskal-Wallis H test which retained the null-hypothesis of:

H0 (Fiscal Health): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar fiscal health will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Collaboration ($\chi 2 = 4.365$, $df = 4$, $p = .359 > .05$), Collectiveness ($\chi 2 = 8.009$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.091 > .05$), and Responsiveness ($\chi 2 = 2.727$, $df = 4$, $p = .604 > .05$).

Fiscal health is being calculated as "the ratio of the difference between the total revenue and the total expenditure to the total expenditure of the local government" (Berry, 1994, p.325; Kwon, 2006, p. 37).

These findings provide an inconclusive answer to a heated debate within the literature. On one hand, the strategic management literature, wrote extensively on the effect of "cutback management" on the adaptation of strategic planning practices by local governments (Berry, 1994). According to this logic, public organization with poor fiscal health will adopt strategic planning practices as a mean to balance their priorities with their available resources (Berry, 1994; Berry & Wechsler, 1995; Kwon, 2006). On the other hand, the literature on innovation (Cyert & March, 1963; Damanpour, 1991; Korac, Saliterer, & Walker, 2017; Walker, 2006) indicates that organizations with strong fiscal health and slack resources are more likely to innovate with strategic planning practices. The finding of the study indicates that fiscal health is mildly causing isomorphic tendencies between the local governments who are constantly reminder by their extreme fiscal health. Extreme fiscal health means local governments with negative fiscal health or the extremely wealthy. The study speculates that Florida's local governments that are fiscally stressed try to mimic the strategic plans of other fiscally stressed local governments. This isomorphic tendency is apparent, as well, within local governments who are with strong fiscal health since they are mimicking the strategic plans of each other's. Finally,

by providing insignificant findings, the Kruskal-Wallis H test provide a statistical evidence which indicated the presence of isomorphic tendencies within the strategic plans of Florida's local governments with a similar fiscal health.

5.3.2 Geographic Location

In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar public value expressions within their strategic plans.

The result of the within groups indicated that mild and no similarity scored the same percentages in Florida's counties and municipalities located at the Southeast region negative (30.667%). Furthermore, The result of the Kruskal-Wallis H test retained the null-hypothesis of: H0 (Geographic Location): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar geographic locations will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Collaboration ($\chi2 = 8.443$, $df = 5$, $p = .133 > .05$), Collectiveness ($\chi2 = 7.307$, $df = 5$, $p = 0.199 > .05$), and Responsiveness ($\chi2 = 4.459$, $df = 5$, $p = .485 > .05$).

The result of Kruskal-Wallis H test showed that Geographic Location had a wide effect on Collaboration and Collectiveness (statistically insignificant) within Florida's strategic plans understudy. By providing insignificant findings, the Kruskal-Wallis H test provide a statistical evidence which indicated the presence of isomorphic tendencies within the strategic plans of Florida's local governments within a similar geographic location.

5.3.3 Population Size

In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

The result of the within groups indicated that mild similarity scored the highest percentage in Florida's counties and municipalities with population size between 200,000 and 500,000 residents (44.44%). Moreover, the result of the Kruskal-Wallis H test retained the null-hypothesis of:

H0 (Population Size): In Florida, county and municipal governments with similar population sizes will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Collaboration ($\chi2 = 4.065$, $df = 4$, $p = .397 > .05$), Collectiveness ($\chi2 = 3.740$, $df = 4$, $p = 0.442 > .05$), and Responsiveness ($\chi2 = 1.524$, $df = 4$, $p = .822 > .05$).

The Kruskal- Wallis H test did not reveal any variation of fiscal health (even statistically insignificance) of population size on any expression of Moore's (1995) public value theory as proposed by Dong (2015). By providing insignificant findings, the Kruskal-Wallis H test provide a statistical evidence which indicated the presence of isomorphic tendencies within the strategic plans of Florida's local governments with a similar population size.

5.3.4 Government Structure

In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

The result of the within-groups indicated no similarity scored the highest percentage in Florida's counties and municipalities with Mayor-Council/ Mayor-Commissioner (43.59%) or

Council-Manager/ Commissioner-Manger (45.4%). This study did not find similarities in government structure as a trigger of isomorphic tendencies among Florida's counties and municipalities.

The result of the Kruskal-Wallis H test retained the null-hypothesis of:

H0 (Government Structure): In Florida, county and municipal governments with a similar form of government (structure) will have similar expressions of public value within their strategic plans.

Collaboration ($\chi 2 = .589$, $df = 1$, $p = .443 > .05$), Collectiveness ($\chi 2 = .013$, $df = 1$, $p = .909 > .05$), and Responsiveness ($\chi 2 = 0.114$, $df = 1$, $p = .735 > .05$).

The result of the Kruskal-Wallis H test did not reveal any significant finding for the effect of government structure on the isomorphic tendencies within the strategic plans of Florida local governments. Previous researches regarding the practice of strategic planning by Florida's local government had indicated that local government with a Council-Manager form of government are 40% more likely to practice strategic planning and to have an active strategic plan than local governments with a Mayor-Council form of government (Kwon, 2006, p. 64). By providing insignificant findings, the Kruskal-Wallis H test provides statistical evidence indicating the presence of isomorphic tendencies within Florida's local governments' strategic plans with a similar government structure.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE RESEARCH

6.1 Conclusion

Using the lens of Moore's (1995) public value theory (PVT), this study examined institutional isomorphic tendencies within Florida's local governments' strategic plans. To do so, this study was divided into two distinctive parts: the first part was devoted to confirming the presence of a new governance paradigm (PVT) within the strategic plans of 22 counties and 55 municipalities within the state of Florida. Also, this part utilized Dong's (2015) propositions for Moore's (1995) PVT; Dong (2015) proposed collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness as the main propositions for the new governance paradigm introduced by Moore's (1995) PVT. After examining all the identified strategic plans of Florida's local governments,' the study was able to extract 785 different excerpts indicating that the Florida local governments under examination have embraced the values of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness.

The finding from Part One was used to inform Part Two which examine institutional isomorphic tendencies within the identified strategic plans, focusing on four internal and external environmental conditions: (a) fiscal health, (b) geographic location, (c) population size, and (d) government structure. To ensure the authenticity of the finding, the study counted the presence of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness as percentages instead of counting the actual frequencies of each of Dong's (2015) components. Counting Dong's (2015) components as percentages allowed the researcher to standardize the strategic plans under examination as they differed significantly in length and format. The within-groups results revealed a mild similarity in Florida's counties and municipalities' strategic plans that are with: (1) extreme fiscal health. Extreme fiscal health includes local governments that are very poor (negative fiscal health) or

very rich (with fiscal health ratio 15 or more); (2) Located in the southeast area of the state, and (3) local governments with a population size between 200,000 and 500,000 residents. This dissertation did not find government structure to effect within-groups isomorphic tendencies. Furthermore, in order to examine between groups similarities this dissertation utilized Kruskal-Wallis H test (Berman & Wang, 2018; Lund & Lund, 2018). Specifically, the non-parametric test of Kruskal-Wallis one-way ANOVA was performed to examine any variation in the expressions of Moore's (1995) public value theory within the strategic plans of 77 local governments within the state of Florida.

The statistically insignificant findings of the Kruskal-Wallis H test of the second part of this study revealed the presence of institutional isomorphic tendencies in the strategic plans of local governments with similar fiscal health, geographic location, population size, and government structure.

6.2 Theoretical Implications

This study is among a few studies that have examined the strategic plans of local governments under the lenses of the new governance paradigm of Moore's (1995) public value theory. Building upon the existing literature of strategic planning and PVT, this study expands the boundaries of each concept and tries to establish an area where these two concepts might intersect. Furthermore, this study is unique because it is one of a few studies that utilize qualitative content analysis techniques to examine the strategic plans of local governments. Taken together, the findings of this study constitute an answer to the call to increase the use of

qualitative content analysis in the areas of strategic planning and public values (Bryson & Edwards, 2017; Bryson et al., 2018; Hartley, Alford, Knies, & Douglas, 2017).

Furthermore, this study adds to the expanding research on institutional isomorphic tendencies at public organizations (Fay & Zavattaro, 2016; George et al., 2020; Kwon, Berry, & Jang, 2013; Thomas, Fay & Berry, 2020). Through the systematic analysis of the content of local governments' official strategic plans, this study confirms the isomorphic tendencies within local governments and the presence of isomorphic tendencies within the strategic plans of Florida's local government understudy. In the second part of the research, the within-groups percentage calculations and the Kruskal-Wallis H test provide statistical evidence of isomorphic tendencies within Florida's local governments' strategic plans understudy.

6.3 Practical Implications

This study confirms Benington and Moore's (2011) observation that academic writing and research lag behind what practitioners are actually doing in the *field,* shedding new light on the emergence of a new governance paradigm based on Moore's (1995) PVT. Traces of the new paradigm appear in the studied strategic plans of Florida's local governments. Embracing Whitehead's process philosophy, this study argues that Moore's (1995) PVT is in the "concrescence" stage of becoming the new concrete reality for local governments (Stout & Staton, 2011, p. 278). Even without directly naming Moore's (1995) PVT, Florida's local governments are embracing it as the newly emerging governance paradigm.

Furthermore, this study was undertaken with the idea of providing valuable insights for elected officials and public managers working in Florida's local governments. The study offers some recommendations for practitioners, as listed here:

6.3.1 Recommendation 1

Elected officials and public managers working in Florida's local governments need to be clear about their role as creators of public value. The phrase public value was not mentioned ever in the examined strategic plans even when its components of collaboration, collectiveness, and responsiveness were heavily manifested through all the examined strategic plans.

6.3.2 Recommendation 2

Elected officials and public managers working in Florida's local governments need to clarify that the public constitutes citizens/shareholders. Public Value theory treats the public not merely as voters or customers but as citizens/shareholders whose participation and inputs should be welcomed and encouraged in any public decision-making.

6.3.3 Recommendation 3

Elected officials and public managers working in Florida's local governments need to acknowledge the importance of fiscal health of their jurisdictions as a trigger to institutional isomorphic tendencies. As indicated by the finding of this study, local governments with extreme fiscal health tend to mimic one another.

6.3.4 Recommendation 4

Elected officials and public managers working in Florida's local governments need to acknowledge the importance of geographic location as a trigger to institutional isomorphic tendencies and need to work deliberately with their neighbors in order to collaborate to produce public value.

6.3.5 Recommendation 5

Elected officials and public managers working in Florida's local governments need to acknowledge the importance of population size of their jurisdictions as a trigger to institutional isomorphic tendencies. As indicated by the findings of this research local governments with medium size population tend to mimic each other within the state of Florida.

6.3.6 Recommendation 6

Elected officials and public managers working in Florida's local governments need to acknowledge the importance of government structure of their jurisdictions as a trigger to institutional isomorphic tendencies.

6.4 Weaknesses of the Study

The weaknesses of this study include implications of data collection, reliability, and validity.

6.4.1 Data Collection Method

The data collection method is biased since it favored Florida's local governments with strategic plans and are available on their official websites. There is always the possibility of other Florida's local governments that have strategic plans, but these plans are not posted on their official websites. Hence, such local governments were included in the analysis of this study. The generalizability of content analysis depends heavily on obtaining unbiased data (Riff, Lacy, & Fico, 2014, p. 129). Therefore, the generalizability of this research should be treated with caution.

6.4.2 Reliability

In content analysis, reliability means the presence of two conditions: (1) the data are generated with precaution against known biases, deliberate or accidental, (2) users interpret the data in roughly the same way (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 277). Three types of reliability are pertinent to evaluating the coding process of content analysis research: stability, reproducibility, and accuracy (Bowen & Bowen, 2008; Krippendroff, 2019). First, stability is the degree to which the coding process yields the same result on repeated trials. Second, replicability measures the degree to which the process can be reproduced by different coders, working under different conditions or using different measuring instruments. Finally, accuracy indicates the degree to which the coding process yields what is supposed to produce (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 281). As reported by Bowen and Bowen (2008), the type of reliability appropriate for evaluating the coding of text-based sources is circumstantial. Because this study relied on a single coder, the most appropriate type of reliability is stability. Krippendroff (2019) acknowledged that stability

is the weakest reliability measure in content analysis studies. In response to this shortcoming, Hill (2013) proposed post-coding reconciliation to address any discrepancies in the coded data to improve the reliability.

6.4.3 Validity

Krippendroff (2019) suggested there are six types of validity that are relevant to content analysis studies:

- Sampling validity,
- Semantic validity,
- Structural validity,
- Functional validity,
- Correlative validity, and
- Predictive validity.

Sampling validity is a measure of how well the sampled texts represent the identified population of the phenomenon under investigation. In this study, sampling validity was not an issue because the researcher extracted data from the census reports of local governments in Florida with a population size of 8,000 or more. The second type of validity is semantic validity, which is "the degree to which the analytical categories of texts correspond to the meanings these texts have for articular readers or the role they play within a chosen context" (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 370). More specifically, Krippendroff (2019) defines semantic validity as analogous to content validity, as proposed by the positivist paradigm (p. 371). Riff, Lacy, and Fico (2014) asserted that, for a study to be high in semantical validity, the operational categories should have similar

meanings to audiences beyond the researcher (p.136). Krippendroff (2019) recommended reliance on outside experts as a technique to ensure semantic validity. Another solution provided by Krippendroff (2019) specifically to address the semantic validity of academic dissertations is to reach a shared understanding among the audience (p. 375).

Next, Krippendroff (2019) identified structural and functional as the third and fourth types of validity; both types of validity assess the logicality and functionality of the analytical construct used in the content analysis. Structural validity determines whether the study's analytical construct accurately represents the meanings and known practices of the text. In contrast, functional validity assesses the analytical construct's ability to answer specific research questions (Krippendroff, 2019).

The fifth type of validity is correlation validity; this type of validity does not apply to this study as it involves correlation with other established measures of a phenomenon. The final type of validity is predictive validity, which concerns the ability of content analysis measurement to predict future or past events (Holsti, 1969; Krippendroff, 2019). Predictive validity is closely related to semantic validity because both focus on representation within the text. Semantic validity focuses on the meanings and the different uses of texts, while predictive validity's primary concern is to determine if the given answers to research questions are "borne out in fact" (Krippendroff, 2019, p. 382).

The application of validity concepts associated with the Positivist paradigm to qualitative studies is not reasonable as these studies focus on meaning rather than on finding an external truth (Baily, 1997, p. 21). Angen (2000) advocated that qualitative studies should focus on validation instead of validity; validation emphasizes the trustworthiness of qualitative research

exists within the discourse of the discipline. In Sandelowski's (1996) view, qualitative studies benefit from real-life contexts, which does not occur in quantitative research. Hence, qualitative researchers have a moral obligation to move "us beyond our present understanding of a given topic to some new, more generative understanding" (Angen, 2000, p. 389). This study fulfills the moral obligation proposed by Angen (2000) to enhance the understanding of strategic planning as practiced in Florida by local governments through the systematic analysis of their produced strategic plans.

6.5 Recommendation for Future Research

There is a strong need for research that examines the process of public value creation by local governments. The way forward is to conduct comparative content analysis (Lee, 2015) between local governments within different settings. Regarding a future research agenda, this study offers several recommendations. First, conduct a comparative content analysis between the strategic plans of local governments from different states, preferably from states with different political cultures following Elazar's (1984) concept of American federalism. Second, conduct a comparative content analysis in international settings. For instance, similar research would be very suitable for a transatlantic setting comparing the strategic plans of different foreign local governments to their American counterparts or, alternatively, comparing the strategic plans of local governments within a single foreign country. Third, future studies should examine additional institutional factors and their isomorphic effects, if any, on the strategic plans of local governments. Such institutional factors might include, but are not limited to, party affiliation of elected officials, the percentages of minorities compared to the total population, and the

utilization of outside consulting firms in preparing the strategic plans of local governments. Finally, this study exists in the intersection between the public value and strategic planning literature within the field of public administration. An excellent future study would involve adding an extension of emergency management threats to this mix. Thus, this study urges future researchers to examine the effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on public values and the strategic plans of local governments. Such a study involving the Covid-19 pandemic would lend itself to natural experimental design, defined as a "shift in exposure that was caused by forces outside of researchers' control, but which may be used to infer the causal impact of these changes" (Thomson, 2020). Local governments produce strategic plans at a regular interval of 3-5 years—this content analysis of local governments' strategic plans are snapshots at two points of time. The first point is the last strategic plan before the pandemic, and the second is the first strategic plan produced after the pandemic; this would allow researchers to examine the effect of Covid-19 on public values and the strategic plans of local governments.

APPENDIX A: FLORIDA LOCAL GOVERNMENTS UNDERSTUDY

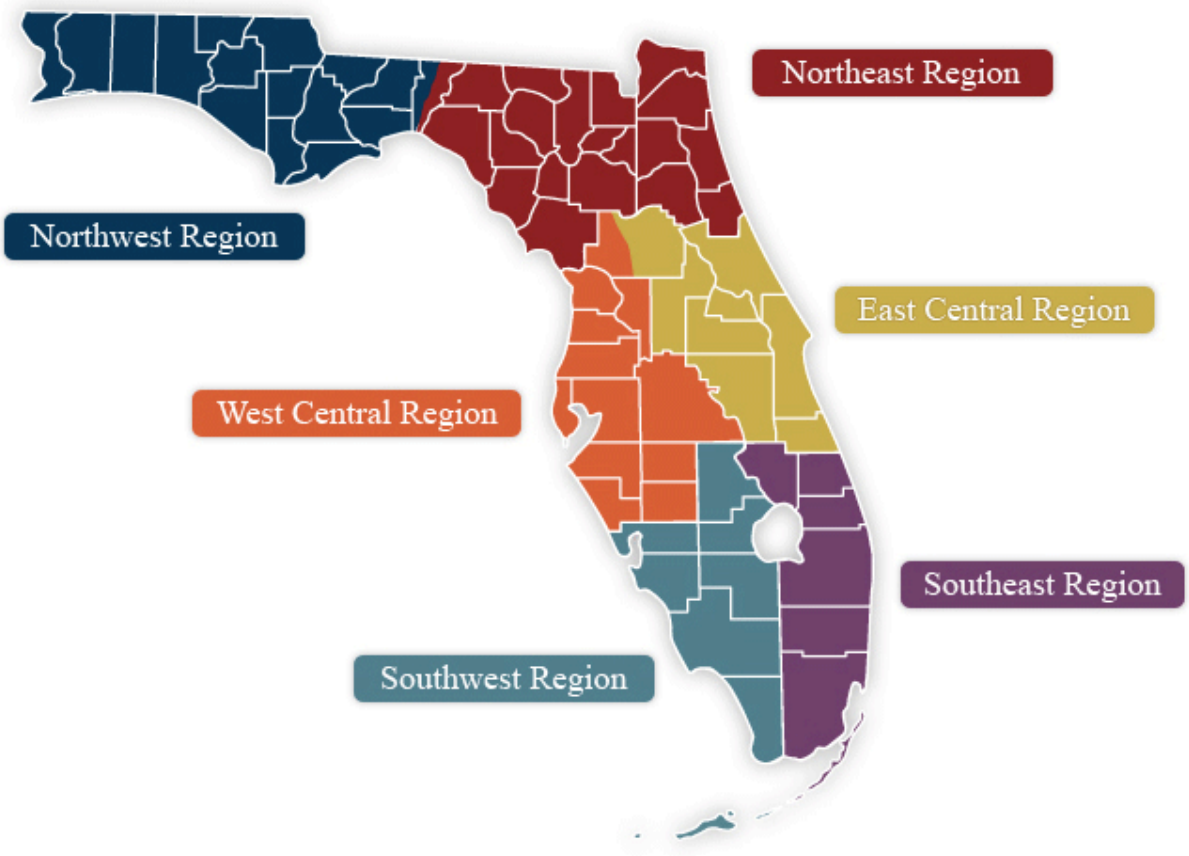
#	Name	Official Website
1	Leon County	http://cms.leoncountyfl.gov/Portals/0/admin/coadmin/docs/LeonCounty_StrategicPlan.pdf
2	Collier County	https://www.colliercountyfl.gov/Home/ShowDocument?id=80655
3	Charlotte County	https://www.charlottecountyfl.gov/transparency/Documents/BCC-Strategic-Plan-2017.pdf#search=strategic%20plan
4	Hillsborough County	https://www.hillsboroughcounty.org/library/hillsborough/media-center/documents/government/strategic-plan.pdf
5	Gulf County	http://www.gulfcounty-fl.gov/common/pages/DisplayFile.aspx?itemId=9181265
6	Flagler County	http://www.flaglercounty.org/document_center/BOCC%20administration/Strategic%20Plan%20-%20Complete.pdf
7	Martin County	https://documents.martin.fl.us/Documents2010/content/Agenda_Items/adm/2012/8A1-2012-02-07%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf
8	Miami- Dade County	https://www.miamidade.gov/performance/library/strategic-plan/2020-strategic-planning-book.pdf
9	Jefferson County	http://www.jeffersoncountyfl.gov/Uploads/Editor/file/planning/vision%20plan/Volume%20I.pdf
10	Monroe County	http://www.monroecounty-fl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/17060/2020-Strategic-Plan
11	Nassau County	https://www.nassaucountyfl.com/DocumentCenter/View/15427/Vision-2032-Final-Report-Oct-2012---Last-Page-Contact-Info-Updated-42618?bidId=
12	Pasco County	https://www.pascocountyfl.net/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/4423
13	Pinellas County	http://www.pinellascounty.org/strategicplan/pdf/goals-strategies-landscape.pdf
14	Sarasota County	https://www.scgov.net/home/showdocument?id=39576
15	Okaloosa County	http://www.co.okaloosa.fl.us/sites/default/files/doc/news/2013/Strategic_Plan.pdf
16	St. Johns County	http://www.citystaug.com/document_center/Publicworks/Mobility/StrategicPlanningLibrary/SJC-FinalStrategicPlan09.03.02.pdf
17	Volusia County	https://www.volusia.org/core/fileparse.php/4478/urlt/14_Goals_and_accomplishments.pdf
18	Bay County	https://www.baycountyfl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/2276/2018-2022-Strategic-Plan?bidId=
19	Walton County	https://www.co.walton.fl.us/DocumentCenter/View/8326/Walton-County-Strategic-Goals-2013-2015?bidId=
20	Okeechobee County	http://www.co.okeechobee.fl.us/home/showdocument?id=603
21	Osceola County	https://www.osceola.org/core/fileparse.php/2731/urlt/081215_Strategic-Plan-2015-2019.pdf
22	Hernando County	https://www.hernandocounty.us/Home/ShowDocument?id=38

23	City of Boynton Beach	https://www.boynton-beach.org/strategic-plan
24	City of Bartow	http://www.cityofbartow.net/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=6820
25	City of Boca Raton	https://www.myboca.us/1183/Strategic-Plan
26	City of Cape Coral	https://cms4.revize.com/revize/capecoralfl/OpenGov/2017-2019%20Strategic%20Plan%20for%20Budget%20Book%20with%20Measures.pdf
27	City of Cocoa Beach	https://www.cityofcocoabeach.com/DocumentCenter/View/4223/2019-2023-City-of-Cocoa-Beach-Strategic-Plan?bidId=
28	City of Coral Springs	https://www.coralsprings.org/government/other-departments-and-services/budget-strategy/strategic-plan
29	City of Coral Gables	https://www.coralgables.com/media/Finance/Management%20and%20Budget/Strategic%20Plan%202017-2019.pdf
30	City of Cocoa	https://www.cocoafl.org/DocumentCenter/View/8234/Working--STRATEGIC-PLAN?bidId=
31	City of Fort Myers	https://www.cityftmyers.com/DocumentCenter/View/1310/Fort-Myers-Strategic-Plan-PDF?bidId=
32	City of Eustis	http://cms5.revize.com/revize/eustisfl/document_center/2013-2014%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf
33	City of Deerfield Beach	https://www.deerfield-beach.com/DocumentCenter/View/12590/Strategic-Plan-Adopted-01162018?bidId=
34	City of Fort Pierce	http://cityoffortpierce.com/663/Strategic-Plan-2018
35	City of Doral	https://www.cityofdoral.com/search/?filter=&q=Strategic+plan
36	City of Hallandale Beach	https://hallandalebeachfl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/1956/Mission-Statement-and-Strategic-Goals?bidId=
37	City of Key West	https://www.cityofkeywest-fl.gov/egov/documents/1300711020_937866.pdf
38	City of Margate	https://www.margatefl.com/DocumentCenter/View/828/Envision-Margate-Strategic-Plan-2018-2022
39	City of Kissimmee	http://www.kissimmee.org/home/showdocument?id=5259
40	City of Miami	https://www.miamigov.com/Services/Your-Government/City-of-Miami-Strategic-Plan
41	City of Gainesville	http://www.cityofgainesville.org/Portals/0/splan/strategic%20plan/Gainesville%20200505%20Strategic%20Plan%202020-2025-2035%20Combined.pdf
42	City of Largo	https://www.largo.com/Strategic%20Plan.pdf
43	City of New Port Richey	http://3adxj44d1tf4346fm63cyw9m-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Updated-NPR-Strategic-Plan-Feb-2018-Status-Report-version-2.pdf

44	City of Oakland Park	http://www.oaklandparkfl.gov/DocumentCenter/View/658/Strategic-Plan---Fiscal-Year-2014-PDF
45	City of North Port	http://www.cityofnorthport.com/home/showdocument?id=18643
46	City of Orange City	https://www.ourorangecity.com/city/government/city-council-goals/strategicplan-report-2017.pdf
47	City of Ormond Beach	https://www.ormondbeach.org/DocumentCenter/View/12755/Strategic-Plan-Update-March-7-2017?bidId=
48	City of Palm Bay	https://www.palmbayflorida.org/home/showdocument?id=2958
49	City of Palm Coast	http://docs.palmcoastgov.com/council/sap/2017-2018/2017-2018%20SAP.pdf
50	City of Palm Springs	http://www.palmspringsca.gov/home/showdocument?id=41817
51	City of Pompano Beach	https://cdn.pompanobeachfl.gov/city/pages/strategic_plan/FINAL%20-%20Strategic%20Plan%20-%20Adopted%20by%20Mayor%20and%20City%20Commission%20-%20June%2027,%202017.pdf
52	City of Parkland	https://www.cityofparkland.org/DocumentCenter/View/12131/Strategic-Plan-Parkland-FL---Revised-8-13-15?bidId=
53	City of Punta Gorda	http://www.ci.punta-gorda.fl.us/home/showdocument?id=5221
54	City of Port Orange	https://www.port-orange.org/DocumentCenter/View/194/Strategic-Planning-Report-PDF?bidId=
55	City of Port St. Lucie	https://www.cityofpsl.com/home/showdocument?id=7890
56	City of Apopka	http://www.apopka.net/DocumentCenter/View/1418/Visioning-Report---FINAL-040116-3pm?bidId=
57	City of Sarasota	https://en.calameo.com/read/004102509de1e782af06f
58	City of DeLand	https://drive.google.com/file/d/12LUMij65EvWBYP2xBwbnKGZ3Xr4R4tLm/view
59	City of North Miami	http://www.northmiamifl.gov/government/Budget/files/FY14/FY14_Adop_Sec1_B.Intro.SMP_CityOverview.pdf
60	City of Fort Lauderdale	https://www.fortlauderdale.gov/home/showdocument?id=10999
61	City of St. Augustine	http://www.citystaug.com/document_center/FinancialServices/StrategicPlanning/2018StrategicPlan.pdf
62	City of St. Cloud	https://fl-stcloud3.civicplus.com/DocumentCenter/View/26874/Strategic-Plan-2018-2023-Epub
63	City of Tamarac	https://www.tamarac.org/DocumentCenter/View/1783/2014-15-Strategic-Plan?bidId=
64	City of Venice	https://www.venicegov.com/Home/ShowDocument?id=3161

65	City of West Palm Beach	https://wpb.org/wpb_website/media/City-Admin-Mayor-s-Office/wpb%202019%20budgert%20planning/West-Palm-Beach-Strategic-Plan-2019-2023-Dec2018-final.pdf
66	City of Wilton Manors	https://www.wiltonmanors.com/DocumentCenter/View/1458/Wilton-Manors-Strategic-Plan-Final?bidId=
67	Town of Cutler Bay	http://cutlerbay-fl.gov/home/showdocument?id=8995
68	Town of Miami Lakes	https://www.miamilakes-fl.gov/index.php?option=com_docman&view=download&alias=4706-strategic-plan-2015-2025-update-fy2017-18&category_slug=strategic-planning&Itemid=604
69	Town of Jupiter	https://www.jupiter.fl.us/DocumentCenter/View/22007/FY-2020-Strategic-Plan?bidId=
70	Town of Davie	https://www.davie-fl.gov/176/Strategic-Plan
71	Village of Key Biscayne	https://keybiscayne.fl.gov/clientuploads/Building,%20Zoning%20Planning%20&%20Public%20Works/Planning%20Division/Committee%20and%20Other%20Master%20Plans/2020VisionPlan_6-17-06Pt1.pdf
72	Village of Royal Palm Beach	https://www.royalpalmbeach.com/documentcenter/view/5372
73	Village of Pinecrest	https://www.pinecrest-fl.gov/government/village-council/strategic-plan
74	Village of North Palm Beach	https://www.village-npb.org/Search?searchPhrase=Strategic%20Plan
75	Town of Palm Beach	https://www.townofpalmbeach.com/DocumentCenter/View/10092/Final-Budget-Book-w-pg-nos?bidId=
76	City of Ocala	https://www.ocalafl.org/home/showdocument?id=22346
77	City of Clearwater	https://www.myclearwater.com/news-info/about-us/strategic-vision-mission

APPENDIX B: A MAP OF FLORIDA SIX REIGONS



Source: Florida Association of Counties.

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