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A METHOD TO STUDY THE MANAGEMENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

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Abstract
The management of urban development projects in the Netherlands has changed significantly in recent years. These projects have become mainly 'led' by developers as they manage the entire life cycle of development projects, while public actors mainly facilitate development projects. This changes the way projects are organized and managed and might resolve in different outcomes. Therefore, this research aims at understanding the roles of public and private actors in private sector-led urban development projects and aims at determining the effects of their cooperation by conducting empirical research in different contexts. This paper provides a method for academic scholars to study the management of urban development projects, as management has been underestimated in theory as a way to influence project outcomes. A conceptual steering model is introduced which provides opportunities to describe, analyze and compare complex urban development cases. Furthermore, empirical findings from case studies in the Netherlands and England are presented and compared with each other to indicate how the conceptual model can be used.

Keywords: Conceptual Steering Model, Management, Urban Development, Method, Cases

INTRODUCTION

The way public and private actors influence the outcome of urban development projects has changed fundamentally in the last decade. By adopting more neoliberal principles throughout the European continent and subsequently Dutch society and spatial planning, the private sector gradually gained more influence over development projects. Daamen (2010) argues that 'governments have found themselves not above but between the other actors concerned, signifying a definite shift in their power to enforce and regulate particular land-uses and planning activities.' Thus, private actors, civic groups and public bodies have all become participants in the process of improving the way land is being used and developed.

It is increasingly acknowledged that this shift also affects the roles, relationships and management opportunities of public and private actors in urban projects. These projects have increasingly become 'private sector-led' as developers apply all sorts of management activities in the entire life cycle of development projects. Public actors mainly facilitate these projects by using public management tools to influence project outcomes. In this regard, Adams & Tiesdell (2010) argue that planners could be more conscious about their role as they already operate in the interest of market actors. In their view public bodies heavily rely on market investment, with the result that planners should effectively use tools at their disposal to implement public planning policies through projects. Thus, boundaries between what is 'state' and what is 'market' evaporate as both actors have become dependent on each other to develop cities and urban areas. It doesn't really matter who is who, but how planning can be implemented, or projects can be influenced.

In addition to this trend, many authors (De Zeeuw, 2007; Van Rooy, 2009) argue that Dutch urban development practice is characterized by a growing sense of ineffectiveness and inefficiency. They argue that legal and organizational arrangements could assist in solving the implementation problem. However, Van Aken (2004) and Klijn (2008) argue that it is often the actors' management of projects which makes a difference in achieving successful outcomes of projects. Nevertheless, the management of urban projects often has been overlooked in academic literature as a way to realize public and private objectives. Therefore, we focus our research on how actors can influence the outcomes of private sector-led urban development projects. Here, we use the steering paradigm applied by De Leeuw (2002) to the business management domain, which sees management as 'any form of influencing'. This is further explained in the conceptual model section.

Thus, the problem of the research is that there is limited scientific and practical understanding about how public and private actors cooperate within private sector-led urban development projects. Therefore, the research objective is to analyze organizational and managerial roles of public and private actors on a project level with the aim to design conceptual roles of public and private actors in Dutch urban development practice. Than, the main question the research tries to answer is: *what are the preferable roles of public and private actors cooperating in private sector-led urban development projects in the Netherlands?* In this paper a conceptual model is introduced that enables us to analyze these development projects, followed by the empirical findings from Dutch and English private sector-led projects. Finally, we compare and draw lessons from these practices.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order to answer the research question above, we need a conceptual model. For this research we developed a *conceptual steering model based upon the systems approach*. According to Arbnor & Bjerke (1997) the systems approach is characterized by a way to view (part of) reality as being a system. We use the systems approach to understand the mechanisms underlying the cooperation of public and private actors in order to design roles for public and private actors cooperating in private sector-led urban development projects.

Management based on the Systems Approach

De Leeuw (2002) has applied the systems approach to the field of business administration. This approach is suitable for studying urban development projects as well as this is also a goal-oriented interaction-driven discipline where actors intend to achieve individual and common goals by collaborating in urban development projects. Here we emphasize that the model is used at a project level which forms the subject of study. Hence, we are not interested in describing the complex and dynamic nature of urban development. We aim at understanding the cooperative mechanisms that take place on a project level but recognize that this is influenced by a complicated set of factors and conditions. Furthermore, by using such a structured device we are able to systematically analyze and design actor's roles within urban development projects. Thus, the model provides opportunities to prescribe solutions for problems as insight is given into relevant mechanisms underlying these problems.

Here, we must explain our view of management within the systems approach which builds upon a *steering paradigm*. Steering according to De Leeuw (2002) is defined as 'any form of direct influencing'. A steering paradigm than is a 'collection of concepts of thought about

steering and the way these can be used to make representations and models for analysis and design.' This view on steering is based on some key principles. First of all, De Leeuw distinguishes three important dimensions in steering projects; uncertainty, unpredictability and ambiguity. These dimensions are also present in urban development projects and need to be dealt with in an accurate way which depends on the changing conditions and aims of projects in specific contexts. Secondly, De Leeuw (2002) supports the contingency theory as he states that: 'There is no universally effective way of managing, the appropriate way to manage is dependent on the circumstances'. Van Aken (2002) also argues that the actual management of projects is not the objective of academic management research as this is the domain of practitioners. Academic research should try to develop useful products and models to analyze and design conceptual 'exemplars for implementation'. Finally, steering is based on three dominant aspects of managing projects; achieving objectives with people, steering a course, and problem solving and designing solutions. This is in line with our research aim.

Conceptual Steering Model

For this research we use a *conceptual steering model* based upon the *systems approach* which is represented in Figure 1. In order to understand this model some key principles need to be elaborated. First, the project *context* represents the different levels of surroundings a certain empirical object of study is part of, a context that is often subject to change. Applied to the domain of urban development the project's context for example exists of spatial policies or economical circumstances which are viewed as conditions for the way urban development projects can be organized. Second, the *organizational system* represents different aggregation levels of organizational structures, formal and informal partnerships, relationships and roles. Applied to the domain of urban development this organizational system consists of actors and the way they organize the public-private cooperation of a project. Third, the *processing system* is the subject of study. In our case this is an urban development process that needs to be managed by actors who organized themselves in an organizational system.

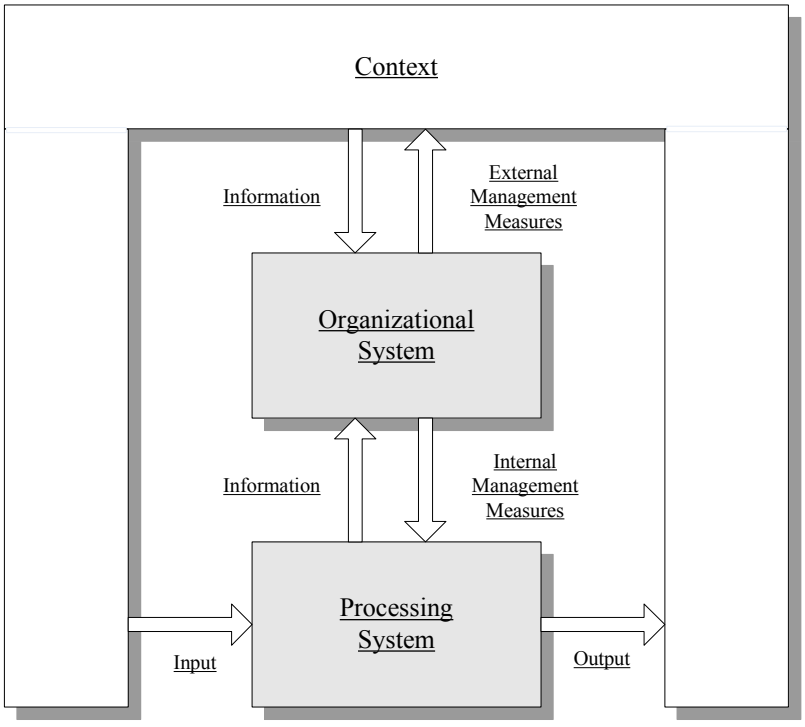

Figure 1: *Conceptual Steering Model based on the Systems Approach (De Leeuw, 2002)*

Furthermore, there are relationships between these three major components, which reflect the dynamics that exist in projects. For instance, a changing context has an impact on planning and development processes, which than is considered as *input*. For instance, changes in economical circumstances changes the way processes can be managed; i.e. the planning for delivering houses will be adjusted according to a changed customer demand. *Information* on changing processes than is 'send' to project organizations, who sometimes adjust their organizational arrangement to cope with the changes. This adjustment can be effectuated by different *management measures*, which are categorized as internal and external management measures. Internal management measures are aimed at influencing the objectives of the project itself, while external management measures are used to influence the project surroundings. For instance, internal management measures eventually are used by actors to realize an *output* or effect of the project. In urban development projects this can be the adaptation of a functional program that is more in line with contextual demands. External management measures can be used by public and private actors for instance to persuade political leaders to politically support the project. Despite the fact that some contextual characteristics are hard to manage, this research analyzes both management measures in order to see how actors are capable of influencing private sector-led urban development projects.

Analysis Aspects & Variables

Thus, this steering model is not a static representation of reality; it rather provides the ability to explain all sorts of mechanisms occurring in projects. In order to analyze and compare cases, however, a choice is made about which aspects are included in the analysis. Here, a brief description of the main analysis aspects is given based on several theoretical insights and categorized into the project's context, organization, management and effects.

In terms of context, three different contextual aspects are analyzed: *economy & politics*; *urban governance*; and *planning system & policies*. Several authors like DiGaetano & Klemanski (1999), Nadin & Stead (2008), and Adams & Tiesdell (2010) amongst others, have in our perspective indicated the importance of several contextual circumstances for actual planning implementation. In this research the economy and politics are described as a way to understand how economic situations and political landscape influences the public-private project cooperation. The urban governance situation is described as a way to understand the relationship between and roles of public, private and civic institutions that influence the project. Planning systems and subsequent policies are described as a way to understand the influence of legal rules and instruments on the project.

In terms of organization, three different institutional aspects are analyzed: *organizational*; *financial*; and *legal*. Bult-Spiering & Dewulf (2002) and Bailey et al. (1995) argue that these institutional aspects are in place in public-private cooperation and determine the inter-organizational roles of actors within different development stages of projects. In this research, organizational aspects that are analyzed are tasks and responsibilities, the financial aspects that are risks and revenues, the legal aspects are requirements and rules. Hence, all these aspects can influence actor's management opportunities in projects.

In terms of management, four different types of management measures are analyzed: *project management* activities; *process management* activities; *management tools*; and *management resources*. Here, we follow scholars like Black & Porter (2000) who indicate that management is 'getting things done with people', and De Leeuw (2002) who refers to different management measures which actors can apply to reach objectives. In this research,

project management activities are related to development stages through which influencing takes place, which are initiating, designing, planning and operating. Process management activities are related to the interaction between actors necessary to develop projects, which are negotiating, decision-making and communicating. Management tools are related to planning tools (see Adams et al., 2005) used by public bodies to influence developments, which are shaping, regulating, stimulate and building capacity. And management resources are related to the necessary assets for development, which are land, capital, and knowledge. All these management functions can be used by actors to influence the outcome of projects.

In terms of effects, three different project aspects are analyzed: *effectiveness*; *efficiency*; and s*patial quality*. These effects are important for determining the output of private sector-led urban development projects in relation to the stated ineffectiveness and inefficiency of Dutch urban development. Effects are measured qualitatively by asking interviewees to indicate whether or not these effects are realized. Effectiveness is the degree to which public and private actor's intended objectives are met. Efficiency is the extent to which public and private actors' cooperation takes place against a minimum use of time and costs. And spatial quality is the degree to which the development project satisfies user, experience and future values of the public and private actors involved.

METHODOLOGY

Hence, this research is a combination of descriptive and prescriptive research. Within the descriptive part, we use qualitative *case study methodology* to collect, analyze, and compare research data. Here we follow Yin (2003) who argues that a case study is 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.' Hence, this is very suitable for the purposes of our research: a case study provide opportunities for management research as it is interested in the comprehension of the 'meaning of action' and data refers to the 'essences of people, objects or situations' (see Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Therefore, to create an understanding of private sector-led urban development projects Dutch and English cases are *described*, *analyzed* and *compared*. In the Netherlands, twelve cases of the concession model, which can be seen as the Dutch form of private sector-led projects, have been conducted. In England, two inner city mixed-use development projects 'led' by developers have been analyzed. The methods used to collect the data are literature reviews, document reviews, interviews and field work, which enables us to triangulate the data as different sources are used to collect them. The analysis of data has been structured by the conceptual steering model, which enables us to compare cases nationally and internationally.

In order to carry out the prescriptive part of this research *lesson-drawing* will be used. Janssen-Jansen et al. (2008) argue that there are three levels of transfer of lessons: inspiration, learning, and transplantation. As the objective of this research is to draw lessons from development projects in different countries and to use these lessons to create a design, our level of transfer will focus on inspiration and learning and not transplantation. Attempts have to be made to formulate context-dependent and context-independent lessons. In order to design the preferable roles, we follow the *engineering design methodology* presented by Dym & Little (2008) which consists of making a conceptual design, testing a design, and making a final design. The design is tested in an expert meeting to validate the design parameters.

DUTCH CASE STUDY FINDINGS

This section contains the case study findings from twelve Dutch private sector-led (concession) urban development projects. The main question we answer is: *How do public and private actors manage Dutch private sector-led urban development projects?*

Empirical Findings

Table 1 gives an overview of the twelve Dutch cases that have been analyzed in this research, which shows the variety of characteristics. These cases have been described and (cross-) analyzed on the basis of the components of the conceptual steering model: organization, management and effects. Hence, in this paper we focus on describing and analyzing the management component of projects.

Table 1: *Case Overview the Netherlands*

City	Project	Location	Scale (ha/acres)	Program (on April 2009)
Amsterdam	Park de Meer	Inner City	14 / 34.6	700 houses facilities
Den Haag	Ypenburg Deelplan 20	Greenfield	5 / 12.4	470 houses
Enschede	De Laares	Inner City	30 / 74.1	450 houses 2.500 m2 retail / 5.000 m2 office
Maassluis	Het Balkon	Greenfield	22 / 54.4	1.000 houses facilities
Middelburg	Mortiere	Greenfield	100 / 247.1	1.500 houses 3.000 m2 office / golf course
Naaldwijk	Woerdblok	Greenfield	30 / 74.1	900 houses
Rotterdam	Nieuw Crooswijk	Inner City	30 / 74.1	500 houses
Tilburg	Koolhoven	Greenfield	100 / 247.1	2.000 houses facilities
	Stappegoor	Inner City	50 / 123.6	1.100 houses / sport facilities / cinema 5.000 m2 retail / 20.000 m2 office
	Wagnerplein	Inner City	10 / 24.7	600 houses / parking 9.000 m2 retail / 60.000 m2 office
Utrecht	De Woerd	Greenfield	17 / 42	500 houses
Velsen	Oud IJmuiden	Inner City	12 / 29.7	350-650 houses

Management

The management of private sector-led urban development by both actors has not been mentioned in literature. Already we indicated that several management measures can be used to influence the outcome of development. Table 3 gives an overview of how these management measures are divided among or between the actors in the Dutch empirical cases.

Table 2: *Empirical Management of Public & Private Actors in Dutch cases*

Management Measures	**Management Functions**			
Project Management	Initiating	Designing	Planning	Operating
	Both	*Private / Both*	*Private*	*Public*
Process Management	Negotiating	Decision-making		Communicating
	Both	*Both*		*Both*
Management Tools	Shaping	Regulating	Stimulating	Capacity Building
	Public	*Public*	*N/a*	*N/a*
Management Resources	Land	Capital	Knowledge	
	Private	*Private*	*Private*	

In terms of *project management* activities, the cases show that local authorities in majority initiate the projects. Thereby, they establish spatial requirements for development and thus are able to influence the project characteristics. Designing plans as mentioned primarily is a private task but in more than half of the cases this management activity is carried out by both actors. Planning as management activity is a way for private actors to influence the profit margins and speed of development. Hence, the operation and maintenance of the project after delivery in all cases becomes a public task. Therefore, at the start of projects they can influence public space characteristics as they become the owner.

In terms of *process management* activities, the cases show that negotiating, decision-making and communicating are management measures that are carried out by both actors. Thus, both actors have opportunities to negotiate the incorporation of public and private objectives into the project at the initiative, design and realization stages. Furthermore, both actors influence developments based on internal or inter-organizational decision-making processes. Communicating as a management activity often is structured by different meetings and legal approvals of plans during the process. However, communication processes have influenced the development progress negatively. Public project leaders do not all have the competencies to align different municipal departments. Furthermore, developers not all seem to be aware of how to communicate with other stakeholders like local communities. Hence, housing associations in some inner cities played a key role in creating support from local residents.

In terms of *management tools*, the cases show that shaping and regulating are the main management measures used by public actors to influence development. They use indicative spatial plans and public briefs as management tools to shape developments. Furthermore, public actors use land-use plans, quality and visual conditions, and other contractual agreements to regulate development. Sometimes these briefs, plans, and conditions are highly detailed and inflexible, which results in minimum freedom for private actors to design and innovate. Hence, Dutch public actors do barely use stimulating or capacity building

management tools to influence the outcome of development. Some local authorities used subsidies to financially stimulate development, but building capacity by involving relevant stakeholders to create social or political support does not occur in the cases.

In terms of *management resources*, the cases show that land, capital and knowledge are mainly used by developers to influence development outcomes. Private land ownership on some of the greenfield sites was used a powerful resource for development. However, brownfield sites were hardly characterized by private land ownership. But as most of the developers performed the land acquisition they were able to influence development at their own interest. Hence, some of the local authorities performed the land acquisition and development in stead of developers. Thereby they managed the time and price of the land sale to developers, but at the same time created an unclear role division between the actors, undermining the principle of concessions. Capital for development was primarily managed by developers, however, their influence was limited as most of them depended heavily on bank loans. Knowledge about local market demand and project marketing mainly were a management measure used by private actors.

Conclusions

On the basis of the Dutch cases, it seems that both actors still encounter difficulties to cooperate in accordance to private sector-led urban development principles. Local authorities in some cases are not completely aware that this type of cooperating implies that they have to management projects differently. Also private actors in some cases are not completely aware that their role also imply that they take on more risks and other responsibilities than they are used to. Therefore, one of the main conclusions is that the private sector-led urban development practice in the Netherlands is not (yet) characterized as a mature way of public-private cooperation, as several problems and misconceptions still exist. In order to design future public and private roles, we need to create a better understanding of the phenomenon of private sector-led urban development by broadening our view towards foreign practices.

ENGLISH CASE STUDY FINDINGS

This section contains the main case study findings from two English private sector-led urban development projects (see Figure 3). The main question we answer here is: *How do public and private actors manage English private sector-led urban development projects?*

Figure 3: *Aerial views Bristol Harbourside and Liverpool One*

Empirical Findings

Table 4 gives an overview of two English private sector-led urban development projects that have been analyzed in this research on the basis of the components of the conceptual steering model: organization, management, effects. Hence, in this paper we focus on describing and analyzing the management component of projects.

Table 4: *Case Overview England*

City	Project	Location	Scale (ha/acres)	Program	
Bristol	Harbourside	Inner City	8 / 20	Total space	119,000 m2
				Office	45,000 m2
				Housing	44,000 m2
				Leisure/hotel	30,000 m2
Liverpool	One	Inner City	17 / 42	Total space	234,000 m2
				Office	3,250 m2
				Housing	500 units
				Leisure/hotel	ca 30,000 m2
				Retail	130,000 m2

Management

In terms of *project management* activities, the cases show that both public actors initiated the project as they were part land owner of sites; no unsolicited development proposals of private actors were handed in. Thereby local authorities were able to influence development at the merits of the projects as they set the ambition. However, developers were able to influence the project outcome by designing and planning activities, as development schemes and project planning are private matters. Hence, by operating development the developer in Liverpool was able to set 'private' requirements for the project at earlier development stages. In conclusion, project management activities in both cases mainly are private sector-led.

In terms of *process management* activities, the cases show that a lot of interaction between the actors takes place. Influencing mainly takes place in negotiations in the pre-realization phase, where public and private objectives are defined and final scheme decisions are made. At a later stage, public influence on project is limited to planning applications for separate buildings or plots which require public planning permission. Hence, communicating to key stakeholders is mainly conducted by developers. Several community involvement and public meetings were organized in which several wishes were incorporated into final schemes. In conclusion, both cases show that process management activities are used by both actors. Public and private actors negotiate and make joint decisions, while private actors in both cases use communicating as a way to incorporate other objectives.

In terms of *management tools*, the cases show that public actors use local plans, area visions and public briefs as tools to shape developments. Regulating development takes place through public instruments like planning briefs, development frameworks, development agreements, section 106 agreements, design guidelines, and even planning permission. In Bristol, the local authority stimulated development by securing public grants for cultural functions which kick-started development. In Liverpool this was not the case. Capacity building was also used by the public actor in Bristol as they facilitated a partnership between

the public and private landowners (the Harbourside Sponsor Group). In Liverpool no such network building relationship activity was used. Thus, the cases show that management tools are mainly used by public actors to influence development.

In terms of *management resources*, the cases show that private actors take the lead and influence development by using land, capital and knowledge. Although local authorities in both cases had substantial landownership, they did not use it as a resource to influence development, as land development was carried out by developers once they acquired it. Capital in both projects was almost solely private investment secured by the developers. In Liverpool, the developer also has an interest as a real estate financer. Also knowledge about market demand and development concepts was a private management resource. Developers had a variety of in-house specialists or hired specific consultants to give advice about different subjects. Thus, resources were private sector-led ways of influencing development.

Table 5 shows which empirical management measures have been used by public and private actors to influence English private sector-led urban development projects.

Table 5: *Empirical Management of Public & Private Actors in English cases*

Management Measures	**Management Functions**			
Project Management	Initiating	Designing	Planning	Operating
	Public	*Private*	*Private*	*Private / Public*
Process Management	Negotiating	Decision-making		Communicating
	Both	*Both*		*Private*
Management Tools	Shaping	Regulating	Stimulating	Capacity building
	Public	*Public*	*Public / n/a*	*Public / n/a*
Management Resources	Land	Capital	Knowledge	
	Private	*Private*	*Private*	

Conclusions

Some general conclusions from these cases are that in terms of context, urban regeneration in England can be considered as politically complex. Both cases show that the changeable nature of urban policies under different political powers also can change conditions for development, which are hard to influence by the actors themselves. In terms of organization the cases have shown that local authorities do not develop themselves, but encourage or establish all kinds of inter-organizational partnerships with other public, private or civic stakeholders in order to create support and raise funds for development. Hence, despite being mostly private sector-led at first sight, the English cases show that local authorities have different and sufficient management measures to influence development, and are aware of how to use them.

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

The aim of this research is also to systematically compare development projects in different international contexts. Here, we compare all findings from both empirical private sector-led urban development cases by showing some similarities and differences between all the conceptual model analysis components, presented in Table 7. Hence, we must highlight that this comparison is made on the basis of this research. These cases are not exemplary for áll private sector-led urban development projects in the Netherlands and England. Nevertheless, the table reveals some interesting points from the Dutch and English cases. The influence of the project's context in England seems to be higher than in the Netherlands; especially the political power and changeable policies influence development. Project actors have difficulties to manage these environmental aspects. The organizational role division of private sector-led projects in England seems to be stricter than in the Dutch projects, where public requirements sometimes are formulated in more detail. Management in the Dutch cases are slightly less private sector-led than in England, were local authorities and developers are more aware of how to use management measures at their disposal. The effects show quite some resemblance; effectiveness and spatial quality can be achieved, while efficiency remains difficult as time and budget overruns occur frequently.

Table 7: *Comparison of Dutch and English private sector-led urban development projects*

Aspect	Netherlands	England
Context	Moderate political influence on project	High political influence on project
	Public-private-civic project relations blurry	Public-private-civic project relations clear
	Policies stable, certainty for project	Changing policies, uncertainty for project
Organization	Blurred task & responsibility division	Strict task & responsibility division
	Risks & revenues mainly private	Risk & revenues always private
	Detailed requirements & rules	General requirements / detailed rules
Management	Project management by both actors	Project management by private actors
	Process management by both actors	Process management by both actors
	Public man. tools used unconsciously	Public man. tools used consciously
	Management tools by private actors	Management tools by private actors
Effects	Cooperation generally effective	Cooperation generally effective
	Process hardly efficient	Process hardly efficient
	Spatial quality mostly satisfying	Spatial quality mostly satisfying

CONCLUSIONS: MANAGEMENT LESSONS LEARNED

This paper showed that it is possible to systematically study urban development projects. Here, we explore what management lessons can be learned from both case study findings.

Important to notice is that despite the local authorities taking less risks and responsibilities they are well able to influence or manage development projects. Thus, private sector-led urban development involves a whole set of managing opportunities for local authorities, and not necessarily less management. Hence, they also have the awareness of how to apply these management measures more consistently then is the case in the Netherlands. Furthermore, developers in England, at least in the cases, tend to be more aware of their managerial tasks and opportunities. First, they create more civic support for development by involving local communities and businesses in the design process. Second, they are open for long term commitment to their projects as they, at least in the Liverpool case, apply long term business models in operating the project after delivery, to secure financial returns and minimize risks. Another main conclusion is that, when viewed from a management perspective, both practices do not differ that much in opportunities for both actors to influence projects.

Therefore, one of the main conclusions is that private sector-led urban developments in England can be characterized as a more mature way of public-private cooperation. In summary, we argue that in order to cooperate on the basis of a private sector-led urban development approach, other public and private management attitudes and competencies should be applied to make this type of projects successful in the Netherlands. With these lessons, conditions for designing preferable public and private roles for Dutch private sector-led projects have been established for what will be the focus of the following research stages. However, as the context for urban development has changed dramatically in recent years, we have to take this into account as well when we design these roles. These are some of the challenges that remain in the last stage of this research.

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