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Enterprise discourses in Dutch urban policies; a comparison between two cities in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT

Local governments make use of ‘enterprise language’ to encourage citizens to adopt entrepreneurial behaviour in managing their daily lives and solving problems that emerge in their neighbourhood. In this paper, we examine the use of enterprise language and the promotion of enterprise in Dutch urban policy focusing specifically on how Dutch cities use enterprise language to influence and encourage their inhabitants to undertake entrepreneurial action. Our analysis shows how the language of enterprise helps cities to reinforce a local identity, to legitimize institutional change in local government functioning and to formulate expectations of how citizens (and professionals) should behave.

KEYWORDS

Enterprise language; critical discourse analysis; urban policy; entrepreneurial cities; entrepreneurial citizens

1. Introduction

Several studies have pointed out that an ‘enterprise discourse’ has gained dominance in Western societies (Burrows and Curran 1991; Fairclough 1991; Armstrong 2005; Jones and Spicer 2005). This ‘enterprise discourse’ is believed to have become ‘hegemonic’, infiltrating different domains in society (Du Gay and Salaman 1992; Burchell 1993; Rose 1998; Du Gay 2004; Foucault 2008; Marttila 2015; Bröckling 2016). The ‘language of enterprise and entrepreneurship’ has also gained dominance in urban policy. Towards the end of the 1980s, urban researchers noted a shift in urban governance from ‘managerialism to entrepreneurialism’ (Harvey 1989). Since then, many urban researchers have focused on how cities are managed and governed as ‘entrepreneurial cities’ (Hall and Hubbard 1996; Jessop 1997, 1998; Griffiths 1998; Painter 1998; Williams 2000; Chapin 2002). According to Jessop and Sum (2000) entrepreneurial cities have three defining features. First, an entrepreneurial city pursues ‘innovative strategies intended to maintain or enhance its economic competitiveness vis-a’-vis other cities and economic spaces’; second, these strategies ‘are not ‘as if’ strategies, but are more or less explicitly formulated and pursued in an active, entrepreneurial fashion; and third, entrepreneurial cities ‘adopt an entrepreneurial discourse, narrate their cities as entrepreneurial and market them as entrepreneurial’ (Jessop and Sum 2000, 2289).

Although much has been written on how cities are becoming more entrepreneurial, still little attention has been paid to how cities govern their inhabitants to adjust their behaviour to the ideal of the 'entrepreneurial city'. This paper examines the use of enterprise language and the promotion of enterprise in Dutch urban policy focusing specifically on how cities use enterprise language to influence and encourage their inhabitants to undertake entrepreneurial action. A wide range of concepts is associated with the term 'enterprise'. Fairclough (1991), for example, identified in his research that the word 'enterprise' can refer to an 'activity', a (personal) 'quality' or a 'business' and sometimes even a combination of these three. Deakin and Edwards (1993) refer to 'enterprise' mainly in terms of a (personal) 'quality' and define enterprise as: 'having initiative and drive; it is taking opportunities when they arise; it is independence from the state; it is having confidence and being responsible for one's own destiny; it is being driven by the work ethic; and it promotes self-interest' (p. 2). In similar wording, Du Gay and Salaman (1992) state that enterprise refers 'to the plethora of "rules of conduct" for everyday life' involving 'energy, initiative, calculation, self-reliance and personal responsibility' (p. 629). When examining the use of enterprise language in Dutch urban policies, we will, in line with Deakin and Edwards (1993) and Du Gay and Salaman (1992), focus on 'enterprise' as a (personal) 'quality' or a 'rule of conduct' and the language used in Dutch urban policy to awaken enterprising qualities and attitudes among those who live and work in the city.

The use of enterprise language and the promotion of enterprise is grounded in the political rhetoric of free markets. Characteristic of the 'language of enterprise' is the emphasis on 'freedom of choice' (Drakopoulou-Dodd and Anderson 2001). This indicates that success or failure is dependent on the choices people themselves make (Rose 1999). Another characteristic of 'enterprise language' is the claim that everyone is born with 'entrepreneurial potential' (Drakopoulou-Dodd and Anderson 2001). One of the ways in which enterprise language is used in urban policy is by triggering this 'entrepreneurial potential' among residents of deprived neighbourhoods to tackle local problems that emerge in their neighbourhood. A change in behaviour is then expected from the ones least able to, while 'the privileged' are not required to do the same (or to the same extent). Several scholars have observed that especially those residents most in need, in the most deprived neighbourhoods, have the least capacity to solve problems in their own communities (Kisby 2010; Painter et al. 2011) and lack key entrepreneurial attributes and skills (Williams and Huggins 2013).

The influence the enterprise discourse has on urban policy can differ between different cities depending on how this discourse interacts with other discourses already situated in local urban policy and politics (Fairclough 1991). As through the language of enterprise (local) governments communicate their expectations of citizens, we think it is important to provide a better understanding of how this type of language works and how different cities interact with it. In this paper, we aim to provide by means of critical discourse analysis a better understanding of how the language of enterprise manifests itself in the urban policies of Dutch cities focusing specifically on how Dutch cities use the language of enterprise to influence and encourage their inhabitants to undertake entrepreneurial action. The following research question will be central in this paper: how does the language of enterprise manifest itself in the urban policies of Dutch cities and how do local governments use this language to communicate expectations regarding the desired entrepreneurial behaviour of the city's inhabitants? Discourse analysis is

often criticised for focusing too little on the reception of discourses. Therefore, in a small case study, we will also shed light on a telling example of how the language of enterprise is perceived by citizens and society.

Jonas and While (2007) state that the emerging consensus among urban scholars is that ‘all cities are becoming entrepreneurial and that ‘differences between cities in terms of politics and policy outcomes are matters of degree rather than substance’ (p. 126). However, Jonas and While (2007) argue that not all cities are entrepreneurial and that ‘urban politics do matter and that the difference such politics make are substantive rather than contingent’ (p. 128). We therefore choose to compare the urban policies of two cities in the Netherlands, namely Rotterdam and Delft. These are two, almost adjacent cities located in the southwestern part of the Netherlands that both in their own way make use of entrepreneurial strategies to govern the city and its subjects. Although both cities are located in the same region, they are considerably different in terms of size, poverty levels and political orientation. The differences between the cities enable us to examine to what extent enterprise language manifests itself differently in the urban policies of both cities.

This paper is divided into six sections, following the introduction. Section two and three describe the origins of the enterprise discourse and its rise in Dutch society and urban policy. Section four describes how the discourse analysis was conducted and which documents were selected. In the fifth section, we will present our findings and in the sixth section, we will discuss the conclusions and added value of this research to the current field of knowledge and provide suggestions for further research.

2. The rise of an enterprise discourse in society

Most studies on the rise of an enterprise discourse in society have focused on the British context (Burrows and Curran 1991; Fairclough 1991; Gray 1998; Drakopoulou-Dodd and Anderson 2001; Carr and Beaver 2002). In the British context, the rise of an enterprise discourse started with the introduction of an ‘enterprise culture’ by the British government in the late 1970s (O’Rourke 2010). The introduction of an ‘enterprise culture’ was meant to deal with the economic challenges during that time but also aimed to create a ‘moral revolution’ (Carr and Beaver 2002). According to Carr and Beaver (2002), the introduction of an enterprise culture was a governmental programme aimed to ‘influence and transform the mind-set and conduct of a population’ (p. 110) creating a culture in which citizens foster positive values towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial attitudes. Fairclough (2000) argues that the policies designed to create an ‘enterprise culture’ are a form of ‘cultural governance’ which he defines as ‘governing by shaping and changing the cultures of the public services, claimants and the socially excluded, and the general population’ (p. 61). In this context, ‘culture’ is interpreted very broadly. This interpretation of cultural governance is associated with the governmentality literature in which governance is viewed to take place through strategies and technologies directed towards what Foucault terms ‘the conduct of conduct’ that is to say, ‘a form of activity aiming to shape, guide or affect the conduct of some person or persons’ (Gordon 1991, 2). This type of governing has continued in the UK under Tony Blair’s Third Way and David Cameron’s Big Society. For example, visible in David Cameron’s speech on the Big Society where he stated that: ‘The Big Society is about a huge culture change where people, in their everyday

lives, in their homes, in their neighbourhoods, in their workplace don't always turn to officials, local authorities or central government for answers to the problems they face but instead feel both free and powerful enough to help themselves and their own communities' (Cameron 2010).

The rise of an enterprise discourse is also observed in the Netherlands. Van Beek (1998) observed that since the early 1990s there is an increased appreciation for entrepreneurship visible in Dutch society. Van Beek (1998) states that this increased appreciation for entrepreneurship mainly refers to entrepreneurial attitudes rather than starting an enterprise. According to Van Beek (1998), the increased appreciation for entrepreneurial attitudes also applies to the public sector in which references to terms such as 'individual responsibility' and giving space to citizens 'own initiative' have become more widespread. The use of these terms recently intensified in the Dutch discourse. By introducing a 'participation society' and 'DIY-democracy', the Dutch government aims to provide more space for citizens to tackle social problems themselves through societal self-organisation (Ministry of the Interior 2013). Examples of societal self-organisation are citizens who set-up a community enterprise, create a community garden or arrange healthcare services in their neighbourhood (Kleinhans 2017; Ham and Van der Meer 2015; Van de Wijdeven 2012). By introducing the 'participation society' and 'DIY-democracy' the Dutch government aims to remind citizens of their duty to care of themselves and their environment and to be 'active' and 'self-reliant'. This conception of citizenship is related to a neoliberal understanding of citizenship. According to Woolford and Nelund (2013) the 'ideal neoliberal citizen' has the following characteristics:

'First, the neoliberal citizen is active, which is often taken to mean participation in waged work. Second, the neoliberal citizen manages risk prudently or, in other words, is an actuarial subject capable of calculating and planning for potential threats and dangers. Third, the neoliberal citizen is a responsible person capable of self-management, self-governance, and making reasonable choices. Fourth, the neoliberal citizen is not reliant on government or social services for survival; instead, she or he is an autonomous, self-reliant, and empowered agent. Finally, the neoliberal citizen is an entrepreneur of self, who can maximize his or her personal interests, well-being, and quality of life through self-promotion and competition.' (p. 304).

Woolford and Nelund (2013), examined in their research to what extent welfare recipients adapt themselves to the demands of neoliberalism. They conclude that most welfare recipients communicated neo-liberal values of being active, prudent, responsible, autonomous and entrepreneurial. Woolford and Nelund (2013) state that: 'they have, either strategically or inadvertently, learned to inflect their public speech with neoliberal discourses in order to present themselves as whole rather than discredited persons' (p. 313). As both social service providers and welfare recipients adjust themselves to 'the scripts of accountability and responsibility', this has resulted in their interactions to be 'characterized by the series of masks worn by the various performers rather than the hard work of getting to know one another, building trust, and forming helping relationships' (ibid., p. 313).

The abovementioned interpretation of citizenship shows how the use of 'enterprise language' has moved beyond the economic domain. Marttila (2015) for example states that: 'competences, such as creativity, self-responsibility, readiness to take risks and

innovative spirit which were previously associated with entrepreneurs working in the private sector, are nowadays considered subject ideals covering the entire society' (p. 186). This statement can be endorsed by a large number of studies that emphasize the dominant role entrepreneurship plays in society. Extensive research has been conducted on 'entrepreneurial societies' (Gavron et al. 1998; Van Beek 1998; Von Bargen, Freedman, and Pages 2003; Audretsch 2007), 'entrepreneurial cities' (Harvey 1989; Hall and Hubbard 1996; Jessop 1997, 1998), 'entrepreneurial governments' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Rhodes 1996) and 'the entrepreneurial self' (Peters 2001; Foucault 2008; Betta, Jones, and Latham 2010; Bröckling 2016). Dutch authors have identified references to 'entrepreneurial citizens' in which elements of entrepreneurship shape the meaning and practice of citizenship in cities and urban neighbourhoods (see e.g. Al Sader, Kleinhans, and Van Ham 2019; Sterk, Specht, and Walraven 2013). It's important to note that even though the enterprise discourse has the status of being 'hegemonic' this does not mean that this discourse is not being resisted (Purcell 2002; Mitchell 2003). According to Purcell (2008) 'hegemonies are always resisted because groups that are disadvantaged by the dominant order will organize to resist it and to pursue alternatives' (p. 174).

3. Enterprise discourse in urban policy

One of the fields of Dutch urban policy in which the 'language of entrepreneurship' is prominently notable is the field of urban regeneration (of deprived areas). According to Howorth, Parkinson, and Southern (2009), enterprise and entrepreneurship are 'firmly established in the lexicon of regeneration and renaissance' (p. 282). It's therefore not surprising that urban regeneration policies often connect enterprise with deprived areas. In the Netherlands, urban regeneration programmes used to be large-scale and national-led programmes mainly focussing on improving the built environment in disadvantaged post-war neighbourhoods (Musterd and Ostendorf 2008; Kleinhans 2012). From 2015 onwards, in the aftermath of the economic crisis of 2008, the national government moved the responsibility (without the funding) for regenerating deprived areas to local governments, housing associations, healthcare organisations and citizens. For cities and local governments, this meant adjusting to a new role and the starting period of experimentation with new partnerships and new approaches to urban regeneration.

In developing these new approaches, an increasingly important role is being allocated to citizens and expectations of citizen's role in the development of their neighbourhood have become higher. Citizens are now expected to 'take matters into their own hands' and to take responsibility for maintaining the quality of life in their neighbourhood (Boonstra and Boelens 2011; Van Meerkerk, Boonstra, and Edelenbos 2013; Ham and Van der Meer 2015; Wagenaar and Van der Heijden 2015; Teernstra and Pinkster 2016; Kleinhans 2017; Rijshouwer and Uitermark 2017). This development has led to an increased emphasis on active citizenship in various local policies and more 'space' for citizens to undertake initiatives in their neighbourhood in different domains (e.g. healthcare, education, sports and culture). However, not every initiative that citizens undertake is welcomed by local governments. Rijshouwer and Uitermark (2017) state in their study on Dutch community centres transforming into community enterprises that in practice 'civil society's entrepreneurialism is only selectively and strategically appreciated to the extent it can be

incorporated into broader, market-oriented policies' (p. 272). Cardullo and Kitchin (2018), who studied citizen participation in smart city initiatives also conclude that although smart city initiatives are framed as enhancing citizen engagement and citizen power, in practice they do not serve the interests of citizens but of the state and the market.

There are multiple dimensions of urban policy in which the language of enterprise manifests itself (for example as in promoting the 'entrepreneurial city' or 'entrepreneurial government'). New responsibilities and roles allocated to urban residents by local governments can be related to the shift in urban governance from a 'managerial' approach towards an 'entrepreneurial' approach (Harvey 1989). This shift meant a 'reorientation of urban governance away from the local provision of welfare and services to a more outward-orientated stance designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development' (Hall and Hubbard 1996, 153). According to Jessop (1993), the shift from urban government to urban governance is one of the developments that led to the rise of the 'entrepreneurial city', with an emphasis on innovation, new technology, labour market flexibility and a revision of social policy. Beyes (2009) states that the concept of entrepreneurial cities 'has engendered a political agenda that includes shifting public sector activities to the private sector, empowering urban residents to become entrepreneurs and focusing on place marketing and 'boosterism' (p. 103).

In the literature on entrepreneurial cities the 'entrepreneur' in the entrepreneurial city is considered to be the municipal government (Harvey 1989; Sbragia 1996; Hall and Hubbard 1996; Jessop 1998; MacLeod 2002; Ward 2003; Jonas and While 2007; Lauermann 2018). In the Netherlands, municipal governments use 'enterprise language' in different ways. Dutch municipal governments have, as a result of national decentralisations and a transfer of responsibilities, reframed their role from service providers to 'facilitators' or 'enablers'. This means that civil servants and social workers need to adjust to a different role and focus on empowering rather than serving citizens. Empowering rather than serving is also one of the ten principles for becoming a more 'entrepreneurial government' introduced by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) in their book 'Reinventing Government'. The other principles include: 'steering rather than rowing', 'prevention rather than cure', 'earning rather than spending', 'funding outcomes, not inputs', 'meeting the needs of the customer, not the bureaucracy', 'from hierarchy to participation and teamwork', 'injecting competition into service delivery', 'transform rule-driven organization' and 'leveraging change through the market' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992). To promote innovation in Dutch municipal governments, civil servants are also requested to 'experiment' and think 'outside the box' and enable active and entrepreneurial citizens to co-develop their living environment.

According to Hoekema (2007), changes in the institutional order have led to more horizontal relations based on cooperation and negotiation between the traditionally distinct spheres of governments, markets and civil society and created the advent of the 'entrepreneurial citizen'. Entrepreneurial citizens are thus embedded within the broader development of entrepreneurial cities and entrepreneurial governments in a changing institutional order. In promoting the city and the local government as 'entrepreneurial' expectations about the desired entrepreneurial behaviour of citizens are also communicated. We will use the conceptions of the entrepreneurial city, the entrepreneurial government, the entrepreneurial civil servant/social worker and 'entrepreneurial citizen'

as conceptual dimensions during our analysis to better understand how cities communicate the desired entrepreneurial image of the city, of governmental institutions and of the people who live and work in the city.

4. Methodology

As mentioned in the Introduction, in this paper we will answer the following research question: how does the language of enterprise manifest itself in the urban policies of Dutch cities and how do local governments use this language to communicate expectations regarding the desired entrepreneurial behaviour of the city's inhabitants? To answer this question, we will evaluate the use of enterprise language and the promotion of enterprise in the urban policies of two Dutch cities. For this purpose, we have applied a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

4.1. Critical discourse analysis (CDA)

The basic assumption underlying discourse analysis is that language shapes our view of the world and is not neutral or simply mirroring reality (Hajer 2006). Discourse analysis is a useful approach to identify and understand how particular ideas are privileged as 'truth'. Michel Foucault, also seen as the founder of the discourse approach, defines discourse as 'a group of statements which provide a language for talking about, a way of representing the knowledge about, a particular topic at a particular historical moment' (Foucault in Hall 1997, 44). Fairclough (1995) builds further upon Foucault's definition and describes discourse as 'a language used in representing a given social practice from a particular point of view. Discourses appertain broadly to knowledge and knowledge construction' (p. 56). According to Fairclough (1995), there is a dialectical relationship between language and social reality, meaning that language shapes social reality but language is also shaped by social reality. In other words, in different social contexts, people tend to say different things. A discourse is therefore socially constructed but also socially conditioned.

For this study, CDA is a suitable method because CDA offers, in contrast to content analysis, the opportunity to examine the relationship between the text and the context in which it is produced (Fairclough 1995; Van den Berg 2004). To understand why a certain discourse becomes dominant, we also need to understand the context in which it is produced. CDA assumes that language contributes to the reproduction of power relations and inequality in society of which the 'producers' and 'recipients' of a discourse are not always aware of. The critical element in CDA refers to exposing this process and 'breaking through it'. By making use of CDA, we will examine the language used by policymakers to legitimize ever higher expectations of citizens in urban neighbourhoods. In a small case study, we will also shed light on how these expectations are experienced by citizens themselves.

4.2. Analytical approach and selection of policy documents

We chose to compare the urban policies of the city of Rotterdam with the city of Delft in the Netherlands. Rotterdam and Delft are both part of the Randstad, the urban

agglomeration of the southwestern part of the Netherlands and part of the Metropolitan Region Rotterdam The Hague (MRDH). Rotterdam is the second largest city of the Netherlands with 644.373 inhabitants (Municipality of Rotterdam 2019a). Many neighbourhoods in Rotterdam are considered ‘problem neighbourhoods’ and some of them show high poverty levels (Hoff et al. 2016). In contrast to Rotterdam, Delft is a smaller city with 103.169 inhabitants and mainly one (big) ‘problem neighbourhood’ (Municipality of Delft 2019). On the political level, Rotterdam and Delft are two distinct cities. A right-wing party, named ‘Liveable Rotterdam’ has been the biggest political party in the city since 2003. Delft on the other side has been ruled by left-wing parties for a long time. The differences between the cities enable us to examine to what extent and how an enterprise discourse manifests itself differently in the urban policies of both cities.

The data collection was done through a multi-stage procedure. We used the municipality’s online database to access policy documents and selected all documents in which we expected to find the municipality’s vision on the city and its inhabitants. For example, coalition agreements often contain information on what the chosen coalition expects from the city’s inhabitants, what matters they aim to focus upon and how they aim to achieve their goals during their coalition period. For this reason, we analysed coalition agreements over the periods 2006–2010, 2010–2014 and 2014–2018 for both Rotterdam and Delft. By analysing coalition agreements over a longer period, we aimed to examine whether an ‘enterprise discourse’ is apparent and whether it has intensified over time. Based upon our first reading of the coalition agreements we subsequently selected further documents focussing on different social domains that are related to urban regeneration such as policy on healthcare, labour market and (citizen) participation. The cross-references made in the documents also enabled us to expand our corpus. We selected the documents which present a full policy program with a long-term perspective. Such policy programs are often extensive documents with a clear argumentation structure to legitimize the proposed policy. A chronological overview of the analysed coalition agreements can be found in [Table 1](#). In this overview, we have included the coalition periods, parties and agreements and relevant national reports during each coalition-period. For the purposes of this paper, we analysed a total number of seven documents from the municipality of Rotterdam and six documents from the municipality of Delft. The coding procedure consists of several stages, making use of qualitative analysis software Altas.ti. In the first and predominantly inductive phase, we started by asking ourselves general questions like; what is the text is about? Who speaks and who is spoken to? What is presented as the ‘truth’ and what kind of arguments are provided to legitimize changes in policy? These questions were intended to make ourselves more familiar with our corpus. Secondly, we focused on the way’s citizens are addressed and what roles and expectations are assigned to them (but also what role the city and the local government assigns to itself). Based on the literature, we searched for words which can be considered as cues for an enterprise discourse, such as ‘initiative’, ‘responsibility’ and ‘active citizenship’ and tried to understand in what context these concepts were used. The first reading of the coalition agreements made it visible that such concepts are mainly manifest in the domain of social policy with a strong focus on the neighbourhood level.

Table 1. (Continued).

City	Coalition period	Coalition parties	Coalition agreements	National reports
Rotterdam	2014-2018	Liveable Rotterdam (Leefbaar Rotterdam) Democrats 66 (D66) Christian Democrats (CDA) Democrats 66 (D66) Technology Students In Politics (STIP) GreenLeft (GroenLinks) Labour Party (PvdA) People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)	'Volle kracht vooruit' [Full steam ahead] 'Delft verdient het' [Delft deserves it!]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. 2014. Implementation Participation Act. • Movisie (commissioned by the Ministry of the Interior). 2015. De onderne- mende burger [The entrepreneurial citizen]
Rotterdam	2018-2020	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) Democrats 66 (D66) GreenLeft (GroenLinks) Labour Party (PvdA) Christian Democrats (CDA) Christian Union – Reformed Political Party (CU-SGP)	'Nieuwe energie voor Rotterdam' [New energy for Rotterdam]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environment and Planning Act – to be implemented in 2021
Delft		GreenLeft (GroenLinks) Technology Students In Politics (STIP) Democrats 66 (D66) People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) Labour Party (PvdA)	'De toekomst in uitvoering' [The future in progress]	

5. Analysis and findings

Based on our analysis of the policy documents we found that the ‘enterprise discourse’ is more dominantly visible in Rotterdam than in Delft. In the case of Rotterdam, we observed in accordance with the literature, the presence of a hegemonic enterprise discourse covering various (scale) levels, such as the city (the entrepreneurial city), the local government (the entrepreneurial government), the ‘level’ of professionals (the entrepreneurial professional) and citizens (the entrepreneurial citizen). This conceptual classification to (scale) levels will be used in the analysis below and the interpretation of the results. In the case of Delft, we did not observe the presence of a hegemonic enterprise discourse covering all these different levels. In Delft, the ‘language of enterprise’ is mainly used to legitimize change in municipal government functioning. However, all these different (scale) levels are mutually dependent. When the municipality of Delft states the aim to change into a more ‘entrepreneurial government’, this indirectly implies that others also should follow this way even though they are not explicitly portrayed as (evenly) entrepreneurial actors. In the following subsection, we will further elaborate on the differences and similarities between Rotterdam and Delft and how the entrepreneurial city, government, professional and citizen are given shape in both cities.

5.1. The entrepreneurial city

In the case of Rotterdam, the use of ‘enterprise language’ is more than just a way to legitimize change in government functioning or to tackle social disadvantage by promoting self-help. The language of enterprise is also used to reinforce a local identity and identification of citizens with their city. Being enterprising is believed to be part of the ‘DNA’ of Rotterdam, clearly demonstrated in the following citation:

“The city where renewal and innovation is the standard. The standard in municipal policy and the standard in our city and its economy. Rotterdam and its people are driven by enterprise. There is no such word as ‘cannot’ and there is always room for improvement. Everyone in Rotterdam has the freedom to make something of his or her life, company, idea or dream. In Rotterdam, we are doers. As a city and as people of Rotterdam, we demonstrate guts, nerve but also empathy” (Coalition agreement Rotterdam 2014-2018, 3).

In Rotterdam, a local identity is reinforced by presenting the city as ‘international, enterprising and raw’ and putting emphasis on values associated with entrepreneurship such as ‘hard work and a ‘can-do spirit’. With the introduction of the slogan ‘Rotterdam. Make it happen’ in 2014, the city clearly communicates its expectations of the city’s inhabitants. Inhabitants who ‘make Rotterdam happen’ are people who ‘pursue innovation and entrepreneurship, who collaborate and connect, who move forward and have the guts to walk ahead of the crowd, who are bold and stick out their necks, who think about sustainable solutions, who discover, experience and take action’ (Municipality of Rotterdam 2019b). It’s clear that in Rotterdam, the construction of an entrepreneurial identity is not only meant to create an attractive image of the city for potential investors, but also to encourage the spirit of entrepreneurship among the city’s inhabitants.

Although the enforcement of an ‘local entrepreneurial identity’ was also visible in the coalition agreements over the period 2006–2010 and 2010–2014, it intensified over the period 2014–2018. Compared to other coalition agreements, the coalition agreement over the period 2014–2018 is the only coalition agreement in which the entrepreneurial city, entrepreneurial government, entrepreneurial professionals and entrepreneurial citizens are all emphasized. Encouraging a ‘can do mentality’ and giving residents of Rotterdam more opportunities to have a say were the major subjects in this coalition agreement. In order to understand why the enterprise discourse became more prominently visible in this period, we should first understand the political shift that happened during that time in the city of Rotterdam.

In 2014, Liveable Rotterdam (*Leefbaar Rotterdam*) became the biggest party in the city and formed a coalition with the Christian Democrats (CDA) and a social-liberal party named D66. Much of the language used in the coalition agreement corresponds with the language used in the election manifesto of Liveable Rotterdam. The extent to which ‘enterprise language’ is manifested in urban policies and politics seems to be highly dependent on the political stances of the ruling political party, but also on contextual factors. Encouraging a ‘can do mentality’ in Rotterdam and spreading the language of optimism and empowerment was also a presumed way to pull the city and its residents out of the economic and financial crisis, of which the (financial) consequences for local governments combined with national decentralisations were clearly felt in 2014. Interestingly, in the following coalition agreement (2018–2022), the enterprise discourse is almost *invisible*. This can also be related to political changes in the city after the municipal elections in 2018, which led to increased political fragmentation. An unprecedented number of twenty parties with different political orientations were running for elections in Rotterdam. Liveable Rotterdam remained the biggest political party in the city but did not become part of the coalition because most of the other parties were unwilling to collaborate with this party. The coalition for the period 2018–2022 exists of six different left and right-wing parties, forming only a small majority in the local council. In the case of Delft, the imaging of the city as an entrepreneurial city started gradually from 2010 and by 2018, Delft started to attach the same entrepreneurial qualities to the city as Rotterdam, as demonstrated in the following citation:

“In Delft, we aim to make a difference. We do this by demonstrating nerve and guts. The municipality is an open authority, that listens and invites contributions, but we also aim to be an authority that takes control and sets the right course when needed. Delft should take the lead in innovations, stimulating and accelerating projects. We do not shy away from experiments: Delft is the perfect place to serve as a test bed for innovations and provide space for initiatives from the city” (Coalition agreement Delft 2018–2022, 4).

In constructing the city’s identity, both cities attach value to the same entrepreneurial qualities such as demonstrating ‘nerve and guts’ and being open for change and innovation. In 2014, the city of Delft introduced the slogan ‘Delft Creating History’ with the city’s core values being innovation, sustainability and hospitality (Municipality of Delft 2014). These core values need people ‘who want to write history’, well-educated people who are ‘curious and receptive for new ideas’, ‘inventors and innovators’, but also people who show ‘hospitality and who help others are emphasised’ (Municipality of Delft 2014). In Delft, the language of enterprise is mainly used to reinforce an external

image of the city as ‘historical city’ and ‘city of innovation and technology’ to attract potential investors and tourists. The image of an ‘entrepreneurial city’ is not used to construct an identity to which residents of the city should live up to or feel connected to, as is the case in Rotterdam. In the case of Delft, encouraging a mentality change more often refers to changing the mentality within the own government functioning rather than changing the mentality of residents. This will be discussed in further detail in the subsection below.

5.2. The entrepreneurial government

In order to ‘deal with the challenges the future will bring’, the local government of Delft aims to become an ‘entrepreneurial government’ and describes this role as follows:

“We are pursuing our choice for ‘more city’ and ‘less government’ to transform Delft into a coordinating municipality. We are moving from being a municipality that implements policy to a networking, entrepreneurial one that prioritises the development of realistic policy and focuses on ensuring the intended socio-economic effects are achieved [...] The municipality sets the conditions, encourages and incentivises and has the confidence to ‘let go’”
(Coalition agreement Delft 2014-2018, 16-17).

References to ‘entrepreneurial government’ started in both Delft and Rotterdam in 2010. Dealing with risk and uncertainty are used as arguments for transforming into an ‘entrepreneurial municipal government’. An entrepreneurial government is assumed to be better able to deal with crises and setbacks. In Rotterdam, the same narrative is used to legitimize change in government functioning, but also to assign a more prominent role to residents in this transition and to provide them with more ‘space’. Both Rotterdam and Delft repeatedly state they want to provide more ‘space’ to others (thus legitimizing becoming a smaller government) and have the confidence to ‘let go’ (by facilitating non-governmental actors to take over or contribute to governmental services). In 2016, the city of Rotterdam introduced the Resilience Strategy of Rotterdam aimed at making the city of Rotterdam better able to cope with uncertainties and risks which would mark the 21st century. This strategy is part of the international 100 Resilient Cities program created by the Rockefeller Foundation (Municipality of Rotterdam 2016b). The main goal of this policy program is to make the city more robust, flexible and inclusive and prepared for the future which is expected to be full of threats and challenges. The introduction of this policy program fits within the dominant narrative that due to rapid changes, a top-down bureaucratic system is no longer effective and that to be effective, efficient and responsive, governments need to be entrepreneurial rather than bureaucratic (Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Du Gay 2004). ‘Entrepreneurial’ here mainly refers to responsiveness and being able to adjust to constant change. This also refers to citizens who are according to the mayor of Rotterdam key actors for making the city resilient. The Resilience Strategy aims to incorporate resilience in the daily thinking and acting of every resident of Rotterdam. As such, citizens and communities need to be more ‘self-reliant’ but also be ‘strong’ and participate in the ‘we-society’ (Municipality of Rotterdam 2016b).

In both Rotterdam and Delft, enterprise language is used to shape and introduce the ‘entrepreneurial municipal government’. Most of the ten principles of entrepreneurial

governments listed by Osborne and Gaebler (1992), such as ‘steering rather than rowing’, ‘empowering rather than serving’ and ‘preventing rather than curing’ are to more or lesser extent implemented in shaping the entrepreneurial municipal government in both cities. In presenting what inhabitants can expect from the entrepreneurial municipal government, expectations of inhabitants and civil servants are also formed. Both Rotterdam and Delft aim to provide more ‘space for others’ with a specific emphasis on providing space for citizens to undertake initiatives. Citizens can expect that the municipal government will facilitate their initiative, but citizens are the ones supposed to start them.

5.3. *The entrepreneurial professional*

Since 2015, local governments in the Netherlands have become responsible for a number of tasks that used to be the responsibility of the national government such as youth care, help for job seekers and health care for the elderly and chronically ill (Rijksoverheid n.d.). This is part of the broader process of ‘decentralising the social domain’. The idea is that local governments are ‘closer’ to citizens and therefore better able to provide customized support. At the same time, the national government aims to mobilize what is referred to as citizens ‘own powers’ (*eigen kracht*). This process of decentralisation has functioned as the starting point for local governments to change the way they work and to reflect upon their previous strategies with regard to social policy. Both Rotterdam and Delft state the aim to reduce the need for professional care (and thus the costs) and encourage living longer independently (for the elderly).

However, they use different language to achieve this goal. The dominant narrative in Rotterdam is that professionals working in the social domain (which includes welfare services, healthcare, upbringing, integration, social activation and education) have taken over too many responsibilities of their ‘clients’, making them dependent and not paying attention to their ‘talents and powers’. Therefore, citizens are encouraged to take out the most of themselves. Reciprocity and doing something in return is presented as the norm. Especially those who ask for a certain service are obliged to give something back in return as demonstrated in the following citation:

“Creating opportunities for the people of Rotterdam and appealing to everyone to become involved. There is so much talent in Rotterdam. We aim to challenge that talent, because only if we bring out the very best in people, can Rotterdam look with confidence to its future. This is done on the basis of reciprocity. People receive an offer to take part. We ensure that is as attractive as possible. Anyone who deliberately and wilfully ignores these opportunities will have us to answer to” (Coalition Agreement Rotterdam 2006-2010, 2).

The abovementioned citation can be found in the coalition agreement of Rotterdam for the period 2006–2010. This coalition agreement focused on a strong ‘social program’, putting citizen participation, emancipation and citizenship high on the agenda. Especially welfare recipients, who are (perceived to be) unwilling to participate in society can expect to be sanctioned. This policy remained in all the coalition agreements thereafter. In 2015, we perceive that in the urban policies of Rotterdam, professionals are also explicitly addressed to adapt several entrepreneurial qualities, such as seeking new opportunities. Civil servants

and professionals working in the social domain are expected to activate and empower citizens and in doing so they as well should be more entrepreneurial:

“Professionals are entrepreneurial. In their sphere of work, they are always in search of what is not yet known, they are inquisitive, easy to find and approachable for residents. Their main focus is to create demonstrably new opportunities for residents” (Nieuw Rotterdams Welzijn 2016-2019, 13).

In the urban policies of Delft, we found no references to a ‘dependency culture’ or ‘entrepreneurial professionals’.

5.4. The entrepreneurial citizen

Both cities facilitate and encourage (entrepreneurial) citizen participation in various forms. This can range from citizen participation in terms of active citizenship such as taking care of your fellow neighbours to citizen participation in terms of entrepreneurial citizenship such as taking over governmental services in the form of the Right to Challenge or the Right to Cooperate (inspired by practices in the UK). In the case of Delft, the use of enterprise language has increased gradually over time. The first coalition agreement (2006–2010) opted for more citizen participation in the context of urban regeneration, but this did not take a very central place in the agreement. No references were made to active citizenship or entrepreneurial citizenship and citizens were addressed as ‘customers’. In the second coalition agreement (2010–2014), the effect of the economic crisis is clear. This coalition agreement is mainly about government reforms, cutbacks and investments. A strong focus was put on redefining the role of the municipality. In order to deal with financial setbacks, the municipality should act as a ‘directing municipality’, the one who brings stakeholders together and facilitates and supports initiatives. This coalition agreement puts a stronger focus on collaboration with citizens and what is expected from citizens is more clearly formulated:

“Our aim is for all adults in Delft to be economically independent. We have confidence in people’s own strength and provide support where necessary to enable residents to take on responsibility in accordance with their ability [...] We strive towards structural empowerment – reinforcing people’s own strength: from awareness-raising through to advocacy and participation. From emancipation to participation in paid employment and care work. In the area of civic integration, we also lay the foundations for vibrant and active citizenship” (Coalition agreement Delft 2010-2014, 6-7).

References to active and entrepreneurial citizenship remained in the following coalition agreements. In Rotterdam, an enterprise discourse is already visible from the first coalition period (2006–2010) examined and continued to be dominant until 2018. The municipality of Rotterdam has been working with an ‘area-based’ approach (*wijkgericht werken*) since 2009. This meant that policy intends to take into account the specific characteristics and problems of the area concerned and the target groups involved. In December 2012, the area-based approach transformed towards a ‘Rotterdammer focused’ way of working (Municipality of Rotterdam 2012). The aim of this transformation was to enhance citizen’s involvement in policy making and to assign the new role of ‘facilitator’ to the local government. This development became more visible in the ‘Participation Guideline’ introduced on 14 November 2013. This guideline provided insights into the way the

municipality of Rotterdam aims to shape (citizen) participation and sets the standards for how the municipality itself as an organization should function and deal with citizens and entrepreneurs who want to think along, participate, co-decide and take initiative. With the introduction of this guideline, the municipality of Rotterdam intended to realize a behavioural and mentality change (Municipality of Rotterdam 2013). Entrepreneurial citizens are mentioned in the ‘Participation Guideline’ and described as citizens who tackle social problems, see opportunities and thus bring about changes:

“The people of Rotterdam take the initiative and contribute towards the city’s development. This has always been the case and will never change. The people of Rotterdam stand up for their city, their neighbourhood and their street. All over the city, you find entrepreneurial people who take on problems in society, identifying opportunities to bring about change” (Participation Guideline Rotterdam 2013, 1).

In our analysis, we found that the language of enterprise is used to address certain groups more often than others (such as welfare recipients, migrants, the elderly, and the youth). Especially, people who ask for something (like social benefits) are expected to give something back in return so that they ‘learn to invest in themselves and grow’ (Coalition agreement Rotterdam 2006–2010).

“We ask people on social welfare benefits to participate actively and not to remain idle. People must make maximum efforts to provide for themselves through paid employment. In individual cases, where paid employment maybe a step too far, we apply the principle of ‘one good turn deserves another’: we ask people on social welfare benefits to do training courses or voluntary work, community activities or to look after relatives at home. This is not just in return for their benefits, but because our main aim is for people to invest in themselves and grow” (Coalition agreement Rotterdam 2006-2010, 5).

Rotterdam was one of the first cities in the Netherlands that obliged welfare recipients to do voluntary work in return for their welfare benefits (Kampen, Veldboer, and Kleinhans 2019). This has led to much discussion and initial disapproval from society. In the next sub-section, we will discuss this case in more detail to give an example of how the language of enterprise in urban policy is manifested and subsequently experienced by citizens and society.

5.5. ‘Giving back to the city’

In 2011, Rotterdam introduced the pilot ‘Full engagement’ in seven neighbourhoods. This pilot aimed to activate welfare recipients with a ‘large distance to the labour market’ with the ultimate goal to make them economically independent and stimulate outflow from social benefits (Municipality of Rotterdam 2011). Welfare recipients were expected to do voluntary work for at least 20 hours a week in return for their welfare benefit. When welfare recipients refused to do so they could get a cutback on their benefit. This ‘Full engagement’ pilot continued in 2013 under the name ‘Societal effort’ (*Maatschappelijke inspanning*) and was extended to seven more neighbourhoods. In 2015, the newly chosen coalition further developed the pilot into a full policy programme and emphasized the term ‘Giving back’ (*Tegenprestatie*). During this coalition period (2014–2018), an action plan was developed aimed to oblige all welfare recipients of 42 neighbourhoods in Rotterdam to ‘give something back to the city’ (which often meant doing mandatory voluntary work) by the end of the coalition-period

(Municipality of Rotterdam 2015). Rotterdam has been ahead of many other cities and developments in national policy, because only on 1 January 2015 the Dutch national government obliged all Dutch municipalities to implement in their local ordinance that welfare recipients should do 'unpaid (societal) useful work' (Participation Act 2015). Municipalities were allowed to fulfil this obligation at their own discretion. This has led to some differences in which some municipalities use more sanctioning methods than others (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment 2017).

The primary goal of current policies is not to reintegrate welfare recipients with a 'large distance to the labour market' (meaning they are not expected to find a paid job within 24 months) into regular jobs, but mainly to let them to do something in return for their benefits (Eleveld 2014). The argument is that when welfare recipients do something in return for their benefit, they gain work experience which helps them to find a paid job faster. Because the mandatory voluntary work welfare recipients need to undertake is often of little additional value for finding a job or improving their social status and position in society, it has received a considerable amount of criticism stating that this policy is 'humiliating' and 'harassing' welfare recipients (Kampen and Tonkens 2018). In different newspapers, images of welfare recipients picking up litter from the streets or collecting garbage (Van der Linden 2015; Cats 2015; Walstra 2015; De Koning 2016) and stories of employees such as street sweepers and home care workers who got unemployed because welfare recipients took over their jobs arose (Cats 2015). In Figure 1, we have provided some examples of newspaper headlines on welfare recipients obliged to do voluntary work. One of the welfare recipients expressed his resentment in an interview with The Financial Daily Newspaper (*Financieel Dagblad*) and stated that he felt criminalized for being unemployed. The Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV) created in 2012 a 'black-book' filled with (negative) experiences to show that the voluntary work the welfare



Figure 1. Newspaper headlines on welfare recipients obliged to do voluntary work.

recipients need to do is a form of 'free labour' and leads to displacement on the labour market (FNV 2012). Peck and Theodore (2000) researched workfare programmes in the US and the UK, and conclude that these programs pay little attention to training and skills upgrading and pressurise participants into accepting contingent jobs. As a consequence welfare recipients move in and out of the labour market as a result of job-loss. Peck and Theodore (2000) argue that workfare programmes normalize contingent work and in turn the demand for contingent work facilitates the extension of workfare programmes, which means that participants are trapped in the lower reaches of the labour market. The same could be the case for the Netherlands. Especially welfare recipients who are deemed least employable (for whom investing in training and skills-upgrading would lead to high expenditures) might be trapped in doing mandatory voluntary work.

Kampen and Tonkens (2018) provide a more nuanced view. They found that experiences of disempowerment or empowerment are dependent on the approach of the caseworker and how they engage with the changing needs of welfare recipients in the course of time. Kampen and Tonkens (2018) conclude that 'workfare policies can be exploitative or humiliating at one stage but empowering at another'. We have chosen to highlight this case because it shows that even though the language of enterprise is dominant in urban policy, this does not mean that it is not being resisted in practice.

6. Discussion and conclusion

Our analysis has shown how the language of enterprise in urban policy shapes the city's identity, legitimizes institutional change within local government functioning and with the goal being 'empowerment' formulates expectations of how citizens (and professionals) should behave. The language of enterprise helps local governments in their attempt to redefine their own role and that of others in a changing institutional order. In creating the image of an entrepreneurial city much is being expected from citizens. With increased emphasis in Dutch society on active citizenship, self-organisation, citizen participation and direct democracy the very meaning of citizenship is also being redefined. In the entrepreneurial city, citizens need to deal with a changed interpretation of 'citizenship', in which they are expected to undertake initiative, be entrepreneurial, independent and responsible. For civil servants and social professionals, this also means that they need to deal with a changed job-interpretation, in which they are expected to 'connect' with citizens and trigger them to undertake initiatives. For both groups, local governments use enterprise language to communicate expectations regarding their new roles. When the language of enterprise is used to empower, it targets specific groups such as people on welfare benefits. The targeted groups are invited and stimulated to reconceive their selves as a business and to invest and work on themselves. This finding seems to contradict some scholars who state that enterprise discourses are a neutral form of subjectification, not targeting specific groups, but everyone in society (Rose 1999; Bröckling 2016).

Furthermore, in accordance with Fairclough's (1991) study on enterprise discourses in political speeches in the UK, we can say that enterprise discourses in the urban policies of Rotterdam and Delft appear in different forms and in different domains, depending on how the discourse interacts with other discourses already situated in

these domains. For example, enterprise discourses in Rotterdam and Delft build upon and are reinforced by already existing discourses on ‘city of work’ and ‘city of knowledge’. When comparing the urban policies of Rotterdam and Delft it became apparent that in Rotterdam, the language of enterprise crosses through several domains of urban policy, while in Delft this language is mainly used to legitimize change in the own governmental functioning. The question is why the language of enterprise has gained such dominance in the urban policy of Rotterdam, but not in Delft? The answer to this question most likely lies in the history, economy, culture and political orientation of each city. In Rotterdam, the language of enterprise, manifested in terms like working hard, and being courageous and strong, is used to describe the city and its residents and to take pride in showing how the city managed to develop itself as Europe’s biggest port city after the city was heavily damaged during the Second World War. The creation of the popular image of Rotterdam as ‘a city of work’ has according to Oude Engberink and Miedema (2001) to do with its economic history as an industrial city, but also its social structure being ‘highly proletarian’ (p. 116). Oude Engberink and Miedema (2001) state that ‘most of the population belonged to the working class, badly educated in formal terms, but trained on the job and possessing a high work ethic: a real blue collar world’ (p. 116). Delft also used to have ‘a thriving manufacturing centre’ with most of it built as ‘social housing for the factory workers’ (Knight 1995, 243). However, after its industrial economy began to decline, Delft focused on presenting the city as a Knowledge City since the early 1990s (Fernández-Maldonado and Romein 2008). With the presence of the largest technological university in the country and several research institutions and knowledge-intensive firms, ‘knowledge’ seemed to be the strongest point of Delft’s economy. In Delft, the language of enterprise is therefore manifested in terms of being innovative and open to change.

This study has contributed to a better understanding of how enterprise language ‘works’ and can be traced. In our analysis, we mainly focused on coalition agreements. Coalition agreements often convey a story about what should be done in the city and which problems should have priority. However, it could be that discourses on this level do not ‘trickle down’ to lower levels. By means of a small case study we have attempted to show that citizens are able to resist hegemonic discourses. Further research could, focus more in-depth on enterprise discourses on the level of individual practitioners. To what extent do civil servants, social workers or citizens actually recognize the presence of an enterprise discourse? And do they adapt to the entrepreneurial qualities expected of them in their daily lives? These can be potential questions for further research. We also observed that in Dutch urban policy, enterprise discourses increase or decrease in dominance depending on different factors, of which the economic situation of the city is seemingly the most important one. In periods of financial setbacks, the usage of enterprise language comes more to the foreground than in times of economic prosperity. In most studies on the enterprise discourse, this discourse is perceived as having ‘no serious rivals’ (Du Gay and Salaman 1992). We are a bit sceptical in this regard and expect that in periods of prosperity, other discourses might prevail. For example, the latest coalition agreement in Rotterdam (2018–2022) put a strong emphasis on sustainability, better air quality and energy efficiency. We might say that the ‘sustainability discourse’ now seems to rival the enterprise discourse.

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