Collaborative roles of public officials in urban planning processes: an exploration

Introduction[i]

Public officials are expected to function as key players in urban projects, but they face difficulties in implementing urban projects in the context of a 'network society' (Albrechts & Mandelbaum 2005)[ii]. This network society is characterised by complex problems and increasingly active community groups and citizens. To achieve success in planning and implementing urban projects in this network context, intensive and often long-term collaboration among the diverse stakeholders is required. Hence, the focus of urban projects shifts from planning product to planning process (Healy 1997)[iii]. Communication and participation are now key elements in different literatures on urban projects (Innes & Booher 1999)[iv].

Communicative and collaborative planning emphasize 'new' roles to be played by public officials. While their traditional role is considered as that of experts, they are nowadays increasingly expected to take up collaborative management (Agranoff & McGuire 2003)[v]. In contrast to planners involved as experts to help produce a high-quality plan in terms of content and vision, the public officials should also focus on the strategies and frameworks concerning both project and process. As such, collaborative planning stresses communication, negotiation, and bargaining with and between different stakeholders as key aspects of contemporary planning. But what roles do local public officials actually play? Are they the main collaborative managers or not?

The paper begins by reviewing four theoretical models of urban planning processes and how public officials are expected to act according to each model (Innes & Booher 2000)[vi]. Next, two strategic planning processes in the city-region of Ghent (Belgium) are introduced, namely the Project Ghent Canal Area (PGCA) and Park Woods Ghent (PWG). Both case studies are brought in to develop our understanding of what roles are played in practice in the third section. We discern what type of collaborative roles is actually played in both processes. We also assess to what extent these roles are indeed played by public officials.

Models of planning processes and ascribed roles for public officials

This section reviews four theoretical models of urban planning processes. These models help us to select cases to be studied and also consider potential roles that local public officials should play.

In their study how to deal with the increasing multi-actor and multi-issue nature of urban planning processes, Innes and Booher (2000, 2004) constructed four competing models[vii]. Each model states how planning should be conducted not only by the professional planners, but also by public officials and other participants. The four models are the technical/bureaucratic model, the political influence mode, the social movement model and the collaborative model. Each model has a different understanding of how planning should proceed and who should be involved in it. It also has a different notion of what kind of information is relevant and of what the role of the public or various interests should be. We will use these models to select cases which are then used to develop the roles played by public officials.

The technical/bureaucratic model assesses which policy alternatives best meet goals, developing comparative analyses and projection, making recommendations to decision makers about which course of action to follow based on the information available, and later assessing

the impacts of policies and suggesting changes. Good information, based on quality data and objective analysis, is a requirement for good planning[viii]. This model works well when there is a unitary set of goals and a single decision maker and where the problems are sufficiently understood for analysis to be useful. For the technical planner, collaboration with stakeholders is something that may be needed at the beginning of a process to determine goals and towards the end of the process to help make the final choice of a plan or a strategy, usually only between marginally different choices. However, they are not fond of interventions of the stakeholders during the process, as it may influence the integrity and neutrality of their analyses which is best based on objective data. Generally speaking, the collaborative nature of or activity in this model is low, and it closely fits with the model of traditional representative democracy.

The political influence model is a model which applies to situations where the planning process is conducted more by an elected official rather than a professional planner. According to this model, they choose what goes into the plan on the basis of what different constituencies want. Typically in this model a plan is made up of projects, each of which is desired by a politically important player. The key planner in this model is a 'fixer' who works with everyone behind the scenes, gives resources to different powerful players in return for support and loyalty for its plans. This model works well when there is a diversity of interests but not if the interests are interdependent because deals are struck one by one with players. It is clear that public participation of citizens is not desirable. This type of planning works behind the scenes. Even if citizens have the possibility to comment on proposals, there is very small likelihood that basic changes will be made (Innes & Booher 2000). This model often involves closed policy communities or sub-government (Jordan 1990) featuring elite decision-making, and is a model which certainly in Belgium has a long-standing tradition (Dewachter 1995)[ix].

The third model is the social movement model. This model appears very often in response to the inability of some interests or of a large number of citizens to get a hearing or be incorporated into the planning and decision making process. Individuals and groups who are not in power join together for some common purposes because the only way they can have influence is through their number. Often, they lack access via institutional ways of participation and public participation gets blurred with the movement itself. In this model, stakeholders often form issue networks, which fight their way into the decision-making process (Heclo 1978)[x].

Finally, the essential idea of the collaborative model builds is that planning should be done through face-to-face dialogue among those who have interests in the outcomes. Hence, all stakeholders - e.g. public agencies, powerful private interests, and disadvantaged citizens - are treated in the same way within the discussions (Innes & Booher 2005). The authors also describe a number of conditions that should be fulfilled to have an optimal dialogue: (1) the full range of interests must be involved; (2) the dialogue must be authentic in the sense that people must be able to speak sincerely; (3) there must be diversity and interdependence among the stakeholders; (4) all relevant issues must be on the table for discussion; (5) everyone in the discussion must be equally informed, equally listened to and thus empowered as members of the collaborative discussion; and (6) agreements are only reached when consensus is achieved among the vast majority of participants and only after substantial serious efforts have been made to satisfy the interests of all players. Innes & Booher (2000) believe that this model is nowadays the most dominant because it is the only one that can accommodate the enormous fragmentation of interests and values in public arenas. However, the extent to which the collaborative model can be achieved in practice is often limited in both extent and effect, as the 'politics of space' (e.g. the organizational structures within a local planning authority, the political culture in a given city) sets the planning context (Healey 1997, Forester 1999)[xi].

If the collaborative model is indeed the most dominant one – or is expected to become so - we are interested to see what roles are played by public officials in such cases. To do so, we will first select two cases in the next section based on the six conditions defined by Innes and

Booher. These cases are used in the third section to carry out a grounded role analysis to see what collaborative roles are played and to what extent these roles are played by public officials.

Two collaborative urban projects

This section selects and discusses two case studies that will enable us to identify different collaborative roles in the next section and to see to what extent these roles are played by local public officials. First, we discuss some methodological notes. Secondly, we introduce the cases and link them to the six conditions mentioned in the previous part of the paper.

Methodological notes

Both case studies are part of a doctoral study (Voets forthcoming) that is focused on collaborative management and the functioning of politicians, civil servants and party politics in urban planning processes. The case studies are based on extensive document analysis and a series of in-depth, semi-structured face-to-face interviews (27 PGCA-interviews, 21 PWG-interviews). A number of questions focused on the collaborative activity of different actors (e.g. who? why? how? evaluation? changes over time?). The research included a longitudinal analysis: different stages of the projects were reconstructed over time, with insights on differences and similarities between those stages. Hence, these case studies also enable one to discuss the evolution of the roles of public officials in these network arrangements over time. The PGCA-study was conducted in 2003-2004 but was recently updated in a number of bilateral contacts with the project office, the PWG-study was conducted in 2006-2007. For the purpose of this paper, a secondary analysis of the case study data was carried out.

Project Ghent Canal Area (PGCA)

The first case analyses the long-term evolution of a governance network engaged with economic development, environmental management and spatial planning in the Ghent canal area of the Flanders region of Belgium (ROM-Ghent)[xii] (De Rynck and Voets 2006[xiii]; Voets and De Rynck 2004, 2006[xiv]). The spatial development of the area, situated on the territory of three local authorities, had evolved in an uncoordinated way. This highlighted the tensions between the different uses of the area – as a major industrial centre, residential zone, environmentally sensitive landscape, and transport route - and by the early 1990s it was clear that a more unified approach was required. PGCA has developed into an ongoing open and collaborative network, including over 80 actors from different governmental tiers, from both public and private sector (profit and non-profit, citizen groups).

The project grew from the bottom-up: it began as a relatively informal, inter-personal relational framework that expanded over the years (De Rynck and Voets 2006). It gained legitimacy from its origins in initiatives by these local actors to address a series of interlinked and highly significant problems that existing governance mechanisms had failed to resolve, and where there was no prospect of further progress. From its start in 1993 until 1996, the network consisted of a small group of public officials and planners who operated on an informal basis. They shared commitment by their agencies, and after 1997 by the introduction of other actors with a shared interest in the strategic plans that were developed. This was reinforced by two factors (De Rynck & Voets 2006). First, the high degree of interdependency between the actors in this crowded institutional space where all levels of government are automatically involved. Secondly, they regularly interact in different governance arenas on different issues.

From 1997 to 2003 the network used a more formalised Steering Committee to provide explicit consent and accountability mechanisms and to coordinate the projects implemented by

partner agencies and a specially created public company. In 2003 the governance design was changed to create more effective ways of making decisions and coordinating implementation. The Steering Committee was replaced by a Sub-Regional Network, which operated through a number of working groups. In addition, greater civil society participation in the governance of the initiative was gradually introduced, by setting up and supporting citizen groups that also have representatives in the Sub-Regional Network. This gradual formalisation of PGCA had developed in response to the increasing role of the initiative. The revised design offers enhanced participation mechanisms at the general level, as well as strengthening those within the policy sectors covered by the project.

Park Woods Ghent (PWG)

This case presents an urban project that works on the creation of a multifunctional parkland in the metropolitan area of Ghent, very poor in terms of woods available to the public. The project area is situated on the territory of the City of Ghent and two autonomous suburbs.

The process was initiated top-down, being part of the Flemish agenda to expand the number of woods in urban regions. This agenda, to be implemented by the Flemish Environmental Department, Section Forest & Green, fitted the agenda of the Provincial Department of Planning and Nature Conservation and that of the city of Ghent (Allaert & Leinfelder 2005)[xv].

Over the years, an increasing number of actors were brought into the process, coming from both public and private sector (e.g. farmers, nature groups) and different governmental tiers. They were involved trough sounding board groups, a project team, working groups, etc. As a result, the content of the project was reoriented substantially. From a single aim and focus on afforestation, it evolved into a plan to develop a multifunctional space, in which a limited part will be turned into woods. Agricultural activity is not abolished, but substantially downsized; recreational possibilities are strengthened, a scientific park will be constructed in the focus area, there are also housing projects …

While the initial focus was on afforestation, it shifted to a strong planning focus: while the need for more woods and potential sites were based on scientific studies of the green departments, it was seen as requiring an official spatial planning status by making it part of the process of drawing up a Regional Spatial Implementation Plan (RSIP) 'Delineation of the Urban Region of Ghent', adopted by the Flemish government on 16/12/2005. By doing so, the PWG obtained a legal status and also contains binding land use rules for the area, a compulsory purchase plan, …

However, the process to come to that RSIP was paved with struggles, conflicts, and other difficulties. Farmers, landowners, and the two suburbs for instance were not very cooperative in the beginning, and certainly the farmers and landowners were and remain an active and heavy lobby throughout the process. While the RSIP has been approved by the Flemish government, many actors believe that the implementation thereof is sabotaged by farmers and some of their christian-democrat allies in the Flemish government. The main supporters of the project are currently developing a new structure to be able to implement the different functions and to design the area according to the vision incorporated in the RSIP.

Matching the collaborative model?

If one takes the Innes and Booher preconditions/criteria to give a general label to each case, the PGCA is closest to the collaborative model. In both cases, the full range of interest was involved, although the degree and type of participation of actors differs. In case of PGCA, the authentic

dialogue was a goal from the outset and framed throughout different stages in documents approved by all actors. In case of PWG, the authentic dialogue was a goal, but difficult to achieve as the conflict of interests was too high and strategic choices were made regarding the degree of openness for actors to bring in ideas, concepts, agendas. In terms of diversity and interdependence, both cases score high: no single actor can achieve its goals autonomously and the diversity of actors and issues is high, as politicians and civil servants from different governmental tiers are involved as well as various private sector actors (interest groups, companies, citizens,…). Fourthly, in both cases, all relevant issues were brought to the table. Fifthly, in both cases, actors were equally informed, although the capacity to produce and absorb information was clearly unbalanced. Finally, while the results of the PGCA are widely supported, the support for the PWG-results is less straightforward. Certainly the farmers in the area remain very skeptic and continue to lobby for their own interests, which deviate from the PWG-agenda. Table 1 summarises the scoring on the conditions of the collaborative model.

Table 1: Scoring on the conditions of the collaborative model

	PGCA	PWG
Full range of interest involved	+	+
Authentic dialogue	+	±
Diversity and interdependence	+	+
All relevant issues on the table	+	+
Equally informed	+	+
Agreement widely supported	+	±

Collaborative role-playing?

In the previous section, we have analysed two case studies using the conditions of the collaborative model of Innes and Booher. In this section, we will develop a grounded role analysis based on both case studies. First, we will discern a number of collaborative roles. Next, we discuss to what extent these roles are played by public officials.

Constructing collaborative roles: a grounded approach

Studies on roles and role perceptions of public officials in interactive processes and on the relationship between public officials and politicians have greatly multiplied the last decennium[xvi]. Historically, planning literature has focused on the roles played by planners; the focus on the roles of public officials in planning processes is of more recent date.

There are several typologies of roles that actors play, but these are often derived from theory and rarely fit practice easily. Other roles are based on self-assessments by public officials, like the typology of Hartman & Tops (1987)[xvii], who categorized the roles of public officials according to the perception of the civil servants concerning their own functioning and the functioning of the government. These are implicit presumptions that guide the work and the choices the public official makes (Edwards 2001)[xviii]. However, like all typologies, these reduce reality. In that sense the practicability of the roles has been questioned by a number of authors (Hood, Aberbach, Putnam & Rockman, De Rynck & Vallet)[xix]. Secondly, the research on these roles is mostly based on intuition. Concrete instruments to measure these roles are scarce and rough. Third, roles of public officials can be expected to be dynamic instead of static throughout a process. This means that depending on the situation and the stages in the planning process the public official can take up different roles. Fourth, one should be aware of the discrepancy between the formal (what he says he does) and the actual role of the public official (what he

does, and what the perceptions of other actors about his/her role are). More often than not, there is a discrepancy between both. Based on these critiques, we develop a grounded typology of roles based on the PGCA and PWG-case studies. These roles are then used to assess which ones are played by public officials.

Empirical analysis to assess roles and attitudes of public officials in planning processes regarding participation can be done using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, e.g. discourse analysis (Hajer 2005)[xx], surveys mapping values and opinions (Alwin & Krosnick 1985)[xxi], participatory action research (Kemmis & McTaggart 1988)[xxii], case studies (Briassoulis 1999)[xxiii]. In our opinion, to assess how public officials act in practice, case study research is required, also because it brings hidden proceedings and activities to the foreground (Yin 2003)[xxiv]. Second, it should be acknowledged that a planning process is no static situation, but that it changes over time. Therefore, we want to start with developing these roles more extensively based on what they actually do in terms of collaborative management in urban planning processes[xxv].

The role assessment in this paper is built on the process dimension of the projects. On might also take a more political focus, look at the actual decision-making or interaction between actors. Hence, this role typology also has it limits and certainly does not claim to be the complete or sole picture that can be made.

Our role typology is constructed by analysing the level of activity (high/low), focus of that activity on collaborative goals (high/low), and the dominant type of activity that they showed (operational, vision, networking, leadership, creativity). In other words, actors can be attributed leadership activity and networking at the same time, but if he/she is associated predominantly with one type of activity, he/she is assigned to a certain role. The roles were ascribed by the researchers, based on the assessments made by the interviewees about their own activity, the activity of others, and the analysis of other sources (e.g. meeting notes). Finally, these roles are assigned at the overall network level[xxvi]. The role analysis is not conducted at the game level (e.g. games played on specific topics, issues), although the picture would certainly become much more nuanced. However, such an analysis poses empirical and practical problems, and developing this is too complex for a single paper.

Our case studies reveal a number of collaborative roles played. As we focused on collaborative management in the case studies, we did not develop the non-collaborative roles of participants (grouped here as 'self-seekers') or the roles of actors outside the network (grouped here as 'outsiders')

'Self-seeker'. Actors that mainly manage in function of their own personal or organizational interests, but not for any collaborative aims as such, are defined as self-seekers. Although their management strategies at times might be conducive to the collaborative aims, the latter is then a by-product instead of a deliberate goal. The majority of actors in the PGCA- and PWG-case managed mainly in function of their own individual and organizational agenda's, hence are considered 'self-seekers'. Although the functioning of this group of actors might be developed further to identify several 'non-collaborative' roles, we have focused our research to identify collaborative roles.

'Outsiders'. Actors that are not part of the network are not assigned roles in this paper, due to the difficulty to demarcate their exact roles and positions. However, it can be expected that actors outside the network can play both collaborative and non-collaborative roles.

Our analysis of PGCA and PWG showed a limited number of actors managing collaboratively, keeping actors in and motivated, looking for new resources useful for the arrangement, and the like. In this group, we uncovered a number of different collaborative roles.

'Network operator'. A network operator is an actor (e.g. a project manager) that is responsible for the daily management of the arrangement: preparing documents for meetings, following up on the operations of different working groups, managing the website and databases, so i.e. a secretariat which takes care of all the administrative aspects of the

arrangement. In the PGCA, as can be expected, this is the work of the project coordinator, who takes care of the day-to-day management. However, the project coordinators' function is not limited to administrative functions only; in the PGCA, she is for instance also the first contact for and communicator between actors in- and outside the arrangement, and she is involved in bargaining and negotiating with actors in- and outside the arrangement (Agranoff and McGuire 2003). In the PWG-case, the network operator was a civil servant from one of the Flemish departments. Currently, the PWG is developing a new network structure, and plans to hire a full-time project coordinator.

'Network champion'. Similar to Agranoff's (2003)[xxvii] notion, a network champion is regarded as an actor that excels in networking in terms of building, maintaining and using connections with stakeholders and other relevant actors at all governmental levels and of all backgrounds. To be defined as a network champion in collaborative management, the actor has to use this networking capacity mainly in function of the collaborative aims. Both in PGCA and PWG, the same provincial civil servant is a network champion, as he is very active in networking on personal, professional and party political levels. This was acknowledged by all the actors that were interviewed: they all considered him the spider in the arrangements' web. Although a number of other network participants were also very successful in networking, we do not label them network champions because they lacked the collaborative focus or because their activity was dominantly focused on other aspects (e.g. promoting the network).

'Network promoter'. Somewhat diverging from Agranoff's (2003) definition, here, a network promoter is an actor that is considered authoritative, accepted by all actors as a principal (in moral terms, not in terms of power or hierarchy) which tries to lead the arrangement towards the common goals. In the arrangement, he/she holds a position of trust, and is also the one to which actors direct grievances or concerns. He/she tries to keep things together at a general level and is also expected to appease conflicts. If necessary, this actor might even 'sanction' actors (but again, based on a moral authority or arrangements' rules, based on trust and informal acceptance, granted to him by the stakeholders, rather than based on a hierarchic position. In PGCA, the former governor was the network promoter. He was the active chair of the PGCA, accepted by all actors as authoritative, perceived neutral, capable of keeping the process on track. The network promoter also has an external function, namely as the 'face' of the arrangement. In the PGCA, the former governor was also a go-between for local, provincial and Flemish government. In the PWG, a single network promoter was not to be found. The then minister of agriculture and environment was identified by some interviewees as a potential network promoter, but others regarded her as a politician trying to gain political points in this project. To date, there is no network promoter like the person in the PGCA, as participants are identified too strongly with certain interests by other actors to be perceived as neutral or authoritative.

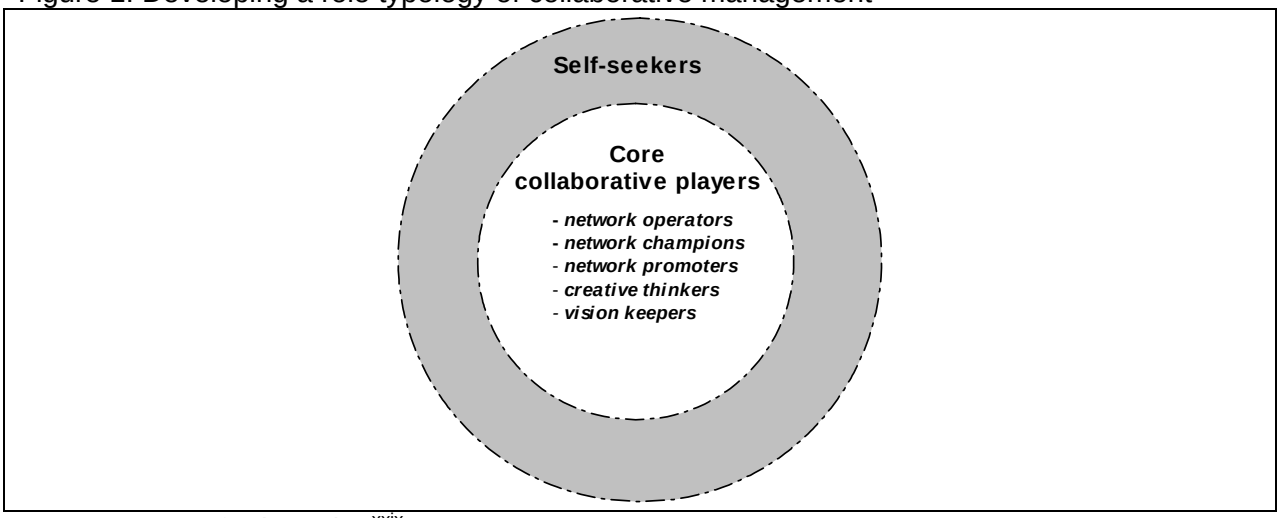
'Creative thinker'. A creative thinker is an actor that has no stake in the focus area or regarding the issues at the table, and hence is 'free' to give creative input. These actors deliver expertise, develop concepts, models, plans, visualize ideas and produce tools to build 'groupware' (Bardach 1998)[xxviii], to induce consensus, and the like. In the PGCA-case and the PWG-case, consultants (in both cases external planners) acted as 'creative thinkers'. They actively sought to frame and reframe actors' mindsets, to forward innovative and joint concepts to incorporate different interests. Although these consultants did not have an explicit 'process coaching'-role, they also looked at process related aspects in terms of quick wins and identifying strengths and weaknesses of actors.

'Vision keeper'. Similar to Agranoff's (2003) notion, a vision keeper is an actor in- or outside the arrangement who - for whatever reason - is/became a strong 'believer' in the collective agenda of the arrangement; they are concerned with the progress of the collaborative agenda. Often, vision keepers are not as actively involved in the management as actors playing the other collaborative roles. Located in- or outside the arrangement, they tend to keep a certain

distance, having an overall perspective. If these actors feel that the arrangement tends to go in a different and undesirable direction, deviating from the joint agenda, they will signal it to other collaborative players or in some cases, act themselves. Their concern with the overall performance of the arrangement separates them from self-seekers. In PGCA, a number of vision keepers are local civil servants which were heavily involved in the beginning of the process but have now taken a step back or have switched positions (in their own organisation or from one organisation to another). In the PWG, main vision keepers are a number of local politicians and local and regional civil servants.

In sum, these five collaborative roles cover the bulk of collaborative management in both projects (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Developing a role typology of collaborative management



Source: Voets, forthcoming[xxix]

Collaborative roles = public officials?

We have identified a number of collaborative roles in the previous section. The question we answer in this section is to what extent public officials play these roles.

Table 2: who plays which collaborative role?

	PGCA	**PWG**
Network operator	Public official (provincial*)	Public official (Flemish)
Network champion	Public official (provincial)**	Public official (provincial)**
Network promoter	Public official (Flemish)***	/
Vision keeper	Public officials (Flemish, local), politicians (local), experts	Public officials (Flemish, local), politicians (local), experts, private actors
Creative thinker	Experts**** (external planners)	Experts**** (external planners)

* = the project office is embedded in the provincial administration, so the project coordinator is in formal terms a provincial official. However, the project office is jointly financed by the different public authorities involved, so acts on behalf of the collective

** = same person

*** = the governor is a commissioner appointed by the Flemish government, but can also function on behalf of the federal and provincial government

**** = one of the planning bureaus was hired in both projects

Table 2 summarizes the collaborative roles discussed in the previous section and what type of actor play them. It is clear that public officials take up most collaborative roles in both cases. A number of additional comments need to be made.

In both cases, most collaborative roles are played by Flemish or provincial public officials. The first reason is that both cases cut across municipal borders, hence cannot be dealt with by a single local authority. Secondly, in Flanders, in the fields of spatial planning, infrastructure, and environmental policies, the main competences and resources are held by the regional, Flemish governmental tier. Hence, in order to achieve success in projects in these fields, local governments are automatically dependent on the participation of regional governmental actors.

In both cases, most of these collaborative roles are played only by a limited number of the public officials involved. A number of public officials are only focused at achieving personal or organisational goals, and their actions and strategies are only instrumental to achieve those. Also, the fact that these collaborative roles are chiefly played by public officials, does not exclude collaborative management efforts by others.

While this role typology tells us who is managing collaboratively, it does not explain why they do so. We have indications that several variables help explain collaborative behaviour, like organisational culture (e.g. in PGCA, one of the non-collaborative actors was an infrastructure department that had no tradition in working collaboratively), personality (e.g. some officials feel comfortable in collaborative settings, being able to think out of the box, while others do not and prefer a Weberian role as bureaucrat), beliefs (e.g. how one values public participation), learning (e.g. in both projects, several actors indicated shifting positions because of learning within the planning process).

Collaborative roles are partly assigned purposefully (e.g. hiring external planners), but also develop informally. In the PGCA, the whole process was steered by a small group of public officials including the provincial governor and a few local politicians. In PWG, an informal team of public officials was set up and acts as the collaborative team.

These roles are not static. Both projects are longitudinal (started in the 1990s and are still ongoing) and their focus shifts over time (e.g. PGCA, which shifts from vision development to implementation of a programme based on that vision). Actors also learn and evolve over time: some actors have an expanding network which they start to use more actively, other actors develop from a network operator to a vision keeper, others evolved from self-seekers to vision keepers. Important to point out is that actors are represented by persons, which can enter or exit the network or shift from one actor to another.

Concluding remarks

This paper has dealt with the question what collaborative roles are played by public officials in urban projects. We started from a number of models to select two cases that are considered to be collaborative. We then introduced both cases and designed five collaborative roles based on collaborative activity of actors in the projects. Finally, we showed that most of these collaborative roles are played by public officials.

In our opinion, the role typology can be used as an instrument for both academics and practitioners to analyse and manage urban projects. Some actors keep track of the operational side of a project and organise it as efficiently as possible. Others take care of the networking activities, typical in multi-actor settings where no single actor can force through its agenda. Another type of actors keeps an overview and guards the overall goal of the project, acting when that goal is considered to be threatened. Some actors try to provide or take up leadership of the project, but only succeed if they are perceived sufficiently neutral and authoritative by other participants. Finally, some actors excel in bringing in ideas and creativity to reconcile conflicting

personal and organisational goals, to reframe mindsets, and the like. Some of these collaborative roles can be more important in the early or developmental stage of an urban project than in its implementation stage. The vision keepers for instance seem to become more important in the current stage as PGCA and PWG have a number of strategic documents and plans to implement them. We believe that the strength of an urban project partly depends on the presence of a good mix of collaborative roles as defined in this paper.

However, this grounded typology should be developed further. A first task is to test the typology in additional collaborative case studies, also enabling a stronger cross case analysis. We suspect that these roles will be present in other collaborative arrangements (see Huxham and Vangen 2006)[xxx]. Secondly, we should test to what degree these roles are present in cases matching the other three models of Innes and Booher, thus enabling a cross model analysis. Thirdly, it is necessary to link these roles to different management strategies (e.g. those strategies defined by Klijn and Teisman)[xxxi]. Fourthly, the role typology should be linked to a set of explanatory variables, in order to understand and manage the collaborative behaviour of actors involved in urban projects.

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[i] The authors would like to thank Eva Beuselinck for useful comments while writing this paper.

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[viii] This type of planners tends to believe in the potential for getting accurate information that can show the best way to do things. This belief is contested by –amongst others- Herbert Simon with its idea of 'bounded rationality' (1997).

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