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Chapter 5

Negotiating Urban Governance: Norm Entrepreneurs in Dutch Cities, 1850-1900

Stefan Couperus and Dirk Jan Wolffram

In this chapter we propose a new perspective on urban governance by means of reassessing the history of Dutch municipal policies in the second half of the nineteenth century through the conceptual lens of ‘norm entrepreneurship’. Key to this approach is the agency of historical actors with regard to how the underlying norms of regulation, government and administration of urban society are articulated, negotiated and, ultimately, established. These historical actors might or might not be part of local elite groups. As such, the approach adopted in this chapter adds a new dimension to existing local elite-centred historiography. Research on urban elites has long focused on defining the changing boundaries of formal or informal elite membership. Social, economic or cultural indicators have been used to determine the outlines of a particular elite group, while subsequent research then inquired into the changing thresholds of elite membership over time. Consequently, studies that probe into the changes of social stratification and its context-bound criteria have created a more or less reified idea of who belonged to particular elite groups – and who did not. When studying urban politics, historians largely tended to reiterate sociological axioms about (upward) social mobility in the age of industrialisation and (piecemeal) democratisation.¹

In the decade after the year 2000, attention shifted from how urban elites are to be distinguished to the question of what elites actually do. The more structuralist studies made way for cultural histories of elite behaviour.² Cultural and social historians have produced a variety of innovative studies on urban elites and their self-representation, stylisation and presence in urban space.³ Such understandings of local elites have also been central to historical inquiries into local government and administration, presenting particular elites as those in charge of urban affairs.⁴ This particularly applies to the master narratives about local government in continental Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The rise of highly educated municipal professionals (i.e. ‘professional society’), the gradual retreat of the nobility at the heart of local government and the hegemonic position of legal experts in public administration have all been central to analyses of how (local) ruling elites changed during the nineteenth century.⁵ Structuralist conceptions of

local elites and the subsequent cultural readings of elite behaviour, thus, have both left a mark on the historical study of local politics and its main actors and protagonists.

However, a proper understanding of the shifts in the governing of the cities in the nineteenth-century also requires a reassessment of the concepts urban government and urban governance. Pierre-Yves Saunier points to two coincidental processes that shaped modern local government in the nineteenth century. He coins the emergence of a ‘world of municipalities’: cross-border, inter-municipal connections and circulations through which particular (public) solutions to urban problems were exchanged.⁶ Spurred by the transnational turn in urban and political history, this process has been scrutinised by many urban historians since the late 1980s. Key studies have shown how transnational exchanges in the fields of urban utilities, housing, social politics, municipal administration and many municipal services generated a widely shared epistemology of governing and regulating the city, within and beyond Europe since the late nineteenth century. This process was part of the broader process of the ‘municipalization of the world’, which Saunier explains as entailing ‘the common rules and conventions that urban municipal governments came to live by’ and which, more or less simultaneously, were constitutionalised and codified in many nation-states.⁷

In contrast, the second process mentioned by Saunier, the establishment of the municipality as the main institution of urban regulation and government within a constitutionalised national polity, has not been assessed to an extent equivalent to the ‘world of municipalities’.⁸ This is all the more remarkable since the promulgation of municipal acts and codes throughout Europe century opened up a highly localised epistemological void from the nineteenth century onward: how was local government to be understood against the backdrop of the new legal (e.g. constitutional law), political (e.g. gradual extension of franchise, the politicisation of city councils), social (e.g. the emergence of an industrial working class and industrial entrepreneurs), cultural (e.g. the advancement of education), economic (e.g. industrialisation within the confines of the city) and physical (e.g. the demolition of bulwarks and urban sprawl) conditions and imperatives in the city?

In this chapter we argue that the Dutch case exemplifies that the combined lenses of urban governance and ‘norm entrepreneurship’ allow for a more incisive view of the historical actors who negotiated the nature and scope of urban regulation, government and administration from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. The notion of the norm entrepreneur stems from international relations theory and has not been applied in urban history before. A norm entrepreneur should primarily be understood as an (historical) actor who actively promotes ‘notions about appropriate or desirable behaviour [norms] in their community’.⁹ In an urban governance context, these actors, thus, are engaged with articulating and disseminating a particular set of norms about the capacities and limitations of the regulation, administration and government of the city. Put differently, norm entrepreneurs negotiate the moral and epistemological framework, and its boundaries, within which rules, regulations and policies become feasible, acceptable and legitimate. These entrepreneurs might be involved in the regulatory institutions of the city, but are not necessarily or exclusively local actors; they might be engaged in a number of (national) political, cultural or religious milieus outside of the city.

The second half of the nineteenth century may be seen as a formative period for local government and administration in Dutch cities, as the constitution of 1848 and the local government (municipal) act of 1851 formalised the municipal tier of state government. Within the context of aligning legal prescriptions with (pre-existing) regulatory practices – and vice versa –, important historical actors, stemming from varying (not necessarily local) backgrounds, come to the fore, who all attempted to promote particular agendas of conservation or change with regard to urban governance. The very notion of ‘urban elites’ has limited value in this approach. The agency and agendas of particular actors, conceived of as ‘norm entrepreneurs’, whether they qualify as being members of a local elite or not, is more instructive to grasp and explain the nature of urban governance in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Taking Dutch cities as a case study, we will show that a wide variety of norm entrepreneurs had access to and were capable of permeating the urban public sphere, here understood as the constitutive sphere where social, political and cultural norms underlying urban governance were negotiated. Our point of departure is that an exclusive focus on municipal officials and elected politicians, *a priori* defined as governmental and administrative elites – either through a

structuralist lens or a culturalist one – in the city, obscures the diversity of actors involved in the process of delineating the customs, practices and institutions of urban governance at large. Moreover, it obfuscates our view on issues such as education and religion that contributed substantially to urban political culture but were not primarily negotiated in the local political arena – yet still resonated locally. We suggest that next to the traditional urban issues, the national question of primary education in the Netherlands generated new forms of local norm entrepreneurship. Thus, the mid- and late nineteenth centuries witnessed the emergence of competing norms that shaped urban governance and formed the necessary prelude to the specific Dutch forms of municipal interventionism of the early twentieth century. These norms did not exclusively stem from local government elites. On the contrary, on closer inspection it appears that non-governmental actors with a more national outlook and range such as church leaders, trade unions leaders, community leaders and tradesmen were highly successful in articulating their own norms. This led to the unlikely convergence of distinct secular, social, confessional and modernist notions of urban society that ultimately shaped governance practices in the city. Before we will unfold this argument, a closer inspection of the concept of norm entrepreneurship, against the backdrop of an urban governance approach to the history of local government and politics, will be offered.

Local government, urban governance and norm entrepreneurs

If we echo some of the language that political scientists have used to articulate a perceived shift from local government to urban governance in the late twentieth century, we might argue that local government by definition was urban *governance* in the mid-nineteenth century; the municipality was not established as the hegemonic regulatory institution at the local level until the late nineteenth century. Moreover, in establishing itself as the hegemonic regulatory institution locally, the municipality faced strong counterforces opposing the development of interventionist policies and, simultaneously, protecting the private interests of particular (wealthy) local elites. Urban historians have always, with reason, tried to eschew the government-governance shift and its normative implications while using *governance* as a prism through which the multifaceted practices of urban government and regulation may be studied historically.¹⁰ According to Mike Goldsmith and John Garrard, governance, in essence, entails

the description of ‘the set of institutions, rules and procedures by which a political system is governed’.¹¹ Urban governance, consequently, provides an analytical framework, which allows students of the history of urban politics and government to encapsulate ‘the complex range of actors, interests and resources, which straddle the public, private and voluntary sectors, each with a vested interest in the way that political power is organised and practised locally’.¹²

For the formative decades of modern ‘municipal government’ in the nineteenth century such a framework offers a good starting point for the assessment of the materialisation of modern urban governance. Yet we believe that another conceptual tool might be necessary to grasp the dynamics that drove the negotiation, legitimation and establishment of ‘the common rules and conventions’ not only of municipal administration proper, but of urban governance at large: how was governing and regulating the city and urban society perceived more generally? Put differently, who was involved – and how – in negotiating the parameters of governing and regulating urban society in the formative years of constitutionalised municipal administration, which, to a large extent, still had to invent its own routines, hierarchies and politics from the mid-nineteenth century onwards? As R. J. Morris suggests, by using governance as an analytical framework, questions about ‘the ordering of order’ and ‘the organisation and legitimisation of authority’ within a specific temporal and spatial context can be addressed.¹³

In order to grasp how ‘common rules and conventions’ materialised as institutions and practices in urban governance from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, we propose to adopt and employ the notion of norm entrepreneurship. This term was coined by the legal scholar Cass R. Sunstein in the late 1990s.¹⁴ Constructivist International Relations scholars have since used it extensively. Here, norms are understood as ‘social attitudes of approval and disapproval, specifying what ought to be done and what ought not to be done’.¹⁵ Norms pertain to claims on (appropriate) behaviour. An institution is to be understood as the consolidated result of an internalised and regularised set of interrelated norms, while an idea is about the personal beliefs an individual holds.

The political scientists Finnemore and Sikkink have proposed a theory in which norms are central to a sequential dynamics in international politics. This sequence starts with the emergence of new

norms and ultimately ends with the internalisation of norms by key social actors. Norm emergence might occur in various patterns, which all have one thing in common: norm entrepreneurs engage in social practices to promote and disseminate their (new) norms in the public sphere.¹⁶ These ‘entrepreneurs’ are the agents who actively promote ‘notions about appropriate or desirable behaviour in their community’ – they anticipate ‘the pervasive influence of social norms on behaviour’.¹⁷ One way in which new norms manifest themselves in the realm of international politics has been called the ‘norm bandwagon’ or ‘norm cascade’. Here, an existing norm is largely abandoned, allowing norm entrepreneurs to promote alternative ones which consequently result in a bandwagon or cascade effect where multiple (competing) norms converge into a stable norm that is accepted by an ever-growing critical mass.¹⁸

Being aware of the risks of applying social and political science theory to historical analysis (i.e. the dangers of reification, reductionism, prioritising rational choice over contingency, and a-historicity), we do believe that there is conceptual merit in the notions of norm emergence and norm entrepreneurs for our purposes. Conceptualising the formative decades of constitutionalised municipal administration in the mid- and late nineteenth centuries as a period during which competing norms about the government and regulation of the city and urban society were brought to the fore, will reveal the role of well-known and new historical actors in formulating the aims of local politics and shaping urban governance. In what follows, we analyse how existing norms were challenged and how new ones manifested themselves in Dutch cities after the promulgation of the municipal act of 1851.

Urban governance and conceptual stasis in Dutch historiography

From the seventeenth century onwards the Netherlands was one of the most urbanised countries of Europe. Until the end of the eighteenth century the Dutch Republic was a federal state, with highly autonomous provinces sharing power with a stadtholder (always a prince of the House of Orange). Proud urban elites governed the provinces; the nobility was all but irrelevant.¹⁹ Under French rule, the state centralised, and after the defeat of Napoleon, the Kingdom of the Netherlands became a constitutional monarchy. Meanwhile, the country had lost much of its grandeur and urban wealth. The secession of Belgium in 1830 caused a political crisis, which was only solved with a substantial liberal revision of the constitution in 1848. In 1851, three years

after the publication of the new constitution that formed the backbone of the modern Dutch polity, a municipal act was signed that created a single form of local government, encompassing rural and urban communities alike. It was the Dutch episode within what Saunier calls ‘the municipalization of the world’.²⁰ The new model included an elected city council as the highest legislative body of local government with a board of aldermen and the mayor as the collegiate, local executive. The supportive apparatus was very limitedly described as consisting of a secretary and an exchequer. The act of 1851 was influential in two respects: it was a critical juncture in the process of democratising public administration and it opened up new spheres of action for local government due to the broad and somewhat undefined nature of the act.²¹

Indeed, municipal administration gradually took on new responsibilities, both as the local implementer of national rules and regulations and as the expression of autonomous local government. With the declining hegemony of classic liberalism, progressive liberals and confessional politicians took an increasingly central role in the development of social politics (e.g. poor and unemployment relief schemes) and the municipalisation of public utilities, particularly towards the end of the nineteenth century. From the last decade of the nineteenth century onwards, socialist politicians added to the diversity of city councils and local executives.²²

Another strand of historiography emphasises the role of private actors and entrepreneurs in the emergence of local policies.²³ Len de Klerk, for instance, convincingly argues that new entrepreneurial elites, propelling the enormous growth of the port of Rotterdam, broached and initiated numerous (private) social housing and town planning projects from 1860s onwards, which, ultimately, laid the foundation for successful public housing policies in the early twentieth century.²⁴ Local and foreign investors, other studies have shown, introduced gasworks and other public utilities in many Dutch cities, prompting public authorities to consider their own role in the provision of utilities. Starting in Leyden in the late 1840s, and accelerating in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, municipalities took over private exploitation of gas, water and trams, in many cases also because local elites had profitable interests in them.²⁵ In many cities, this municipal ownership – or ‘gas and water socialism’ – ushered in an all-encompassing agenda of public interventionism in urban society, ranging from amenities and housing to – particularly

during and after World War One – the regulation of local consumption and production of foodstuffs.²⁶

Alongside local government and entrepreneurial elite studies, historians have studied the significance of the voluntary sector in the regulation of urban society. For the Dutch case specific attention has been paid to the sociability of the middle classes in the mid-nineteenth century. The 1848 constitutional freedom of association stimulated the creation of organisations. Middle-class groups copied elite clubs and created leisure societies. Gradually also specific social and political issues inspired the creation of organisations. Local elites had set the example, specifically through the widespread network of departments of the Association for the Common Good (Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen), established in 1784, which aimed at educating and civilizing the middle and lower classes. 'Het Nut' successfully organised schools, local savings banks, libraries and a diversity of cultural activities all over the country, in the cities but also in rural municipalities.²⁷ After 1848, local middle-class organisational activities contributed their own dynamics to local society. Cities big and small, but also rural municipalities, witnessed the development of a lively multitude of organisational activities. In many cases, these were church-oriented. Catholics were recently fully emancipated: in fact the formal Dutch Catholic church organisation was only fully legalised in 1853, a government decision which elicited mass Calvinist protests. Calvinists, in their turn, founded local school associations that organised private 'Schools with the Bible', and would form the backbone of a national campaign on Christianising education and Calvinist party formation in 1878-79.²⁸

In 1848 constitutional change also stimulated political organisation at the local level. A thorough revision of political representation brought direct elections for parliament and municipal council and the secret ballot. This required preparation in order to prevent chaos in national as well as local elections. Regulation of all elections took place at the local level until well into the 1870s. Local political associations set and advertised candidacies and distributed ballot papers, for local and national elections. These associations were mostly initiated and controlled by local liberal and conservative elites, whereas in some places a Calvinist political association was created. Modern political parties, organised at the national level, only emerged around 1880, the first one being the Calvinist anti-revolutionary party.²⁹ Initially, until well into the 1860s, members of

municipal councils were elected on a personal ticket. This changed when the middle classes started to be involved in local politics. Well-to-do shopkeepers and merchants, but also professionals like physicians and engineers articulated specific interests regarding local taxes, public utilities, sanitary problems and so forth. Candidates for the municipal council representing a specific interest were supported through leaflets and advertisements in local newspapers.

An awareness of the power of organisation stimulated middle-class initiatives: housing associations (mostly exploiting a very modest number of newly-built dwellings) were created, but soon also associations which were inspired by a strong moral appeal emerged, aiming at prohibition of alcohol or the abolition of slavery or prostitution. Especially the last challenged existing elite morality (prostitution as a necessary evil to curb male sexual desire) and tried to set a new norm of sexual restraint and public responsibility. The anti-prostitution movement demanded an end to the municipal regulation of prostitution with which local administrations tried to prevent the proliferation of venereal diseases.³⁰ Through these new associations, new social categories found their way into the realm of local politics: the Calvinist orthodox Protestants, especially, experienced the power of association based on strong moral values. Of course, participating in church organisations concerned with youth or poor relief had already to some extent prepared them for their new role in society. But from the late 1860s onward orthodox, Calvinist Protestant local activities developed in a more or less coherent socio-political movement outside the confines of church. Christian primary education became a spearhead in a programmatic approach that challenged the domination of the liberal elite.

The historiography of Dutch urban governance in the second half of the nineteenth century provides us with ample fine-grained studies about (changing) local elites in municipal administration, the role of particular voluntary associations and philanthropists and the emergence of particular urban policy domains such as public health, utilities, unemployment relief schemes and town planning.³¹ Yet taken together this body of scholarship offers a somewhat fragmented understanding of the nature and scope of modern urban governance in its formative stages. This is mainly due to two predominant tenets in Dutch historical inquiries into urban governance.

Firstly, local government or administration, in many cases, only forms the subtext of investigating perceptions of citizenship in Dutch society. As such, local government – or urban governance for that matter – has been but a part of a master narrative about citizenship in the nineteenth century. Secondly, and conceptually, urban government and regulation has hardly escaped the interpretative (legal) framework of the nineteenth century. The three-tier polity – the so-called ‘House of Thorbecke’ named after the famous statesman to whom constitutional reform in the mid-nineteenth century is generally ascribed – is, still today, a very tenacious metaphor with which the relation between the local, the regional and the national is assessed. In general, one might say that ever since the nineteenth century, constitutional scholars have tended to study the legal structure of the House, that is the relation between the national and the local level, with an emphasis on the question of whether the national state was dominant and whether this led to a reduction of the autonomy of the municipality.³² This modality of methodological nationalism has hampered more innovative conceptualisations with which to capture the multifaceted local dynamics that shaped urban governance in the nineteenth century. One way of transcending the fragmentation of case studies and conceptual stasis with regard to local government studies, is to look at the way in which various actors engaged in the negotiation of what governing and regulating the city should be from the mid-nineteenth century onwards.

Negotiating norms in Dutch urban governance

With the Dutch Municipal Law of 1851, the purpose of local government was redefined. In principle, the municipality – the only and exclusive local authority for rural and urban communities alike as of 1851 – became responsible for public order and for executing state policies, of which organising primary education was by far the most sizeable. Both public order and primary education gave cause for redefining public norms at the local level. As elsewhere, public order in the Netherlands was initially related to public safety (policing), but also, increasingly, encompassed sanitation and public utilities.³³ As the newly developing discipline of public health was used to diagnose urban society, hygienists and local reformers introduced new norms for the physical quality of public space. Their views on municipal intervention (as minimal as possible) and conservative views on social relations still linked closely to the ideas, norms and values cherished by traditional urban elites. But especially through the initiatives of local physicians, pollution by manure, human excrement and the waste of butchers and tanneries was

no longer regarded as an inevitable, smelly nuisance, but seen as a threat to the quality of life.³⁴ Control over public space became imperative, even though until the 1880s medical science could only guess at the causes of infectious diseases. Shifts in norms with regard to public health were initiated by hygienists and liberal reformers, acting as norm entrepreneurs in this field.

Sanitary intervention was one of the features of modern urban governance in general.³⁵ At the same time a more specific Dutch pattern surfaced with regard to other contested issues: poor relief and education. The moderate liberal local elites had to tolerate the emergence of the aforementioned religiously inspired new sub-elites. In the Dutch case they manifested themselves as new subgroup of norm entrepreneurs, challenging the dominant liberal political discourse. Catholic and orthodox-Protestant (Calvinist) leaders started campaigning for church prerogatives in poor relief and education.

In 1851 a fierce debate was waged about the responsibility for poor relief. The liberal national government tried to bring it under state control but had to succumb to the intertwined forces of conservatism and church, both Protestant and Catholic. Poor relief remained the prerogative of local private initiative (i.e. the churches) with only a secondary role for local government. However, this amounted to a gradually developing practice in which church poor relief concentrated on more or less permanently supporting the disabled – the sick, injured, and elderly - while municipalities provided basic temporary unemployment benefits. This division of responsibility initially solved the question, but the debate had created a permanent sense of urgency on the side of those in favour of church dominated poor relief.³⁶ On the one hand the churches guarded their privileged position, on the other they realised that they could mobilise forces in favour of implementing reform on the issue they cherished most: their desire to Christianise education.

The school issue offered another opportunity for Christian norm entrepreneurship, albeit the other way round: the Education Act of 1857 confirmed that public education was the norm, that is, only public education could receive government funding. Private (religiously inspired Catholic or Calvinist) education was left to private funding. In Dutch historiography the ‘school issue’ has been analysed as a predominantly national affair, similar to developments in Belgium and

France.³⁷ The school issue led to the formation of the first modern political party of the Netherlands, and fuelled an intra-Calvinist church schism and the formation of a Calvinist university in the 1880s. It has therefore been seen as pivotal in the modernisation of society, with an emphasis on the paradoxical situation of a Calvinist engine for modernisation.

Historiography on the school issue has generally followed the national narrative. But the movement that embodied the school issue, the organisation of modern political parties and the Calvinist secession, either originated in or heavily relied on municipal initiatives and practices. Calvinist leaders emerged as new norm entrepreneurs, not only challenging the existing classical liberal norm of municipal abstention, but initiating, introducing and implementing new norms on the basic tenets of local politics and administration. These norm entrepreneurs were the leaders of the local Calvinist election associations, local Calvinist or Catholic school associations and local Calvinist church leaders. They often combined functions and formed a complex national network of local leaders.³⁸

But what were the norms they advocated? What were their ideas and principles regarding urban politics, municipal administration and the regulation of urban society beyond the obvious religious inspiration? Here we find two elements that help explain the nature of Dutch urban governance and administration at large. Firstly, both Catholics and Calvinists shared a dislike of state intervention but they were inclined to accept state subsidies if they were deemed indispensable, as in the case of primary education.³⁹ This was the case when in 1878 a new Education Act passed Parliament, which substantially enhanced the quality requirements, for school buildings as well as teachers. This Act was also applied to private education, which brought Catholic and Calvinist schools serious financial problems. Catholics and Calvinists had staged separate campaigns against this Law, with a strong basis at the local, parochial level. There they managed to mobilise massive support for their petitions. In all, the Calvinist local Anti-Education Act Committees collected over 300,000 signatures, while the Catholics managed to submit lists with 160,000 signatures. All signatures were offered to the King personally, who graciously received the organisers and listened to their plea not to sign the law. He of course had to sign since the constitution did not authorise him not to.⁴⁰

For the Calvinists these local Anti-Education Act Committees became the starting point for the formation of their political party, the Anti-Revolutionary Party, founded in 1879.⁴¹ Unexpectedly they won the 1888 national elections and could form a government with their age-old religious adversaries, the Catholics. This coalition did not last long, but it did manage to pass a new Education Act, which stipulated that the state would pay 30 per cent of the costs of private schools without intervening in the school curriculum. In 1917, this ‘freedom of education’ became part of the Constitution, and consequently private schools were granted 100 per cent state subsidy. So state support became a means of cultural emancipation, rather than a coercive instrument in implementing neutrality or *laïcité*, as in France.⁴²

Furthermore, the initiatives of confessional leaders aimed at a certain emancipation of their constituency, specifically of the lower social classes. Yet in the same breath emancipation entailed tight and proactive social control with regard to multiple aspects of public and private life, ranging from shopping to sexual morality. Obviously, the emancipatory effect of Christian education was restrained by the confines of religious values, but in any case it greatly stimulated literacy until the promulgation of the liberal Compulsory Education Act of 1901, which issued a national standard of literacy.⁴³ Education, with poor relief, became an important instrument of community-led social control at the local level. Education and poor relief disclosed Christian norm entrepreneurship in its most profound guise: trying to protect the vulnerable Christian against the threats of modernity, particularly in urban society.

These norms translated into an organisational model. Catholics and Calvinists heavily relied on their own organisational resources, or rather on their desire to organise social activities within their own religious circle. The principle of organising social activities on a religious basis (the socialists would follow suit) spread to trade unionism, public housing, social welfare, sports and culture, all at the local level during the last decades of the nineteenth century.⁴⁴ This proverbial Dutch ‘pillarisation’ became the dominant organisational model in the Netherlands in the interwar years as well as in the postwar development of the Dutch welfare state.⁴⁵

But that is not all there is to norm entrepreneurship with regard to urban regulation. In social affairs the prevailing norm was *laissez faire*: private initiative became the standard. An early

nineteenth century conservative emphasis on forms of state control had given way to a liberal discourse that was shared by confessionals and initially, to some extent, even by the emerging socialist labour movements. State intervention and municipal interference were kept at a minimum level.⁴⁶ As a response to the liberal and Christian *laissez-faire* ‘norm bandwagon’, a new generation of radicals, followed by socialists, rendered visible a new social norm for urban governance from the 1890s onward. Radical norm entrepreneurs in a few cities with Amsterdam as its primary locus successfully challenged the marriage of convenience between liberals and confessionals. Dutch historiography has approached their emergence as a generational one: a young new elite emerged as the main challenger to liberal dominance and the rise of confessional norms.⁴⁷ But this fails to explain their lasting impact on urban governance in Amsterdam, and also in the Netherlands more generally. Despite their fairly short-lived existence as a political elite, the radicals were nevertheless able to effectively change existing norms about municipal administration and urban regulation.⁴⁸

Radicals gave new impetus to the poor relief issue, by concentrating on the part that had become the responsibility of municipal governments: supporting the unemployed. Initially, after the debates of 1851, the poor relief question was of marginal consequence as industrialisation and urbanisation set in relatively late in the Netherlands. But in the 1890s it became obvious that unemployment was not simply a matter of a seasonal lack of jobs, but structurally related to modern economic development. The newly emerging local trade unions seized the initiative with municipal support and created private unemployment funds, inspired by Belgian and Danish examples and co-financed by employers and employees.⁴⁹ Local labour association leaders initiated these local unemployment funds and in a number of cities, municipalities actively endorsed and financially supported them. These local labour leaders were liberals, socialists, Calvinists, and sometimes even Catholics, although the Dutch bishopric was very reluctant in tolerating these kind of activities.

Only a limited number of municipalities implemented these local unemployment benefit schemes. Nevertheless they set the tone for future local and national social security arrangements: private initiative became the norm, employers and employees cooperated and the (local) state sanctioned these arrangements, declared them binding for a specific business sector and

sometimes gave auxiliary support.⁵⁰ This became the model for most of the social benefit schemes, including post-1945 welfare state legislation. This specific way of dealing with social security has been attributed to the pivotal role of employers, who recognised the inevitability of regulation, but in addition, we would point to the initiating role of new local elites, not necessarily including employers, and acting as norm entrepreneurs.⁵¹ All in all, this shows how the urban and municipal arena became the testing ground for new social policies that ultimately would be taken up by the central state.

The highly successful norm entrepreneurship of the radicals, amounting to a norm cascade, coincided with the emergence of a fundamental reassessment of the exploitation of public utilities in cities. Around 1890 in a number of Dutch cities the contracts of private (predominantly British) companies exploiting local gas factories had to be renewed. However, a few cities had already been operating municipal gas factories for some decades, following the precocious example of Leiden (1848). Roughly at the same time, it became obvious that supplying, or rather selling, clean drinking water substantially reduced death rates.⁵² This insight prompted many municipal authorities to consider municipal exploitation of utilities. The new norm became public responsibility for utilities, and the aforementioned new generation of radical liberal politicians, vehemently reform-minded but explicitly anti-Marxist, in Amsterdam, Arnhem and elsewhere, drove this to the limit.⁵³ They managed to win local elections – capitalising on the new norm of municipal ownership – and were able to oust old elites. In a true cascade of new policies they introduced minimum wages to be paid by municipal branches and companies working for the municipality, regulated the labour market and introduced a system of municipal long-lease of land. They municipalised gas, water and public transportation within only a few years.

But the political careers of the radicals were short-lived. With the substantial extension of the municipal franchise to the workers and small shopkeepers in the late 1890s, confessionals and socialists largely replaced the radicals, though maintaining the norm of public responsibility. As such, the radicals' norm was internalised by relatively new political actors and municipal officials who had assisted in setting up the new interventionist policies. The municipality remained responsible for the quality of urban life at large, to which were added the aforementioned

collective unemployment benefits supported by the municipality after 1904, and public housing (a socialist project) after the First World War.

Conclusion

In this chapter we propose a historical approach to nineteenth-century urban governance that is informed by the social scientific notions of norm emergence and norm entrepreneurship. We argue that this approach allows for the analysis of the negotiation of particular social norms about the nature and scope of urban regulation and local government. Moreover, it reassesses the role of particular norm entrepreneurs, historical actors, straddling the local and the national nexus of public politics, who challenged (pre)existing norms and promoted alternative ones. In the case of Dutch urban governance, the case study in this chapter, we have distinguished the emergence of new norms with regard to poor relief, unemployment, education and the exploitation of public utilities. These norms disclose a clear convergence between the general acceptance of municipal responsibility for the well-being of urbanites, the acceptance of private parties as actors in public affairs and the acceptance of ideological difference being irrelevant to these norms. As such, subsequent norm cascades, first initiated by Calvinists and Catholics, then by radicals and socialists helped create a corporatist urban political culture in which the municipality became the main regulatory institution, but with strong ties to voluntary associations and private actors – a typology of urban governance that according to some scholars still resonates in the Netherlands and elsewhere today.⁵⁴

Beyond its application to the Dutch case, we believe that our approach offers a promising interpretative framework for the historical analysis of urban governance, in particular when it concerns the formative and transitional stages of modern municipal administration and local government in the nineteenth century. This framework opens up an avenue of potential comparative research on seemingly distant cultures and institutional settings of urban governance. Comparing different contexts of norm emergence in the formative period of modern urban government - the mid- and late nineteenth centuries - may generate new insights into how existing and new institutions, actors and practices of regulation have been arranged in accordance with shifting social norms. Perhaps more importantly, this may reveal how ‘the common rules and conventions’ of urban governance have been negotiated and settled – and how this process

differed across time and space. This, then, would enrich the history of urban governance, emphasizing how regulatory practices depended on a variety of institutions and agents. In the process such an approach articulates the underlying social norms that informed governance practices, and how and by whom they were negotiated.

¹ Kees Bruin, *Een Herenwereld Ontleed: Over Amsterdamse Oude en Nieuwe Elites in de Tweede Helft van de Negentiende Eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1980); Boudien M.A. de Vries, *Electoraat en Elite: Sociale Structuur en Sociale Mobiliteit in Amsterdam, 1850-1895* (Amsterdam, 1986);

² Jan Hein Furnée, *Plaatsen van Beschaafd Vertier: Standsbesef en Stedelijke Cultuur in Den Haag, 1850-1890* (Amsterdam, 2012); Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester, 2000); Robert Lee (ed.), *Commerce and Culture: Nineteenth-century Business Elites* (Farnham, 2011).

³ Simon Gunn and Robert J. Morris (eds), *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City Since 1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001);

⁴ William B. Cohen, *Urban Government and the Rise of the French City: Five Municipalities in the Nineteenth Century* (Basingstoke, 1998); Len de Klerk, *Particuliere Plannen: Denkbeelden en Initiatieven van de Stedelijke Elite Inzake de Volkswoningbouw en de Stedebouw in Rotterdam, 1860-1950* (Rotterdam, 1998); Stefan Couperus, Christianne Smit, and Dirk Jan Wolfram (ed.), *In Control of the City: Local Elites and the Dynamics of Urban Politics, 1800 – 1960* (Leuven, 2007); Barry M. Doyle (ed.), *Urban Politics and Space in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries. Regional Perspectives* (Newcastle, 2007).

⁵ Michele Dagenais, Irene Maver and Pierre-Yves Saunier (ed.), *Municipal Services and Employees in the Modern City: New Historic Approaches* (Aldershot, 2003); Simon Gunn, 'Governance, citizenship, and municipal provision in the modern city', *Journal of Urban History*, 33 (2007), 1006–14; Stefan Couperus, 'Research in urban history: recent theses on nineteenth and early twentieth-century municipal administration', *Urban History*, 37 (2010), 322–32; Federico Lucarini, 'La professionalisation de la culture administrative dans les grandes villes Italiennes: expériences étrangères et discussions nationales 1894-1914', in *Jahrbuch Für Europäische Verwaltungsgeschichte: Formation Und Transfer Städtischen Verwaltungswissens* (Baden-Baden, 2003), 131–54.

⁶ Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Introduction: global city, take 2: a view from urban history', in Shane Ewen and Pierre-Yves Saunier (ed.), *Another Global City. Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850–2000* (New York, 2008), 1–18.

⁷ Marjatta Hietala, *Services and Urbanization at the Turn of the Century. The Diffusion of Innovations* (Helsinki, 1987); Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Changing the city: urban international information and the Lyon municipality, 1900–1940', *Planning Perspectives*, 14 (1999), 19–48; Pierre-Yves Saunier and Shane Ewen, (ed.), *Another Global City: Historical Explorations into the Transnational Municipal Moment, 1850-2000* (New York, 2008); Shane Ewen, 'European cities in a networked world during the long twentieth century', *Environment and Planning, Part C, Government & Policy*, 3 (2007), 327–40.

⁸ In general, understandings of local government as *municipal* government are not problematised in historiography on nineteenth-century cities. Only for the early twentieth century has this been studied thoroughly against the backdrop of (transnational) municipal reform. Cf. Klaus-Gert Lutterbeck, *Politische Ideengeschichte Als Geschichte Administrativer Praxis: Konzeptionen Vom Gemeinwesen Im Verwaltungshandeln Der Stadt Strasbourg/Straßburg 1800-1914* (Frankfurt am Main, 2011); Renaud Payre, *Une Science Communale? Réseaux Réformateurs et Municipalité Providence* (Paris, 2007); Pierre-Yves Saunier, 'Taking up the bet on connections: a municipal contribution', *Contemporary European History*, 4 (2002), 507–28; Stefan Couperus, 'Parcelling out municipal administration and power in Amsterdam, 1880-1940', *The International Journal of Local and Regional Studies*, 7 (2012), 65-89.

⁹ Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change', *International Organization*, 52(1998), 887–917, at 893 and 896.

¹⁰ Payre, *Une Science Communale?*; Lutterbeck, *Politische Ideengeschichte*; Saunier, 'Taking up the bet on connections'.

¹¹ Mike Goldsmith and John Garrard, 'Urban governance, some reflections', in Robert Morris and Richard J. Trainor (ed.), *Urban Governance. Britain and Beyond Since 1850* (Aldershot, 2000), 15-27, at 15.

¹² Couperus, 'Research in urban history', 322.

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- ¹³ Robert J. Morris, 'Governance: two centuries of urban growth', in Robert Morris and Richard J. Trainor (ed.), *Urban Governance. Britain and Beyond Since 1850* (Aldershot, 2000), 1.
- ¹⁴ Cass R. Sunstein, 'Social norms and social roles', *Columbia Law Review*, 96 (1996), 903–68; Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change'; J. Samuel Barkin, *Realist Constructivism: Rethinking International Relations Theory* (Cambridge, 2010), 109–116. For a critique about the emphasis on international as opposed to domestic norms, see the review essay: Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'The constructivist turn in international relations theory', *World Politics* 50 (1998), 324–348.
- ¹⁵ Sunstein, 'Social norms and social roles', 914.
- ¹⁶ Geoffrey Brennan, Lina Eriksson, Robert E. Goodin and Nicholas Southwood, *Explaining Norms* (Oxford, 2013), 95–102.
- ¹⁷ Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change', 893 and 896.
- ¹⁸ Robert C. Ellickson, 'The evolution of social norms: a perspective from the legal academy', in Michael Hechter and Karl-Dieter Opp (ed.), *Social Norms* (New York, 2001), 35–75, at 51–52.
- ¹⁹ Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford, 1995).
- ²⁰ Saunier, 'Introduction: global city', 11.
- ²¹ V. Veldheer, *Kantelend Bestuur: Onderzoek Naar de Ontwikkeling van Taken van het Lokale Bestuur in de Periode 1851-1985* (Rijswijk, 1994), 19–21.
- ²² Veldheer, *Kantelend Bestuur*; Jan van den Noort, *Pion of pionier. Rotterdam. Gemeentelijke Bedrijvigheid in de Negentiende Eeuw* (Rotterdam, 1990); P.F. Maas, *Sociaal-democratische Gemeentepolitiek, 1894-1929* (The Hague, 1985); Dirk Jan Wolffram, 'Schikken en inschikken. Plaatselijke elites in tijden van verzuiling 1850-1920', in J.C.H. Blom and J. Talsma (ed.), *De Verzuiling Voorbij. Godsdienst, Stand en Natie in de Lange Negentiende Eeuw* (Amsterdam, 2000), 80-102.
- ²³ For a recent study on how local entrepreneurs and bankers changed social life in late nineteenth century Amsterdam see Barbara M. M. van Vonderen, *Deftig en Ondernemend: Amsterdam 1870-1910* (Amsterdam, 2013).
- ²⁴ De Klerk, *Particuliere Plannen*.
- ²⁵ Van den Noort, *Pion of Pionier*; Pim Kooij, *Groningen, 1870-1914: Sociale Verandering En Economische Ontwikkeling in Een Regionaal Centrum* (Groningen, 1986); Hans Buijter, *Riool, Rails en Asfalt: 80 Jaar Straatruoer in Vier Nederlandse Steden* (Zutphen, 2005).
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- ³³ On this, see for instance Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London, 2003).
- ³⁴ Houwaart, *De hygiënisten*.

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- ⁴⁰ J. Kennedy, *A Concise History of the Netherlands* (Cambridge, 2017), 332.
- ⁴¹ G. Harinck, R. Kuiper and P. Bak (Eds.), *De Antirevolutionaire Partij 1829-1980* (Hilversum, 2001), 74
- ⁴² H. te Velde, *Gemeenschapszin en Plichtsbef. Liberalisme en Nationalisme in Nederland, 1870-1918* (The Hague, 1992), 247.
- ⁴³ J.H. de Graaf, *Leerplicht en Recht op Onderwijs. Een Onderzoek naar de Legitimatie van de Leerplicht- en Aanverwante Onderwijswetgeving* (s.l., 1999) 37-39.
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- ⁴⁸ D. Slijkerman, *Enfant Terrible. Wim Treub (1858-1931)* (Amsterdam, 2016), 57-77.
- ⁴⁹ D.J. Wolfram, *Vrij van Wat Neerdrukt en Beklemt. Staat, gemeenschap, sociale politiek, 1870-1918*, (Amsterdam, 2003) 139-164.
- ⁵⁰ De Rooij, *Werklozenzorg*; Wolfram, *Vrij van Wat Neerdrukt*.
- ⁵¹ Marcel Hoogenboom, *Standenstrijd en Zekerheid. Een Geschiedenis van Oude Orde en Sociale Zorg in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2004).
- ⁵² Wolfram, *Vrij van Wat Neerdrukt*, 37-60.
- ⁵³ Wolfram, *Vrij van Wat Neerdrukt*, 125-138.
- ⁵⁴ Jon Pierre, *The Politics of Urban Governance* (New York, 2011), 61; Jon Pierre, 'Models of urban governance', *Urban Affairs Review*, 34 (1999), 372–96.