



Conceptualizing local development practitioners: creators, coordinators or inside lobbyists?

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A B S T R A C T

Local development practitioners in local government administration play a significant role in the governance of local development. This category of public officials – development officers, managers, strategists, secretaries, etc. – have received some attention in the local development literature. However, the directions in the literature are just as varied as the descriptions of the different aspects of local development governance they are taking part in. That means that the overarching understanding of what local development practitioners actually do is blurred, and is left to detailed case studies with very little or no conceptual ambition. Against this backdrop, the ambition of this article is to grasp what the local development practitioner role consists of at a *conceptual level*.

This article offers a better understanding of what local development practitioner roles in particular consist of and how these roles relate to existing theories of governance and public administration. In order to do so, we first clarify and refine what the literature has stressed about local development practitioners' roles and functions, and cluster the findings into three theoretically separated roles: the *coordinator*, the *creator* and the *inside lobbyist*. Second, we bridge these roles with recent trends in public administration research. Finally, we discuss how this conceptualization informs us about governance modes of local development, as well as 'new and modern' public official roles in local government administration.

Introduction

In recent years, local development politics have received increased interest as a strategy to enhance the competitiveness of a region or municipality. As a part of this development, the number of public officials with explicit tasks to work for local development as strategists and coordinators has increased. These local development practitioners (hereinafter referred to as LDPs) have a special and – compared to most other types of public officials – peculiar type of public official role. The policy field of local and regional development is multifaceted, diversified and inconstant, and has vague borders with other policy fields (Montin 2010; Olausson 2020; Pike et al. 2017). In addition, the administrative settings of local and regional development governance are blurred by non-hierarchical, mutable, informal, temporal and cross-sectoral governance structures (Hanssen et al. 2011; Pierre 2011; Aarseather & Ringholm 2011; Nyhlén 2013; Godenhjelm 2016). LDPs find themselves the middle of this, trying to navigate towards development goals. But what do they actually do? And how can their different activities and roles be understood in relation to theories of governance and public administration? To our knowledge, no one has tried to grasp what the local development practitioner role consists of at a *conceptual level*. By conceptual level, we refer to the definition offered by Sartori (1984), whereby concept formation is said to apply to three mechanisms of a concept: the object to be defined, the characteristics of this object, and a label which fits and combines both the object and its characteristics. We also draw

upon Gerring's (1999) framework of eight criteria for what constitutes a good concept: familiarity, resonance, parsimony, coherence, differentiation, depth, theoretical utility and field utility. We argue that conceptualizing the role of LDPs can say something important about not only the individual actor role but also the governance of local and regional development from a wider perspective. Therefore, an empirical and theoretically grounded conceptualization of the role of local development practitioners is what this article aims to contribute.

From this article's point of view, the interesting characteristics of local and regional development consist of the so-called 'new governance modes' (Pollit & Bouckaert 2017), which in the next step also lead to new and changed roles for public officials. The governance of local and regional development is often described as bottom up-driven, non-hierarchical and consensus oriented, where good and innovative ideas should be promoted wherever they come from (Hamdouch et al. 2017a). These special settings, compared to other more traditional and bureaucratically governed policy fields, have significance for the role of public officials. For many students of local and regional development governance, it has been natural to talk about these roles in terms of political or policy entrepreneurship (see e.g. Karlsson, Silander & Silander 2016). Most common definitions of political or policy entrepreneurship include elements of creativity, networking, innovation, opportunity seeking, timing and personal dedication (Petridou et al. 2015). However, Pozen (2008) has stated that the concepts of political or policy entrepreneurship, which are often used interchangeably, are too diffuse,

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stretched and diverse to offer any analytical usefulness. In other words, referring to local development practitioners as political entrepreneurs allows us to understand some of the ideals and motivations behind their work. However, it does not help us very much if we are interested in a conceptual understanding of the local development practitioners' function in the governance and administrative system.

The aim of this article is to develop a deeper and more structured understanding of LDPs' embeddedness in current governance modes of local and regional development (hereinafter referred to as local development). The research question we ask is: What does local development practitioners roles in particular consist of and how do these roles relate to existing theories of governance and public administration? In order to answer this question, we first clarify and refine what the literature has stressed about local development practitioners' roles and functions, and cluster the findings into three theoretically separated roles: the *coordinator*, the *creator* and the *inside lobbyist*. Second, we bridge these roles with recent trends in public administration research. The ambition of this article is thus not to examine entrepreneurial governance modes or LDPs' roles from any normative position, but to bring conceptual order and create a common theoretical language that can help us to understand the sometimes messy practices of place-based development.

When we say that the analytical focus of this article is on *roles*, we closely associate roles with governance and the organizational context in local government administration. We see roles as both *actions* taken by individuals in an organizational context and *functions* in a governance system. We argue that these two elements should be seen as different sides of the same coin. This means that when a LDP is taking action, he also has a function in governance. When that phenomenon follows institutionalized patterns, we believe that the LDP has a distinct and specific role.

This conceptual study is not only relevant for those who are interested in local development. Our ambition is also that our conceptualization can be useful for making sense of other public official roles. We argue that our conceptualizations can be used to specify the function and theoretical foundations of the most essential entrepreneurial roles and functions, which have been empirically described in the literature about political and policy entrepreneurship among public officials. Therefore, the article offers an improved understanding of not only LDPs but also many other entrepreneurial public official roles.

By LDPs we mean public officials in local and regional government whose main responsibility is to work with place-based development. Traditionally, the focus has often been on economic, labour market and enterprise development, but due to the idea of joined-up government (and similar approaches), the integration of educational, social and environmental aspects has also come into consideration. This group includes work titles such as development strategist, manager, officer and secretary. In this article, we do not include planners (or city planners) or the planning literature in our review and discussion. This is because planning does not fit perfectly into the setting of 'entrepreneurial governance', which is what we are interested in. Planning is regulated in significant respects by planning acts, standardized procedures and praxis. However, planners are hybrid professionals with some aspects of their job being very close to the entrepreneurial governance of creating development (Sehested 2009). Therefore, although we do not mention planners explicitly, we believe that the conceptualization offered in this article could be highly relevant for gaining a better understanding of certain aspects of the diversified role of planners.

The conceptualization offered in this article is based on empirical analyses drawn from a systematic literature review (eg. second order empirical observations). Starting from a broad interest in LDPs roles, the authors mapped all kind of research output that touched upon empirical analyses or descriptions of LDPs, including research articles, books, and book chapters. In the most established databases, the authors used different search words for the field (eg. local, regional, urban, rural, community development) and the titles of the specific group of actors (practitioners, officers, etc. see above). After a solid work of collecting

literature and tentative sorting, the collection of literature started to accomplish empirical saturation regarding perspectives and aspects that was highlighted in the studies. From that point, a thematic clustering of common features could start. The empirical analyses and observations made in the literature could be clustered into three empirically generated but theoretically distinct roles. By that we mean that the roles are made up from characteristics found in the second order empirical observations, but the characteristics are clustered in a way that they are theoretically distinct from each other.

The article proceeds as follows. In the next section, the entrepreneurial governance mode of local development is discussed. This is followed by three sections in which the different roles – creator, coordinator and inside lobbyist – which together conceptualize LDPs are presented. Finally, in the last section we offer some concluding remarks and discuss further research directions.

Local development and the entrepreneurial form of governance

As stated above, the policy field of local and regional economic development offers a case where the institutionalized conditions create an entrepreneurial public official role which is conceptually hard to grasp *in detail*. This statement can be further developed and explained from two different points of departures. *One way* is to start with the field of local development and investigate how the specific governance mode and governance settings of the field have been portrayed in the literature. *Another way* is to start with the literature of entrepreneurship among public officials and to look what has been said about why entrepreneurial roles arise in local and regional governments. In this section, we will sketch both ways of deepening our understanding of what makes the role of local development practitioners special in this context.

First, the policy field of local development politics is typically characterized by entrepreneurship ideas about how development is created, rather than top-down ideas of governing development. This notion has been articulated in somewhat different ways.

It is not a controversial statement that local government strategies for achieving local development are characterized by egalitarian governance rather than hierarchical government modes of steering, which have been illustrated in many empirical studies (see for example Nyhlén 2013). More specifically, networks and network governance have been key concepts in order to understand how local governments try to influence and support development (Olausson & Wihlborg 2018; Björnå & Aarsaether 2010). Aarsaether and Ringholm (2011) have made a distinction between traditional planning and entrepreneurial modes in local government strategies to promote development, and state that they complement rather than compete with each other. In their analysis, the entrepreneurial mode corresponds to more dynamic, flexible and responsive action than fixed traditional planning.

The terms *entrepreneurial governance* and *entrepreneurial orientation* have been used in order to analyse local governments' strategies and approaches to local development. Entrepreneurial governance has been defined in slightly different ways. Local governments that cooperate with different actors, benchmark their own performance and the local settings, and invest in development initiatives in order to create growth and development have been analysed in terms of *entrepreneurial governance* (Olsson, Westlund & Larsson 2015). In a more recent publication, Olsson, Westlund and Larsson (2020) define local entrepreneurial governance as "activities that create new institutions for collective action or learning within a municipal governance framework" (p. 2). They emphasize that creating new institutions does not mean that old ones are reformed or dismantled. However, creating new institutions indicates that local governments think outside the box (or the existing institutional framework) and try to find new ways towards development. Similarly, the term *entrepreneurial orientation* has been used to benchmark local governments' approaches to dealing with structural conditions that affect local economic development negatively. Naldi et al. (2020) describe the relationship between the degree of entrepreneurial orientation and

so-called structural vulnerability among Swedish municipalities. In line with established concepts of organizational behaviour, entrepreneurial orientation by local governments is defined by three elements: innovation, proactiveness and risk-taking (Naldi et al. 2020: 2). This means that entrepreneurial orientations “capture how an organization is governed rather than what is does” (Naldi et al. 2020: 4). In their empirical study, they find that vulnerable (often small and peripheral) municipalities have lower degrees of entrepreneurial orientation than others. However, the directions of any correlations are hard to discern because the structural conditions that create the vulnerability also affect the local governments’ ability to act entrepreneurially.

Furthermore, researchers have not only measured local governments’ degrees of entrepreneurial orientation. It has also been stressed that creativity in local governments’ action to promote development in the globalized world is an absolute necessity (Hamdouch et al. 2017a). Hamdouch et al. (2017b) state that:

[...] SMSTs [small and medium sized towns], could only find their way in this challenging new context if they are able to think, plan and act in creative and innovative ways. This means that SMSTs in general [...] are doomed to be creative in the way they envisage, design and implement local development strategies. (Hamdouch et al. 2017b: 1)

In summary, different concepts have been used in order to stress how local governments as individual actors act entrepreneurially in their attempts to promote development and growth. Taken together, this forms an organizational context for entrepreneurial management discourse which is ideal for local development practitioners to work within.

Second, and more specifically, we have in an earlier article (Olausson och Svensson 2019) tried to understand under what kind of institutional circumstances entrepreneurial governance modes arise. In order to do so, we have stressed the importance of several conditions that are likely to create demands for entrepreneurial roles for public bureaucrats. These conditions can occur to varying degrees in local and regional government organisations. The different conditions can be divided into organizational and policy conditions (see table below, for a full explanation Olausson och Svensson 2019)

A quick examination of the characteristics of governance and management practices in local development politics indicate a striking conformity to most of the highlighted conditions. Taking departure in the table below, local development politics score high on almost all conditions that are likely to require entrepreneurs in the grassroots bureaucrat function. Therefore, it is a distinctive and favourable case for studying entrepreneurial bureaucrats and the roles they under entrepreneurial governance modes.

Regarding organizational conditions, the degree of *projectification* and *interaction between the administration and citizens* (participatory governance), the organizations of local development (local and regional government organizations) typically score high (Mukthar-Landgren & Fred 2019; Andersson 2009; Sjöblom, Löfgren & Godenhjelm 2013). A third condition, the general *politics-administration dichotomy*, is somewhat tricky to examine. Local development has been described as a field in government organizations where administrators have considerable professional discretion (Green Leigh & Blakely 2017: 115ff.; Sotarauta 2010) and where leading politicians are highly operationally engaged and are therefore involved in traditional ‘how’ questions (Björnå & Aarsaether 2010; see also Beer et al. 2019).

Regarding the specific policy conditions, local development policies are often characterized by *bottom-up processes* – so-called endogenous growth. Further, a high degree of *flexibility* and *cross-sector collaboration* in the implementation processes and a high degree of *policy crowding* are conditions that fits well into the prevailing framework of neoliberal development. Neoliberal thinking has had a great impact on local and regional development policy for decades (Allmendinger & Haughton 2013; Lovering 2010). It can be argued that the overarching neoliberal emphasis on competition and experiment in development policy (ref) need *flexibility* and *cross-sector collaboration* in the implementation phase and

unintentionally result in *policy crowding* when actors are involved in loose networks of policy implementation.

The point here is that conditions that are significant for entrepreneurial governance and bureaucratic practices in general, also are well recognized in the characteristics of local development. The review above illustrates that LDPs are acting in a context of entrepreneurship, directed from both organizational and policy conditions. However, entrepreneurship can present itself in different forms. We have identified three *conceptual* roles of entrepreneurship in the local and regional development literature, which are presented in the following section. By ‘conceptual’, we mean that these roles constitute basic approaches to the LDP role. One LDP can (and does) take on various roles depending on the situation.

The empirical and theoretical work in the article is designed in order to contribute to the field of governance of place-based development in a wide sense. But, since we clearly characterize the studied policy field in the article as entrepreneurial, we believe that the work could be of interest for scholars of public entrepreneurship or other entrepreneurial policy field. Potential contributions to different fields are further discussed in the last section.

Table 1

Creator

The role of *creator* is here defined as a bureaucrat who changes existing structures and practices in public organizations or creates new ones. The creator is proactive, takes the initiative and actively seeks out opportunities for change. In practice, building networks and establishing new contacts seems to be a core task for the creator role.

With evidence from several empirical studies, local development practitioners have been shown to act as creators. In practice, local development practitioners seem to have a key task in creating networks and arenas for corporate handling of local development issues. The importance of networks for local development is often stressed in the literature. Local development practitioners have been shown to create these kinds of networks by seeking opportunities and taking the initiative.

Leick and Gretzinger (2018) drew this conclusion from case studies of local development projects in Germany with the aim of preventing economic and population decline:

An important activity for these [local development practitioners] is the building of alliances, coalitions and networks not only in accordance with the needs and challenges of the local business community, but also in line with their own agenda-setting. By adopting a proactive stance and setting impulses, these agents show leadership in developing such networks and, moreover, act strategically. (Leick & Gretzinger 2018: 257)

Sotarauta (2010) made similar observations of the tasks and roles of regional development officers in Finland:

A regional development officer’s task is to provide all relevant actors with a seat at the table when strategic issues are framed and strategic decisions are made, and actually to stimulate them to take a seat. Mobilization starts with identifying possible participants and stakeholders relevant to the issue at hand, and continues with pooling their skills, knowledge and resources (Sotarauta 2010: 393)

In addition to the creation of formal and informal networks, local development practitioners also build formal public organizations that promote local development. Green Leigh and Blakely stress that “[o]ne of the most important functions of an economic development practitioner is to develop a strong, viable, and continuing organization” and that “the economic development practitioner must assist the organization in strengthening its network” (Green Leigh and Blakely 2017:125).

However, local development practitioners do not only search for opportunities and take initiatives in order to create networks, contacts and build organizations. They also play a key role in creating opportunities for local development by identifying the local resource base for devel-

Table 1

Conditions which are likely to affect institutional demands for entrepreneurship among public bureaucrats. From Olausson and Svensson 2019.

Organizational conditions	Policy conditions
The politics-administration dichotomy and degree of administrative discretion	Formation of the policy process: Bottom-up or top-down policy making, and degree of stakeholder inclusion
Degree of projectification of temporal and ordinary work	Degree of flexibility in implementation
Forms for and degree of interaction between public administrators and citizens	Degree of cross-sector and multilevel collaboration
	Degree of policy crowding

opment. And as Green Leigh and Blakely (2017) point out, local development practitioners must also find ways to use the resource base for community objectives.

The role conceptualization presented here is not new or unique in public administration research. The creator role can be traced back to two different paths of public administration analysis.

The policy-driven path can be described as a discussion within both research and practice about how to address the perceived problems of ponderous and ineffective public bureaucracies. Seminal books such as *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector* (Osborne & Gaebler 1992) suggested that change and development in public services must be driven by the people in public organizations themselves. In other words, public organizations, units and employees should be proactive and search for change opportunities instead of being passive rule followers (Du Gay 2000). Since the 1990s, the call for more entrepreneurial and change-oriented public organizations and employees has been developed in an extensive bureaucracy-critical literature with clear policy implications (Du Gay 2000).

The theory-driven path in the roots to the creator role is formulated around the role of agents and agency in institutional and organizational change. Different versions of institutional theory have been increasingly influential in public administration research during the last couple of decades (see Peters 2019). However, the role of agents and agency in institutional and organizational change is still a field of unsolved controversies. An institutional perspective means structural features of stability (Peters 2019), and even elements of determinism. However, these structural features disappear or change, and new ones are established. In order to explain processes of change in otherwise stabile structures such as public organizations and services, agency and agents have been brought into the discussion. Different concepts have been used in order to address agents and agency in institutional change. DiMaggio introduced the concept of institutional entrepreneurship with the aim of addressing actors' capabilities to challenge institutional stability and contribute to change (see Di Maggio 1988). Since the concept was introduced, the research interest in the field has ranged from individual employees' actions and roles (Welter & Smallbone 2015; Battilana, Leca & Boxenbaum 2009) to outcomes at organizational level (Battilana & Casciaro 2012) and agency embedded in the political context (Olsson 2016).

The *intrapreneurship* concept, commonly understood as entrepreneurship in existing organizations (Antoncic & Hisrich 2003), has for decades contributed to analyses of innovation and renewal in private firms. Based on an extensive literature review, Neessen et al. (2019: 551) suggest that intrapreneurship should be defined as "a process whereby employee(s) recognize and exploit opportunities by being innovative, proactive and by taking risks, in order for the organization to create new products, processes and services, initiate self-renewal or venture new businesses to enhance the competitiveness and performance of the organization". The concept is so far very unexploited in studies of public organizations and employees. In the few studies that have been conducted, the dimension of *opportunity identification* by single employees has been central to the operationalization of the concept (see e.g. Kraus et al. 2019; Arnold 2019). Even though the concept is rooted in an academic discipline, the use of the concept almost always comes with clear policy implications that organizations (firms or public organizations) should hire intrapreneurial stuff and/or encourage intrapreneurial behaviour at all levels of the organization in order to pro-

mote innovation and self-renewal. Conceptual and empirical analyses of how intrapreneurship works when embedded in the political context of the public sector are still lacking.

Coordinator

The role of *coordinator* is here defined as a bureaucrat who coordinates and serves as a link between existing organizations, actors, networks and institutions. The coordinator facilitates information exchanges and makes collaboration run more smoothly, but without being the driving force behind collaboration. In order to do so, communicative skills are central.

By definition, some of the key tasks in regional development officers' activities are to improve coordination between fragmented groups of actors, to foster and organize collaboration, and to influence, if possible, the division of labour within the policy network. (Sotarauta 2010: 395)

In the literature, the coordinating function of local development practitioners has been stressed by several researchers. Different surveys have shown an interest in this area, and the results illustrate that LDPs clearly identify themselves with the coordinating role and function. In a survey of local economic development officers in 39 small municipalities in Sweden, 72% answered that they act as facilitators and coordinators in the governance of local development, which was the highest ranked among four alternative roles (Hermelin & Olausson 2020).

Sotarauta (2009) presents a survey sent to regional development practitioners and officers at all levels of government – local, regional and central government agencies. Among the selected respondents (a total of 531), 5% were found in national agencies and the rest in agencies and public organizations at local and regional levels. The respondents were asked to assess which efforts are important in their work, "in order to influence other actors in the name of regional development". Among the top ranked efforts, "removing communication obstacles between actors" was ranked as highly important by 75%¹. In the same survey, the respondents were asked to assess the factors that are "important in your own work when you try to influence other actors in the name of regional development". The highest ranked alternative of all was "such personal networks that provide me with new information"². This indicates that LDPs clearly have the function of gathering and assisting other actors with information, as well as making communication run more smoothly between actors, all in the interests of improving coordination between development actors.

One of the key characteristics of local development is the dimensions of simultaneous cross-sector and multilevel governance. This characterizing condition requires intense and advanced coordination in both intergovernmental relations and societal relations. In the literature, this challenge for LDPs has been addressed in terms of vertical and horizontal coordination. While the vertical dimension represents relations between different tiers of government, the horizontal dimension can represent both relations between government (even local government) and society, and relations between different administrative areas within government. At the same time, managing these relations is described as one of

¹ The scale goes from 1 to 5, where 1 is the least important and 5 is the most important. 75% answered 5 or 4.

² 86% answered 5 or 4 on the same scale as above.

the biggest challenges for local and regional development practitioners. Using interview data from England, Ayres and Stafford (2014) illustrate how complex and uncertain conditions make coordination a key challenge for practitioners at local government level who work with practical issues of investments, transport, housing and other development issues. Thorkildsen et al. (2015) also consider horizontal and vertical coordination to be the key challenge of governance of local and regional development. In their study of leadership in regional development coalitions, they conclude their empirical analysis with the following rhetorical question:

“How should we deal with the challenge of orchestrating and facilitating bottom-up learning processes along the horizontal dimension, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the upholding of the national mandate and political visions along the vertical dimension?” (Thorkildsen et al. 2015: 394)

The challenge of – and increasing need for – coordination in the public sector has been examined from various angles. These angles can be related to the various reasons for coordination; coordination can be done to balance the strong vertical structure, to overcome duplications and contradictions in policy programmes, to prevent displacement between organizations, to handle client groups whose needs run through several government agencies (such as the elderly and children), to handle policy problems which run through several government agencies (such as sustainability and public health), and finally to keep the image of the public sector organization somewhat tidy (Peters 2018).

Thus, coordination can have many objectives, but the common feature is that the focus is on balancing and mediating between values, in order to coordinate them. The coordinator does not create new values, like the creator, or lobby for values, like the inside lobbyist. Instead, the coordinator focuses on bringing together values and preferences in order to facilitate collaboration between actors.

One of the most commonly used concepts for understanding coordination and coordinators is that of *boundary spanners*. ‘Boundary spanners’ is a broad term, and includes both public officials with formal positions of working for coordination and those who do it anyway, either by personal choice or because their public official position requires it, as is the case with most managers (Williams 2012; Williams 2013; Edelenbos & Van Meerkerk 2015; Van Meerkerk & Edelenbos 2014). When LDPs work to bring actors and perspectives together, but refrain from trying to influence the result of these settings, they act as coordinating boundary spanners.

Another commonly used concept for understanding the public officials who use networks as their main work tool is *grey-zone administrator* (Sørensen 2004). These are public officials who work to establish strong networks in their policy areas, and these networks can be both within and outside public administration. The actor who facilitates networks in this way is also referred to as a *network manager*, and network management has become a widely used concept in debates on how to organize the development from government to governance (Voets et al. 2015; Klijn & Koppenjan 2004). Network managers encounter many conflicting situations, and need to learn how to adjust their role. Agger and Sørensen (2018) and Agranoff and McGuire (2001) mention that in order to successfully manage networks, the network manager needs coordinating, persuading and framing capabilities. We argue that although these capabilities are important for successful coordination, they have conceptually different foundations in terms of how active the public official is as a network manager in relation to the content which is the object of coordination. Coordinating and persuasion for participation are clear coordination aspects, whereas framing is more of a lobbying activity.

A fourth concept that is useful for understanding the coordinator role is what Noordegraaf et al. (2014) and Noordegraaf (2016) call *connective professionals*. The connective professional concept refers to the increasing number of public officials who are specialized in connecting different actors and managing relations. The concept is elaborated on

within the profession research, and underlines that working with connecting (or coordinating) policies and actors has developed into a specific professional skill in the new public administration landscape. The request for LDPs to be coordinators highlights that this group of public officials is also part of the developing connective profession. However, Noordegraaf et al. (2014) point out that the connective professionals work proactively for policy, which also gives them an aspect of lobbyism. Hence, we find the concept of connective professionals useful for understanding how the LDP position and its entrepreneurship have developed the way they have, but insufficient for understanding the variation of the role and the choices LDPs make.

Inside lobbyist

The role of *inside lobbyist* is defined here as a bureaucrat who makes other actors within government work in agreement with local development strategies and perspectives. Because of a lack of formal authority and mandate, LDPs often have to find creative ways to influence professionals, managers and even politicians in different administrative areas. By changing the views and opinions held by key actors, LDPs can make the implementation of development strategies more effective.

As stated above, due to the cross-sectoral nature of place-based development, effective implementation of development strategies often requires involvement from different administrative areas of local government. In order to achieve this, LDPs can act as lobbyists for the local development perspectives in relation to other administrative areas, which often embrace other perspectives, values and standpoints. We are aware that the inside activist role and function are not described particularly clearly in the local development literature. However, some indications tell us that this is an urgent and perhaps emergent role that must be further described and conceptualized.

In the literature, there are descriptions of how LDPs frame questions in strategic ways in order to make actors work in a specific direction. Sotarauta (2010) describes how this is an effective way of working for LDPs:

At this level, influence is at its most powerful because it is also at its most subtle. The power to shape conversations and to frame strategic issues as well as individual problems of individual organizations rests, as argued above, on understanding the needs and resources of a whole series of different organizations with varying objectives and strategies. (Sotarauta 2010: 394)

As noted above, the multilevel dimension of governance is often very much present in development initiatives taken at local government level. In a study of an urban development initiative in Almere, Netherlands, Verduijn (2015) stresses how dependent local government can be on regional or state government actors. Therefore, as in the studied case, LDPs can be very long-term and persevering in their attempts to gain the necessary support from government actors. In Verduijn’s (2015) case, the LDPs carried out advanced strategies of framing and mobilization in order to gain state government support for an infrastructure link from Almer to Amsterdam. For instance, they opened a project office in Amsterdam with an impressive view of Almer’s skyline, to which they could invite key individuals and convince them of the public benefit of the link.

As with the other roles elaborated on in this article, survey data offers some evidence for the existence of the inside lobbyist role. In the survey referred to above, 71% of the participating regional development practitioners and officers said that “presenting alternative views on futures and promoting regional development, thus influencing other actors” is a highly important measure for them³ (Sotarauta 2009). *Presenting alternative views on futures* could be understood as a way of fram-

³ 71% answered 5 or 4 on a 1–5 scale, where 5 is very important and 1 is not important at all.

ing and attempting to influence actors' views of something. In addition, 84% said that "such expert knowledge that enables me to convince the key individuals that changes are needed" is highly important when it comes to influencing other actors in the name of regional development⁴ (Sotarauta 2009). This illustrates that nagging and attempts to mediate a positive view of local development work are not enough. Knowledge and hard facts about how a specific development initiative could influence other government actors' activities and services are important if LDPs' lobbying is to succeed.

One particularly pithy summary of an LDP's own understanding of her role can be found in a citation in Olausson and Wihlborg (2018). The LDP says:

My task is to get others involved in developing the city centre. I can never do this alone; I have to get other key actors to join in. Thus, my work is very much about gaining acceptance for the issue, and nagging. (citation in Olausson & Wihlborg 2018: 247)

Nagging and gaining acceptance for the development issue, are very much what the insider lobbyist role involves in practice.

One version of inside lobbyist was presented by Olsson and Hysing (Olsson 2009, Hysing & Olsson 2011; Olsson & Hysing 2012). They applied the concept of the inside activist to understand how committed people use their position within a public organization to create change. The inside activist is "an individual who is engaged in civil society networks and organizations, who holds a formal position within public administration, and who acts strategically from inside public administration to change government policy and action in line with a personal value commitment" (Olsson 2009).

The inside lobbyist resembles the inside activist in many ways. Both work for policy change, and both hold positions within public organizations. However, where the inside activist derives the values or objectives for activism from his or her own commitment within civil society, the inside lobbyist finds them within the public organization. Generally, the inside lobbyist has a position which is directly designed to work with the topic at hand, such as local development. This also means that there are generally political goals connected to it. These goals may be vague and have the character of a wicked problem, but they are still founded in political decisions. They also do not originate from the lobbyist's personal values, although it is very likely that the lobbyist shares them.

The inside lobbyist also resembles, but is not exactly the same as, the policy broker. The policy broker plays a mediating role between coalition frameworks (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith 1993; Weible & Jenkins-Smith 2016). Although this role may require more active lobbying than the coordinator, due to the active mediation carried out by the broker, the broker's purpose is still the mediation and brokering, rather than the policy. For the broker, lobbying for policy is a means to reach the end, whereas for the lobbyist, the policy itself is the end and the target.

One reason why the entrepreneurial role of the LDP takes the form of inside lobbyist can be found in the policy integration literature. Policy integration is both an old and a new concept. Old, due to the basic problem it addresses: that of coordinating public administration (Peters 2018). New, due to its newer take on how to govern integration (see Candel & Biebroek 2016; Candel 2019). It is stressed that policy integration requires the capacity of framing, i.e. seeing a policy and its connection to other policy areas from many different points of view (Aukes et al. 2017). However, just as with the policy brokers, policy integration is something different to coordination. Where coordination is the sum of all parts added together, a successful policy integration is more than that (Cejudo & Michel 2017). In order to achieve synergies, the public official in charge of the policy integration policy will have to develop a framing which comes very close to lobbying: by expressing a problem with various vocabularies, by strategically pointing out aspects of a pol-

icy area which are of interest to the lobbied object, and by learning what is on the agenda in a specific setting in order to be able to address it. This process may not be one hundred percent transparent, but can be defended by the argument that it is for the greater good: since these synergies are generally the target of employing local development practitioners and other public officials with similar entrepreneurial tasks, it can be argued that they are governance tools for policy integration, and that their lobbying is a part of the toolkit (Svensson 2019).

Conclusions

Based on this elaboration, we can see that there are many possibilities for entrepreneurial public officials such as LDPs to shape and develop their role. Although most LDPs perform all three roles, and the roles sometimes can be intertwined, the different approaches to LDP work means that the role can be more or less of one or another. However, shaping and developing the LDP role is not isolated from the rest of the organization; on the contrary, the possibility to successfully take on a role is very much dependent on what the organization and the other actors expect from the LDP. These expectations, in turn, are shaped by organizational culture and tradition, in combination with the individual preferences of other actors. Where some top politicians or managers may prefer to have a very active creator to hand over tasks to, others may prefer to participate actively themselves, and then benefit more from a coordinator. A third group may consider both creation and coordination to intrude on their main responsibilities (Molenveld et al. 2020), and thus be more open to a lobbyist with framing capabilities.

One may argue that if the roles are intertwined and most LDPs perform all three roles, what is the need of a clarification? We argue that a clarification of the roles has both a practical and theoretical function. Theoretically, it serves to condense observations from empirical studies into a framework which can be used for further studies on how LDPs and other strategist roles are shaped in various settings. Each of the roles has distinct empirical boundaries: the creator actively changes structures, which is made possible with a stronger mandate; the coordinator is a spider-in-the web bringing actors together, but does not have an active agenda of his/her own; and the inside lobbyist is working to make actors with power to embrace the local development politics, since he/she does not have a very strong mandate. Sometimes one role serves the purpose of reaching to another role (i.e. the inside lobbyist may be a way to approach the creator role (Svensson 2018) but just as often, the roles are developed in an interplay with the surrounding context and without any idea of further change. The conceptualization of roles also serves the purpose of complementing the existing empirical case studies. The case studies provide us with in-depth knowledge of how public entrepreneurship plays out in one specific setting with a specific policy area or project. By condensing these results, we may lose certain details in relation to the setting or project, but instead we gain knowledge of how public entrepreneurship can be used as a governance tool, and how the role of entrepreneurial bureaucrats may vary despite being a part of the same governance development. Thus, this clarification nuances the theoretical discussion on the entrepreneurial role in public administration as a whole and specifically in local and regional governance. Since the clarification also shows how the actions of LDPs are connected to broader governance trends, something which have not been done before, we gain a deeper understanding of what the LDPs do and why they do what they do. These governance trends come together in a broad version of entrepreneurial governance and explains the three different roles.

However, the elaboration on different entrepreneurial roles do not only serve the purpose of contributing to a more nuanced theoretical discussion on the entrepreneurial role in the public sector and the connection between entrepreneurship and other often overlapping concepts. With this elaboration and clarification, we also hope to cast some light on the practical and often contradictory reality for LDPs and the organizations in which they work. LDPs sometimes face expectations on one

⁴ 84% answered 5 or 4 on a 1-5 scale, where 5 is very important and 1 is not important at all.

role from one actor and different expectations from another actor. It is also rather common for these expectations not to be clarified, which can create a confusing situation for the LDP. Finally, there are situations in which certain expectations were expressed when the LDP was hired, but turned out differently in reality, causing dissonance between the employing public organization and the employed LDP. These situations may not be eliminated with a more elaborated framework, but they may be easier to grasp.

To conclude, we would like to present some distinct advantages and disadvantages which follow the entrepreneurial role and can be distinguished based on the framework of the three roles.

Firstly, what this elaboration thus shows is that the role of LDP requires flexibility. This resembles the results from previous studies on entrepreneurial roles in the public sector, such as cross-sector strategists for sustainability, human and children's rights, public health, equality, etc. (Svensson 2018; Svensson 2019). Local development policy areas are often considered to be more established than social policy areas within the governance of the public sector, due to the latter having a stronger 'wicked problem' character. However, this study shows that a policy field such as local development also encounters the same challenges. These challenges may partly be rooted in the level and version of the policy area's wickedness, but they mainly seem to surface based on the governance which is applied to them. In other words, a policy area governed as a policy area in need of entrepreneurial public officials will face the same complexities, and the public officials with entrepreneurial positions will thus develop the same roles, regardless of which policy area they are assigned. This is a challenge, which offer great potential if handled wisely: an active LDP who is interested in working flexible and learning the various interaction skills required might become a great asset in bringing different parts of, and perspectives in, the organization together. The disadvantage is that it can be perceived as a very challenging role, especially if the organization are not really into the work to start with.

Secondly, as stated in the introduction, the roles conceptualized in this article represent both functions and types of actions in local development governance. Therefore, the roles – which we argue are very prominent in the empirical literature – do say something about how local development de facto is governed today. Drawing on the literature referred to in this article, local development governance is characterized by innovative, place-based and dynamic rather than instrumental-rational governance modes. Policymaking and implementation are intertwined in the same kinds of governance processes. Such governance modes require anything but instrumental rule-following bureaucrats. In order to get the ideal of innovative, place-based and dynamic governance to work, creators who are closely aligned with both grassroots movements for development (such as local enterprise) and official governance institutions are required. The advantage of using creators here is that they have the skillset to think outside the box, and the drive to make things happen, (the so-called entrepreneurial spirit). The disadvantage is that this creative work arguably might not be appropriate for a public administrator since it contains changes and agenda setting, and instead should be conducted by politicians.

Thirdly, local development governance is characterized by cross-sector and multi-level governance, which means that a wide range of both governmental and non-governmental actors are expected to join up and take part in the implementation of development strategies. These kinds of governance modes require both the coordination of actors' different activities and the integration of central strategies into actors' objectives and views of society. This is why the roles of coordinators and inside activists are so present in development governance nowadays. The advantage of using coordinators and inside lobbyists for this work is that they may make the process of bringing many and sometimes contradictory policy areas and goals together easier. The disadvantages are 1) that if a lot of focus is put on the coordinator's job, the process of working for local development may take the form of pure coordination, rather than output and outcome of that coordination, and 2) if the

inside lobbyist role becomes the more prominent, important policy conflicts may not surface to the political level, since the lobbyist reframes the topics before they reach the political debate.

Thus, there is an overall advantage of knowing that entrepreneurship holds several different features, which all in different ways serves the practical reality of governance. Hopefully, by clarifying them, it might also be easier to distinguish when and why a certain role matches a certain situation. The value of the conceptualization offered here is not only descriptive but also constructive. By deconstructing LDPs' roles into the conceptualization offered in this article, is it easier to have a structured debate about how local development should be governed. Students of local development and practitioners in local government administration could use this typology and conceptualization to discuss which kinds of governance modes should be applied in specific cases. From our point of view, this debate should not only include pros and cons regarding efficiency and effectiveness. We also need to carefully consider different governance modes' implications for core values of liberal democracy, such as equal treatment, representation, accountability, and transparency in governance.

Declaration of Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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