Christoph De Spiegeleer (Ed.)

THE CIVILISING
OFFENSIVE

SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL REFORM
IN 19TH-CENTURY BELGIUM

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The Civilising Offensive

New Perspectives on the History of Liberalism and Freethought

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The Civilising Offensive

Social and Educational Reform in 19th-century Belgium

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1 New Perspectives on Social and Educational Reform during the Long Nineteenth Century. An Introduction

This book is the first volume of a new academic series devoted to the results of scientific workshops and colloquia organised by Liberas/Liberaal Archief, the central archive and documentation centre of the liberal movement in Belgium/ Flanders.[1] On 10 February 2017, the institution organised an academic workshop on 19th-century social and educational reform movements. This topic connects well with the expertise and collection of Liberas/Liberaal Archief on reformist and educational initiatives set up by social or progressive liberals in Flanders. The largest part of this volume consists of a multifaceted selection of studies presented at the colloquium.[2] All contributions explore an array of 19th-century bourgeois initiatives in Belgium that tried to solve the 'social question' by 'civilising' and moralising the lower classes. 'Social reform' refers to a wide variety of efforts taken by an engaged elite to deal with the social question. The concept of the 'social question', in its turn, became in vogue from the 1880s onwards. It is a catch-all term used to describe a wide set of problems related to the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation, which led to extremely poor living conditions for the urban and industrial proletariat. Social problems were related to crime, deviancy, public health, hygiene and their moral side effects.[3] Hence, educational reform initiatives can not be set apart from the social question, as education was considered to be one of the most efficient instruments for reform.

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1 See: www.liberas.eu.

2 Both the colloquium and this publication were made possible thanks to the continuous support of Peter Laroy, Director of Liberas/Liberaal Archief, and the efforts of all those who presented and discussed papers at the colloquium. I would like to thank all the authors who submitted chapters for this book for their time and patience, as well as the reviewers for their valuable comments and suggestions. A special word of thanks goes to Rabea Rittgerodt at De Gruyter Oldenbourg for her commitment and guidance.

3 Chris Leonards and Nico Randeraad, "Transnational Experts in Social Reform, 1840–1880," *International Review of Social History* 55, no. 2 (2010): 219.

Civilising offensive, educationalisation and social legislation

Through a number of concrete case studies, all chapters in this volume contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms behind the 19th-century 'bourgeois civilising offensive'. In the late 1970s-early 1980s, Dutch historians coined the term 'the bourgeois civilising offensive' ("*het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief*"). This referred to 19th-century middle-class attempts to improve the fate of the lower classes, and 'raise' them to a higher, 'civilised' standard of conduct. Initiatives ranged from model factory villages to educational and recreational activities and health campaigns.[4] The term was inspired by the work of Norbert Elias on the civilising process,[5] Michel Foucault's study[6] on the disciplining of the body, and Christopher Lach's book[7] on forces of organised virtue during the 19th century.

The core of the Western civilising process is, in the judgment of Elias' theory, a long-term development in emotion management, an increasing tendency towards self-control that started in the upper strata of society (in the Ancien Régime the nobility, in the 19th century the bourgeoisie) and spread over wider layers of the population through distinction and imitation. Elias' civilisation theory permits little socio-historical differentiation and constitutes only one side of the history of educational and social reform, thereby neglecting the actual effects and impact of these external civilising forces on individuals.[8] The same goes

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4 For the first uses of the term, see: Piet de Rooy, *Werklozenzorg en werkloosheidsbestrijding 1917– 1940. Landelijk en Amsterdams beleid* (Amsterdam: Van Gennep, 1979); Bernard Kruithof, "De deugdzame natie. Het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief van de Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen tussen 1784 en 1860," *Symposion. Tijdschrift voor maatchappijwetenschap* 2, no. 1 (1980): 22–37. For a reconstruction of the intellectual context in which the concept was born in the Netherlands, see: Ali de Regt, "*Beschavingsoffensief* (civilising offensive): from Sociological Concept to Moral Appeal," *Human Figurations* 4, no. 1 (2015); Bernard Kruithof, "The Dutch Bourgeois Civilising Offensive in the Netherlands," *Human Figurations* 4, no. 1 (2015) (accessible via https://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/11217607.0004.1*?rgn=main;view=fulltext). For an overview of the various ideas and initiatives of late 19th-century Dutch reformers against an international background, see: Christianne Smit, *De volksverheffers. Sociaal hervormers in Nederland en de wereld, 1870–1914* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2015).
5 See: Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1976 [1939]); de Regt, "*Beschavingsoffensief* (civilising offensive)".
6 Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
7 Christopher Lash, *Haven in a Heartless World. The Family Besieged* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).
8 One could argue that the concept 'bourgeois civilising offensive' does not fit with Elias' civilisation theory. Elias regards the civilising process as an unintended, unplanned social develop-

for the normalising paradigm of Michel Foucault, where hospitals, prisons, factories and schools exert disciplinary power over the individual, making no distinction between disciplining strategies and the actual effects of these interferences.[9] The concept of 'bourgeois civilising offensive' has gone somewhat out of use because of its association with a one-sided top-down interpretation of the history of social and educational reform, with a focus on disciplinary interests of reformers.[10] Even though few authors in this volume still explicitly use the term, a lot of the case-studies analysed here address various ambiguities of 19th-century civilising activities and initiatives of bourgeois reformers, in particular with regard to their effects and target groups. Together they allow for a less one-sided take on the 19th-century 'bourgeois civilising offensive'.

When studying the 19th-century 'bourgeois civilising offensive', we have to take into account various nuances. First, although the term 'civilising offensive' has a military and disciplining connotation, this does not exclude the benevolent intentions of many reformers, as well as the fact that the new rules and behavioural standards were often in accordance with the wishes and interests of the working-class families concerned, without necessarily being coercive. This does not imply that the labouring poor were a blank slate without a culture and behavioural norms of their own. When using the concept of 'civilising offensive', we should leave room for failed effects of civilising strategies, caused by resistance or indifference. Due to a lack of sources, it is difficult to measure the effects and perceptions of the civilising offensive among the lower classes.[11] Second, it is important to note that 'elevating' the lower classes was not meant to make them the equals of the bourgeoisie. Social barriers were not to be broken down and keep-

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ment, whereas the bourgeois civilising offensive was an intendend and planned initiative to change the behaviour of lower groups. However, though the civilisation process as a whole is unplanned, during that process dominant groups still take specific actions to civilise lower strata towards more disciplined behaviour and self-control. These attempts were part of a more general civilising process that resulted from growing interdependencies between social groups. See: de Regt, "*Beschavingsoffensief* (civilising offensive)".

9 Marc Depaepe, "Educationalisation: A Key Concept in Understanding the Basic Processes in the History of Western Education," *History of Education Review* 27, no. 1 (1998): 19–22.

10 For a critical appraisal of the concept 'civilising offensive' and Elias' theory, see: Jeffrey Tyssens, "Het Willemsfonds als sociaal-culturele organisatie," in *Vlaamsch van taal, van kunst en zin. 150 jaar Willemsfonds (1851–2001)* (Ghent: Willemsfonds/Liberaal archief, 2001), 185–186; Smit, *Volksverheffers*, 11–13. Nowadays, the term 'civilising offensive' is used in a general, public discourse of moral decline to address problems of indecency and rudeness in public spaces, and a lack of norms and values in general. See: de Regt, "*Beschavingsoffensief* (civilising offensive)".

11 See: Smit, *De volksverheffers*; Ali de Regt, *Arbeidersgezinnen en beschavingsarbeid. Ontwikkelingen in Nederland 1870–1940* (Meppel: Boom, 1984).

ing a distance between the bourgeoisie and the common man was still absolutely necessary. The 'civilising offensive' often came with a 'civilising defensive'. This is, for example, shown in chapter 2, which focuses on initiatives aimed at the physical and moral reform of neglected working-class children, who were seen as possible dangers to future society. Chapter 7 on house-building associations stresses the thin line between discipline and humanitarianism, between paternalism and emancipation. Third, various initiatives that were part of this bourgeois civilising offensive did not necessarily reach the poor labour classes (such as the popular restaurants analysed in chapter 6), but offered a way of life to intermediary groups such as the 'better' skilled workers and the petty bourgeoisie, which would serve as examples for the lower groups.[12]

It is also important to note that the actions and initiatives instigated by reformers often had a multidimensional character. An example of an early 20th-century social housing project that combined strategies of social and educational reform was the urban renewal program of the *Istituto Romani di Beni Stabiliti*. The Roman real estate association, founded in 1904, was engaged in the rehabilitation of housing in a depressed slum area in Rome by acquiring and re-modeling run-down city tenements. In 1907, the director general of the society, Eduardo Talamo (1858–1916), gave Italian pedagogue Maria Montessori (1870–1952) the opportunity to open a school in a large tenement house. The *Casa dei Bambini* welcomed poverty-affected children, from age three to seven. Montessori used the school to test and verify her educational theories.[13] Whereas Montessori wanted to develop an innovative pedagogical method based on the principle of auto-education, Talamo regarded the schools of the *Instituto Romani di Beni Stabiliti* first and foremost as part of a larger civilising and moralising offensive towards the poor tenants. Talamo also had to protect the financial interests of the real estate association's shareholders. Talamo and Montessori eventually parted ways in 1909.[14]

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12 Bernard Kruithof, "'Godsvrucht en goede zeden bevorderen'. Het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief van de Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen," in *Tot burgerschap en deugd. Volksopvoeding in de negentiende eeuw*, eds. Nelleke Bakker e.a. (Hilversum: Verloren, 2006), 78–79; Jean Puissant, "Quelques aspects de la moralisation de la classe ouvrière au XIXme siècle," *Réseaux. Revue interdisciplinaire de philosophie morale et politique* 32–34 (1978): 78.
13 Gerald Lee Glutek, "Introduction," in *The Montessori Method. The Origins of an Educational Innovation: Including an Abridged and Annotated Edition of Maria Montessori's The Montessori Method* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004), 14–17.
14 Renato Foschi, "Maria Montessori e la prima Casa dei Bambini dell'Istituto Romano di Beni Stabili (1970)," *Giornale di Storia Contemporanea* 10, no. 2 (2007): 160–175.

Many bourgeois or middle-class reformers gave a key role to education and socialisation to solve the social question. Initiatives to elevate the people morally were bound up with an increased attention on the pedagogical sphere.[15] In the late 1990s, historical educationalist Marc Depaepe propagated building on the notion of 'educationalisation', which was to be further filled in historically, as an alternative to the 'civilisation' and 'normalisation' paradigms within educational historiography.[16] In the 1980s and 1990s, Belgian pedagogues and educational historians began to use the term 'educationalisation' (or 'pedagogisation') as an umbrella word to indicate the steady expansion and increased depth of educational action during the 19th and 20th centuries.[17] These scholars understood 'educationalisation', from the German word "*Pädagogisierung*"[18], as the quantitative and qualitative expansion of the domain of educational/pedagogical theory and practice to numerous areas of everyday life.

In Belgium, progressive parts of the liberal bourgeoisie were at the vanguard of the educationalisation of the daily world of the workers and the broader civilising offensive. Nineteenth-century reformist and educational initiatives set up by social or progressive liberals (*"progressistes"*) have been the subject of research by both historians and pedagogues active in the field of history of educa-

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15 Marc Depaepe, Frederik Herman, Melanie Surmont, Angelo Van Gorp and Frank Simon, "About Pedagogization: From the Perspective of the History of Education," in *Between Educationalization and Appropriation: Selected Writings on the History of Modern Educational Systems*, ed. Marc Depaepe (Leuven: Leuven Univeristy Press, 2012), 190; Frank Simon and Dirk Van Damme, "De pedagogisering van de kinderlijke leefwereld. De "Ligue de l'Enseignement" en de oorsprong van enkele para-scolaire initiatieven," in *Rechten van kinderen. Een tekstbundel van de Rijksuniversiteit Gent naar aanleiding van de Uno-Conventie voor de Rechten van het Kind*, eds. Eugène Verhellen e.a. (Antwerp: Kluwer, 1989), 157, 166; Jean Puissant, "Quelques aspects de la moralisation de la classe ouvrière au XIXme siècle," 67–81.
16 Marc Depaepe, "Educationalisation: A Key Concept," 22.
17 Depaepe, Herman, Surmont, Van Gorp and Simon, "About Pedagogization," 178–179. See, for example: Maria Bouverne-De Bie, "De pedagogisering van sociale problemen. Historische ontwikkelingen in de jeugdwelzijnszorg in Vlaanderen," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Wetenschappen* 36, no. 1 (1991): 1–15; Simon and Van Damme, "De pedagogisering van de kinderlijke leefwereld," 151–181.
18 The concept 'Pädagogisierung' was coined in the late 1950s to the 1960s, but only gained some popularity in German pedagogical historiography in the 1980s. See: Ulrich Herrmann, "Die Pädagogisierung des Kinder- und Jugendlebens in Deutschland seit dem ausgehenden 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Zur Sozialgeschichte der Kindheit*, eds. Jochen Martin and August Nitschke (Freiburg: Alber, 1986), 661–683. Authors translate "*Pädagogisierung*" as both 'educationalisation' and 'pedagogisation'. We prefer 'educationalisation'.

tion in Belgium.[19] Like elsewhere in Europe, the Belgian Liberal Party was divided between a progressive and a conservative wing. Left-wing progressive or social liberals influenced the rise of socialism.[20] Progressive liberals were in favour of a positive stimulating role for the government to end strong social and economic inequalities, but disagreed on the exact extent of desirable state intervention in the social question.[21] With regard to social politics, these *progressistes* clearly differed from conservative liberals. They propagated measures to benefit workers and extend suffrage. They also built bridges with the labour movement. Social liberals claimed that the worker was socially inferior because he was intellectually inferior. Instead of class segregation, they strived for integration, which would ease the fear of the upper classes and avoid workers turning into dangerous collectivists or anarchists.[22] Secularised education was a major pillar

19 Marc Depaepe, *De pedagogisering achterna. Aanzet tot een genealogie van de pedagogische mentaliteit in de voorbije 250 jaar* (Leuven/Amersfoort: Acco, 1999), 176–177. For the role of the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*, see: Simon and Van Damme, "De pedagogisering van de kinderlijke leefwereld," 151–181. For an overview of liberal francophone associations which offered popular education (conferences, distribution of books, popular libraries, excursions) to the working classes between 1860 and 1880, see: Jacques Lory, "Les Sociétés d'éducation populaire de tendance libérale 1860–1880," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 10, no. 1–2 (1979): 217–254. The influence of progressive liberals in the 1860s and 1870s was important for the growth of these societies. Lory compared the following societies: *Soirées Populaires* in St-Josse-ten-Node (1863), the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* (1864), the *Société Franklin* in Liège (1865), and the *Cercle des Réunions Populaires de Mons et du Hainaut* (1876). For an overview of the activities of the branches of the *Willemsfonds* concerning popular education in Flanders and Brussels, see: Luc Pareyn, "Het Willemsfonds en de volksontwikkeling," in *Het Willemsfonds van 1851 tot 1914* (Ghent: Provinciebestuur Oost-Vlaanderen, 1993), 185–223. See also: Catharina Lis, Hugo Soly and Dirk Van Damme, *Op vrije voeten? Sociale politiek in West-Europa (1450–1914)* (Leuven: Kritak, 1985), 179–180.
20 Carl Strikwerda, *A House Divided. Catholics, Socialists and Flemish Nationalists in Nineteenth-Century Belgium* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 32. For an overview of the political translation of social liberal ideas in the Netherlands, Britain and Germany around 1900, see: Fleur de Beaufort and Patrick Van Schie, *Sociaal-liberalisme* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2014), 111–148.
21 Carmen Van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres* en de sociale kwestie in de negentiende eeuw. Tussen lokaal en internationaal" (PhD. diss., University Ghent, 2015), 375; René Vermeir and Jeffrey Tyssens, *Vrijmetselarij en Vooruitgang. De Gentse progressistenloge La Liberté (1866–1966)* (Brussels: ASP Editions, 2016), 140.
22 Els Witte, Jan Craeybeckx and Alain Meynen, *Political History of Belgium from 1830 onwards* (Brussels: ASP Editions, 2009), 78. For a reconstruction of the political culture shared by Brussels *progressistes* during the second half of the 19th century, see: Christoph De Spiegeleer, "Charles Potvin (1818–1902) en de progressistische politieke cultuur," *Revue Belge de Philologie et de Histoire* 91, no. 2 (2013): 387–425. For a study of the way the Ghent *progressiste* Masonic

of the progressive liberal plans to solve the social question. When in 1879, a liberal Belgian government enacted a new primary school law that undermined the role of the Church in public elementary schools, the progressive liberal *Ligue de l'Enseignement* had already been active for years as a pressure group for a new primary school law.[23] Chapter 5 of this volume explores the difficulties with which the local circles of this educational reform association, which tried to promote popular adult education through libraries and conferences, were confronted.

The importance of the progressive liberal belief in popular secular education as a means to moral and intellectual elevation of the working classes can also be seen in the organisation of the first holiday colonies by liberal philanthropic organisations in the late 19th century, supported by liberal municipal authorities.[24] In these colonies, weak and poor schoolchildren spent their time playing and walking in the open air to strengthen their fragile health.[25] Some evolved into permanent school colonies, such as the 'open-air school' of the *Diesterweg Hulpkas voor Behoeftige Schoolkinderen* ('Diesterweg Assistance Fund for Needy Schoolchildren') in Heide-Kalmthout, where intellectual education took place outside the classroom in the open air.[26] In 1904, the permanent school colony of this left-liberal education association officially opened its doors to children from Antwerp municipal schools. Initiatives such as these showed the expansion of the medical and pedagogical argument beyond the boundaries of the traditional school environment.[27]

The process of educationalisation not only consisted of an increasing number of child-rearing institutions and educational programs but was also related

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lodge *La Liberté* tried to solve the social question through concrete philanthropic initiatives, see: chapter 5 in René Vermeir and Jeffrey Tyssens, *Vrijmetselarij en Vooruitgang*.

23 See: *Histoire de la Ligue de l'Enseignement et de l'Éducation ermanente, 1864–1989* (Brussels: Ligue de l'Enseignement, 1990).

24 Simon and Van Damme, "De pedagogisering van de kinderlijke leefwereld," 151–181; Martine Vermandere, *We zijn goed aangekomen! Vakantiekolonies aan de Belgische kust (1887–1980)* (Brussels/Ghent: ASP Editions/AMSAB, 2010), 23–29, 40–48. In 1878, the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* already tried to establish its own holiday colony for weak and poor children.

25 See: Vermandere, *We zijn goed aangekomen!*.

26 Simon and Van Damme, "De pedagogisering van de kinderlijke leefwereld," 165.

27 Geert Thyssen and Marc Depaepe, "The Sacralization of Childhood in a Secularized World: Another Paradox in the History of Education? An Exploration of the Problem on the Basis of the open-air school Diesterweg in Heide-Kalmthout," in *Between Educationalization and Appropriation*, 89–117. Liberas/Liberaal Archief stores archives of the Diesterweg Assistance Fund for Needy Schoolchildren. The permanent school colony in Heide-Kalmthout continued to function till 1963.

to the increasingly central role of the pedagogical in society. The 'educational gaze' also manifested itself in domains and initiatives that did not originally belong to the professional fields of teachers and educators.[28] For example, we can see a growing pedagogisation of penal punishment of juvenile delinquents, in which prisons were becoming schools and prisoners were becoming pupils, in successive denominations of the St.-Hubert prison for juvenile (male) offenders. This prison for male minors, the first in Belgium, opened its doors in 1844. In 1867, it became a "*maison pénitentiaire et de réforme*", and in 1881, the prison was turned into a "*maison special de réforme*", leaving behind every explicit textual reference to the penitentiary and penal character.[29]

Children were not the only people who were subjected to the influence of educationalisation and civilising offensives. Chapters 6 and 7 stress how ideas of moral uplift and practical instruction were present in reformist initiatives sponsored by reformers and associations such as "*cités ouvrières modèles*", 'model housing quarters', and "*fourneaux économiques*", 'people's kitchens'. Reformers integrated down-to-earth activities such as working in the small garden of one's own house, or eating in a cheap popular restaurant, in the broader perspective of the moralisation and civilisation of the working classes. It was believed that maintaining gardens in model workers' quarters of mid-century house building associations would keep labourers away from pubs and other immoral places. The food culture of cheap restaurants instigated by Dutch and Belgian social reformers was also explicitly presented as an alternative to drinking joints, with strict behavioural guidelines. Hence, both gardens and dining halls became informal educational spaces within the bourgeois civilising offensive.

"*Visiteurs du pauvre*" and rent collectors active in various European cities intervened in the personal living spaces of worker families and regarded the houses of the working classes as educational spaces within the civilising offensive. Already in Joseph-Marie de Gérando's 1824 study on philanthropy as an empirical science, *Le visiteur du pauvre*, the French philanthropist stressed the importance of personal visits to check the cleanliness and orderly state of the interiors in which the poor lived as signs of their moral condition.[30] In the 1860s, the influential English social reformer Octavia Hill (1838 – 1912) began what was referred to as 'friendly rent collecting' in a London slum. Hill and her assistants not

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28 Depaepe, Herman, Surmont, Van Gorp and Simon, "About Pedagogization," 178 – 179.
29 Jenneke Christiaens, "A History of Belgium's Child Protection Act of 1912. The Redefinition of the Juvenile Offender and his Punishment," *European Journal of Crime, Criminal Law and Criminal Justice* 7, no. 1 (1999): 8.
30 Michel Perrot, "L'Oeil du baron ou le visiteur du pauvre," in *Du visible à l'invisible. Pour Max Milner*, ed. Stéphane Michaud (Paris: José Corti, 1988), 63 – 71.

only managed the buildings but also the tenants, and taught them lessons of self-help and self-reliance through personal contacts and inspections. Hill believed that families could learn and develop the necessary norms and values in their house under the right circumstances.[31] This professional 19th-century social work discourse of individual help for the 'deserving' poor proved to be an enduring legacy in social work, extending into the 20th century.[32]

Aside from offering a better understanding of broader epochal processes such as educationalisation and civilising offensives, a close study of the efforts of social and educational reformers that dealt with the social question before the widespread emergence of social legislation helps us understand how welfare states are historically grown constructs, which have been long in the making. When in the 1980s Dutch social scientists began to use the term 'civilising offensive', they used it to refer to middle-class initiatives that sooner or later changed into a form of state intervention, be it in the domain of poor relief, child protection, unhealthy housing, prison life or infant care.[33] In fact, the expertise and authority of reformers left their imprint on the formation of (later) social legislation, although the road was often long and direct influence is not always easy to trace. For example, Octavia Hill helped pressure the British government into passing the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Improvement Act in 1875. The act permitted local councils to buy up areas of slum dwellings in order to clear them.[34]

Regulations of the industrial labour process and measures to educate and ensure the welfare of children were enacted into law in many industrialising capitalist nations during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Politicians often built on the practical blueprints initiated by the (private or mixed private/public) actions of reformers, through organisations such as housing associations, educational societies and co-operative societies, and with the help of the production of knowledge through the exchange of ideas and expertise of intellectual elites on international fora. Knowledge-bearing groups and knowledge-generating institutions influenced the framing of issues, and helped identify and characterise

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31 For the international influence of Hill, see: Smit, *Volksverheffers*, 156–165.

32 John Harris, "State Social Work: Constructing the Present from Moments of the Past," *British Journal of Social Work* 38, no. 4 (2008): 666.

33 See: de Regt, "*Beschavingsoffensief* (civilising offensive)".

34 Ken Blakemore and Louise Warwick-Booth, *Social Policy. An Introduction. 4th edition* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2013), 235.

social problems associated with the effects of capitalist industrialisation on which states could act.[35]

Each state has its own historical trajectory of social legislation.[36] In Belgium, the 1880s were particularly stirring years. The riots and strikes of March 1886 shook bourgeois society out of its complacency and instigated a first wave of social legislation. The years 1886–1914 witnessed a considerable growth of social legislation, and the Belgian state, social policies and previously produced social knowledge became intimately intertwined.[37] Take, for example, social laws on housing (1889) and child protection (1912), two topics treated in different contributions in this volume. In 1889, the Catholic government promulgated a law on the housing of labourers. Building houses for the poor became a task of house-building associations, which could borrow money from a national savings bank. Although this law came into being as a reaction to the social upheavals of 1886, the government could rely on a long tradition of reflection and private initiatives regarding social housing.[38] In 1887, the High Council for Public Hygiene pointed out the fact that "illuminated minds have been insisting for a long time that it is necessary to create rural dwellings, near the industrial centres, where the workers can enjoy clean air, a cheap life and rest".[39] The central goal of the 1889 housing law was the integration of workers by turning them into house owners living in the surroundings of urban centres, without the direct intervention of the national government. This idea had already been spread transnationally in the 1850–1860s, and resembled the Mulhouse Model. Furthermore, as shown in chapter 7, the latter had already inspired small-scale housing projects in Belgium in the 1850s and 1860s.

The Belgian Child Protection Act of 1912, which brought the problem of juvenile offenders, abandoned children and educational or social surroundings into one legal frame, also did not come out of nowhere. It was based on the decades

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35 Theda Skocpol and Dietrich Rueschemeyer, "Introduction," in *States, Social Knowledge, and the Origins of Modern Social Policies*, eds. Dietrich Rueschemeyer and Theda Skocpol (Princeton: Princeton University Press/New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1996), 3–13

36 See: Lis, Soly and Van Damme, *Op vrije voeten?*, 182–197.

37 Gita Deneckere, "Nieuwe Geschiedenis van België, 1878–1905," in *Nieuwe Geschiedenis van België. Deel I. 1830–1905* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2005), 565–577.

38 Van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres*," 69–70.

39 Cited in Pascal De Decker, "A Garden of Eden? The Promotion of the Single-Family House with a Garden in Belgium before the Second World War," in *The Powerful Garden: Emerging Views on the Garden Complex*, eds. Valerie Dewaelheyns, Kirsten Bomans and Hubert Gulinck (Antwerp: Garant, 2011), 38.

old 'social defence doctrine'[40], as proposed and defended at international congresses by Adolphe Prins (1845–1919), professor of penal law (1876–1919) and general inspector of prisons (1887–1917), and other experts in the new science of criminology.[41] The idea of social defence implied an intensified search into pre-delictual situations. In doing so, it reserved a key role for child protection in an all-embracing quest to prevent (future) crimes.[42] Prins inspired the legislative actions of Jules Lejeune (1828–1911), Minister of Justice between 1887 and 1894, including the introduction of the first Belgian project for a child protection act in 1889, which provided the blueprint for the law of 1912.[43]

In the remainder of this brief introduction, we will sketch the general historical context of social and educational reform in Belgium, focusing on the particularities of Belgian history which explain why Belgium is such a 'great small nation' to conduct research into social and educational reform, followed by a closer look at the role of the city of Ghent as a 'social laboratory'. We conclude by setting out the general outline of the volume and position the various chapters in the context of international historiography.

Social and educational reform in nineteenth-century Belgium

All chapters in this book start from Belgian initiatives and reformers, or the impact of foreign reform models on Belgian soil, to highlight various middle-class attempts at improving the fate of the lower classes. Chapters 6 and 8 explicitly focus on parallels and differences between Belgium and the Netherlands. All contributions are proof of a considerable amount of recent scholarly interest in social and educational reform in 19th-century Belgium, both among historians and among pedagogues specialised in the history of education. We identify three main reasons why Belgium is such a 'great small country' for the exploration of social and educational reform as a response to the social question in Europe: (1)

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40 See: Françoise Tulkens, *Généalogie de la défense sociale en Belgique (1880–1914). Travaux du séminaire qui s'est tenu à l'Université Catholique de Louvain sous la direction de Michel Foucault* (Brussels: Story-Scientia, 1988).

41 Stef Christiaensen, *Tussen klassieke en modern criminele politiek* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2004), 502–503.

42 Christiaens, "A History of Belgium's Child Protection Act," 16–17.

43 Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, *Les pénitenciers pour les enfants en Belgique au XIXe siècle (1840–1914)* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Commission internationale pour l'histoire des Assemblées d'États, 1996), 55–64, 91–97.

late 19th-century Belgium was a heavily industrialised state, with long hours and low wages, (2) from the mid-century until the Belle Époque, Belgium was an important site of internationalism/transnational intellectual exchange of ideas for solving the social question, and (3) the analysis of reformist initiatives enables us to gain insights into various national zones of tension in Belgian history. Let us take a closer look at these three elements.

First, around 1850, Belgium was continental Europe's most heavily industrialised state.[44] It was the first nation on the European mainland to experience accelerated industrialisation during the first half of the century. Like Britain and Germany, its industrial base rested on coal, metallurgy and textiles. Until the 1880s, Belgium was second only to Britain as an industrialised country. Although Belgium's industrialisation closely followed the British model, its standards of living were worse. For most of the century, the densely populated country was able to stay competitive on world export markets by virtue of its cheap labour costs, which in turn were heavily dependent on women and children's labour, with widespread poverty and a low standard of living as a consequence.[45] For the majority of the 19th century, the national state mostly served as a regulating power in the social field, without any direct involvement in its organisation. Social provisions such as social housing and poor relief were (in theory) the responsibility of local governments but actually largely depended on private welfare providers such as religious institutes and philanthropic societies, which lead to various types of private/public cooperation.[46] In 1914, Belgium was the last in-

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[44] The Netherlands, on the other hand, would not begin the industrialisation process in earnest until four decades later. See: Thomas Ertman, "Liberalization, Democratization, and the Origins of a 'Pillarized' Civil Society in Nineteenth-Century Belgium and the Netherlands," in *Civil Society Before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Nancy Bermeo and Philip Nord (Lanham: Rowmand and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 156.

[45] Strikwerda, *A House Divided*, 35.

[46] Hendrik Moeys, "Social Policy by Other Means from a Comparative Historical Perspective. Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Belgium (1800 –1920)," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, no. 1 (2018), https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13876988.2017.1409939; Leen Van Molle, "Social Questions and Catholic Answers. Social Reform in Belgium, c. 1780 – 1920," in *Charity and Social Welfare*, ed. Leen Van Molle (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2017), 104. This can for example be seen in two case studies from the late 19th century explored in chapter 2. The care for the abandoned children of Ghent was organised through a convention between the religious congregation of the *Zusters Kindsheid Jesu* and the Council of Civil Hospices. The head of Belgium's first sea hospital in Wenduine (1881), François Van Den Abeele (1824 – 1900), entered into an agreement with the congregation of the *Zusters van de Bermhertigheid Jesu* to have a nursing staff at his disposal. See: Vermandere, *We zijn goed aangekomen!*, 30 – 31.

dustrialised nation to introduce compulsory primary education, from the age of six.[47]

Second, Belgium was not only the most industrialised country on the continent until the late 19th century, it was also an 'international nation' where one could find diverse international associations and an active community of experts who travelled and networked beyond national boundaries. From the mid-century until the Belle Époque, many international social reform associations were based in Belgium, as were their main international actors.[48] Belgium's geographical position, liberal association laws, well-developed railway network, and the country's linguistic profile (with a prominence of French) benefited its position as an important site of internationalism.[49] The large number of international congresses held in Belgium between 1840 and 1880 on penitentiary reform, welfare, hygiene, social science and statistics is proof of the country's leading position in the struggle for social reform.[50] In the 1850s and 1860s, ambitious international attempts were launched to solve the social question. In fact, social problems, such as unhygienic houses in industrial cities, did not stop at the borders of the nation-state, sometimes literally, as pandemic diseases spread out transnationally.[51] The first proper international association for open international debate on social engineering, the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences*, was founded in 1862 by liberals and republicans from across Europe and based in Brussels. Its first four-day congress was held in Brussels in September 1862. Despite its broad thematic scope, the protagonists of the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences* shared an ambition to solve the social question.[52]

Third, the history of social and educational reform in Belgium offers an excellent case for studying the impact of linguistic, philosophical and socio-economic areas of conflict and the resulting segmentation of civil society. As Carl Strikwerda has pointed out, 19th-century Belgium provides an especially intriguing example of the road from the industrial revolution to the welfare state, since

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47 Stephen K. Sanderson, *Modern Societies. A Comparative Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 131–132.

48 Christian Müller and Jasmien Van Daele, "Peaks of Internationalism in Social Engineering: A Transnational History of International Social Reform Associations and Belgian Agency, 1860–1925," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 90, no. 4 (2012): 1299–1300.

49 Daniel Laqua, *The Age of Internationalism and Belgium, 1880–1930: Peace, Progress and Prestige* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 9.

50 Leonards and Randeraad, "Transnational Experts in Social Reform," 227.

51 Van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres*," 67.

52 Müller and Van Daele, "Peaks of Internationalism," 1301.

its politics was complicated by much more than just battles between workers and capitalists.[53] Well before the rise of socialism, divisions between anticlerical liberals and Catholics had deeply divided Belgian politics. The demands of the industrial revolution, the expansion of education and the political mobilisation of the masses also challenged the privileged place of the French language in Flanders.[54] Belgium's history is traditionally defined by the presence of three divisions: between Catholics and non-Catholics, between labour and capital, and between Dutch-speakers and French-speakers. The religious-philosophical, the socio-economic and the language dispute had a profound impact on the history of social and educational reform.[55] From the late 19th century onwards, the institutionalisation of societal divisions led to the compartmentalisation or segmentation of Belgian society in separate ideological (Catholic, liberal and socialist) communities/'pillars', each with its own political and social organisations that catered to all the needs of its members 'from the cradle to the grave'.[56] Most research on 'pillarisation' in Belgium has focused on the formation of a strong Catholic pillar.[57] From the late 19th-century onwards, Catholic social work consisted of a broad range of activities and associations stimulating self-help and self-development under strict religious tutelage, such as societies for working-class housing, study circles, temperance societies, women's associations, savings

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53 Strikwerda, *A House Divided*, 27.

54 Strikwerda, *A House Divided*, 15 – 36.

55 Luc Huyse, "Breuklijnen in de Belgische samenleving," *Als in een Spiegel? Een sociologische kaart van België en Nederland*, eds. Luc Huyse and Jan Berting (Leuven: Kritak, 1983), 9 – 25; Luc Huyse, "Political Conflict in Bicultural Belgium," in *Conflict and Coexistence in Belgium. The Dynamics of a Culturally Divided Society*, ed. Arend Lijphart (Berkeley: University of California, 1981), 107 – 126. For the oldest cleavage, the religious-philoshophical divide, see: Els Witte, "The Battle for Monasteries, Cemeteries and Schools: Belgium," in *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 102 – 128. For a seminal overview of Belgian political history that uses the fault line model to investigate areas of conflict, see: Witte, Craeybeckx and Meynen, *Political History of Belgium from 1830 onwards*.

56 For comparisons between Belgium and the Netherlands, see: Maarten Van Ginderachter and Minte Kamphuis, "The Transnational Dimensions of the Early Socialist Pillars in Belgium and the Netherlands, c. 1885 – 1914: An Exploratory Essay," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 90, no. 4 (2012): 1321 – 1337; Ertman, "Liberalization, Democratization, and the Origins of a 'Pillarized' Civil Society".

57 For studies of Catholic pillarisation processes in Belgium within a broader European context, see: Hans Righhart, *De Katholieke Zuil in Europa: Een vergelijkend onderzoek naar het ontstaan van verzuiling onder katholieken in Oostenrijk, Zwitserland, België en Nederland* (Amsterdam: Boom, 1984); Staf Hellemans, *Strijd om de moderniteit: sociale bewegingen en verzuiling in Europa sinds 1800* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 1990).

funds, allotment associations etc.[58] This process of pillarisation culminated after the First World War.

Even more so than national and international contexts, local socio-economic and municipal cultures decidedly influenced the (early) development of social and educational reform initiatives. A lot of the initiatives and reformers treated in the different contributions to this book were situated in the city of Ghent, in the province of East Flanders. The three characteristics we have identified above, as a way to explain the considerable scholarly interest in Belgian social and educational reform movements (the strong presence of industrialisation, internationalism and societal cleavages/pillarisation of civil society), determined the city's political and cultural history during the long 19th century. Ghent was one of the first cities on the continent to industrialise and it remained an industrial enclave in Flanders throughout the 19th century.[59] There was an acute shortage of housing, resulting in the typical "*cités*"or "*beluiken*"; narrow dead-end streets where the most impoverished part of the population lived in dreary, unsanitary conditions (see Figure 1.1).[60] Inadequate city dwellings, a lack of personal hygiene, the inability to provide primary necessities such as food and clothing, and unhealthy and dangerous working conditions in the textile factories led to high mortality rates, particularly for infants as a result of bad feeding habits. In other words, Ghent had evolved from a sleepy medieval town to the notorious 'Manchester of the continent' and was in great need of social and educational reform.[61]

Hence, it is no wonder that progressive liberal reformers instigated various associations and initiatives that tried to elevate and educate the Ghent working classes and develop their self-government, with varying degrees of success. For

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58 In 1867, the *Fédération des Oeuvres Ouvrières Catholiques* was founded to co-ordinate and re-inforce Catholic patronages and moralising initiatives for workers. This federation preceded the *Ligue Démocratique Belge*, founded in 1891, which was an umbrella organisation in which various Catholic associations such as workers' circles, cultural assocations, corporatist guilds, co-operative societies etc. joined together on the basis of the same religious belief. See: Van Molle, "Social Questions and Catholic Answers," 111, 120.

59 Jeroen Backs, "Mortality in Ghent, 1850–1950. A Social Analysis of Death," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 31, no. 3–4 (2001): 533

60 Frank Simon and Dirk Van Damme, "Education and Moral Improvement in a Belgian Industrial Town (1860–1890). François Laurent (1810–87) and the Working Classes in Ghent," *History of Education* 22, no. 1 (1993): 65.

61 See: Backs, "Mortality in Ghent, 1850–1950," 529–556. For more information on the wages of Ghent factory workers in the textile industry, see: Peter Scholliers, *Wages, Manufacturers and Workers in the Nineteenth-Century Factory. The Voortman Cotton Mill in Ghent* (Oxford/Washington: Perg Publishers, 1996).

example, the first people's bank in Flanders, modelled after the institutions founded by Hermann Schulze-Delitzch (1808–1883) in Germany, saw the light in Ghent in 1866. The *Gentsche Volksbank* ('Ghent People's Bank'), a credit association established on a cooperative basis with the liberal reformer Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns (1835–1902) as its president, tried to help the lower classes acquire capital and property by offering credit and saving modalities. The bank loaned mostly start-up capital to traders and craftsmen, and did not reach the poor factory workers of Ghent. The bank in Ghent served as a model for similar institutions in other Flemish cities and remained active until 1905.[62] Another example of Ghent's rich history of social reform, based on the principles of self-help and thrift, was the unemployment fund founded by the city in 1900. The unemployment fund provided municipal financial supplements to individual out-of-work benefits administered by trade unions. This model, devised by Louis Varlez (1863–1930), was soon adopted in cities all over Europe and proved to be crucial in the development of 'subsidised freedom' in social policy at the national level, i.e. the practice of the state granting subsidies to private initiatives that provided social insurance on a voluntary basis.[63]

The city also played an important part in both the first phase of encyclopaedic internationalism during the 1860s, represented by the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales*, and the peak of internationalism on social reform during the Belle Époque, with more specialised congresses.[64] The second large meeting of the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales* took place in Ghent in 1863.[65] When at around the turn of the century a new wave of internationalism in social engineering arose, Varlez established the permanent secretariat of the *Association Internationale pour la Lutte contre*

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62 Van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres*," 257–271.

63 Jasmien Van Daele, "Louis Varlez en de sociale kwestie: de liberale burgerij uitgedaagd," *Handelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent* 61 (2007): 274–275; Guy Vanthemsche, "La Ville de Gand et l'aide aux chômeurs (1900–1914). Une innovation communale à résonance nationale et internationale," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 89, no. 2 (2011): 889–917; Jo Deferme, *Uit de ketens van de vrijheid. Het debat over sociale politiek in België, 1886–1914* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2007), 338.

64 Müller and Van Daele, "Peaks of Internationalism," 1303.

65 Kathleen Devolder, *Gij die door 't volk gekozen zijt ... De Gentse gemeenteraad en haar leden, 1830–1914* (Ghent: Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde, 1994), 157–158. For more info on the meeting in Ghent in 1863, see chapter 9.

Figure 1.1: Narrow dead-end street in Ghent (*beluik*) (1900–1950) (© University Archives Ghent)

le Chômage in Ghent in 1911. The city of Ghent hosted the international conferences of this association in 1911 and 1913.[66]

The overlapping zones of tensions in Belgian society we referred to earlier – the conflicts between socio-economic groups, between Catholics and non-Catholics, and the language dispute – and the related process of the growing pillarisation of civil society were very much present in the history of social and educational reform in the city of Ghent. The city was a melting pot of liberal, socialist, Catholic and *flamingant* emancipatory movements. With regard to the language dispute, the Ghent milieu of social liberal reformers sometimes suffered from tensions and concurrence between a francophone and a Flemish-minded/flamingant wing.[67] The Catholic-secular division ran even deeper into Ghent society. For example, the workers' societies instigated by the anticlerical reformer François Laurent (1810 – 1887), which functioned as evening schools and recreational associations, were liberal counterparts of existing Catholic clubs. Laurent's aim was to keep the pupils of the Ghent adult schools out of the hands of the Church.[68] Eventually, the first clear beginnings of mass pillarisation in Belgium emerged in late 19th-century Ghent. Between the mid-1880s and the late 1890s, Ghent socialists created a socialist 'state within a state' with a network of intertwined organisations such as the consumer cooperative *Vooruit* ('Forward'), unions, political groups and leisure clubs such as the *Gentse Volkskinderen* ('The Children of the Popular Classes from Ghent').[69] By the early 1890s, a distinctive Catholic working-class movement also emerged in the city, which cop-

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66 Jasmien Van Daele, *Van Gent tot Genève: Louis Varlez, een biografie* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2002), 96 – 101; Van Daele, "Louis Varlez en de sociale kwestie: de liberale burgerij uitgedaagd," 278.

67 Van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres*," 345; Jacques Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire, 1842 – 1879. Tome 1* (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1979), 350; *Het Volksbelang*, June 29, 1872, 2.

68 Simon and Van Damme, "Education and Moral Improvement," 77. Liberas/Liberaal Archief stores the archives of two of the most important Laurent's workers' societies which survived till the 1970s.

69 See: Guy Vanschoenbeek, *Novecento in Gent. De wortels van de sociaal-democratie in Vlaanderen* (Antwerp: Uitgeverij Hadewijch, 1995). The *Gentse Volkskinderen* was an educational initiative for working-class children of socialist militants, founded in 1898. Boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 14 were taken on short and longer holiday trips. See: Bruno Vanobbergen and Frank Simon, "'Merci à tous et à toutes de votre propagande, si pleine de charme et de sourires': On Tour with the Socialist Travelling Colony Gentse Volkskinderen (1898 – 1915)," *History of Education* 40, no. 3 (2011): 315 – 332.

ied the socialist model, but at the same time explicitily presented itself as 'anti-socialist'.[70]

The outline of the volume and methodological perspectives

The chapters in this book are grouped into three thematic sections. The authors of the research shaping part I, 'Social-pedagogical perspectives on the social question', are for the most part active at the Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy of Ghent University. Social pedagogy has not been developed as a coherent system of theory building. In general, social pedagogical research deals with the relations between individuals and their social environment by paying special attention to the social preconditions for individual development and the pedagogic opportunities for influence and help.[71] Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the mechanisms of spatial and ideological in- and exclusion and some of the paradoxes that characterised the process of educationalisation in the history of child care initiatives and leisure time associations in 19th-century Belgium.

In chapter 2, Lieselot De Wilde, Bruno Vanobbergen and Michel Vandenbroeck analyse three child welfare initiatives in Belgium within the broader European context of reformers who discussed the fate of the 'unfortunate children' of the working classes during international congresses. They show how educationalisation of the 'child at risk' went hand in hand with medicalisation, making the parents invisible. The late 19th-century medico-moral discourse considered unfortunate children to be both at risk and a future risk for society. De Wilde, Vanobbergen and Vandenbroeck's 'rhetorical' analysis of a selection of photographs of child care initiatives attests to how the visual turn in the humanities and social sciences has led to a methodological renewal in the history of education. Recent studies no longer consider the visual as a transparent source with a stable meaning, but consider photographs as complex objects in their material and affective qualities, shaped by historical circumstances.[72]

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70 For the history of the *Antisocialistische Werkliedenbond* ('Anti-Socialist Workers' League'), founded in 1891, see: Strikwerda, *A House Divided*, 229–238.

71 Juha Hämäläinen, "Defening Social Pedagogy: Historical, Theoretical and Practical Considerations," *British Journal of Social Work* 45 (2015): 1022–1038.

72 See: Inés Dussel and Karin Priem, "The Visual in Histories of Education: A Reappraisal," *Paedagogica Historica* 53, no. 6 (2017): 641–649; Inés Dussel, "The Visual Turn in the History of Education: Four Comments for a Historiographical Discussion," in *Rethinking the History of*

In chapter 3, through a spatial micro-analysis, Evelyne Deceur, Maria Bou-verne-De Bie and Angelo Van Gorp focus on the parallel pillarised social-cultural infrastructure set up by Catholics, liberals and socialists in one particular work-ers' neighbourhood in Ghent during the late 19th to early 20th centuries. They show how the raw materials for the construction of the future Catholic pillar were already in place well before the late 1870s, in the form of a network of Cath-olic social work, instructional and leisure-time bodies. The authors trace the his-torical roots of current participatory projects in urban renewal programs, where participants are seen as passive consumers instead of active co-designers and in-strumental initiatives have become self-evident, to 19th-century pillarised social-cultural infrastructures.

The study of continuities and discontinuities in the development of educa-tional practices is an important research line at different departments of Educa-tional Sciences in Flemish universities.[73] When comparing the two collective chapters of Part I, written by pedagogues/educationists, with the subsequent contributions of historians in the following sections, it becomes clear that there is still some kind of tension in the field of history of education between the applied interests of educationists specialised in history and the aspirations of historians to depict the past of educational and social reform on its own terms.[74] Both chapters authored by historical educationists link history to current

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Education. Transnational Perspectives on its Questions, Methods, and Knowledge, ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 29 – 49.

73 Frank Simon, trained as an historian, and Marc Depaepe, trained as an educator, have been working together for decades. As representatives of the universities of Ghent and Leuven, they have given the Belgian output within the field of history of education considerable weight abroad. At the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, there is a special centre for the history of educa-tion, with large expertise in the history of educational initiatives for people with disabilities. *Pae-dagogica Historica*, an international journal in the history of education, was born in Ghent Uni-versity in 1961. History of Education is still an important research line of the present-day Department of Social Work and Social Pedagogy at Ghent University. However, in some Europe-an countries the discipline of historical pedagogy is in a state of crisis, with educational scholars who have to increasingly re-orient themselves towards fields of more immediate practical con-cern. For the situation in Finland and France, see: Jukka Rantala, "History of Education Threat-ened by Extinction in Finnish Educational Sciences," and Pierre Caspard and Rebecca Rogers, "The History of Education in France: A Laboriously Useless Science," in *Knowledge, Politics and the History of Education*, ed. Jesper Eckhardt Larsen (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2012), 25 – 39 and 73 – 87.

74 For the difference between the attitudes towards past and present of historians and educa-tionists in post-war England, see: William Richardson, "Historians and Educationists: the Histo-ry of Education as a Field of Study in Post-war England. Part I: 1945 – 1972," *History of Education* 28, no. 1 (1999): 1 – 30; W. Richardson, "Historians and Educationists: the History of Education as

social welfare issues, such as the continuous expansion of the child at risk and the instrumental use of participatory urban renewal programs, whereas historians tend to stay away from current debates. The authors of the two social-pedagogical contributions do not read present-day social arrangements back into history in search for origins, but they share a belief in the influence of deeply embedded historical and cultural habits on present-day social work practices, such as distinctions between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' parents and the conception of categories of children at risk.[75] Both chapters assume that social work's past exists in its present through on-going aspects carried forward from each historical moment.[76] Evelyne Deceur, Maria Bouverne-De Bie and Angelo Van Gorp explicitly use a 'history of the present'-approach, inspired by Foucault's use of history as a means of critical engagement with the present, in order to trace the historical power relations and struggles that gave birth to present-day practice.[77]

In Part II, 'New topics in the history of social and educational reform', three historians fill historiographical gaps by looking at some specific, under-researched aspects of the 19th-century 'bourgeois civilising offensive' in Belgium. All three chapters explore sources which have barely been used in earlier research. Chapters 4 and 5 focus on private initiatives in the battlefield of education. Private liberal fundraising for secularised schools in the 1870s and 1880s is well covered in Belgian historiography.[78] In chapter 4, Stijn Van de Perre shifts the focus towards the social and economic aspects of an early under-researched fundraising initiative for Catholic schools: the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* (1855). Van de Perre's research connects with a recent international interest in the economics of education and school funding among historians of education. In chapter 5, Christina Reimann explores the limited impact of Belgium's most visible liberal educational association, the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* (1864), in

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a Field of Study in Post-war England. Part II: 1972–1996," *History of Education* 28, no. 2 (1999): 109–141.

75 Walter Lorenz, "Practicising History. Memory and Contemporary Professional Practice," *International Social Work* 50, no. 5 (2007): 601.

76 John Harris, "State Social Work," 662–679.

77 David Garland, "What is a 'History of the Present'? On Foucault's Genealogies and their Critical Preconditions," *Punishment & Society,* 16, no. 4 (2014): 365–384. For a genealogical research on Belgian child care history that starts from actual questions, see: Michel Vandenbroeck, "The Persistent Gap between Education and Care: a "History of the Present" Research on Belgian Child Care Provision and Policy," *Paedagogica Historica* 42, no. 3 (2006): 363–383.

78 Jacques Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire, 1842–1879. Tome 2,* 521–585; Frank Simon, "De vrije liberale school te Sint-Amandsberg (1886–1896)," *Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor Oudheidkunde en Geschiedenis te Gent* 31 (1977): 191–224.

small villages and towns. The remarkable difference between the Belgian Leage's failure to integrate the countryside and the local success of the Education League in France is central in Reimann's argument. Although the Belgian Education League has been a subject of research since the 1970s, the local embeddedness of the *Ligue* has not yet been explored in detail.

Not only the financing and organisation of formal education, but also the quality and quantity of the food available to working-class families was a topic of great concern among European reformers. A couple of scholars have already made a link between people's kitchens in Amsterdam and Brussels, i.e. dining halls which offered workingmen a cheap but healthy lunch during their break, and a broader civilising offensive, but never in detail nor in a comparative manner.[79] In chapter 6, Jeffrey Tyssens reconstructs and compares the history of cheap popular restaurants started by social reformers in two Belgian and two Dutch cities in the last third of the 19th century. He explains how these reformers wanted to organise modern alternatives to traditional charitable food distribution through "*volksgaarkeukens*" or "*fourneaux économiques*". However, these restaurants, just like the people's bank in Ghent described earlier, did not necessarily reach the workers with low incomes they were aiming for.

Tyssens' and Vandeperre's careful biographical reconstructions of the lives of Frederik Nysiemus Boer (1818–1915) and Ferdinand de Meeûs (1798–1861), reformers coming from completely different backgrounds, give us insights into the various possible motives and ideas behind reformist initiatives. Reimann, on the other hand, gives a voice to many unknown education activists in small Belgian towns and villages. Inspired by the work of educational theorist John Dewey, she places the 'experiences' of these militants at the centre of her chapter. The meticulous historical research of Reimann, Van de Perre and Tyssens clarifies why the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* and the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* did not succeed in achieving a nationwide relevance, and why some people's restaurants fared better than others in the Low Countries. In the case of the Catholic fundraising initiative, the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* failed to have a national impact because of the uncommon business-like approach used by its organisers to raise money and invest, whereas the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* suffered from a considerable social and cultural divide between the centre in Brussels and provincial circles. The success of cheap dining halls seemed to depend on the extent of competition with the boarding house sector and the size of the cities. Hope-

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79 See: Smit, *De Volksverheffers*, 261–265; Jeffrey Tyssens, "Association, Patronizing and Autonomy: Belgian Masonic Lodges as Sponsors of a 'Cooperative' Movement in the 1860s and 1870s," *Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism* 2, no. 2 (2011): 261–292.

fully these valuable findings can inspire others to conduct further historical research into battles around school financing, (failed) processes of educationalisation in rural areas and small towns and the importance of food in reformers' civilising mission, in Belgium as well as in other national contexts.

The chapters of part III focus on transnational connections and circulations of people and ideas. Lately, a lot of research has been conducted on the extent and variations of the transfer of ideas on social reform, which requires writing history from a transnational perspective. Transnational history pays attention to non-state actors that thrive between, across and through different nations. It thus focuses on movements, flows and the circulation of persons and ideas across borders.[80] In the past few years, the historiography of social and educational reform in Belgium has benefited greatly from such a transnational turn. Historians have been focusing their attention on Belgian agency in international reform congresses and associations in order to reconstruct the formation of transnational personal networks and the transfer of ideas and practices.[81]

A focus on transfers and "*histoire croisée*" form the methodological core of history in a transnational perspective.[82] In a 1994 article, French historian Michel Espagne put forth the concept of 'transfers' in his critique of classical comparison. He called for more room to be given to historical studies of transfers, since every nation is constituted not only by its own traditions, but also by transfers from other nations.[83] French historian Michael Werner and his colleague Bénédicte Zimmerman reflected on the limits of comparative methods and transfer studies and introduced the term 'histoire croisée' in the debate on "relational approaches" in order to overcome linear analyses. The notion of an intersection is basic to the *histoire croisée*-approach. Within a *histoire croisée*, entities and objects of research are not merely considered in relation to each other, as in com-

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80 See: Pierre-Yves Saunier, *Transnational History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

81 For a historiographical overview, see: Thomas D'haeninck, Lisa van Diem and Amandine Thiry, "Hervormers en de sociale kwestie in België tijdens de negentiende eeuw," *Contemporanea* 38, no. 4 (2016), http://www.contemporanea.be/nl/article/2016‑4-review-dhaeninck-van-diem-en-thiry.

82 Philipp Ther, "Comparisons, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks. Toward a Transnational History of Europe," in *Comparative and Transnational History. Central European Approaches and New Perspectives*, eds. Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 204.

83 Michel Espagne, "Sur les limites du comparatisme en histoire culturelle," *Genèses* 17 (1994): 112–121.

parative and transfer studies, but also through one another, in terms of relationships, interactions, connections and circulation.[84]

A 2016 article by Carmen Van Praet analysed the transnational transfer and local adaption of housing models for the lower classes.[85] This research was part of a larger research project of Liberas/Liberaal Archief in collaboration with Ghent University, dedicated to the transnational history of social liberalism. We chose to include a reprint of this article as chapter 7 for two reasons in particular. First, there is still an immediate need for concrete empirical research into entangled histories (including *histoire croisée* and transfer history) in order to avoid the methodological debate on relational approaches becoming lost in the abstract.[86] Second, transnational influences played a vital role in the development of social policy. The transfer of practical solutions to the social question occurred through real-life podia, such as world exhibitions, national and international conferences, social institutions such as Toynbee Hall, personal contacts and professional networks. Social housing was a domain par excellence in which international congresses resulted in the transfer of ideas and formalisation of transnational contacts.[87] Van Praet examines the origins of the housing model

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84 Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45, no. 1 (2006): 30 – 50.

85 Carmen van Praet, "The Opposite of Dante's Hell ? The Transfer of Ideas for Social Housing at International Congresses in the 1850 – 1860," *Transnational Social Review. A Social Work Journal* 6, no. 3 (2016): 242 – 261.

86 A recent successful example of an empirical study into transnational links and cross-border flows, in the field of urban reform, is Philipp Wagner's study on expert internationalism in the first half of the 20th century. Wagner examines how the British garden city movement succeeded in influencing Belgian architects and politicians in the post-war reconstruction. He reveals how the First World War offered a unique window for British garden city supporters to influence national building laws across borders. See: Philipp Wagner, *Stadtplanung für die Welt? Internationales Expertenwissen 1900 – 1960* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 39 – 64, 78 – 90. For an entangled history of children's libraries in Belgium, see: Christophe Verbruggen, and Julie Carlier, "An Entangled History of Ideas and Ideals: Feminism, Social and Educational Reform in Children's Libraries in Belgium before the First World War," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 3 (2009): 291 – 308.

87 Smit, *Volksverheffers*, 65 – 72. Smit gives the example of the travels of the Dutch physician Samuel Sarphati (1813 – 1866), who initiated reform initiatives in Amsterdam after having been inspired by foreign examples, such as the Brussels Musée de l'Industrie, and the visits of foreign guests to the workers' housing area of Jacques van Marken (1845 – 1906) in Delft. For an overview of the question of social housing in France, see: Roger-Henri Guerrand, "Espaces privés," in *Histoire de la vie privée, volume 4. De la Révolution à la Grande Guerre*, ed. Michelle Perrot (Paris: Le Seuil, 1987), 325 – 411.

of a French house building association, the *Société Mulhousienne des Cités Ouvrières* in Mulhouse, and its transnational transmission and institutionalisation in various Belgian cities. She overcomes a linear transfer history by elaborating on the local adaptation of the housing model in Belgium, taking convergences, divergences and socio-economic and political factors that influenced local transformations into account. In other words, without explicitly mentioning the relational, interactive and process-oriented method defined by Werner and Zimmerman, Van Praet looks upon the history of social housing as a clear example of *histoire croisée.*

The study of 'networks', defined by Manuel Castells as a "set of interconnected nodes", makes it possible to conduct an empirical transnational study because it offers the opportunity to focus on institutionalised and consolidated forms of cultural exchange.[88] In Chapter 8, Amandine Thiry, Thomas D'haeninck and Christophe Verbruggen conduct a quantative analysis of reformist networks by analysing the changes over time in the memberships of Belgian and Dutch actors in international organisations and conference series devoted to social and educational reform. The tools of a collaborative digital humanities project allowed them to map the number of Belgium-based international educational organisations, highlighting the pivotal role of Belgium in comparison with the Netherlands, as well as to analyse the co-presence of Belgians and Dutch at international congresses. This actor-oriented approach indicates that international educational congresses can not be separated from a wider network formed by international reformist congresses and are deeply rooted in transnational networks that emerged much earlier. Focusing on actors who connected different clusters of reform also enabled the authors to examine how 'educational internationalism' related to the emergence of an international movement for the protection of the child.

The analysis of the composition of social networks does not answer research questions about the intertwinement of local and international discursive fields in (changing) discourses. A biographical focus on the lives and thoughts of individual reformers enables us to gain a deeper understanding of the complex process of performing expertise and the mechanisms behind the cross-border circulation of knowledge. The intellectual mobility of one specific social reformer, the Ghent liberal Auguste Wagener (1829 – 1896), in a transnational network is at the centre of the contribution of Thomas D'haeninck (Chapter 9). Like many other reform-

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88 Manuel Castells, "Materials for an Exploratory Theory of the Network Society," *British Journal of Sociology* 51, no. 1 (2000): 15; Ther, "Comparisons, Cultural Transfers, and the Study of Networks," 218.

ers, Wagener proved to be a "rooted cosmopolitan"[89] who referred to both the local and the international levels to persuade various audiences. Wagener referred to ideas which circulated in transnational networks and the international prestige of local initiatives to gain legitimacy at home, while referring to his local and professional background to claim expertise on international fora. The intellectual mobility of Wagener illustrates that the transnational perspective cannot simply be considered as a simple change of focus, a supplementary level of analysis to be added to local, regional, or national levels. Far from being limited to a macroscopic reduction, the transnational should be apprehended as a level that exists in interaction with the others, producing its own logics with feedback effects upon other space-structuring logics.[90]

This volume certainly does not cover all aspects of social and educational reform in Belgium. For example, the question of the civilising offensive in the Congo colony and its impact on the metropole is not addressed and the role of social and educational reform initiatives in the preparation of the working classes for the future extension of suffrage is only tackled indirectly. However, each chapter is compelling in its own way and there are also a lot of interesting parallels between them. Together, these chapters stimulate the debate between historians and social pedagogues and place the history of social and educational reform in Belgium within a broader European perspective.

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89 Rooted cosmopolitans are "people who are rooted in specific national contexts, but who engage in regular activies that require their involvement in transnational networks of contact and conflicts". See: Sydney Tarrow and Donatella della Porta, "Conclusion: Globalisation, Complex Internationalism and Transnational Contention," in *Transnational Protest and Global Activism*, eds. Sydney Tarrow and Donatella della Porta (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 237.
90 See: Werner and Zimmerman, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity". For more on the relationship between *histoire croisée* and the transnational dimension, see: Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmerman, "Vergleich, Transfer, Verflechtung. Der Ansatz der *Histoire croisée* und die Herausforderung des Transnationalen," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28, no. 4 (2002): 607–636.

Part I **Social-Pedagogical Perspectives on Social and Educational Reform**

Lieselot De Wilde, Bruno Vanobbergen & Michel Vandenbroeck

2 "On voit bien que c'est un petit malheureux des Hospices". The Child, the Body and the Bath in Nineteenth-Century Belgium: a Cure for the Future?

This chapter focuses on the so-called 'unfortunate children' of the 19th century – children who, in the spirit of the age, allegedly were destined for criminality, as a result of their exposure to misery, neglect and poverty.[1] Using Belgian case studies, we will show how unfortunate working-class children were reformed, and their parents made invisible, in order to minimise the risk of contaminating society. In the second half of the long 19th century, Europe was facing a number of social policy problems, including a high infant mortality and a low life expectancy among the working classes. High infant mortality rates in particular came to be seen as an important problem in many European cities.[2] In 1891 in the province of East Flanders, for example, 20 per cent of male new-borns passed away within the first year after birth.[3] Parentless children, such as foundlings and abandoned children, had an even lower life expectancy. In 1863, Gustave Callier (1819 – 1863), alderman for education in the city of Ghent, described the "*vondelingenschuif*" installed at the hospital of St. Jan, where one could anonymously leave his/her (often sick) child, as a "murderous institute", since 62 per cent of the babies that were left there died in their first three months of

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1 The quote in the title ("It is easy to see that it is an unfortunate child of the Hospices") referred to a (poorly clothed) child, abandoned by his/her parents and registered at the Council of Civil Hospices of Ghent. The child was placed in a family in a rural village. See: letter Jean Nové to secretary Council of Civil Hospices, 12 February 1912, BG 14, n° 61, Council of Civil Hospices, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare (OCMW-Archief), Ghent, Belgium.

2 See: Alain Bideau et al., eds. *Infant and Child Mortality in the Past* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (New York: Longman, 1995); David S Barnes, *The Making of a Social Disease: Tuberculosis in Nineteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). For the situation in Belgium, see: Elise Plasky, *La protection et l'éducation de l'enfant du peuple en Belgique. I. Pour les tout-petits* (Brussels: Société belge de librairies, 1909).

3 Helmut Gaus, *Politieke en sociale evolutie van België* (Leuven: Garant, 2002), 102.

life in the period 1830 – 1863.[4] In fact, Ghent had an exceptionally high infant and child mortality. At the end of the 19th century, more than one in four newborns in Ghent died during their first year, mostly as a result of an unhealthy diet. Bad living conditions and lack of personal hygiene explained the high child mortality. [5]

Overpopulation, the absence of sewerage and waterworks, pollution of watercourses and poor nutrition caused outbreaks of many diseases in the urban housing areas where the working classes were concentrated. Common diseases among the working classes were tuberculosis, syphilis (Venus disease), anaemia and rickets. Exceptionally high infant mortality and diseases such as tuberculosis were at the basis of high death rates in industrialised towns and cities such as Ghent and Verviers.[6] The bourgeois class developed an unrelenting fear of the working classes and their epidemics. In addition to the fear of contamination of the higher social classes by the lower, the public was also afraid of contamination of the countryside by the city. Cities were seen as places of rampant diseases, destruction and death, while rural areas were glorified. The Belgian hygienist Hyacinthe Kuborn (1828 – 1912) said the following during a conference in 1876:

> The existing difference between the city and the countryside is vital in terms of hygiene. Here, dispersion, healthy air and space. And there, concentration, oppressive and corrupt air, and a thousand harmful influences.[7]

The multitude of illnesses and epidemic diseases in cities were believed to be caused by the poor and their unhygienic living conditions, as well as by their lack of morality. In this way, health and virtue were linked intrinsically to one

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4 Michel Steels, "De vondelingen te Gent in de 19e eeuw," *Ghendtsche Tydinghen* 3, no. 4 (1974): 139 – 140. Ghent was the last city to shut down their *vondelingenschuif* (*rolle/tour*) in 1863. For a broader context, see: Jean-Paul Bougard, "Des enfants trouvé en Belgique au début du XIXe siècle: le cas de Bruxelles de 1797 à 1826," in *Enfance abandonnée et société en Europe, XIVe-XXe siècle. Actes du colloque international de Rome (30 et 31 janvier 1987)* (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1991), 259 – 271.

5 Jeroen Backs, "Mortality in Ghent, 1850 – 1950. A Social Analysis of Death," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 31, no. 3 – 4 (2001): 536 – 543.

6 For Verviers, see: Muriel Neven, "Epidemiology of Town and Countryside. Mortality and Causes of Death in East Belgium, 1850 – 1910," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 27, no. 1 – 2 (1997): 39 – 82.

7 Cited in Liesbet Nys, "Nationale plagen. Hygiënisten over het maatschappelijk lichaam," in *De zieke natie*, eds. Liesbet Nys, Henk De Smaele, Jo Tollenbeek and Kaat Wils (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2002), 224.

another.[8] For this reason, the working classes were seen as a danger to the repro-
duction of a healthy population which, in the eugenic spirit of the time, could
disrupt the genetic quality of future generations. Poor families, and poor chil-
dren in particular, became the focus of medical research in order to mitigate
this risk.[9] Authorities considered that the reorganisation of urban living environ-
ments could ameliorate or cure the "anti-social behaviour" of the lowest
classes.[10] At the same time, working men began to rebel against their poor work-
ing conditions and the effects of economic recession. The rioting and strikes of
March 1886 shook Belgian society. Many workers all over Belgium became
more willing to protest and demand reforms from employers and the govern-
ment. In 1885, the socialists founded the Belgian Workers' Party, and over the
next 15 years, they created a nationwide movement.[11]

   During this time, children from the lower classes and their parents were seen
as dangers to the future health of society.[12] Consequently, "the protection of the
child and the healthy status of the population became the domain of organisa-
tions, institutions, expertise and techniques".[13] The increased focus on these
children came from philanthropic societies, judicial and penal institutions
and, later on, from the medical community. International publications from
this time show how, for example in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands
by the second half of the 19th century, medicine had come to perceive itself as
central to paediatric health through classification, treatment and institutions
for 'at-risk children'.[14] Historically, this focus on the 'child at risk' was aligned
with attention to the 'abnormal child'.[15] This fascination with the 'abnormal'
dates back to 1795 at least, when Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777–1855) developed

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8 See: Felix Driver, *Power and Pauperism. The Workhouse System 1834–1884* (Cambridge: Cam-
bridge University Press, 2004).
9 Michel Vandenbroeck, "The Persistent Gap between Education and Care: A "History of the
Present" Research on Belgian Child Care Provision and Policy," *Paedagogica Historica* 42,
no. 3 (2006): 363–383; Bruno Vanobbergen and Nancy Vansieleghem, "Repairing the Body, Re-
storing the Soul: The Seaside Hospital of the City of Paris in Berck-sur-Mer and the French War
on Tuberculosis," *Paedagogica Historica* 46, no. 3 (2010): 325–340.
10 Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 14.
11 Carl Strikwerda, *A House Divided. Catholics, Socialists and Flemish Nationalists in Nineteenth-
Century Belgium* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 109–111.
12 See: Christine Mayer, Ingrid Lohmann and Ian Grosvenor, eds., *Children and Youth at Risk:
Historical and International Perspectives* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009).
13 Vanobbergen and Vansieleghem, "Repairing the Body, Restoring the Soul," 326.
14 *Ibidem*, 327, 331.
15 Ingrid Lohmann and Christine Mayer, "Lessons from the History of Education for a 'Century
of the Child at Risk'," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 1–2 (2009): 1–16.

his conception of the normal curve.[16] This made it possible to compare every individual to 'the average'. Interest in outliers from the average arose from an atmosphere of fear; not so much of the 'abnormal person', but of the effect of abnormality on the social order. After all, a healthy society required a healthy race and healthy members.[17] During the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, children (and their growth and development) were increasingly visualised through diagrams, tables and graphs.[18] This led to an increased interest in tests and other measuring instruments to distinguish 'normal' children from 'abnormal' children. Scientification in the field of education, for example, led to the emergence of experimental pedagogy and pedology.[19]

In turn, this led to the design of pedagogical initiatives targeted at different categories of at-risk children.[20] Institutions or interventions targeting these children included boarding schools, observation centres, alms-houses, holiday camps, infant day and night centres, orphanages and charity schools. The main aim of these often publicly funded initiatives was to limit future risks to both the child and society. Through the initiatives' focus on hygiene, morals and education, the authorities hoped to turn at-risk children into healthy adult citizens. By the end of the 19th century, there was a growing consensus that the education and protection of children was no longer the sole responsibility of parents. Instead, governments came to be seen as necessary co-educators: "taking children into care and protection was a transformative act of governance – a social intervention by the local state to shape future conduct".[21] In late 19th-century Belgium, local public and private interventions based on this idea included seaside hospitals, the care for abandoned children, and infant care centres/crèches and infant consultations. The history of these initiatives highlights the characteristics of the kind of childcare that was intended for the lowest socio-economic class. All were part of a broader program of philanthropic and public interest to protect the future of society.

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16 See: Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, *The Bell Curve—Intelligence and Class Structure in America* (New York: Freepress, 2004).

17 See: Elise Plasky, *La crèche et sa nécessité sociale. Conférence donné le 5 février 1910 à l'Exposition d'Hygiène des enfants du premier âge* (Anvers: Buschman, 1910).

18 André Turmel, *A Historical Sociology of Childhood: Developmental Thinking, Categorization and Graphic Visualization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 66.

19 See: Marc Depaepe, *Zum Wohl des Kindes?: Pädologie, pädagogische Psychologie und experimentelle Pädagogik in Europa und den USA, 1890–1940* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1993).

20 See Mayer, Lohmann and Grosvenor, eds., *Children and Youth at Risk*.

21 Ian Grosvenor, "Geographies of Risk: An Exploration of City Childhoods in Early Twentieth Century Britain," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 1–2 (2009): 229.

An in-depth discussion of each of the above initiatives is beyond the scope of this contribution. Hence, this chapter highlights some specific procedures and practices from each initiative to illustrate the view of at-risk children as a sick body. Based on prior research by the authors, this contribution examines interventions aimed at the physical and moral reform of the so-called 'unfortunate children' of the 19th century. First, this chapter discusses the change of perspective from 'delinquent children' towards 'unfortunate children' that is evident in international congresses on the protection of the child during the second half of the 19th century. Second, this chapter analyses seaside hospitals in Wenduine and Middelkerke, the care for Ghent's abandoned children and the first crèches and infant consultations in some major Belgian cities. We examine these case studies from three different angles. First, we will discuss these interventions' perspectives on 'the child' by analysing narratives in photographs from the time. Next, we examine the notion of 'the body' in the idea of the scientification of risk. Finally, we look at 'the bath' as a metaphor for moral purification.

The 'unfortunate children' of the nineteenth century

Social policy in late 19th-century Europe was characterised by a change in attitude towards living conditions in urban centres. Different youth interventions had already been developed by this time, from alms houses over hospices to orphanages run by philanthropic or charitable considerations. However, the plight of parentless children only emerged on the political agenda in European countries during the last decades of the 19th century, when several conferences on children without parents were held across Europe. The items on the conferences' agendas and the changing perspectives in debates on the protection of the child illustrate the emerging focus on these parentless children. The international penitentiary congresses, eight of which were held between 1872 and 1914, contributed to a widespread concern over 'the poor child'.[22]

Initially, the penitentiary congresses reported on the miserable conditions of children in prisons, including their abuse at the hands of adult inmates, and the

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22 *Les Congrès Pénitentiares Internationaux* of Frankfurt (1846), Brussels (1847), Frankfurt (1857), London (1872), Stockholm (1878), Rome (1885), Saint Petersburg (1890), Paris (1895), Brussels (1900), Budapest (1905) and Washington (1910). See Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, "Le mouvement international en faveur de la protection de l'enfance (1880 – 1914)," *Revue d'histoire de l'enfance "irrégulière"*, 5 (2003): 208.

subsequent risk of moral and physical contamination of these imprisoned children and the effect of this on society. The great promoters of these mid-19th century conventions were, first and foremost, prison inspectors, in particular Charles Lucas (1803 – 1889) from France and Édouard Ducpétiaux (1804 – 1868) from Belgium.[23] From 1880 onwards, the protection of new groups of children (unfortunate children, abandoned or in danger) became a chief agenda item at several conferences, parting with the earlier emphasis on juvenile delinquency, as these children needed to be protected rather than punished. International conferences were dedicated to the protection of childhood, several of which took place in Belgium.[24]

Statistical reports of increasing numbers of delinquent children and worsening crime rates caused alarm in European countries in the late 19th century. This led to the assumption that institutions and interventions for at-risk children had been ineffective and had produced recidivists instead of 'normal' children. Moreover, the existing institutions had become overpopulated due to increasing numbers of delinquent children. This did little to assuage the widespread public fear of poverty, crime and beggars. One lecture held in Brussels in 1857, for example, had the following title: "If you do not destroy pauperism, pauperism will destroy you".[25] Vagabonds, abandoned children, or parentless children in general, were seen as embodying the features of potential risks to future society. The authors of an international, comparative study on Western policy concerning the protection of children between 1820 and 1914 argued how, in the last quarter of the century, a logic of punishment shifted towards a doctrine of re-education and protection. They described the change in public opinion as follows:

23 Dupont-Bouchat, "Le mouvement international en faveur de la protection de l'enfance," 207 – 208. Édouard Ducpétiaux was inspector-general of the Belgian prison system for 30 years. On Ducpétiaux, see: Bert Vanhulle, "Dreaming about the prison: Édouard Ducpétiaux and Prison Reform in Belgium (1830 – 1848)," *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* 14, no. 2 (2010): 107 – 130.
24 Dupont-Boucat, "Le mouvement international en faveur de la protection de l'enfance," 210. See also: Catherine Rollet, "La santé et la protection de l'enfant vues à travers les Congrès internationaux (1880 – 1920)," *Annales de démographie historique* 101, no. 1 (2001): 97 – 116. The first international conference exclusively dedicated to the protection of children took place in Paris in 1889. In October 1890, the *Congrès International pour l'Étude des Questions Relatives au Patronage des Détenus et à la Protection des Enfants Moralement Abandonnés* (International Conference for the Study of Questions relating to Patronage of Detainees and the Protection of Morally Abandoned Children) took place in Antwerp. This conference was a big success, with 124 foreign attendants. See chapter 8 in this volume for more information on the broader role of this conference.
25 Cited in Romain Vanlandschoot, *Sluit ze op... Jongeren in de criminaliteit, 1400 tot nu* (Leuven: Davidsfonds, 2008), 186.

> Feeling sorry for unfortunate children when they are inoffensive, punishing them when they are guilty will not suffice any longer. It is necessary to consider them as victims of neglecting or unworthy parents. They need education and protection. This has to be done because the unfortunate, abandoned child is a danger for society.[26]

This oscillating focus on the endangered and the dangerous, on the culpability of abusing parents and that of their abused children, and on the innocent past and compromised future featured in discussions on the "*enfant moralement abandonné*" ('morally abandoned child') and "*la déchéance de la puissance paternelle*" ('the decay of parental authority').[27] At-risk children were seen as children exposed to misery, desolation and parental neglect.[28]

The innocent dangerous child

From 1880 to 1890, reformers worked to develop systems focused on prevention rather than repression. Debates on social policy at this time were dominated by the question of whether at-risk children were to blame for their plight. This discussion led to the idea of the "innocent criminal child".[29] For example, the opening session of the penitentiary conference in St. Petersburg in June 1890 focused on "*l'enfant malheureux*".[30] The international conference on patronage and the protection of socially abandoned children, organised in Antwerp a few months later, established a modern definition of 'children at risk': "children who, due to weaknesses, negligence, serious errors of the parents or others are left to themselves and deprived of education".[31]

This idea arose from crime prevention efforts, amidst an emerging understanding that incarceration alone could not address the problem of criminality.

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26 Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat and Eric Pierre, eds., *Enfance et justice au XIXe siècle. Essays d'histoire comparée de la protection de l'enfance 1820 – 1914. France, Belgique, Pays-bas, Canada* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001), 257.
27 Sylvia Schafer, *Children in Moral Danger and the Problem of Government in Third Republic France* (Princeton: University Press, 1997), 73; Carine Steverlynck, *Kleine martelaars. Een historisch document over misbruikte kinderen, kindermishandeling, incest en prostitutie* (Antwerp: Icarus, 1997), 260.
28 Juliane Jacobi, "Between Charity and Education: Orphans and Orphanages in Early Modern Times," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 1– 2 (2009): 51– 66.
29 See: Chris Leonards, *Ontdekking van het onschuldige criminele kind* (Utrecht: Verloren, 1995).
30 Dupont-Bouchat, "Le mouvement international en faveur de la protection de l'enfance," 213.
31 Cited in Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, *Les pénitenciers pour enfants en Belgique au XIXe siècle (1840 – 1914)* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Commission internationale pour l'histoire des Assemblées d'États, 1996), 82.

The evolution towards protection and re-education emerged from philanthropic networks and patronages of "the fathers and mothers of the movement of children at risk".[32] These so-called 'educational children' were seen as children deprived of good parenting. This led to the creation of novel categories of at-risk children, also known as abandoned children, foundlings, vagrants and orphans. During this period, categories emerged such as "*l'enfant en danger*", "*l'enfant morallement abandonné*", "*l'enfant incorrigible*" and "*l'enfant martyr*".[33] These concepts had become in vogue by the end of the 19th century, and were discussed and approved by the international conferences held in St. Petersburg and Antwerp in 1890.

The debates and agendas of subsequent penitentiary conferences further developed this idea. This led to a growing consensus that crime rates would drop, and eventually disappear, if society could protect these children. These debates illustrate that at-risk children were no longer regarded as criminals, but as children in need of state protection and support from private philanthropic societies that operated as legal substitutes for the children's parents. The notion of risk replaced the focus on intervention, with an abstract combination of factors designating statistical sets as 'populations at risk' based on probability rather than cause.[34] More recently, this concept of 'the child at risk' has been discussed extensively in international literature.[35] Children who had fluctuated between being at risk and becoming a risk became the subject of intervention. In this way, the child at risk had many faces:

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32 Jeroen Dekker, "Children at Risk in History: A Story of Expansion," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 1–2 (2009): 18.

33 Dupont-Bouchat, "Le mouvement international en faveur de la protection de l'enfance," 209; Cynthia Connolly, *Saving Sickly Children. The Tuberculosis Preventorium in American Life, 1909 – 1970* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 17.

34 Robert Castel, "De la dangerosité au risqué," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 47–48 (1983): 119 – 127.

35 Nelleke Bakker, Sjaak Braster, Marjoke Rietveld-Van Wingerden & Angelo Van Gorp, eds., *Kinderen in gevaar. De geschiedenis van pedagogische zorg voor risicojeugd. Jaarboek voor de geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs 2007* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2007); Jeroen Dekker, *Het verlangen naar opvoeden* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2006); Mayer, Lohmann and Grosvenor, eds. *Children and Youth at Risk*; 'Special Issue: Children and Youth at Risk', *Paedagogica Historica* 45, no. 1–2 (2009): 1–264; Bruno Vanobbergen, "Belgian Seaside Hospitals and the Child at Risk: Exploring an Educational Paradox," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 2 (2009): 234–248.

'At risk' as a category was then filled in many ways, ranging from presumed problem be-
haviour by children and youths and the families they came from to children and youths
with a particular physical or mental handicap.[36]

The out-of-home placed child

Debates began to focus on how the protection of the state should be organised.
Governments discussed how to address the question of parentless children:
should they be placed in foster families or in residential care? Which substitute
education was best for children who could not continue living with their pa-
rents?[37] Medical doctors set the tone in this debate. However, in addition to
the question of where children needed to stay, people also discussed the provi-
sion of adequate medical care. This included appeals for better access to sterili-
sation and distribution of milk to combat child mortality.

This contributed to the rise of the hygienic movement, which assigned social
dimensions to the concept of disease.[38] At its roots was an analogy between parts
of the human body and 'the social body' or 'the people's body' ("*volkslichaam*").
If the lower social classes were affected by diseases, both physically and morally,
the rest of society was in danger as well. In this way, children in poverty were
considered a body that suffers from various diseases. Hygienists considered cit-
ies more and more as places to be avoided by (poor) children, given the increas-
ing number of people suffering from alcoholism, tuberculosis and syphilis.[39]

Social progress was deemed impossible if the situation of at-risk children
was left untouched. This perception of childhood was linked to the then prevail-
ing fear of degeneration and destabilisation of society, as described by the Liège
hygienist Gustave Jorissenne (1846 – 1924):

> The viability of a nation depends on a correct understanding of all parts: the misfortune of
> the small spread to the grownups; an epidemic remains not only a threat for the destitute, it
> also affects the upper class, like the skipping flames of a burning hut can burn palaces in

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36 Bruno Vanobbergen and Frank Simon, " 'Merci à tous et à toutes de votre propagande, si
pleine de charme et de sourires': On Tour with the Socialist Travelling Colony Gentse Volkskin-
deren (1898 – 1915)," *History of Education* 40, no. 3 (2011): 316.

37 Marjoke Rietveld-van Wingerden, *Kind in gevaar: reden tot uithuisplaatsing? De vereniging Tot
Steun als zorgverlener in een veranderende wereld van de kinderbescherming en jeugdzorg 1886 –
1998* (Antwerp: Garant Uitgevers, 2017).

38 Nys, "Nationale plagen. Hygiënisten over het maatschappelijk lichaam," 220 – 241.

39 *Ibidem*, 224.

ashes; the moral decay is contagious from low to high and similarly high to low; social disturbances spoil the whole national organism.[40]

All of this resulted in the development of a comprehensive European program during international penitentiary conferences and conferences on patronage and the protection of childhood held in Antwerp (1890, 1894 and 1898), Paris and Brussels (1900). The program included four key elements: legislative reform, institutional reform, the promotion of "*le patronage*"[41] and the reform of the juvenile justice system through the establishment of juvenile courts in accordance with the Anglo-Saxon model.[42] By this time, initiatives to protect working-class children were in effect across Europe: "In the nineteenth century, attacking the problem of at-risk children, to be found only among the lower strata of society, was seen as a tough job to be coped with successfully within a measurable time".[43] People assumed that improving the urban environments of the children of the labour class would solve poverty, criminality, ill health, alcoholism, delinquency and degeneracy. These diseases of the lower class were summarised as "anti-social behaviour". Improvements in the appalling living conditions in urban areas would improve health as well as virtue, which were linked intrinsically to one another. The body of the child was considered the best way to morally cure the future social body.[44]

Exploring the child as a sick body: The child, the body and the bath.

Three examples of Belgian educational interventions based on this idea are the seaside hospitals in Wenduine and Middelkerke, the care for the abandoned children of Ghent, and the first crèches and infant consultations in major Belgian

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40 Cited in Nys, "Nationale plagen. Hygiënisten over het maatschappelijk lichaam," 223.
41 For the role of Jules Lejeune (1828–1911), Minister of Justice in Belgium between 1887 and 1894, in promoting the patronage of delinquent and abandoned children by committees consisting of bourgeois elites, as a means of social control, see: Stef Christiaensens, *Tussen klassieke en moderne criminele politiek. Leven en beleid van Jules Lejeune* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2004), 407–409.
42 Dupont-Bouchat, "Le mouvement international en faveur de la protection de l'enfance," 214. For the history of the Belgian Child Protection Act of 1912, see chapter 1/introduction to this volume.
43 Dekker, "Children at Risk in History: A Story of Expansion," 35.
44 Driver, *Power and Pauperism*, 65.

cities such as Antwerp, Brussels, Ghent and Liège. We will outline each case study briefly. More detailed information on each case study is available in existing published work by the authors.

The first seaside hospitals emerged in Europe between 1860 and 1880, with the first pioneering initiatives taken in France and Italy.[45] Seaside hospitals were developed based on the perceived benefits of fresh air for children's health, declining public health and the need for a moral reclamation of the nation. Belgium was a late adopter of seaside hospitals, much to the outrage of Belgian hygienists. Attendees at the Hygiene Congress in Brussels in 1876 raised this issue. Soon after, the General Council of the Civil Hospices of Brussels initiated the construction of a seaside hospital.[46] However, the Council lacked the funds to build its own hospital and decided to pursue other options. The Council eventually decided to cooperate with François Van Den Abeele (1824–1900) who had just completed the construction of a private seaside hospital for weak children in Wenduine, a small town on the Belgian coast. From this point onwards, at-risk children were sent from Brussels to Wenduine. In the meantime, however, Viscount Roger de Grimberghe (1830–1879) died on 27 November 1879 in Brussels and in his will left half a million Belgian francs to the General Council. The money was to be used to create "a hospital for poor and rachitic children from the Brussels region, which should be given the name 'Hôpital Maritime Roger de Grimberghe'".[47] The dunes of the sea town of Middelkerke were chosen as the location. The construction of the hospital began in 1882 and the first ill children were set to arrive on 6 November 1884. The seaside hospital in Wenduine would last until 1899; the one in Middelkerke was destroyed at the end of the First World War.[48]

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45 J. Uffelmann, "Ueber Anstalten und Einrichtungen zur Pflege unbemittelter scrophulöser und schwächlicher Kinder, insbesondere über Seehospize, Soolbäderheilstätten, ländliche Sanatorien, Reconvalescenzhäuser und Feriencolonieen," *Vierteljahrsschrift für Gesundheitspflege* 12, no. 4 (1880): 697–742.

46 During construction of the seaside hospital of Middelkerke, the Ministry of the Interior was responsible for public health affairs. However, Belgium's central administration played a modest role in public health at that time. It was only after the First World War that Belgian government authorities increased their radius of action. Until then, public health mainly was managed by local communities. The two most important local authorities were the *Commissions des Hospices Civiles* ('Councils of the Civil Hospices') and the *Bureaux de Bienfaisance* (Social Welfare Councils), established by the laws of October 7, 1796 and November 27, 1796 respectively.

47 See: Placement des enfants atteints de rachitisme ou de scrofulose dans l'hôpital maritime du Dr Van den Abeele, 1878–1883, n° 251/1, Council of Civil Hospices, General Fund, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare (OCMW-Archief), Brussels, Belgium.

48 For more info, see: Van Obbergen, "Belgian Sea Hospitals".

The second case study is the care for the abandoned children of Ghent. Children were labelled 'abandoned' by the Council of Civil Hospices through an application letter, which was usually written by the mother of the child (which means that, contrary to foundlings, the parents were known). This initiated a police investigation to complete a "*Déclaration d'abandon d'enfant*" in order to register the child. Next, a written request was sent to the hospice of the sisters of Childhood Jesu (*zusters Kindsheid Jesu*) to accept the child on a temporary basis, regardless of its age and gender, until the moment a suitable wet nurse and family were found. The congregation of the sisters of Childhood Jesu was established in 1835 to organise a home for foundlings and a children's hospital in the hospice of *Sint-Jan-in-d'Olie*. There, the sisters took care of foundlings, abandoned and sick children in difficult material circumstances , without any form of comfort.[49]

In July 1871, the congregation, together with the abandoned children, moved to a hospice in Schreiboom, in the city centre of Ghent ('Kortrijksepoortstraat'). From this point onwards until the First World War, the care of abandoned children and foundlings was regulated in Schreiboom through a convention with the Council of Civil Hospices.[50] Subsequently, the city of Ghent gradually stopped naming it an 'institution' for abandoned children, since, in theory, the children only had to stay there for a short period of time before being allocated to families on the countryside. However, annual reports from this time show that, in practice, some children stayed at Schreiboom for months or years on end. Furthermore, Schreiboom served as a stopover for abandoned children moving from one foster family to another, or if the child needed medical care in the city of Ghent.

The third case study concerns the first crèches and infant consultations that emerged in urban areas of Belgium, initiated by bourgeois philanthropic and religious groups. The first Belgian crèche, for children from zero to three years of age, was founded in Brussels in 1845. In 1869, the *Societé de Bienfaisance pour l'Établissement de Crèches à Gand* established the first private crèche in Ghent. By the early 20th century, 51 crèches provided care for 3500 Belgian children. The crèches were intended for the lowest socio-economic classes and kept a

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49 For the history of this congregation, see: Karel Strobbe and Kristien Suenens, *Zusters Kindsheid Jesu, 1835–2010* (Ghent/Leuven: Zusters Kindsheid Jesu/KADOC, 2010).

50 Rapport sur la convention concernant la garde des enfants trouvés et abandonnées, s.d. and letter secretary Council of Civil Hospices to Jean Nové, 17 August 1901, BG 14, n° 28, Council of Civil Hospices, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare, Ghent.

clear distance between the parents and the staff.[51] Infant consultations were or-
ganised to advise young mothers on hygienic rules they needed to follow in rais-
ing their babies. The first infant consultation was founded in Brussels in 1897.[52]
Interventions were designed to rescue children from their original living and ed-
ucation environments. Parents were often made invisible. We will analyse the
seaside hospitals, the care for the abandoned children of Ghent, and the first
Belgian crèches and infant consultations from three perspectives. Each case
study illustrates initiatives aimed at the physical and moral reform of the 'unfor-
tunate children' of the 19th century.

The child

The first part of this analysis focuses on the imagery used by each initiative to
frame the child at risk. The use of visual materials has become quite common
in the history of education, but not a lot of photographs of late 19th-century to
early 20th-century child care initiatives are available for study.[53] An in depth vis-
ual analysis of each selected image is beyond the scope of this contribution. In-
stead, we will examine three photographs that typify the imagery and narratives
of each case study. In line with the work of Sonja K. Foss, we studied these im-
ages from the perspective of the photographer, but also sought to discover what
"action the image communicates".[54] We wanted to know the messages these im-
ages intended to convey to their audience. To answer this question, we focused
mainly on what is portrayed explicitly in or is absent from the selected photo-
graphs. In other words, we were interested in what the photos revealed through
what they included or excluded. In this way, we apply "a rhetorical analysis of
the visual" – in which we explore how visual artefacts are embedded in a spe-
cific historical context and discourse.[55]

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51 For more info on the origins of Belgian childcare, see chapter 3 in Michiel Vandenbroecke, *In
verzekerde bewaring. Hondervijftig jaar kinderen, ouders en kinderopvang. 4e editie* (Amsterdam:
Uitgeverij SWP, 2014).
52 Karel Velle, "Hygiëne en preventieve gezondheidszorg in België (ca. 1830 – 1914). Bewust-
wording, integratie en acceptatie" (Thesis, Rijksuniversiteit Gent, 1981), 87.
53 For a reflection on the 'visual turn' in the history of education, see chapter 1/introduction to
his volume.
54 Sonja K. Foss, *Rhetorical Criticism: Exploration and Practice, 3rd edition* (Long Grove, IL:
Waveland Press, 2004), 216.
55 Cara Finnegan, "Doing Rhetorical History of the Visual: The Photograph and the Archive," in
Defining Visual Rhetorics, eds. Charles A Hill and Marguerite Helmers (London: Lawrence Erl-
baum Associates, 2004), 95 – 214; Heidi Degerickx, Griet Roets, Kris Rutten and Angelo Van
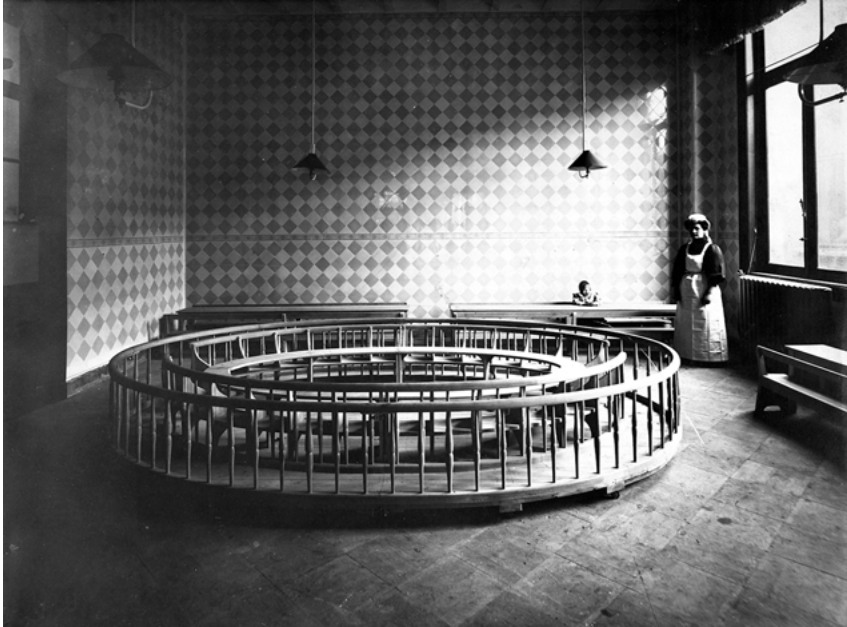
Fig. 2.1: Photograph of one of the first infant care centres in Antwerp, early 20th century. One of the authors received this photo (without reference or date) from a person in charge of an Antwerp crèche.

As the first step in our analysis, we considered whether each photo included children. As seen in Figures 4.1 and 4.2, the selected images of the seaside hospital in Middelkerke and an early Antwerp day-care centre do not include children, in spite of the fact that these institutions were intended to accommodate large groups of children for long periods of time. Joseph Casse (1841–1915), the first medical doctor in the Middelkerke seaside hospital, printed postcards of the seaside hospital for the children to use when writing to their families. These postcards supported Casse's efforts to present the institution as a scientific enterprise; the postcards showed the hospital's sterilisation kettle, surgery room, refectory and dormitories. The images presented a clean, neat medical worksite characterised by order and regularity, unspoilt by the chaos and disorder caused by 20 children returning from the beach.

Gorp, "What Kind of Silence is Being Broken?: A Visual-rhetorical History of the Out-of-home Placement of Children in Poverty in 1990s Belgium," *Paedagogica Historica* 53, no. 6 (2017): 720.

Also evident is the images' focus on cleanliness and hygiene. The two photos portray settings that are clean and tidy. The large windows and the light evoke a sense of unpolluted air. These photos were intended as proof of sanitation and hygiene in these institutions. Public perceptions of the institution were created through imagery. The images do not portray happy or healthy children as evidence of the quality of the care or education offered by the institution. Rather, the images depict spacious rooms, heating, large windows and clean white sheets. The images highlight the clean, uniform and regulated settings that housed the admitted children. In this way, the images clarified the link between the institutions' "environmental design" and the "moral reformation" of their pupils and, by extension, their pupils' families.[56]

Middelkerke -- Hôpital maritime Roger de Grimberghe Un dortoir.
Phot G. de Poorter Middelkerke, reproduction interdite

Fig. 2.2: Postcard of a children's dormitory in the seaside hospital of Middelkerke (the archive of Ronny Van Troostenberghe)

In the same vein, foster families would send pictures of the abandoned child that was placed in their family to health inspectors in order to demonstrate that the children were in good health. The photograph shown in Figure 2.3 is an ex-

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56 Driver, *Power and Pauperism,* 14.

ample of this. In January 1906, the foster parents of Polydore Raveel sent a photo of the young boy as proof that he had recovered from an obstinate disease. Polydore was born in Ghent on 8 December 1904. His mother died in the hospital shortly after giving birth at home and Polydore was registered as an abandoned child by the Ghent authorities. Already in bad health, he would be placed with three different foster families. The photograph was accompanied by a handwritten letter commenting on Polydore's good health. The letter noted that Polydore continued to suffer from a leg injury caused by his disease, which still affected his ability to walk.[57]

Fig. 2.3: Photo of Polydore Raveel (1906) (Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare in Ghent)

The photos were staged to convey a specific message to the public. In this respect, the absence or presence of 'the child' in these photos communicates the intended mission of these initiatives. In this way, photographs served as instruments to display the successes of the reform project. The first two photographs analysed here were intended to persuade well-off citizens to donate to

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57 Personal file Polydore Raveel (1904–1905), BG 14, n° 269, Council of Civil Hospices, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare, Ghent.

the reform efforts, and parents to entrust the institutions with the care of their children. The photos' focus on the institutions' infrastructure legitimised the pedagogical interventions for children considered to be at risk—i.e. removal of the children from their parents and placement in institutions.[58] The "aesthetic mission" of the photographs was linked inextricably to the "moral mission" of the reform projects.[59]

The body

As we can see in each of this contribution's case studies, attention to the children's health was a constant and central feature of the reform project. In the case of Ghent's abandoned children, for example, inspection visits focused mainly on health. Annual inspection reports by the inspection service of foundlings and abandoned children showed an increased focus on *"l'état sanitaire"* (health status) of the children. By the 1890s, a standardised inspection form was introduced. Items for observation included health, cleanliness, behaviour, character, morality and obedience. Correspondence from foster parents to the inspector focused mainly on the health of the foster child.

Foster parents used these letters to ask the inspector for advice and inform him of the child's development. The inspector would then respond to the parents with recommendations meant to keep the child healthy. Aside from this, the correspondence also included information about the height, weight and other physical features of the child, as well as the child's conduct at school and his or her writing and speaking skills.[60] This allowed close observation of the physical and moral status of children placed with foster families in the countryside. André Turmel describes this focus on the health of at-risk children as "the medical gaze".[61] During the second half of the 19th century, children were increasingly viewed from a medical perspective. This perspective made children objects of

58 For international examples, see: Anne-Lise Head-König, "Les formes de garde des enfants placés en Suisse: politiques ambiguës, résistances et objectifs contradictoires (1850–1950)," *Paedagogica Historica* 46, no. 6 (2010): 763–773; Dekker, "Children at Risk in History: A Story of Expansion"; Christine Mayer et al., eds., *Children and Youth at Risk*; Nelleke Bakker et al., eds., *Kinderen in Gevaar. De geschiedenis van pedagogische zorg voor risicojeugd*; Timothy A. Hacsi, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997).

59 Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin Books, 1979), 115.

60 See: inspection reports on the condition of the placed children (1893–1899), BG 14, n° 283, Council of Civil Hospices, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare, Ghent.

61 Turmel, *A Historical Sociology of Childhood*, 77.

systematic observation and classification, to be represented in charts and graphs.

In this vein, the professionalised mass observation of children in the late 19th century became more scientific in its methods, techniques and procedures. No longer were paediatricians mainly concerned with a sound and scientific methodology for observing the child. Instead, their focus shifted to monitoring children in order to protect them against the worst social harms. This is evident in the evolution of the seaside hospital of Middelkerke. In the view of Dr. Casse, the value of the seaside hospital lay in its work as a scientific medical institute rather than in the services it provided to sick children. Casse envisioned Middelkerke as a hospital and not merely a site for convalescence. In his publications and letters to the General Council, he presented himself as a man of science who embraced a kind of medical activism. According to Casse, the seaside hospital was not a passive institution that provided supportive care. It was more akin to a traditional hospital, characterised by what Casse termed 'real' activities, such as medical treatment and experimental research.[62]

Casse distinguished between his hospital and Dr. Van Den Abeele's facility, the seaside hospital in Wenduine. The Wenduine hospital functioned more as an institution for feeble-minded children, with a focus on instruction and morality. The Middelkerke Seaside Hospital, according to Casse, had an entirely different mission. This perspective led the institution to select children based on age and abnormality. The standardisation and normalisation of children's developmental behaviour led to an expectation among medical and welfare experts that parents and children ought to conform to the averages represented in the charts. No longer did paediatricians merely observe and register. Now, they supervised and regulated child-rearing.

The malleability of the concept of 'the normal child' should be seen against the background of the broader expansion of the concept of normality in the 19th century. This encompassed advances in observational methods to include different charts or graphs that measured items such as behaviour, skills and abilities. In this way, each addition to the notion of 'the normal child' relied on the establishment of a preceding construction.[63] Subsequently, every deviation from the norm required an intervention to prevent further deviation. In each case study in this contribution, ideas of normal versus abnormal were translated into distinct criteria for inclusion and exclusion. Abandoned children, for example,

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62 See: Admissions et placements, le nombre des enfants à traiter à Middelkerke (1884–1890), n° 260, Council of Civil Hospices, General Fund, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare, Brussels.

63 Turmel, *A Historical Sociology of Childhood*, 183.

were divided into three groups: children of normal health; children with physical defects but who were otherwise in good health, including children who were crippled, lame, beaten, obese, idiots, blind, or had deformed legs; and children suffering from disease, including scrofula, epilepsy, paralysis, incontinence, rickets, asthma or eye diseases.[64]

Most 19th-century crèches were private initiatives. For this reason, crèche owners decided which children to admit and which to reject based on objective criteria such as age, and on subjective criteria such as the good conduct of the mother. For example, the regulations of one day-care centre in the city of Ghent (1869) stipulated that it would only accept "children under two years of age, whose mothers are indigent, behave well and work outside the home".[65] Other institutions, such as the crèche Louise-Marie (Ostend, 1898), stipulated similar criteria: "Only children under the age of three, from mothers that are poor and behave well, are accepted".[66] In fact, in many crèches, it was customary to have the public authorities conduct an inquiry into the mother before accepting a child.[67] In addition, many crèches required a recommendation from a member of the philanthropic or charitable association behind the day-care centre. Guidelines for one crèche in Brussels stipulated a recommendation by "*la dame patronesse*". In Liège, an inspector of the poor noted children's morality and their degree of misery, to be used as criteria for admission.[68]

In search of suitable foster families for abandoned children in Ghent, the inspector would also question prominent figures in the foster family's home town prior to and during placement. This might include the town's mayor, pastor, notary or the school director. In addition, the town's police would make inquiries into the family of the child, including a survey based on observation of the home and testimonies from neighbours. Observation, categorisation and standardisation of admitted children through instruments, inspections and surveillance were core elements in each of this contribution's case studies. The focus was not only on individual children's sick bodies, since their physical wellbeing

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64 See: inspection reports on the condition of the placed children (1893–1899), BG 14, n° 283, Council of Civil Hospices, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare, Ghent.

65 *Maatschappij van Weldadigheid voor het Stichten van Kinderkribben te Gent. Reglement van de kinderkrib* (Ghent: MWSKG, 1869).

66 Albert Lecointe et al, *Crèche Louise-Marie. Statuts & Règlements. Arrêtés en Assemblée Générale le 16 février 1899* (Ostend: Imprimerie Centrale Bouchery, 1899).

67 See: Elise Plasky, *La protection et l'education de l'Enfant du Peuple en Belgique. I. Pour les Tout-Petits* (Brussels: Société Belge de Librairie, 1909).

68 See: Perrine Humblet, "Analyse et évaluation de la mise en œuvre du programme de l'Œuvre Nationale de l'Enfance pour les milieu d'accueil de jeunes enfants" (PhD. diss., Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1998).

was thought to be closely related to their moral virtue. In this respect, the health of the parents was important as well, in addition to that of the child. In this way, the child's body represented the social collective body and its maladies. This is what made the directors of these initiatives small functionaries of "*l'orthopédie morale*".[69]

The bath

The move towards a medical approach to the development of children as part of a larger project of social, medical and educational engineering made it possible to compare children with each other against different developmental criteria. Medical science offered novel insights on childhood through new methods, techniques and protocols. This process of scientification resulted in guidelines and detailed codes for children in care. For example, Henri Cazin (1836–1891), the doctor in charge at the sea hospital of the city of Paris in Berck-sur-Mer, developed a characterisation of different forms of bathing for different groups of children at risk. This resulted in a sort of typology of different kinds of baths for different kinds of children.[70] The inspector of the abandoned children of Ghent also sent health regulations to foster parents and examined the physical wellbeing of children during visits. In 1904, the inspector of the Council of Civil Hospices, Jean Nové, outlined some health regulations that foster parents were required to follow closely in the event of illness among the abandoned children. The list included taking the child into the open air; frequent washing in cold water (especially the legs); and baths in lukewarm water, 20 minutes in duration and with one kilogram of kitchen salt in the bath water.[71]

The bath and the regulations on bathing are examples of what was seen as best practice at the time, particularly in the seaside hospitals.[72] Emerging medical knowledge was translated into recommendations for a healthy daily life. Three factors were considered important with respect to bathing: water temperature, the water's salt and mineral content, and the strength of the water's

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69 See: Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
70 Henry Cazin, *De l'influence des bains de mer sur la scrofule des enfants* (Paris: Asselin & Houzeau, 1885), 76–77.
71 List of Nové, 19 August 1904, Personal file Adrienne De Mets, BG 14, n° 243, Council of Civil Hospices, Archives of the Bureau of Social Welfare, Ghent.
72 Bruno Vanobbergen, "Changing Perspectives on the Child at Risk at the End of the Nineteenth Century. The Belgian Maritime Hospital Roger De Grimberghe (1884–1914) as a Space of Inclusion and Exclusion," *Disability & Society* 24, no. 4 (2009): 425–436.

waves. Waves, for example, were seen as conferring strength and balance. Casse outlined some principles to be followed when bathing. For example, certain periods of the year were best suited to bathing in the sea. The ideal duration of baths was studied, as was the time of the day best suited to bathing. Medicalised regulations were also applied to crèches in the early days of Belgian day-care. Children received fresh clothes when they arrived in the crèche, and their cradles were separated from each other. Their daily clothes were disinfected, and the children themselves received a thorough wash every day.[73]

By the beginning of the 20th century, reformers were, through written manuals and guidelines, in a position of "creating and implementing social devices and technologies to frame the behaviour of children as well as that of their parents".[74] Regulations on bathing were not only examples of what was seen as best practice at the time, particularly in the seaside hospitals.[75] 'The bath' can also be used as a metaphor for social reform and moral purification. The belief in enhancing children's welfare by putting them in a healthy environment was the foundation of all three initiatives. Daily rituals and health regulations to cure these children of what Felix Driver calls "anti-social behaviour"[76] were pivotal to the reform project. The medical practices that took place in these three research cases clearly functioned as normalising techniques and served a dual goal. Of course, the promotors were striving for an enhancement of the children's physical status. Nevertheless, the emphasis was much more on moulding the children's hearts and souls. By removing the children from their families and by putting them in a 'healthy' setting, far away from all dangers of their life in the city, the hope existed of generating virtuous citizens.

Conclusion

The strategic approach of these initiatives is clear: the physical cleansing of children in care would lead to moral purification of the pupils and future citizens. In time, this attention to the moral health of children at risk would spread, through their parents, into society. The origin of the idea of the child at risk is situated by most authors in the beginning of the 19th century, when numerous initiatives were developed for abandoned children, foundlings, vagrants and orphans in order to redeem morally endangered children for the benefit of society. Case

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73 E Hommelen, "Gezondheidsorganisatie in kinderkribben," *Het Kind* (1961): 245–253.

74 Turmel, *A Historical Sociology of Childhood,* 114.

75 Vanobbergen, "Changing Perspectives on the Child at Risk".

76 Driver, *Power and Pauperism,* 23.

studies of three institutions for at-risk children – the seaside hospitals, the care for the abandoned children of Ghent and the first Belgian crèches – show that the risks of future contamination of society were curtailed by reforming at-risk children and making their parents invisible. By categorising this group of children as poor, ill and parentless, reformers created the idea of an entity separate from other members of society. At the same time, reformers suggested that, through intervention and assistance, at-risk children could escape from their fate and become virtuous citizens after all.[77] This chapter examined three procedures or practices of this reform project.

Initiatives to reduce the number of children at risk led to the conception of new categories of children at risk. In this way, although initiatives to care for at-risk children arose from the desire to reduce their numbers, the history of the child at risk has become one of ongoing expansion.[78] Today, the creation of categories of at-risk children continues to lead to the creation of institutions and measures to eliminate these risks. In that sense, 'at risk' has had, and continues to have, different meanings. Having shown that the idea of 'risk' or of 'being at risk' has been used in different settings, we conclude that the evolution of the idea of the child at risk continues today. In fact, never before in history have more children been diagnosed as at risk.[79]

Our analysis of reform programs through the 'child as a sick body' perspective of these initiatives has outlined perceptions of good education and, in turn, of good parenting. The images, the inclusion and exclusion mechanisms of reform initiatives, and the health regulations analysed in this chapter, contributed to the idea that at-risk children had 'deserving' or 'undeserving' parents. This distinction is evident in Western societies throughout history. This attitude ignores the fact that poverty is a social problem, not a moral one. Today, social policy makers and organisations continue to label children and frame their potential risk to society through the rhetoric of class, poverty or disease to distance children from their families and legitimise intervention.

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77 See: Lydia Murdoch, *Imagined Orphans. Poor Families, Child Welfare, and Contested Citizenship in London* (New Brunswick: Rutgers university press, 2006).
78 Dekker, "Children at Risk in History".
79 Paul Smeyers, "Child Rearing in the 'Risk' Society: On the Discourse of Rights and the 'Best Interests of a Child'", *Educational Theory* 60 (2010): 271–284; Dekker, "Children at Risk in History".

Evelyne Deceur, Maria Bouverne-De Bie & Angelo Van Gorp

3 The Social Question as an Urban Question. A Social-Pedagogical Analysis of Participatory Initiatives in Rabot (Ghent) during the Nineteenth Century

Throughout the past few decades, urban development programmes for so-called disadvantaged neighbourhoods have gained considerable attention. In recent European history, in the wake of a growing political recognition that exclusion threatens social stability, economic prosperity and democratic legitimacy,[1] the focus of these programmes gradually shifted from mainly physical projects towards more broader and integrated strategies that take local community participation into account.[2] Today, participation is considered a general trend as it carries the promise of connecting (policy) rationality to perception,[3] obtaining efficient and effective decisions and outcomes,[4] and fostering processes of empowerment and individual and social wellbeing.[5]

1 Pascal De Decker et al., eds., *On the Origins of Urban Development Programmes in Nine European Countries* (Antwerp/Apeldoorn: Garant, 2003).
2 See, for example: Robert Furbey, "Urban 'Regeneration': Reflections on a Metaphor," *Critical Social Policy* 19, no. 4 (1999): 419–445; Marc Parés, Jordi Bonet-Marti and Marc Marti-Costa, "Does Participation Really Matter in Urban Regeneration Policies? Exploring Governance Networks in Catalonia (Spain)," *Urban Affairs Review* 48, no. 2 (2012): 238–271; Venda Louise Pollock and Joanne Sharp, "Real Participation or the Tyranny of Participatory Practice? Public Art and Community Involvement in the Regeneration of the Raploch, Scotland," *Urban Studies* 49, no. 14 (2012): 3063–3079; Peter Roberts and Hugh Sykes, eds., *Urban Regeneration. A Handbook* (London: Sage, 2000); Federico Savini, "The Endowment of Community Participation: Institutional Settings in Two Urban Regeneration Projects," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 35, no. 5 (2011): 949–968.
3 See, for example: Nico de Boer and Jos van der Lans, *Burgerkracht in de wijk. Sociale wijkteams en de lokalisering van de verzorgingsstaat* (Rotterdam: Platform 31, 2013); Filip De Rynck and Karolien Dezeure, *Burgerparticipatie in Vlaamse steden. Naar een innoverend participatiebeleid* (Bruges: Vanden Broele, 2009).
4 See, for example: Frances Cleaver, "Institutions, Agency and the Limitations of Participatory Approaches to Development," in *Participation: The New Tyranny*, eds. Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 36–55; Ruth McAlister, "Putting the 'Community' into Community Planning: Assessing Community Inclusion in Northern Ireland," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, no. 3 (2010): 533–547.
5 See, for example: Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

However, in parallel to this rise in participatory belief and interventions, critics have suggested that the claims made for participation conceal far more than they reveal. Questions are raised about who is participating, why, where, when, at what level and what for.[6] Peris S. Jones, for instance, notes that there is no such thing as 'the people' or 'the community',[7] nor does sharing through participation necessarily means sharing in power.[8] Participation can, according to Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, even lead to 'tyranny', understood as "the illegitimate and/or unjust uses of power" which, at its worst, "can obscure, and [...] sustain, [...] macro-level inequalities and injustice"[9] and limit innovative planning and policies.

Yet remarkably, while citizen participation is constantly challenged and subverted in practice,[10] most discussions only tend to deal with the promotion of participatory practices and barely question *what* participation really stands for. Overall, participation appears as a vague 'catch-all term', linked up to both problems of social inequality, differences and exclusions, and topics of order and cohesion.[11]

In this chapter, we assert that participative efforts have a long and varied history and periodically regenerated around new schools of thought, institutional

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6 See, for example: Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, eds., *Participation: The New Tyranny* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Samuel Hickey and Giles Mohan, eds., *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation? Exploring New Approaches to Participation in Development* (London/New York: Zed Books Ltd., 2004); Jan Masschelein and Kerlijn Quaghebeur, "Participation for Better or for Worse?," *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 39, no. 1 (2005): 51–65; Robert Lawy and Gert Biesta, "Citizenship-as-Practice: The Educational Implications of an Inclusive and Relational Understanding of Citizenship," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 54, no. 1 (2006): 34–50; Maria Bouverne-De Bie and Sven De Visscher, "Participatie: een sleutelbegrip in de samenlevingsopbouw," in *Handboek samenlevingsopbouw in Vlaanderen*, ed. André Desmet et al. (Bruges: Die Keure, 2008), 41–53; Hilary Silver, Alan Scott and Yuri Kazepov, "Participation in Urban Contention and Deliberation," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 34, no. 3 (2010): 453–477; Rudi Roose, Griet Roets and Maria Bouverne-De Bie, "Irony and Social Work: In Search of the Happy Sisyphus," *British Journal of Social Work* 42, no. 8 (2012): 1592–1607.

7 Peris S. Jones, "Urban Regeneration's Poisoned Chalice: Is There an Impasse in (Community) Participation-based Policy?," *Urban Studies* 40, no. 3 (2003): 581–601.

8 Sarah C. White, "Depoliticising Development: The Uses and Abuses of Participation," in *Development, NGOs, and Civil Society,* ed. Oxfam GB (London: Oxfam GB, 2000), 142–174.

9 Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari, "The Case for Participation as Tyranny," 14.

10 Margo Huxley, "Historicizing Planning, Problematizing Participation," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 37 (2013): 1541

11 Lesley Hustinx, "Participatie: een sociologische benadering," in *Participatie: what's in a name? Een multidisciplinaire kijk op maatschappelijke participatie*, eds. Jan Van Damme, Frankie Schram and Marleen Brans (Bruges: Vanden Broele Academics, 2012), 63–64.

agendas and changing political circumstances "from which we cannot detach ourselves at will".[12] Therefore, we call for a thorough critical understanding of the rhetoric and the practice of participation itself. Regarding the specific topic of this volume, we analyse what participation meant within an urban reality in the course of the 19th century. How was participation conceived and realised in the interplay between the individual, the institutional and the policy-level,[13] and what were the underlying logics, agendas and views of the initiatives developed?

To scrutinise the meaning and shaping of these 19th-century participatory convictions and practices, we adopt a genealogical angle that traces "the erratic and discontinuous process whereby the past became present."[14] With Michel Foucault we believe that such an angle can show that "the things which seem most evident to us are always formed in the confluence of encounters and chances, during the course of a precarious and fragile history".[15] More concretely, we use a "history of the present"-approach, which is "a method for understanding change through exploring how the objects of thought and action are assembled, connected and disconnected over time and space".[16] While exposing the underlying, heterogeneous, sometimes forgotten contexts and views of social-cultural initiatives, we thus indicate which constructions were possible in the past and may still be present today. The search for such constructions and patterns of change clearly goes beyond simply describing how it used to be. Rather, it is looking back from a certain perspective, next to other possible perspectives. After all, historical research is by definition non-neutral, incomplete and subjective.[17]

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12 John Harris, "State Social Work: Constructing the Present from Moments of the Past," *British Journal of Social Work* 38, no. 4 (2008): 665; Walter Lorenz, "Practicising History. Memory and Contemporary Professional Practice," *International Social Work* 50, no. 5 (2007): 601.

13 Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality* (New York, Harper and Row, 1972).

14 David Garland, "What is a 'History of the Present'? On Foucault's Genealogies and their Critical Preconditions," *Punishment & Society,* 16, no. 4 (2014): 372.

15 Foucault cited in Michael Kelly, ed., *Critique and Power. Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate* (Cambridge/London: MIT Press, 1994), 127.

16 Thomas S. Popkewitz, "Curriculum History, Schooling and the History of the Present," *History of Education* 40, no. 1 (2011): 18.

17 Marc Depaepe, "Geen ambacht zonder werktuigen. Reflecties over de conceptuele omgang met het pedagogische verleden," in *Pedagogische historiografie. Een socio-culturele lezing van de geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs*, eds. Angelo Van Gorp et al. (Leuven/Den Haag: Acco, 2011), 15 – 62; Christoff Lorenz, *De constructie van het verleden. Een inleiding in de theorie van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam/Meppel: Boom, 1994); Klaus Mollenhauer, *Vergeten samenhang.*

In the following sections, we draw on the intriguing case of Rabot, a working-class neighbourhood, part of the semi-periphery of Ghent, a medium-sized city in Belgium. The quarter, for over a century an important segregated habitat for textile labourers, was recently appointed for urban regeneration and can be seen as an example of a socio-economic context marked by deindustrialisation, explosive poverty problems and a growing diversity. Though Rabot is barely one square kilometre, today the district accommodates over 10,000 inhabitants and an ever-growing number of 'users', such as students, illegal immigrants, shoppers and visitors to the nearby courthouse.[18] Moreover, in Ghent, the quarter has the reputation of being the youngest neighbourhood (27 per cent of the inhabitants is younger than 20) with the biggest number of unemployed and non-professionals (66.7 per cent) and people coming from abroad (68.5 per cent).[19]

We briefly outline how Ghent became a local exemplar of the Industrial Revolution and discuss the position of Rabot within this context by analysing a range of socio-historical and urban studies on the quarter. We show how in the course of the late 19th century, Rabot became a self-sufficient but also impoverished 'island', where Catholics, liberals and socialists installed a 'pillarised' network and a social-cultural infrastructure that created a sense of community and supported the residents 'from the cradle to the grave'.[20] By doing so however, we state that the idea of socio-spatial class segregation was strengthened and participation, seen as 'consuming' and 'taking part' in the activities offered, grew to be the norm.

The working class as a dangerous class

At present, Ghent is the third largest city in Belgium with over 260,000 inhabitants. Its thriving textile business played a decisive role in the city's history. In the Middle Ages for instance, Ghent, famous for its expensive woollen fabrics, was one of the biggest and wealthiest cities north of the Alps. During the 19th

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Over cultuur en opvoeding (Amsterdam/Meppel: Boom, 1986), 11–13; Michel Vandenbroeck, *In verzekerde bewaring. Honderdvijftig jaar kinderen, ouders en kinderopvang* (Amsterdam: SWP, 2009), 317–318.

18 Luc De Droogh, Jolijn De Haene and Griet Verschelden, "Community Building as Forum and Arena," in *Perspectives on Community Practices: Living and Learning in Community. Conference Proceedings, ESREA 2015*, eds. Sabina Jelenc Krašovev and Damijan Štefanc (Ljubljana: ESREA, 2015), 64–75.

19 Stad Gent, *Buurtmonitor* (Ghent: Stad Gent, 2016).

20 For the phenomenom of pillarisation in Belgium, see: chapter 1/introduction to this volume.

century, after some turbulent years and the relocation of (most of) the artisanal production to the countryside, the introduction of the mechanical spinning frame (1800), the steam engine (1805) and the power loom (1820) made the city's cotton, linen and flax industry rapidly boom.[21] Ghent became known as the 'Manchester of the continent'.[22]

Together with this industrialisation, the view of Ghent changed tremendously.[23] The population doubled (from 50,827 in 1793 to 100,810 in 1842)[24], medieval buildings like the 'Augustijnenklooster' ('Augustinian Monastery') and the 'Gravensteen' ('Castle of the Counts') were converted into spinning and weaving mills, and the surface area of the built-up part of the town, that until then had been hardly expanded, got covered by narrow dead-end alleys within housing blocks and courtyards. The houses in these so-called "*cités*" were composed of one single room per floor, they shared three walls with the neighbours, had no private sanitary facilities and were scarcely visible from the street.[25] The *Batavia-cité* was probably the most horrible 'ghetto':

> One 100 meters long, 30 meters wide, with 117 houses around 4 corridors, 6 communal closets, 2 pumps and an open sewer in which the gutters and toilets flowed. […] [Here] 117 families, 585 people lived closely together […] despised by the law and the rich, excluded from society, just like the lepers in the Middle Ages.[26]

In 1845, two professors of Ghent University, Daniel Mareska (1803–1858) and J. Heyman, condemned the proliferation of these narrow, hidden streets where misery, disease and crime reigned. According to them, the high population density – around 1850, one third of Ghent's inhabitants lived on 3 percent of the city's sur-

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21 Dominique Vanneste, "The Preservation of Nineteenth-century Industrial Buildings near Historical City Centres: The Case of Ghent," *Acta Academica* 36, no. 1 (2004): 157–185.

22 Cedric Goossens and Angelo Van Gorp, "The Myth of the Phoenix: Progressive Education, Migration and the Shaping of the Welfare-state, 1985–2015," *Paedagogica Historica* 52, no. 5 (2016): 467–484; Frank Simon and Dirk Van Damme, "Education and Moral Improvement in a Belgian Industrial Town (1860–90). François Laurent (1810–87) and the Working Classes in Ghent," *History of Education* 22, no. 1 (1993): 63–84.

23 Frank Andriaensen, "Breken en bouwen in een industriële stad," in *Bouwen voor de industrie*, eds. Guido Deseyn, Frank Adriaensen and Johan Van de Wiele (Ghent: Museum voor Industriële Archeologie en Textiel, 1989), 39–63.

24 Maurice Dumont, *Gent. Een stedenaardrijkskundige studie. I Tekst. II Atlas* (Bruges: De Tempel, 1951), 120.

25 Willy Steensels, "De tussenkomst van de overheid in de arbeidershuisvesting. Gent, 1850–1904," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 3–4 (1977): 447–500.

26 Karel Van Isacker, *Mijn land in de kering. 1830–1980. Deel 1: een ouderwetse wereld 1830–1914* (Antwerp/Amsterdam: Uitgeverij De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1978), 75.

face[27] –, the lack of basic sanitation as well as the poor hygienic conditions seriously endangered the health of the labourers. Nonetheless, it was not this permanent undernourishment, physical exhaustion and the low life expectancy of the working class that worried the industrial elites the most. Rather they feared the disorder, immorality, putrefaction and the outbreak of riots among the increasing number of proletarians.[28] As a result of this 'social question', understood as both the fear of revolts and concern for the grinding living and working conditions of the labourers, Ghent's bourgeoisie encouraged the idea of socio-spatial segregation to minimise encounters between the social classes. In this respect, Kobe Boussauw and Guido Deseyn have delineated how during the second half of the 19th century, inspired by the work of urbanist Georges-Eugène Haussmann in Paris (1852), countless slums and small working-class districts in Ghent's city centre were demolished and new parks, squares and wide avenues were constructed in order to display the 'natural superiority' of the elites.[29] By 1860, the city walls and gates were torn down and the patent law, a tax on in- and outgoing goods, was abolished to make room to parcel out the waterlogged grounds that surrounded Ghent.

Gradually, a dichotomy arose between the bourgeois south, where among others a prestigious station, a zoo and theatres were raised, and the north of Ghent, where the labourers who had been expelled from the centre settled in new houses in cul-de-sacs between the factory chimneys.[30] Through its position, at the north-western outskirts of the city and close to the two important canals to Bruges and Ostend (the North Sea) and Terneuzen (the Netherlands), Rabot was one of the first new neighbourhoods to arise. The district itself owes its name to the fortified lock (1489) on the old river *De Lieve* that once separated the quarter from the centre. From the 16th century onwards, Rabot had been nothing more than a muddy territory used to dump everything that could be harmful within

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27 Jan De Maeyer and Leen Van Molle, eds., *Joris Helleputte. Architect en politicus. 1852–1925* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers/KADOC Artes 1, 1998), 22.

28 Jaak Brepoels, *Wat zoudt gij zonder 't werkvolk zijn? De geschiedenis van de Belgische arbeidersbeweging. 1830–2015* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Van Halewyck, 2015), 30–31; Catharina Lis and Hugo Soly, *Armoede en kapitalisme in pre-industrieel Europa* (Antwerpen/Amsterdam: Standaard Wetenschappelijke Uitgeverij, 1980), 198–199.

29 Kobe Boussauw, "City Profile: Ghent, Belgium," *Cities* 40 (2014): 32–43; Guido Deseyn, "Rechtstreekse invloeden der Gentse textielindustriëlen op de 19de-eeuwse stadsontwikkeling: bedrijfsinplantingen, arbeidershuisvesting en openbare werken," in *Vijfde Nationaal Kongres voor Industriële Archeologie Textiel*, ed. Werkgroep voor Industriële Archeologie der Rijksuniversiteit Gent (Ghent: Jan Dhondt Stichting, 1979), 171–199.

30 Gita Deneckere, "Stad van industrie en arbeid," in *Gent, stad van alle tijden*, eds. Marc Boone and Gita Deneckere (Brussels/Ghent: Mercatorfonds/STAM, 2010), 163–164.

Ghent itself, such as a cemetery and a place for the victims of the bubonic pla-
gue.[31]

Dictated by the rhythm of the looms

Already in the decades prior to 1860, when the patent law was annulled, numer-
ous textile factories had been built within Ghent's fortifications, close to the old
Rabot lock. In the 'Molenaarsstraat' for example, cotton printers *De Graeve*
(founded at the end of the 18th century) and *Lousbergs* (1785) had installed
their companies. Respectively in 1843 and in 1827, both were taken over by *de
Hemptinne* (1816, in 1873 renamed *NV Florida*), an enterprise located within
the same street. Just around the corner, in the 'Vogelenzang', there was the cot-
ton mill *Voortman* (1790, in 1876 renamed *NV Texas*) and the flax firm *La Linière
Gantoise* (1838). Just outside the old medieval walls, textile industrialists Charles
De Buck-Van der Waerden (1827) and François Liévin De Smet (1802, in 1876 his
company was renamed *NV La Louisiana*) owned two major plants. There was the
metal workshop *Atelier du Vulcain* (1838) and the textile factory *Parmentier-Van
Hoegaerden* (1860, in 1898 renamed *Usines Cotonnières de Gand-Zele-Tubize*).[32]

   Right after the city gates were removed, Ghent's (liberal) city government, in
which a small group of industrialists was strongly represented, made up plans to
rapidly convert the area according to their own ideas of a bourgeois, segregated
society. During the 1860s, they constructed the public boulevards 'Begijnhoflaan'
and 'Plezante Vest' (now: 'Blaisantvest'), between the district and the city centre.
An extra canal, the 'Verbindingskanaal' ('Junction Canal') (1863) was dug to con-
nect the two waterways to Ostend and Terneuzen. The Rabot-station (1872), part
of the big Ghent ring railroad, opened to process the textile goods.[33] The trian-
gular area between the station, the canals and the wide boulevards, part of

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31 Paul Blondeel, "Reading and (Re)writing the City: The Use of the Habitus Concept in Urban
Research and Development", Paper for the International Conference 'Doing, Thinking, Feeling
Home: The Mental Geography of Residential Environments', Delft, 2005, 5, https://repository.
tudelft.nl/islandora/object/uuid:4ae199c3-a9af-4a10-a9de-fa9dc11dae7a/datastream/OBJ.
32 Robin Debo, "Spinnen en weven in de stad. Een chronologische en geografische reconstruc-
tie van de Gentse textielindustrie 1900–2000" (Master's thesis, University Ghent, 2014); Peter
Wezenbeek, "De urbanisatie van de Wondelgemmeersen (Rabotwijk)," *Tijdschrift voor Geschie-
denis van Techniek en Industriële Cultuur* 4 (1986): 89–165.
33 Erik Dekeukeleire, *Trein, tram en trolley in de regio 'Rabot'. 1864–2008* (Ghent: Lokaal Dien-
stencentrum Ten Hove, 2008), 11–12.

the wetland 'Wondelgemse Meersen', was drained and raised with the remains of the former ramparts and the soil of the new canal.

In the following years, Rabot thus evolved from a swampy no-man's-land into a small company town.[34] New large-scale firms were installed: Ghent's Gas Company *Stadsgasfabriek* (1891), the mills *De Nieuwe Molens van Gent en Brugge* (1897) and the textile processing factory *De Backer-De Rudder* (1899). In the meantime, the previously worthless grounds that were bought up by industrialists, especially members of the De Smet and de Hemptinne families, were developed methodically in a draught board pattern (see figure 3.1). While the (more) wealthy citizens and the senior executives settled at the borders of Rabot, the vast majority of the labourers were packed away in the small, poorly equipped houses in the heart of the district.[35]

This urge to create as many (very modest) houses as possible within this already very cramped neighbourhood was later on referred to as cold blooded philanthropy. The urbanisation of Ghent's periphery was, according to André Coene and Martine De Raedt, utilitarian; "the greed for maximum profit was primary".[36] For the 'textile barons' the development of the quarter was interesting from three perspectives: "housing the labourers who from then on could be expelled from the city centre where the bourgeoisie had now constructed their own 'ideal image of a town'; attracting enough (future) workforce for their factories; and an important return on investment of what used to be unprofitable grounds".[37]

"The rhythm of the looms"[38] completely regulated everyday life in Rabot. In the streets hundreds of labourers went to work in the morning and returned home together; in the streets, large public clocks indicated the time, barrows with bales of cotton drove on and off, new sheds and ware- and stock-houses emerged, and small traders started a grocery or a bar. In the factories, a production logic took the upper hand. The working conditions were often horrendous. The hot machines regularly caught fire, there were many accidents, and children, women and men who worked long hours for a pittance, were indecently treated or even threatened. In this vein, Bart De Wilde has argued that the housing and

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34 Paul Blondeel, *Waar ik woon, wil ik niet leven. Omgangsvormen van een kansarm genoemde wijk met een veranderende stad* (Heverlee: Onderzoeksgroep stad en architectuur, 1999), 19.

35 André Capiteyn et al., *Gentse torens achter rook van schoorstenen. Gent in de periode 1860 – 1895* (Ghent: Dienst voor Kulturele Zaken, 1983); Johan Van de Wiele, *De Rabotwijk. Ontstaan en evolutie van een wijk in de negentiende-eeuwse gordel* (Ghent: CERA, 1990), 6 – 10.

36 André Coene and Martine De Raedt, *Kaarten van Gent. Plannen voor Gent. 1534 – 2011* (Ghent: Snoeck Publishers, 2012), 168.

37 Deseyn, "Rechtstreekse invloeden," 171 – 172.

38 Bart De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot. De teloorgang van de textielnijverheid* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2007), 49.

Fig. 3.1: Approved urbanisation plan for the East Side of Rabot (1889) (Ghent University Library). Catalogue number: BIB.VLBL.HFII.PGR.001.01. This image is licensed under a Creative Commons license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/

supply funds provided by (some) industrialists were not so much expressions of charity, but formed attempts to supervise and discipline the labourers.[39] Dirk Van Damme and Frank Simon even suggested that the textile patrons considered the private and public poor relief as complimentary to the wages, which relieved them of every social responsibility regarding the miserable living situations of the working class. Moreover, this possibility to appeal to the poor care provided the labourers with the vague promise that they would be helped when needed, which in turn contributed to the acceptance of their own inferior position.[40]

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39 Bart De Wilde, "Een sociografisch onderzoek van de Belgische textielpatroons in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 74, no. 3–4 (1996): 839–884.
40 Frank Simon and Dirk Van Damme, "François Laurent en de sociale kwestie: een offensief beschavingsdefensief," in *Liber Memorialis François Laurent 1810–1887*, ed. Johan Erauw et al. (Brussels: Story-Scientia, 1989), 113–114.

A pillarised social-cultural infrastructure

Together with the urbanisation of Rabot, the 19th-century textile elites also started setting up a rich organisational life from which they could further control and manage their workers, raise their moral level and keep them on the right track. After all, the misery of the working class that extended to every realm of life – cultural, ethical, intellectual, as much as material – was believed to be primarily due to their own ignorance, neglect of duty and their misbehaviour.[41] These new organisations were charged with the socialisation and civilisation of the labourers; they had to teach them to act sober, fair and diligent, to be aware of their duties, and act as 'responsible citizens'. The individual and social problems of the proletariat were thus translated into educational issues,[42] which was in fact considered both a problem and a solution since the labourers on the one hand lacked education, and education on the other hand served to meet this 'lack'. The underlying educational perspective was neither made explicit nor questioned; it was obvious that the working class needed to be 'instructed', which implied that one told "them what to think, how to act and, perhaps most importantly, what to be".[43] Against this background, two different educational ideologies originated in order to make the unformed labourers ready to serve the progress of society[44]: a conservative ideology intended to discipline the lower classes and adjust them to the dominant civic values, and a more progressive ideology focused on supporting the labourers to emancipate from their marginalised position by offering them possibilities to acquire knowledge, dispositions, and skills that could contribute to their chances of social mobility.[45]

In 1872, a new parish called 'Sint-Jozef' ('Saint Joseph') was founded for the inhabitants of Rabot. The industrial family of de Hemptinne offered land to build

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41 Marc Depaepe, *De pedagogisering achterna. Aanzet tot een genealogie van de pedagogische mentaliteit in de voorbije 250 jaar* (Leuven/Amersfoort: Acco, 1999), 146–158.

42 Maria Bouverne-De Bie, "De pedagogisering van sociale problemen. Historische ontwikkelingen in de jeugdwelzijnszorg in Vlaanderen," *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Wetenschappen* 36 (1991): 1–15.

43 Gert Biesta, "Becoming Public: Public Pedagogy, Citizenship and the Public Sphere," *Social and Cultural Geography* 13, no. 7 (2012): 690.

44 Evelyne Deceur, "Sociaal-cultureel werk als democratische arena. De inzet van participatieve praktijken in stedelijke contexten" (PhD. diss, University Ghent, 2017), 40–42.

45 Maria Bouverne-De Bie et al., "Learning Democracy in Social Work," in *Civic Learning, Democratic Citizenship and the Public Sphere*, eds. Gert Biesta, Maria De Bie and Danny Wildemeersch (Dordrecht/Heidelberg/New York/London: Springer, 2014), 43–54; Simon and Van Damme, "François Laurent," 109–164.

a new parish church.[46] In anticipation of the construction of this church in the central 'Wondelgemstraat', priest Aloïs Joos (1830–1891) was appointed to gather his new parishioners in initiatives and associations. Therefore, during the 1870s, he opened – for boys and girls separately – a Sunday school and succeeded in financing a Catholic primary school, where lessons in morality and religiosity were linked to alms. He founded several congregations, such as the *Confrerie van de Heilige Jozef* ('Brotherhood of Saint-Joseph', 1872), the *Confrerie van het Heilige Sakrament* ('Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament', 1873), and the *Confrerie van de Heilige Aloysius* ('Brotherhood of Saint-Aloysius', 1874). Around 1876, a workmen's circle and a *patronage* (a sort of 'youth club') for boys followed. In 1877, a building complex with a chapel, meeting rooms and a celebration hall arose in the 'Vlotstraat' to house the boys' patronage and the workmen's circle.[47] Once the Saint Joseph Church was officially inaugurated (1883), the parish offered new recreational activities and associations, like the choir *Broederbond* ('Union of Brothers', 1896), part of the Catholic workmen's circle, and excursions led by the parish priest to Holland, Luxemburg and Wallonia (1890–1898). During these trips, the members of the workmen's circle could enjoy nature or visit steel factories and coal mines while tightening their mutual Christian friendship bonds.[48]

The growth of the Catholic organisations and parochial initiatives set up by Joos in Rabot was part of a broader movement in Ghent.[49] For example, Catholic ultramontane-minded patronages for the youth flourished in Ghent from the middle of the century onwards. Members of the *Sint-Vincentius a Paulogenootschap* ('Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul'), in which the Catholic textile manufacturer Joseph de Hemptinne (1822–1909) played an important role, had already set up a patronage in 1850. The parochial clergy, monks and well-to-do women followed their example. All these patronages aimed at enhancing the morals of the working classes by offering activities for children and young members of working-class families on Sundays and Mondays. Careful attention was given to the fulfilment of religious duties. The full day programmes with games and courses in elementary subjects had to keep the working-class chil-

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46 Roger Van Hamme, *1872–1972. Honderd jaar gemeenschapsleven op de St.-Jozefsparochie te Gent* (Ghent: Parochieraad Sint-Jozef, 1972), 17; Wezenbeek, "De urbanisatie van de Wondelgemmeersen," 123.

47 De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 62; Van Hamme, *1872–1972. Honderd jaar gemeenschapsleven*, 25, 35–36.

48 De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 68; Van Hamme, *1872–1972. Honderd jaar gemeenschapsleven*, 44–45.

49 Jan Art, *Kerkelijke structuur en pastorale werking in het bisdom Gent tussen 1830 en 1914* (Kortrijk: UGA, 1977), 296–297.

dren off the streets. In 1867, the boys' patronage of the parish of 'Sint-Jan Baptist'" ('Saint John the Baptist'), which covered the quarters of Rabot and the Brugse Poort, before the parish of Saint Joseph was founded, reached 403 apprentices between 11 and 25 years old.[50]

Parallel to these parochial initiatives that wanted "to conserve the Catholic faith and its morality within the people by spreading good advice"[51] on alcohol consumption, obedience and morality,[52] liberal patronages were also established. In April 1868, the first liberal societies for young male and female workers in the Rabot neighbourhood were launched under the impulse of the liberal politician François Laurent (1810–1887) (see Figure 3.2): *Vrijheidsliefde* ('Love of Freedom') for boys and *Vreugd in Deugd* ('Joy through Virtue') for girls. In 1875, *Vrijheidsliefde* opened its own building in the quarter, at the corner of the 'Gasmeterlaan' and the 'Spaarstraat' (the former 'Laurentstraat'). Laurent financed the construction of the building with the prize money he had received years earlier for his *Conférence sur l'Épargne* (1872) and the proceeds from his *Principles de Droit Civil*.[53] The membership of *Vrijheidsliefde* consisted of two categories: next to male workers, older than 16, who could participate in a whole range of educational and recreational activities (gymnastics, music, trips, etc), there were also young protégés ("*beschermelingen*"). Until 1897, the daily leadership of *Vrijheidsliefde* was in the hands of Jacob Wiemer, the headmaster of a municipal boys' school.[54] Forty-two pupils of an adult school co-founded the society in 1868. The liberal industrial Camille Joseph de Bast (1807–1872) became honorary president of the society. In January 1877, *Vrijheidsliefde* already counted 555 full members and 358 protégés.[55] The members' fees were used for the creation of a library, two theatrical sections (one for the older members and one for

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50 An Hertmans, "Negentiende-eeuwse patronaten: 'beschermplaatsen' voor volkskinderen," in *Vijftig Jaar Chiroleven 1934–1984. Aspecten uit heden en verleden van een jeugdbeweging*, eds. Maurits De Vroede and An Hermans (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1985), 17–19; De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 61.

51 *'t Rabot. Katholiek orgaan der wijk van S. Jozef* 1 (1906), 1.

52 De Wilde, "Een sociografisch onderzoek".

53 Doreen Gaublomme, *François Laurent (1810–1887). De ongelukkige liefde van een liberaal vechtjas voor de kinderen van het volk* (Ghent: Stadsarchief, 1987), 45; Letter 'Werkmansgenootschap De Vrijheidsliefde', 27 October 1875 (copy from University Library Ghent), 4.1 (1/4), Archives *Vrijheidsliefde*, Liberas/Liberaal Archief, Ghent; François Laurent, *De werklieden-genootschappen van Gent* (Ghent: Drukkerij C. Annoot-Braeckman, 1878), 28–29.

54 *Laurent's genootschap De Vrijheidsliefde, Jubeljaar 1868–1894* (Ghent: E. De Laere, 1894), 8; Laurent, *De werklieden-genootschappen*, 22–24.

55 Laurent, *De werklieden-genootschappen*, 23, 30.

the protégés) and the organisation of evening courses in French, English, Dutch, Economics and History.[56]

Attracting young children and protégés to the educational and recreational activities of *Vrijheidsliefde* on Sundays and Mondays was seen as essential by the board in order to moralise them, elevate their sense of self-esteem, help them in self-government[57] and keep them out of the hands of the Catholic patronages:

> To enlighten these small beings, to take them away from the hands of a party who is hostile to us, to give them an education independent from the clergy, to raise them and to make them walk the road towards progress; that is our goal.[58]

Laurent was convinced that, under the watchful eye and leadership of the upper classes, thrift, self-reliance and precaution (the idea of "*Épargne et Prévoyance*") could be encouraged. He stated that the working class needed to be taught

> to improve their own conditions, not by violating the laws of production and not by changing the society, but by reforming themselves, by giving up their wasteful and harmful expenses, by living a family life instead of becoming blunt by drunkenness, and by developing their intellectual and moral possibilities instead of being ignorant and wallowing in debauchery.[59]

Consequently, only "the 'deserving' poor – those who were victims of circumstance and those who had the moral character to use assistance to restore themselves to self-help" could benefit.[60] In this respect, Hendrik Michielse has pointed out that this progressive ideology manifestly had a tricky double nature: people were promised that they could socially and culturally emancipate by participating in the activities offered, and at the same time the initiatives were also deployed to maintain and safeguard the existing socio-economic order and to

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56 Laurent, *De werklieden-genootschappen*, 62–63; Gaublomme, *François Laurent*, 45; Simon and Van Damme, "Education and Moral Improvement," 77; Bart D'hondt, *Van Andriesschool tot Zondernaamstraat. Gids door 150 jaar liberaal leven te Gent* (Ghent: Liberaal Archief-Snoeck, 2015), 121; Wezenbeek, "De urbanisatie van de Wondelgemmeersen," 127; Oscar Langerock, *Koninklijke Laurentkring Vrijheidsliefde-eeuwfeest* (Ghent: Vrijheidsliefde, 1968), 12.
57 Simon and Van Damme, "Education and Moral Improvement," 76–82.
58 Letter 'Beschermlingen der maatschappij De Vrijheidsliefde', 25 January 1877 (copy from University Library Ghent), 4.1/ 1(/4), Archives *Vrijheidsliefde*, Liberas/Liberaal Archief, Ghent, Belgium.
59 François Laurent, *Le livre de l'épargne par un membre de la Société Callier* (Ghent: Imprimerie C. Annoot Braeckman, 1868), 119.
60 John Harris, "State Social Work," 665.

Fig. 3.2: Portrait of François Laurent (1909) (Liberas/liberaal Archief)

(re)produce the stable progress of the (industrial) system.[61] The 'civilising offensive' aimed at adapting the behaviour of the working class to the bourgeois virtues and norms thus came with a 'civilising defensive', confirming the dominant position of the bourgeoisie and the existing social classes, instead of overthrowing them.[62] Furthermore, the support and protection measures were made conditional and irrespective of the concrete problems of the labourers: only those who obeyed the normative values could get help and assistance, and only those who took care of the poor and the needy could achieve salvation.[63]

Not only did the battle against the Catholics and their initiatives constitute an important motive for Laurent and the liberals, they also wanted to preserve young workers from the emerging socialist ideas of class struggle.[64] In the early 1870s, *Vrijheidsliefde* expelled members of the Ghent section of the *International Workingmen's Association* who tried to turn society in a socialist direction.[65] Liberal workers' societies such as *Vrijheidsliefde* focused on preparing labourers for their political integration and the gradual extension of the franchise through courses and lectures, whether the liberal reformers agreed with expanding suffrage or not.[66] The introduction of general multiple male suffrage in 1893 more than ever made it necessary for the Liberal Party to integrate the new mass electorate in the liberal pillar.[67] In 1894, the *Liberale Kring – Wijk Rabot* ('Liberal Club – Rabot Quarter') was founded, two weeks before the elections of 14 October. This local liberal club in the 'Maria-Theresiastraat' aimed to stimulate fraternal ties between liberals and to distribute propaganda in favour of the Liberal Party. The *Liberale Kring Rabot* grew fast and did not limit itself to political mo-

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61 Frieda Heyting, "Opvoeden tot samenleven. Afscheid van moraal en deugd als voorwaarden voor maatschappelijke integratie," *Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Opvoeding, Vorming en Onderwijs,* 14, no. 1–2 (1998): 35–49; Hendrik Cornelis Marie Michielse, *De burger als andragoog. Een geschiedenis van 125 jaar welzijnswerk* (Amsterdam/Meppel: Boom, 1977), 35.

62 Bernard Kruithof, "De deugdzame natie. Het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief van de Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen tussen 1784 en 1860," in *Geschiedenis van opvoeding en onderwijs. Inleiding, bronnen, onderzoek,* eds. Bernard Kruithof, Jan Noordman and Piet de Rooy (Nijmegen: SUN, 1983), 371–385; Simon and Van Damme, "François Laurent". See also: chapter 1/ introduction to this volume.

63 Maria De Bie, *Sociale agogiek: een sociaal-pedagogisch perspectief op sociaal werk* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2015), 50–52.

64 Gaublomme, *François Laurent,* 7; Michel Steels, *Geschiedenis van het stedelijk onderwijs te Gent 1828–1914* (Ghent: Gemeentebestuur Gent, 1978), 195.

65 *Laurent's genootschap De Vrijheidsliefde, Jubeljaar 1868–1894,* 13; Laurent, *De werkliedengenootschappen,* 24, 400–401.

66 Simon and Van Damme, "Education and Moral Improvement," 82; *Laurent's genootschap De Vrijheidsliefde, Jubeljaar 1868–1894,* 22, 26–27.

67 Gaublomme, *François Laurent*, 47.

bilisation and propaganda.[68] Soon sub-branches for women, art lovers, gymnasts, travellers, etc saw the light.[69] Different members of *Vrijheidsliefde* were also members of the *Liberale Kring Rabot*, but the President of *Vrijheidsliefde*, Jacob Wiemer, feared the attraction of the growing socialist movement for the members of the workers' society.[70]

Meanwhile, in 1885, socialist leaders had taken the initiative to centralise forces in the *Belgische Werkliedenpartij* ('Belgian Workers' Party'), formed from the collaboration between different cooperatives, syndicates, unions and study circles throughout Belgium.[71] In their first programme, the labour party immediately demanded the extension from tributary to universal suffrage (for men). Furthermore, they called for compulsory and free neutral education, the separation between church and state, the abolition of child labour (for those under 12 years of age), health and safety committees in the factories and the transformation from public beneficence to a social security system so "the State was responsible to ensure the fate of all workmen during work, sickness, old age"[72]. Before the First World War, Ghent became widely known as the capital of Belgian socialism. In fact, between the mid 1880s and the late 1890s the socialists in Ghent vastly extended their influence and created a sort of socialist 'state within a state', a network of intertwined organisations based on consumer cooperatives which funded all other activities: unions, political groups, mutual aid societies and leisure clubs.[73] For example, around 1900 the cooperative company *Vooruit* ('Forward') owned stores, bakeries, coffee houses, a brewery, a weaving mill, a sugar factory and even a complete arts and recreation centre.[74]

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68 "In den Liberalen kring van 't Rabot," *Het Volksbelang*, November 3, 1906, 2; *Reglement van de Liberale Kring Wijk Rabot* (Ghent: Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1905).

69 De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 69; D'Hondt, *Van Andriesschool tot Zondernaamstraat*, 46–48.

70 *Laurent's genootschap De Vrijheidsliefde, Jubeljaar 1868–1894*, 22, 27–30.

71 Els Witte, Jan Craeybeckx and Alain Meynen, *Political History of Belgium: From 1830 onwards* (Brussels: ASP Editions, 2009), 103.

72 Brepoels, *Wat zoudt gij*, 63.

73 Carl Strikwerda, *A House Dived. Catholics, Socialists and Flemish Nationalists in Nineteenth-Century Belgium* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1997), 113–115. See also: Hendrik Defoort, *Werklieden bemint uw profijt! De Belgische sociaaldemocratie in Europa* (Leuven: Lannoocampus, 2006); Guy Vanschoenbeek, *Novecento in Gent. De wortels van de sociaal-democratie in Vlaanderen* (Antwerp: Uitgeverij Hadewijch, 1995).

74 Liesbet Nys, *Vooruit Gent 1913–2013. Feestlokaal – Kunstencentrum* (Ghent: Amsab/UGent/STAM/Uitgeverij Hannibal/Kunstencentrum Vooruit/Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen, 2013); Carl Strikwerda, "The Divided Class: Catholics vs. Socialists in Belgium, 1880–1914," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 2 (1988): 333–359.

In Rabot, the first socialist club was erected in 1889 in the pub 'Cosmorama' in the 'Rietstraat', only a block away from the church of Saint Joseph and the liberal club in the 'Maria-Theresiastraat'.[75] The aspirations of the socialist militants were made clear in the first issue of the periodical of various socialist community clubs, including the Rabot club: "It is our goal to defend the working classes [...]. By joining the threefold socialist battle – politics, collaboration and corporation – [...] fortune and prosperity will come".[76] Unlike the Catholic initiatives and their progressive counterparts though, they were not able to benefit the support of the textile patrons. Only by relying on the profits of self-organised lotteries and the sale of coupons could the socialist club *Rabot* buy their first red flag. Karel Vercauter (1849–1921) and Alfons Drapier (1846–1898) were early pioneers. In the early 20th century, the club had its own women's branch, gymnastics club and theatre group. The socialist club arranged fairs, meetings and lectures, similar to those set up earlier by Joos and Laurent in the same quarter, but now with the intention of preparing the labourers and raising their awareness regarding their emancipation and the class struggle. The presence of a pharmacy, a grocery store and a shoemaker of the cooperative company *Vooruit* in the 'Wondelgemstraat' was very important for the development of the socialist club. Behind the shops of *Vooruit,* for decades a celebration hall was used by the club.[77] As a reaction to the socialist success in Ghent, the Catholic and liberal working-class movements copied the socialist model. In 1896 the Catholics founded the cooperative society *Het Volk* ('The People'), part of the *Antisocialistische Werkliedenbond* ('Anti-Socialist Workers' League'), which opened a shop in Rabot.[78] The enormous success of the socialist cooperative movement made the liberal workers' society *Vrijheidsliefde* decide to start a cooperative society in 1910, leading to the integration of a bakery and a coal warehouse in its building in the 'Spaarstraat'.[79]

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75 De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 74.

76 "Allen in 't gelid voor 'De Volksstrijd'," *De Volksstrijd*, October 24, 1909, 1.

77 De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 74.

78 Paul De Baere, *Van broodkar tot tankwagen. Coöperatieve Het Volk in Gent 1896–1996* (Ghent: C.V. Het Volk, 1996), 20; Strikwerda, *A House Divided*, 241; De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 69.

79 Letter 'Laurent's Vereeniging De Vrijheidsliefde', 5 September 1910 (copy from University Library Ghent), 7.11.2, Archives *Vrijheidsliefde*, Liberas/Liberaal Archief; Programma van het feest ter gelegenheid van het 30-jarig bestaan van de samenwerkende maatschappij, 1940, 7.11.3, Archives *Vrijheidsliefde*, Liberas/Liberaal Archief.

Living apart together

By the turn of the 19th century, Catholics, liberals and socialists organised almost identical activities, next to each other in the small district of Rabot. By doing so, on the one hand, they created a certain sense of belonging, collective interest and purpose. Their numerous activities made Rabot into an almost 'totally self-sufficient island', from which the inhabitants had no reason to leave and where people not living in the quarter had no reason to go. A neighbourhood identity arose and it was this shared "*Rabotiengevoel*" ('Rabot feeling') that was based on a particular mix of shared pride and a notion of deprivation, that made the different ideological groups strive for improvements in their quarter: more street lights, less dirt, public bathing facilities, tram shelters, etc.[80] Most important, however, was better housing:

> Our labourers are not only stuck all day in smelly and unhealthy workshops where the air is polluted, in the evening, when they have finished their tasks as useful members of the society, they again arrive in miserable and sloppy caverns and houses, where every man, who has some understanding of health doctrine, hesitates to breathe [...]. Here, the working class slowly dies because they lack fresh air and sunlight.[81]

On the other hand, this sense of cohesion and belonging was very ambiguous. In the end, even though the accelerated urbanisation had caused employers and their labourers to live together in the city, their worlds, interests and experiences mainly remained divided. The moral leadership of the textile barons was constantly stressed. The working class in turn was made to believe that the only way to escape from their miserable situation was by following the example of the already powerful actors and by participating in ideologically, socially, spatially and culturally separate projects.

In this respect, we could argue that Catholics, liberals, as well as socialists, were convinced that engagement in their social-cultural organisations served a 'better' society. The social question was thus translated into a participation issue: solely by participating in the categorical practices and by accepting the dominant values, norms and rules, the already marginalised labourers could abolish their individual and social shortcomings and realise social (and political) recognition within the models and ambitions proposed. Within such a functional approach, the three ideological parties reduced their members to 'objects of in-

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80 De Wilde, *Gent/Rabot*, 84 – 87.
81 "Ook eene bron van inkomsten voor kapitalisten," *Vooruit,* January 13, 1891, 1. For the importance of the housing issue in the social question, see chapter 7 of this volume.

tervention' and their initiatives to their 'scope'. Rather than questioning *why* their activities were formed and *if* these activities really improved the conditions of the labourers, participation was seen as a methodical-technical instrument and far less as having a political and emancipatory quality.

As such, although the agendas held by the various organisations differed, a certain 'learning regime' was installed. As Gert Biesta has argued, this meant that "a particular conception of political agency in which (political) action follows from (political) [...] right, correct or true understanding" was put forward; in other words: labourers "need[ed] to learn and [...] [had to] learn in order to become (better) political actors".[82] Such a 'learning regime' tends to control rather than support people in analysing and adressing social problems. By emphasising that one had to learn the 'right' civic and moral duties and virtues, the concerns of the labourers themselves were hardly thematised. Besides, in the (seemingly) homogeneous communities formed by the ideological societies, individual differences were neglected and decontextualised. The participants were seen as passive consumers, not as active co-designers. In this way, they were attributed a kind of 'not yet-status': they had to be supported by the organisations that had set out the right instruments and methods in order to socialise them into being citizens and teach them uprightness and dedication to the law.

Concluding reflections

Currently, this instrumental-methodical point of view is very vital. Many participatory initiatives fail to think critically about their own role and their link with broader social-political developments. They have evolved into "sedimentary and self-referential practices": practices that have lost their initial orientation towards the problems and the people at stake, and have become self-evident.[83] Encouraged by subsidising governments that increasingly ask for demonstrations of the effects of participation and/in social-cultural work by means of measurable targets, participatory organisations want to prove *that* they have impact, but they rarely discuss *why* they do *what* they do and "by whom, with and for whom, what problems are formulated, on what grounds."[84] In this sense, we could argue

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82 Biesta, "Becoming Public," 692.

83 Chantal Mouffe, *Over het politieke* (Kapellen: Pelckmans, 2005), 24; Roose, Roets and Bouverne-De Bie, "Irony and Social Work: In Search of the Happy Sisyphus".

84 Maria Bouverne-De Bie, "Participatie: een kenmerkend perspectief op samenlevingsopbouw," in *Handboek Samenlevingsopbouw in Vlaanderen*, ed. Herman Baert et al. (Bruges: die Keure, 2003), 53.

that participation has become a form of 'social engineering': a technical intervention based on methods that have proven their effectiveness, regardless of the social and political context.[85] The connection with the underlying logic, views and contradictions of social-cultural work, which go far back into history and which continue to influence participation issues and initiatives today, has faded. Participation is not (or no longer) a reflection of or an answer to social problems, and social-cultural work is not (or no longer) a place where these social problems are put into interaction.

In this chapter we have shown, from a combined socio-pedagogical and historical perspective, how participatory strategies arose in the 19th century as an answer to the social and urban question. The case of Rabot served here as a prototype. We analysed how a pillarised network of schools, labour unions, study circles, youth and sports clubs, etc. emerged that reinforced class segregation and constantly oscillated between pacification and politicisation, that is, between consolidating the existing order on the one hand, and offering levers for social integration and political inclusion on the other hand. Their respective, extensive social-cultural infrastructures and networks created a sense of belonging and launched the image of participation as a strong societal norm to overcome individual and social deficits. As little room was left for difference and discussion on structural unequal socio-economic and political factors, the participatory initiatives unintentionally contributed to their own instrumentalisation.

This historically developed 'functional approach' is undeniably limited. Today, as the demand for effectiveness expands, the questions relating to the meaning and range of participation are further translated into apolitical, technical answers. Social-cultural organisations struggle with this. If they fail or refuse to indicate their 'unique effectiveness', they run the risk of throwing out the good with the bad: their present qualities of community development, then, become misunderstood and social-cultural work will be marginalised in terms of merely leisure time.

We contend that such an evolution urgently calls for critical reflection. In this, historical research is essential in order to keep comparing present, past and future to prevent so-called 'emancipatory practices' leading again to new forms of discipline and repression. If we want participatory initiatives to be more than procedures and techniques, if we want them to be grounded in the

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85 Walter Lorenz, Filip Coussée and Griet Verschelden, "Sociaal-cultureel werk en historisch bewustzijn," in *Wissels. Handboek sociaal-cultureel werk met volwassenen*, ed. Frank Cockx et al. (Ghent: Academia Press, 2011), 126–151.

commitment of a society to realise equal opportunities for every individual to be recognised as a social and political actor, social-cultural work has to (re)focus itself on shared concerns and shared responsibilities regarding contemporary social and urban questions.

Part II **New Topics in the History of Social and Educational Reform**

Stijn Van de Perre

4 Catholic Fundraising to Educate the Poor. The History of the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* (1855 – 1878)*

The religious-philosophical dispute is known to be one of the classic zones of tension in Belgian society. Throughout the 19th century, Catholics and liberals struggled for power and disputed control over the socialisation of the masses. This polarisation escalated between 1879 and 1884 in an ardent 'school war', with the 'soul of the child' at stake.[1] By then both Catholics and liberals had invested in fundraising organisations in order to develop their preferred system of schooling. Associations such as the liberal *Denier des Écoles* (1872) or the *Katholieke Schoolpenning* ('Catholic School Penning', 1876) collected gifts from their sympathisers in order to found free Catholic and non-confessional schools.[2] However, the mechanism of collecting funds to finance private education proj-

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1 See: Jacques Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire 1842 – 1879. Introduction à l'étude de la lutte scolaire en Belgique* (Université de Louvain. Recueil de travaux d'histoire et de philologie, 6ᵉ série, fascicule 17 – 18), 2 vol. (Leuven: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1979); Jeffrey Tyssens, *Om de schone ziel van 't kind. Het onderwijsconflict als een breuklijn in de Belgische politiek* (Bijdragen Museum van de Vlaamse Sociale Strijd, 15) (Ghent: s.n., 1998). See also: Paul Wynants with the cooperation of Martine Paret, "École et clivages aux XIXe et XXe siècles," in *Histoire de l'enseignement en Belgique*, ed. Dominique Grootaers (Brussels: CRISP, 1998), 13 – 84; Raf Vanderstraeten, "Cultural Values and Social Differentiation: The Catholic Pillar and its Education System in Belgium and the Netherlands," *Compare* 32, no 2 (2002): 133 – 148; Els Witte, "The Battle for Monasteries, Cemeteries and Schools: Belgium," in *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth Century Europe*, eds. Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 102 – 128; Raf Vanderstraeten, "Religious Congregations at Work in Education – with Special Reference to Belgium," in *International Handbook of Catholic Education – Challenges for School Systems in the 21st Century*, eds. Gerald R. Grace and Joseph O'Keefe (Dordrecht: Springer Verlag, 2007), 519 – 539; Patrick Loobuyck and Leni Franken, "Religious Education in Belgium: Historical Overview and Current Debates," in *Religious Education in a Plural, Secularised Society: A Paradigm Shift*, eds. Leni Franken and Patrick Loobuyck (Münster/New York/München/Berlin: Waxmann, 2011), 35 – 55; Paul Wynants, Vincent Dujardin, Henk Byls and Sarah Van Ruyskensvelde, "Conflicten als vormgevers en stoorzenders. Ideologische breuklijnen en twee wereldoorlogen," in *Katholiek onderwijs in België. Identiteiten in evolutie 19de -21ste eeuw*, eds. Jan De Maeyer and Paul Wynants (Averbode: Halewijn, 2016), 79 – 106.

2 Eliane Gubin and Jean-Pierre Nandrin, "Het liberale en burgerlijke België, 1846 – 1878," in *Nieuwe Geschiedenis van België. I. 1830 – 1905* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2005), 308.

ects that was used in the 1870s was by no means entirely new. In this chapter, I will focus on a particular precursor. In 1855, the governor of the *Société Générale*, Count Ferdinand de Meeûs (1798 – 1861), founded the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* ('Civil Company for Credit of Charity'). He introduced an original formula for raising capital to invest in Catholic schools for poor working class children. The society issued shares, without interest but which were refundable after a certain period. Its mission was to push back pauperism in industrial centres. I will answer various questions in relation to this insufficiently studied initiative. Did Ferdinand de Meeûs succeed in his aims? Why was his example not followed by similar initiatives? What was its involvement in the phase preceding the school war? Did this project matter anyway?

Financing schools

In both Belgian and international historiography, only limited research has been done on financing mechanisms for funding elementary schools and popular education in a broader sense.[3] This can be explained by the rather limited availability of serial source material. Nevertheless, discussions on school financing are of major importance, as these debates concern the role private organisations and (local) authorities should play in education. The relation between private and public engagements often caused lively conflicts.[4] Fundraising played a decisive role in the control over how education was organised and what the public was taught. In various countries the battle over the 'soul of the child', not in the least among the poor, inevitably translated ideological antagonisms into a critical political dispute.[5] Recently, there has been some attention paid to the financing of education on the international academic forum. At a conference in 2011 on

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3 Peter Heyrman, "Bedrijfscultuur van katholieke scholen. Financies en beheer," in *Katholiek onderwijs in België*, 296; Johannes Westberg, *Funding the Rise of Mass Schooling. The Social, Economic and Cultural History of School Finance in Sweden, 1840 – 1900* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2.

4 See, for example: Harry Van Dyke, "Government schools or Free schools? Abraham Kuyper Addresses a Long-Standing Controversy in the Dutch Parliament," *Canadian Journal of Netherlandic Studies* 35, no. 2 (2014): 29 – 45.

5 See, for example, the controversies regarding the establishment of a private education network for the Catholic poor in Ireland: Kristin V. Brig, "'Torn from Their Mother's Breasts': The Battle for Impoverished Souls in Ireland, 1853 – 1885," *Madison Historical Review* 13 (2016): 27 – 34. For the debate on the role of Catholic schools in France since 1870, see: Sarah A. Curtis, "Supply and Demand: Religious Schooling in Nineteenth-Century France," *History of Education Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1999): 51 – 72.

the 'History of Schooling: Politics and Local Practice' at Uppsala University (Sweden), sessions were programmed on 'School Finance' and on the 'Economics of Education'.[6] Special issues of the *Nordic Journal of Educational History* (2015) and *Paedagogica Historica* (2016) presented an overview of the relevant historiography.[7] All contributions emphasised the need for more systematic research in order to develop new insights into the massification of education, especially in relation to industrialisation and state building processes.[8]

Private organisations, both lay associations and religious congregations, faced several challenges in their ambition to finance Catholic schools.[9] First, they had to find an appropriate venue. This venue could be temporarily placed at their disposal, granted to them on a permanent basis, or acquired with collected money or borrowed investment capital. If the latter was the case, the repayments resulted in a financial burden for years to come. Once the activities had taken off, the staff related and operational costs continued to inflict recurring expenses. When an institution did not make an appeal to government subsidies or logistical support[10], it became dependant on philanthropy. Foundations ("*libéralités*") or legacies offered a more definitive solution. Quite often these foundations consisted of both immovable property and cash funds. The benefactors often introduced conditions with regard to the allocation of the donation. Carefully managed and invested, these resources could provide a reliable source of income. To cover more current needs, associations held collections or organised benefit events. School board members went out to petition the local elite and other potential backers. A great many parish priests did not hesitate to cooperate in person.[11] Finally, there were also some other opportunities to raise income.

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6 The Swedish and Swiss contributions were included in the section 'School Finance: Funding and Regional Variations' in *History of Schooling. Politics and Local Practice*, eds. Carla Aubry and Johannes Westberg (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2012).

7 See: Anne Berg, Samuel Edquist, Christin Mays, Johannes Westberg and Andreas Åkerlund, "The History of Educational Finance. Introduction," *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 2, no. 1 (2015): 3 – 22; Marcelo Caruso, "Why Do Finance? A Comment about Entanglements and Research in the History of Education. Concluding Remarks," *Ibidem*, 141 – 149; Carla Aubry Kradolfer and Michael Geiss, "The Backbone of Schooling: Entangled Histories of Funding and Educational Administration – Introduction," *Paedagogica Historica* 52, no. 4 (2016): 315 – 324.

8 Westberg, *Funding*, 4. This is why Westberg argues for a "materialistic turn in the field of educational history".

9 Heyrman, "Bedrijfscultuur," 304 – 306.

10 In addition to financial support, a municipality could also provide for rooms, heating, furniture or school materials. For examples, see: Désiré P.A. De Haerne, *Tableau de la charité chrétienne en Belgique* (Brussels: C.J. Fonteyn, 1857), annexe I (comments on the institutions of the diocese Tournai).

11 Heyrman, "Bedrijfscultuur," 300 – 301.

Recurrent costs could be covered by levying school fees from solvent pupils. Besides that, different religious orders developed lucrative secondary activities (such as lace schools, laundries, paid caregiving for elderly and disabled persons). These activities made it possible to fund their educational work.[12]

If private associations eventually succeeded in generating the necessary means through a certain capital, they faced yet another problem. Under French law (which was still valid), Belgian policymakers were not at all inclined to grant them legal personality, fearing the return of the old mortmain practices ("*mainmorte*"). This position meant that such organisations were unable to perform legal transactions. They merely existed as de facto associations. To bypass this problem, people started looking for all sorts of solutions. Besides working with straw men, the formation of a partnership or the setting up of a civil company ("*société civile*") also offered an answer. In both cases, the partnerships had no real legal status, but the partners or shareholders made an agreement by mutual consent on what was to happen when someone left or died.[13] As from 1847, successive liberal ministers of Justice attempted to reverse the existing practices of tolerance towards private (i. e. Catholic) organisations that received a foundation, donation, or bequest for charitable and educational purposes.[14]

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12 Maarten Van Dijck and Kristien Suenens, "La Belgique charitable: Charity by Catholic Congregations in Rural West Flanders, 1830–1880," in *Armenfürsorge und Wohltätigkeit. Ländliche Gesellschaften in Europa, 1850–1930. Poor Relief and Charity. Rural Societies in Europe, 1850–1930*, eds. Inga Brandes and Katrin Marx-Jaskulski (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008), 169–172; Heyrman, "Bedrijfscultuur," 304–305.
13 Heyrman, "Bedrijfscultuur," 306–307. See also: Joeri Vananroye, *Morele wezens en wetsontduikende monniken. Over de vereniging zonder rechtspersoonlijkheid* (Antwerp/Cambridge: Intersentia, 2012), 2–5; Edouard Haus, "Sociétés civiles – personnes morales," *La Belgique Judiciaire*, 13, no 3–4 (1855): 33–41; Fred Stevens, "Les associations religieuses en Belgique pendant le 19e siècle," in *Religious Institutes in the 19th and 20th Centuries: Historiography, Research and Legal Position*, eds. Jan De Maeyer, Sofie Leplae and Joachim Schmiedl (Leuven: University Press, 2004), 198–201.
14 Witte, "The Battle," 110; Gubin and Nandrin, "Het liberale en burgerlijke België 1846–1878," 296–297.

Shares for a good cause

"Let's start; We will do better later", was the tagline Count Ferdinand de Meeûs, his four oldest sons (Ferdinand François, Henri, Julien and Joseph[15]), and his son-in-law baron Joseph François de Roest d'Alkemade (1831–1892) [16] used when they assembled, on 3 December 1855, in Saint-Josse-ten-Noode before notary Philippe Alexandre Coppyn (1796–1874). They came to pass the founding deed of an association they named the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*. According to the statutes, this enterprise focused on the funding of Catholic schools for poor children of the working class, and on shelters for old and sick workers.[17] The society concentrated on the industrial regions, especially those where there was coal mining, in the provinces of Hainaut and Liège, and on Brussels. The intention was to develop educational initiatives, preferably led by religious. Where possible, the *Société* was also willing to support or patronise other charitable organisations.

The *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* opted for a remarkably original formula to raise funds. Capital was collected by issuing two classes of shares. The base was laid by the foundation shares ("*actions de fondation*"), worth 500 Belgian francs (fr). Buyers renounced all interest or dividends. This investment was only to be released in case of liquidation of the society. Of these shares, the issue was limited to 500,000 fr. In addition, there were participation shares ("*actions de participation*"), also worth 500 fr. Buyers of this kind of shares could not count on dividends either, but they were promised an interest rate of 2.5 per cent. Buyers could choose for a refund of capital after a period of 20, 30 or 50 years. Furthermore, the company also accepted gifts. The statutes included clear directives on the procedures that should be followed. All means were to be invested on the stock market. This produced income from dividends which was subsequently used by the *Société* to fund its activities. The general rule dictated that with a capital of 500,000 fr, up to 60 per cent of the net income could

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15 Ferdinand François Joseph Antoine (1825–1916), Henri Joseph Ferdinand (1826–1913), Jean Baptiste Joseph Ferdinand Julien (1827–1867) and Joseph François Ferdinand (1829–1910). See: Charles Poplimont, *La Belgique héraldique,* Vol. VII, *-M* (Paris: Walder, 1866), 240–241 and the website of the Association Familiale d'Argenteuil (www.demeeus.org).

16 François de Roest d'Alkemade married on 20 April 1854 to Marie Louise Pauline Françoise de Meeûs (1831–1865). See Poplimont, *La Belgique*, 240.

17 The statutes were also published as a brochure: *Société du Crédit de la charité* (Brussels: Emm. Devroye, 1855). See also De Haerne *Tableau*, 84–85; A. Dufau, "Société civile du crédit de la charité en Belgique," *Annales de la charité* 13 (1857): 218–220; Poplimont, *La Belgique*, 235–236.

be spent on subsidies. In case of a capital between 500,000 to 1 million fr this part was raised to 75 per cent, and when the capital exceeded one million fr, the proportion increased to 90 per cent. This mechanism was designed to protect capital and commitments, and to ensure the proper functioning of the organisation in the long term. The issuance of shares was launched on January 1, 1856 and was, at least according to the *Société* itself, an instant success.[18]

Even King Leopold I (1790–1865) purchased several shares, and he explicitly welcomed the initiative.[19] The shareholders were not only members of the wealthy upper class, but also directors, executives, and even ordinary employees of coalmines, factories and other industrial enterprises. Some people wished to remain anonymous. By the end of December 1855, 450,000 fr were collected already. Thanks to the increase in the value of the investments, the *Société* soon rounded the cape of 500,000 fr. This implied a margin available for subsidies of about 30,000 fr. In the course of 1856, the *Société* already supported more than 30 schools for poor children.[20] By 1861, this number grew to 67 institutions, in 1862 to 88, in 1866 to 92 and in 1875 to 116.[21]

A top banker as inspirer

The success of this imitative was no coincidence, as the driving force behind the *Société* was a figure of major importance: Count Ferdinand de Meeûs, the first Belgian governor of the *Société Générale*, the finance company that helped finance the expansion of the Belgian economy after 1830 by extensive direct investment in industry. In 1855, Ferdinand de Meeûs could look back on a distinguished career.[22] Thanks to the fortune his father François-Joseph Meeûs (1765–

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18 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 5 février 1857* (Brussels: J. Delfosse, 1857), 2.

19 *Le Crédit de œuvres ouvrières et de la charité a.s.b.l. 1855–1955* (Brussels: s.n., 1955), 18.

20 Cited in De Haerne, *Tableau*, 82–83.

21 Jean-Joseph Thonissen, *Vie du Comte Ferdinand de Meeus* (Leuven: Ch. Peeters et Cie, 1863), 157; Désiré P.A. De Haerne, "Rapport sur la charité chrétienne en Belgique," *Assemblée générale des catholiques en Belgique. Première session à Malines 18–22 août 1863, vol II, Compte-rendu des sections – Annexes* (Brussels: H. Goemaere, 1864), 332; "Société civile du Crédit de la charité en Belgique," *Revue Générale, vol. VI, 3me année* (Brussels: Comptoir universel d'imprimerie et de librairie Victor Devaux et Cie/Paris: C. Billet/'s Hertogenbosch: W. Van Gulick, 1867), 550; *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 6 mars 1876* (Brussels: Louis Despret-Poliart, 1876), 6.

22 For biographical information, see: Poplimont, *La Belgique*, 179–240; Thonissen, *Vie du Comte*; "Le comte Ferdinand Philippe de Meeûs," in Ed. Terwecoren, *Collection de précis histor-*

1821) had made in trade, the family became one of the leading families in Brussels.[23] During French rule, Napoleon appointed François-Joseph Meeûs as president of the General Council of the Department of the Dyle. In the heyday of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Catholic liberal François-Joseph was a member of the House of Representatives of the States General.[24] When in August 1830 the unrest that would eventually lead to the the secession of the southern provinces and the establishment of the Kingdom of Belgium commenced, Ferdinand resolutely chose the side of the insurgents. Given his background as a banker and considering his firm commitment to the cause of the revolution, it was hardly surprising that the Provisional Government of Belgium nominated him, despite being only 32 years of age, as the first Belgian governor of the *Société Générale*. At the same time, Ferdinand was elected as a representative in the National Congress as well. From 1832 to 1845, he continued to represent Brussels in parliament. De Meeûs, a moderate liberal on the political level with a strong Catholic belief, fully supported the unionist policy and rejected the growing liberal discontent with these bargaining policies. In 1845 he was not re-elected.[25] He guided the *Société Générale* through the troubled first years.[26] De Meeûs managed to transform the *Société Générale* into a mixed bank that fully invested and participated in the infrastructural and industrial development of the

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iques, mélanges littéraires et scientifiques, Xe année (Brussels: J. Vandereydt, 1861), 334 – 344; Julie Laureyssens, "de Meeûs, Ferdinand," *Nouvelle Biographie nationale*, vol. 4 (Brussels: Académie royale des sciences, lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique, 1997), 114 – 118; Herman Van der Wee and Monique Verbreyt, *De Generale Bank 1822 – 1997. Een permanente uitdaging* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1997), 35 – 36; Helena Taelman, "Prosopografische studie van de leden van de beheerraad van de Société Générale in de periode 1830 – 1848" (Master's thesis, University of Ghent, 2006), xiii-xiv.

23 On the family history, see: Jean-Louis Van Belle, *Meeûs à de Meeûs: Bruxelles – la foi – le feu* (Braine-le-Château: La taille d'Aulme, 1997) and the website of the Association Familiale d'Argenteuil (www.demeeus.org).

24 Herman Theodoor Colenbrander, *Gedenkstukken der Algemeene Geschiedenis van Nederland van 1795 tot 1840. Achtste deel. Regeering van Willem I, 1815 – 1825. Tweede stuk* ('s Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1915), 549 – 550.

25 Michel Magits, "De socio-politieke samenstelling van de Volksraad (10 november 1830 – 21 juli 1831)," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 12, no. 3 (1981): 604; José Douxchamps, *Présence nobiliaire au parlement belge (1830 – 1970). Notes généalogiques* (Wépion-Namur: José Douxchamps, 2003), 83; Thonissen, *Vie du Comte*, 107.

26 Gita Deneckere, *Leopold I. De eerste koning van Europa* (Antwerp: De Bezige Bij, 2012): 391 – 393; Els Witte, "Wijzigingen in de Belgische elite in 1830. Een voorlopige verkenning," *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 94, no. 22 (1979): 239 – 240.

young state.[27] He was strongly involved in the establishment of joint-stock companies. Ferdinand de Meeûs sat on the governing boards of many enterprises, as (honorary) chairman, director or administrator.[28] He succeeded in establishing an impressive network. In 1836 King Leopold I bestowed on him the title of Count. [29] In the meantime, de Meeûs had purchased a domain in Ohain near the Sonian Forest and built the castle of Argenteuil.[30] With his *Société Civile pour l'Agrandissement et l'Embellissement de la Capitale de la Belgique*, he ensured the development of the exclusive and elitist Leopold Quarter in Brussels.[31]

Throughout his life, Ferdinand de Meeûs was committed to different forms of charity. In 1822, the 24 year-old Ferdinand visited destitute families in the Brussels parish of St. Michael and St. Gudula for the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* ('Social Welfare Council').[32] In 1832, after his nomination as the governor of the *Société Générale*, he joined the board of directors of the *Refuge des Vieillards des Ursulines* in Brussels. His father had already held that position from 1809 until his death in 1821.[33] Ferdinand de Meeûs proved himself an active benefactor, both in the surroundings of the domain of Argenteuil as in the capital.[34] He supported, among others, the alms-house of the *Petites Soeurs des Pauvres*, the institutions of the *Filles de la Charité de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul*, the works of the *Enfance Catholique* and the congregation of Saint Francis Xavier.[35] He also patronised the

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27 Van der Wee and Verbreyt, *De Generale Bank*, 39–49. See also: Julie M. Laureyssens, "Financial Innovation and Regulation. The Société Générale and the Belgian State after Independence (1830–1850)," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 20, no 1–2 (1989): 223–250, and part 2 in *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 23, no 1–2 (1992): 61–89.

28 Samuel Tilman counted 22 mandates. See Samuel Tilman, *Les grands banquiers belges, 1830–1935. Portrait collectif d'une élite* (Mémoire de la Classe des Lettres. Collection in-8°, 3e série, vol. XXXIX) (Brussels: Académie royale de Belgique, 2006), 23, 25. Even more records can be found in Louis-François-Bernard Trioen, *Collection des statuts de toutes les sociétés anonymes et en commandité par actions de la Belgique, vol. 2.* (Brussels: Chez l'auteur, 1839); Idem, *Collection des statuts de toutes les sociétés anonymes et en commandité par actions de la Belgique* (Brussels: Société belge de librarie, 1841); E. Van Damme, *Manuel du Financier, des opérations en fonds publics et des sociétés par actions en Belgique. 1858–1859* (Ghent: D. Verhulst, 1859).

29 Poplimont, *La Belgique*, 161–162; Luc Duerloo and Paul Janssens, *Wapenboek van de Belgische adel van de 15de tot de 20ste eeuw, vol. F-M* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1992), 729.

30 Eric Meuwissen, *Argenteuil, Le domaine "des" Rois* (Ohain-Lasne: Éditions de la Page, 2005), 9–34.

31 Frédéric Leroy, "Quand l'aristocratie et la grande bourgeoisie habitaient le quartier Léopold," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 88, no 2 (2010): 520.

32 Tilman, *Les grands banquiers*, 191.

33 *Ibidem*, 181–182.

34 See also: Thonissen, *Vie du Comte*, 158–163.

35 Poplimont, *La Belgique*, 237.

Fig. 4.1: Ferdinand de Meeûs (1798 – 1861), lithograph of J. Schubert in Jean-Joseph Thonissen, *Vie du Comte Ferdinand de Meeus* (1863).

institute of the *Dames de l'Adoration Perpétuelle du Très Saint-Sacrement*, found-
ed by his oldest daughter Anna (1823–1904).[36]

Education for working-class children in industrial regions

For some considerable time, long before the formation of the *Société Civile du
Crédit de la Charité* in 1855, Ferdinand de Meeûs showed an interest in the
fate of working-class families. In this, he pursued a dual strategy. On the one
hand, he used his position as governor of the *Société Générale* to add a dimen-
sion of social welfare to the bank's investment policy. In 1840, for example, he
was the driving force behind the creation of the *Caisse de Prévoyance en faveur
des Mineurs de l'Arrondissement de Mons*.[37] Financed by the administrators of in-
dustrial enterprises in the Borinage, the fund took care of the pensions of miners
who were unable to work any longer, or delivered social benefits to widows and
orphans of miners who were killed in accidents. In addition, the *Caisse* also in-
tended to establish and support schools and offer free education. De Meeûs ar-
ranged that the *Société Générale pour favoriser l'Industrie Nationale*, the *Société
des Capitalistes Réunis dans un But de Mutualité Industrielle* and the *Société de
Commerce de Bruxelles* donated at least 5000 fr each year to the fund for promot-
ing education for working-class children.[38] These contributions were used for

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36 Martine Paret and Paul Wynants, "La noblesse belge dans les ordres religieux et les congré-
gations, 1801–1960," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 30, no 3–4 (2000): 514; An-
nelies Hemelsoet "Liefdadigheid als roeping van een dame: Het sociaal engagement van de adel-
lijke vrouw in het 19de-eeuwse Gent (1845–1880)" (Master's thesis, University of Ghent, 2002),
120–123; Daniel Bockstal, "La chapelle funéraire d'Anna de Meeûs à Watermael," *Chroniques
de Watermael-Boitfort*, no 10 (2010): 8–14. Anna de Meeûs is one of the central characters in
the doctoral dissertation "'Too robust to be saint'. Female congregation founders in 19th-century
Belgium: double-voiced agency, religious entrepreneurship and gender tension", defended by
Kristien Suenens on 30 October 2018 at the KU Leuven.
37 Thonissen, *Vie du Comte*, 141–142; Poplimont, *La Belgique*, 235.
38 Art. 3, 5°, of the "Arrêté royal qui approuve les statuts de la caisse de prévoyance en faveur
des ouvriers mineurs de l'arrondissement de Mons, province de Hainaut," *Pasinomie*, *Troisième
série, Tome dixième* (Brussels: Société typographique belge, 1840), 560–563; Auguste Visschers,
De l'état actuel et de l'avenir des caisses de prévoyance en faveur des ouvriers mineurs en Belgique
(Brussels: B.J. Vandooren, 1847), 15, 29. In 1842, the Welfare Fund of Mons, with 31 affiliated en-
terprises, spent 8.250 fr (13,30 % of the global expenses) on elementary education for 3004 pu-
pils. For more numbers, see: *Ibidem*, 16, 20, 29.

evening classes. Sunday schools proved to be less successful, except during winter. [39] By 1860, 7703 children received free education thanks to this initiative.[40]

On the other hand, de Meeûs also did not hesitate to use his personal fortune and make significant donations to support the education of working-class children.[41] At first, he did so anonymously and wanted to keep his contributions a secret, even from his own family.[42] In 1850, he travelled to Paris to meet the Superior General of the *Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes* ('Brothers of the Christian Schools'). At the congregation's headquarters, they arranged to scout for suitable locations in the Borinage, Charleroi and Châtelet. Thanks to his donations, the Brothers could start schools in Jemappes (1851), a suburb of Charlerloi (1851), Boussu (1852), Châtelet (1853), La Bouverie (1854), Châtelineau, and Dour (1855). Additionally, Ferdinand de Meeûs also funded the expansion of existing schools (for example in Frameries and Charleroi) of the Brothers, as well as the establishment of several adult schools.[43]

De Meeûs also approached business leaders from a variety of industrial enterprises to ask for additional support. This was by no means surprising, as de Meeûs was connected to many joint-stock companies through the *Société Générale*. Nevertheless, he soon realised that this formula would not last. The replacement of managers in these firms meant uncertainty about commitment in the long run. This is why he started looking for a more structurally sound and permanent solution for the funding of schools. Furthermore, he also wanted to give the project a larger scope. The establishment of the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* would offer a solution.

A formula for structural support

The *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* pursued its own philosophy. In principle, the association did not intervene in the acquisition, rent, foundation or the set-up costs of schools. It argued that local benefactors were better placed to

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39 Visschers, *De l'état actuel*, 29 – 31.

40 Thonissen, *Vie du Comte*, 143.

41 In 1855, he donated 14.281 fr. to the *Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes* in Belgium. See Félix Hutin, *L'Institut des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes en Belgique*, vol. II, *Les établissements des Frères sous le règne de la liberté constitutionnelle et sous la loi du 23 septembre 1842 de 1831 au 1er juillet 1879* (Namur/Aalst: Procure des Frères/Temse: Duculot-Roulin, 1912), 69.

42 The truth on these donations came out when the Brothers of the Christian Schools notified the family after his death. See: Thonissen, *Vie du Comte*, 144 – 145; Hutin, *L'Institut*, 67 – 68.

43 Thonissen, *Vie du Comte*, 146 – 147.

judge whether the establishment of schools was appropriate. The majority of initiatives succeeded in acquiring start-up financing. However, this benevolence did not always last.[44] After a first wave of enthusiasm, they faced financial troubles. This is where the *Société* came into the picture.[45] To prevent the downsizing or even discontinuation of educational activities, the society intervened and granted schools an annual allowance. If the institution planned further expansion, the subsidy could be raised.

The initiators of the plan left no room for doubt about their aims. With the organisation of Christian education, they wanted to counter increasing pauperism.[46] Just like so many contemporaries, they ascribed poverty to a lack of proper upbringing. This explained, in their view, why workers squandered their hard-earned income so inconsiderately on alcohol or in pubs.[47] Moreover, investing in education could help preserve social harmony.[48] At the same time, they also considered the idea of selecting the better students and helping them, by means of a scholarship of 300 to 400 fr, to go to college. That way, they could develop into reliable supervisors, who would one day take the lead on the factories' work floors.[49]

The formula of de Meeûs tried to overcome one of the main problems private associations faced. The law did not give them legal recognition, which was necessary to ensure continuity and stability in management (see above).[50] By estab-

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44 See also: Heyrman, "Bedrijfscultuur," 300 – 301.

45 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 5 février 1857* (Brussels: J. Delfosse, 1857), 5.

46 *L'Économiste Belge* argued that distributing relief was counterproductive and perpetuated poverty. The only way to tackle the root cause of the problem was to invest in prevention ("*institutions de prévoyance*"). See: "Societé du crédit de la charité," *L'Économiste Belge. Journal des réformes économiques et administratives* 2, no. 5 (5 March 1856): 3 – 4.

47 As pointed out by the administrative commission of the Welfare Fund of Mons: "We observe among a large number of labourers that the absence of religious principles, the lack of order, licentiousness, and the neglect of family relations go hand in hand with the lack of education. One does not have to look further than the abuse in the cabaret to find the cause of the small amount of pupils who go to Sunday schools and evening courses", cited in Édouard Ducpétiaux, *De l'association dans ses rapports avec l'amélioration du sort de la classe ouvrière* (Brussels: Hayez, 1860), 27.

48 Paul Gérin, "Sociaal-katholieke verenigingen voor de arbeiders," in *150 jaar katholieke arbeidersbeweging in België (1789 – 1939)*, vol. 1, *Het sociaal-katholicisme (1789 – 1886)*, ed. Servatius Herman Scholl (Brussels: S.V. De Arbeiderspers, 1963), 240 – 241.

49 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 7 mars 1859* (Brussels: J. Delfosse), 7.

50 "Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapport lu à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 7 mars 1859," *Le Bien Public*, March 13, 1859, 1.

lishing a civil company, the *Société* wanted to bypass these regulations.[51] Furthermore, the statutes permitted the board of directors to apply for a joint-stock company status, if appropriate.

Within Catholic circles, quite a lot of people felt a certain aversion to investments or stock market speculation as a means to accumulate capital. In this case, however, the end justified the means. In 1859 the Catholic ultramontanist newspaper *Le Bien Public* included an editorial that stated that the acquisition of shares of the society was a nice heritage to leave one's children.[52] In France, Catholics showed a bit more reticence. When Marie Gustave Baguenault de Puchesse (1843–1922) presented the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* before the *Société d'Économie Charitable*, two objections arose.[53] Some members questioned the prospect of establishing a civil company according to French law. More importantly, however, several speakers were afraid that the entanglement of making profit, speculation and charity would lead to distrust, criticism or accusations. In their eyes, the association faced the risk of becoming entangled in morally questionable practices.

Liberals responded sarcastically. The liberal journal *Le Messager de Gand* applauded the initiative, but expressed the hope that it would not go down the road of the empty promises the "hauts barons" of the *Société Générale* made twenty years earlier. After all, they had also recorded in their statutes the intention to found charitable institutions and alms-houses next to industrial enterprises.[54] At the same time, the newspaper warned the board of directors. According to their statutes, not one of them could be held personally responsible for the potential debts of the association. Under such terms, the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* misappropriated the prerogatives of a joint-stock company, although the conditions of the Commercial Code were not met. Without a proper legal base, the shareholders would have no guarantee at all of the reliability of their commitments.

The arrangement Ferdinand de Meeûs had set up matched his conviction that Catholic charities deserved every possible support. The means he accumulated were invested in stocks of industrial companies through his *Société Générale* which thus contributed just as much to economic development as it did to

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51 With a formula of a "*société civile*" or civil company the associates only risked the value of their capital investment. They could not be held liable for their management acts, unless they infringed the statutes. See: Van Damme, *Manuel du Financier*, 17.

52 *Le Bien Public*, May 3, 1859, 1.

53 "Société d'économie charitable," *Le contemporain. Revue d'économie chrétienne*, *Nouvelle série, Septième année, vol. XI* (Paris: Adrien Le Clere et Cie, 1866), 295–301.

54 "Société du crédit de la charité," *Le Messager de Gand*, January 15, 1856, 2–3.

education. This in its turn advanced prosperity.[55] The idea of financing the grants of the *Société* with the revenues from dividends entailed certain risks. If the stock portfolio was compiled in a balanced manner and the industries prospered, not only would the value of the stocks increase but also the revenues from dividends. However, economic fluctuations could get joint-stock companies into trouble, with obvious consequences for the distribution of profits. This is what happened at the beginning of the 1860s.[56] From 1873 to 1874, the opposite occurred: business boomed to such an extent that the revenues of the *Société* increased much more than anticipated.[57]

A cautious financial policy

Ensuring a healthy financial policy was no easy task. Commissioners pointed out deficits in the society's budget more than once. At some time in the future, the invested capital had to be paid back. Furthermore, the *Société* had made a commitment to pay interest of 2.5 per cent on the participation shares each year. There were also operational and administrative costs attached to the management of the capital. It was necessary to handle the influx of applications for support in a sufficiently selective way and adapt the commitments carefully to match the expected revenues.[58] Diminishing the grants could have pernicious consequences for the continued existence of the schools. When in 1865 some of the institutions were threatened with closure, a number of shareholders put up the difference from their personal fortunes.[59]

In the first years of its existence, the *Société* seemed to prosper and grow. After some time, however, interest faded. The death of Ferdinand de Meeûs in 1861 was a serious blow. As the governor of the *Société Générale*, he had, without any doubt, a significant influence through his network of industrial entrepreneurs, bankers and venture capitalists. The expressions of interest and sympathy at the Catholic Congresses in Mechelen gave the *Société* a fresh breath. Adolphe Dechamps (1807–1875), a well-known Catholic representative, even expressed

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55 "Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapport lu à l'Assemblée générale des Actionnaires, le 5 mars 1860," *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 10, 1860, 1.

56 *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 18, 1862, 1.

57 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des Actionnaires, le 5 mars 1877* (Ixelles: François Matthyssens, 1877), 5; *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 31, 1877, 1.

58 "Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapport lu à l'Assemblée générale des Actionnaires, le 5 mars 1860," *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 10, 1860, 1.

59 *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 11, 1865, 1.

the intention to augment the capital from 1 to 3 million fr by the end of the meetings.[60] However, this desired financial stimulus never occurred. This caused some resentment within the board of directors. Some wondered aloud why the direct or indirect beneficiaries of the subsidies showed so little effort in attracting new shareholders or generous benefactors. At the same time, they alerted the Catholic community that new organisations were trying to draw young people away from the influence of the Church.[61] The *Société* also pointed out that it had to deal with competition in its own ranks, with the foundation of the *Ligue Nationale Belge*[62] and the *École des Mines* in Leuven.[63] In 1879, for the first time in its existence, there was a fall in the civil company's capital.[64] But the board of directors was not altogether worried about the future. In 1881, the board confidently stated that, even when all participation shares were claimed, all commitments to schools would be complied with.[65]

Table 1 and 2: Overview of the grants, and evolution of the capital, of the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*, 1856 – 1880 (Source: annual financial reports of the society published between 1857 and 1881 or included in press articles)

Date	Total capital (in fr)
27.12.1856	448900,92
31.12.1857	614840,98
31.12.1858	799508,87
31.12.1859	907476,55

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60 *Assemblée générale des catholiques en Belgique. Première session à Malines 18 – 22 août 1863*, vol. II (Brussels: H. Goemaere, 1864), 79.

61 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 7 mars 1870* (Brussels : s.l., 1870), 6.

62 The *Ligue Nationale Belge* was established in 1872 as a reaction against the Paris Commune. This association merged into the *Fédération des Sociétés Ouvrières Catholiques Belges* in 1877. See: Jan De Maeyer, "De Belgische Volksbond en zijn antecedenten," in *De christelijke arbeidersbeweging in België*, vol. II (*KADOC-Studies*, 11), ed. Emmanuel Gerard (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 1991), 24.

63 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des Actionnaires, le 3 mars 1873* (Brussels: E. Guyot, 1873), 10 – 11. The *École des Mines et des Arts et Manufactures* was established in 1864 as part of the Faculty of Science at the University of Leuven, to train Catholic engineers.

64 *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 25, 1880, 2.

65 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 7 mars 1881* (Ixelles: François Matthyssens, 1881), 4.

Table 1 and 2: Overview of the grants, and evolution of the capital, of the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*, 1856–1880 (Source: annual financial reports of the society published between 1857 and 1881 or included in press articles) *(Continued)*

Date	Total capital (in fr)
31.12.1860	1012078,28
31.12.1861	1036690,57
31.12.1862	1078359,92
31.12.1863	1104717,37
31.12.1864	1139708,63
31.12.1865	1012337,56
31.12.1866	1040953,52
31.12.1867	1066033,35
31.12.1868	1086031,68
31.12.1869	1090744,18
31.12.1870	1099494,48
31.12.1871	1105194,18
31.12.1872	1111324,18
31.12.1873	
31.12.1874	1344044,12
31.12.1875	1349069,18
31.12.1876	1345206,68
31.12.1877	1340219,18
31.12.1878	
31.12.1879	1406616,68
31.12.1880	1405319,18

Date	Grants disbursed (in fr)
31.12.1856	26100
31.12.1857	23275
31.12.1858	33987,50

Continued

Date	Grants disbursed (in fr)
31.12.1859	45043,87
31.12.1860	51213,25
31.12.1861	56130,99
31.12.1862	54478,28
31.12.1863	56303,28
31.12.1864	56877,20
31.12.1865	57077,20
31.12.1866	58752,20
31.12.1867	58652,20
31.12.1868	60027,20
31.12.1869	60002,20
31.12.1870	59414,70
31.12.1871	58127,20
31.12.1872	58477,20
31.12.1873	
31.12.1874	76337,26
31.12.1875	88938,30
31.12.1876	89450,80
31.12.1877	86612,80
31.12.1878	83871,99
31.12.1879	85496,99
31.12.1880	85821,99

Area of activity and coverage of the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*

The reports the board of directors submitted annually at the general meeting of the shareholders gave them a view of the pattern of subsidies granted by the association. In principle, these grants were financed solely through the revenues

from investments. Until 1861, these revenues consistently permitted raising the level of funding. From 1861 to 1873, however, the board was obliged to contain the expenditure, until, after 1873, due to favourable economic conditions, a considerable increase in the subsidies became possible again. Grants amounted to 90,000 fr a year. This number was never to be surpassed as subsequently the *Société* saw its capital dwindle due to reimbursement of the participation shares.

We have at our disposal a detailed list of grants disbursed by the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* for 15 years between 1856 and 1881. The majority of beneficiaries received a fixed yearly grant. This ranged from 50 fr (for Sunday schools) up to (a rather exceptional) 3600 fr for elementary schools. Grants of 300 to 600 fr were the most common. These sums covered the annual cost of one teacher.[66]

The overview in table 3 shows that almost three quarter of the schools supported by the *Société* were elementary schools, with considerably more girls' schools than boys' schools. Various Sunday schools also got a boost. The category 'others' consists of all kinds of associations and institutions. Often, the grants for these institutions were disbursed on an occasional or temporary basis[67], although, some kindergartens, hospitals, hospices and orphanages[68] could count on a more structural form of support. The *Société* almost never deviated from its prevalent practices. Exceptions included support for the church and the schools of Argenteuil (Brabant)[69], not surprisingly the residence of the de Meeûs family, and for the rent of schools in the Borinage.[70]

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66 The Brothers of the Christian Schools counted 600 fr per brother as the annual remuneration (Hutin, *L'Institut*, II, 72). Given their vow of poverty and frugal way of life, this was not bad at all, but they financed the school supplies themselves, as confirmed by Cornelis Anton Van Bommel (1790 – 1852), bishop of Liège, in a pastoral letter of 1831 (*Ibidem*, 103 – 104). This allocation was raised in Brussels in 1868 to 700 fr (*Ibidem*, 459 – 462) and in Liège in 1875 to 750 fr, as a result of the rising cost of living (*Ibidem*, 404 – 405). In Nivelles, the allocation was raised in 1870 from 600 to 650 fr, and in 1872 to 700 fr (*Ibidem*, 541).

67 Such as the lace workshop in Vilvoorde (Brabant), the *Institut des Aveugles, Sourds & Muets* in Brussels, the orphanage *Notre-Dame du Bon Pasteur* in Namur, the *Oeuvre des Forains* in Brussels, patronage associations for young workers in Feluy (Hainaut), some parishes in Liège, the *Patronage des Apprentis* in Nivelles (Brabant), the *Société de St-François-Régis* in Brussels (Brabant) and Mons (Hainaut), and the *Société de St-Vincent-de-Paul* in Kortemark (West Flanders).

68 In particular the kindergarten in Gosselies, Pâturages and Soignies (Hainaut), the hospitals in Frameries and Frasnes (Hainaut), the hospices in Jemappes and Templeuve (Hainaut), the girls' orphanages in Brugelette (Hainaut) and Durbuy (Luxemburg).

69 With a subsidy of 8112,5 fr in 1875 and grants of 8450 fr in the following years. See: *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 6 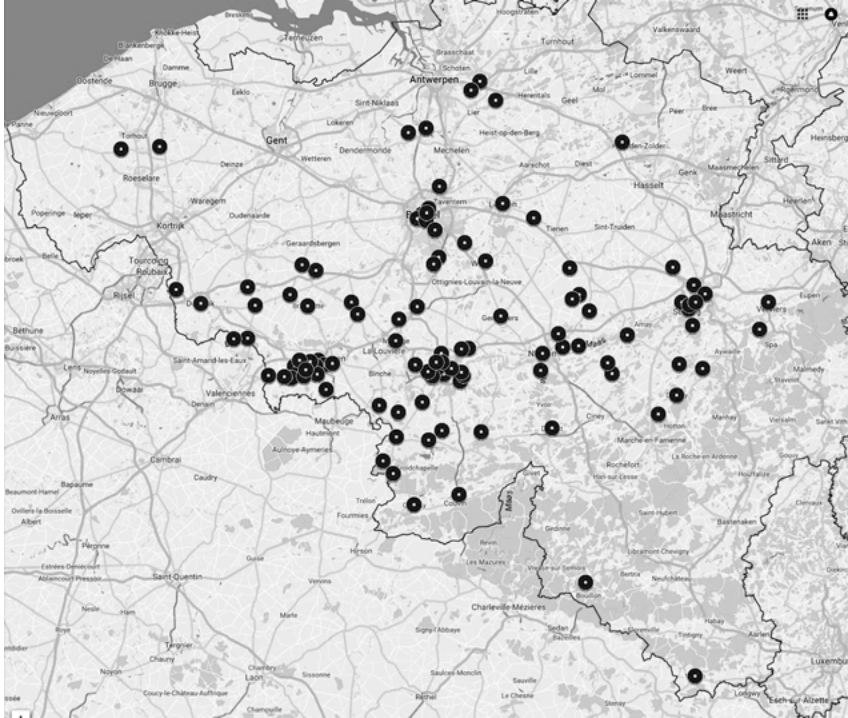mars 1876* (Brussels: Louis Despret-Poliart, 1876); *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 5 mars 1877* (Ixelles: François Matthyssens, 1877); *Société*

Table 3: Overview of the number of institutions per province subsidised by the *Société*, 1856 – 1881 (Source: annual financial reports of the society published between 1857 and 1881 or included in press articles)

	Boys' school	Girls' school	Sunday school	Others	Total
Antwerp	1	4	0		5
Brabant	12	15	2	11	40
West Flanders	0	1	0	1	2
East Flanders	0	0	0	0	0
Hainaut	29	25	8	14	76
Liège	2	16	0	3	21
Limburg	0	1	0	0	1
Luxemburg	1	2	0	1	4
Namur	4	8	0	2	14
Total	49	72	10	32	163

From the start, the *Société* had stated that its main working area would be the mining regions of Hainaut and Liège. This made sense since the board was convinced that it was in industrial regions that the need for a religious education was most essential, even though the association did not want to ignore needs elsewhere. Brussels especially merited particular consideration.[71] The figures in table 3 prove that the *Société* complied with its intentions. Almost half of all endowed associations and institutions were indeed located in Hainaut, a quarter in Brussels. The Flemish provinces, East and West Flanders in particular, were ignored almost entirely.[72] The annual report of 1875 summarised the geographical coverage following ecclesiastical demarcations: 33 institutions in the

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civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 4 mars 1878 (Ixelles: François Matthyssens, 1878); *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 1 mars 1880* (Ixelles: François Matthyssens, 1880) and *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 7 mars 1881* (Ixelles: François Matthyssens, 1881).

70 With a subsidy of 2301 fr in 1863 and 1250 fr the following years. See : "Rapport présenté par M. le comte Eugène de Meeûs, au nom de l'administration de la Société civile du Crédit de la Charité," *Assemblée générale des catholiques en Belgique. Troisième session à Malines, 2 – 7 septembre 1867* (Brussels: Comptoir universel d'imprimerie et de librairie Victor Devaux et Cie, 1868), 264 – 269; *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 18, 1867, 1; *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 2 mars 1868* (Brussels: s.n., 1868).

71 See, for example: *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 2 mars 1868* (Brussels: s.n., 1868), 10.

72 De Haerne, "Rapport," 332 – 333.

diocese of Mechelen, 55 in the diocese of Tournai, 10 in the diocese of Namur, 17 in the diocese of Liège, and 1 in the diocese of Bruges.[73]

Map: Institutions supported by the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*, 1856 – 1881

The run-up to the school war

Count Eugène de Meeûs (1834 – 1915)[74], who succeeded his father in 1861, managed to draw attention to his organisation at the Catholic congresses in Mechelen (1863, 1867, 1867), meetings inspired by the German *Katholikentage*. He did this

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73 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 6 mars 1876* (Brussels: Louis Despret-Poliart, 1876), 6.
74 Eugène François Joseph Ferdinand was married to Marie Charlotte Célestine de Couédic de Kergoaler.

by outlining the intentions and practices of the *Société*.[75] The Count was also a member of the bureau of the second section, which discussed the *Oeuvres de Charité* ('charitable work'). The bureau had the social Catholic lawyer and economist Charles Périn (1815–1905) as its chairman. Eugène de Meeûs was appointed secretary.[76] Little wonder, then, that the resolutions of the first conference cited the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* as a model that could inspire and support other Catholic charitable organisations.[77] The French social Catholic Armand de Melun (1807–1877), the co-founder of the *Société d'Économie Charitable*, saw the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* as an example for French Catholics.[78] The formula could also be an inspiration elsewhere in Belgium. The superior of a well-known Catholic school in Roeselare argued unequivocally in favour of the establishment of a *Crédit de l'Enseignement Catholique* to counter the appeal of public secondary schools.[79] The idea to implement the principles of the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* in other charities and institutions, both at home and abroad, was also discussed in other sections of the conferences.[80]

Catholics complained about the secularising educational policy of liberal governments and the application of the primary education law of 1842.[81] This resulted in the accusation that the liberal policy-makers maintained a political agenda to prevent Catholic schools from acquiring a legal status and therefore become entitled to government subsidies.[82] There were various reasons for distrust and animosity: the hardline policy of the liberal Minister of Justice François

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75 This happened already at the first congress in August 1863. See *Assemblée générale des catholiques en Belgique. Première session à Malines 18–22 août 1863, vol. II* (Brussels: H. Goemaere, 1864), 60–61.

76 *Assemblée générale des catholiques en Belgique. Première session à Malines 18–22 août 1863, vol. I* (Brussels: H. Goemaere, 1864), 6.

77 *Assemblée générale des catholiques, Première session, vol. I*, 469.

78 Armand De Melun, "Rapport sur les Oeuvres de Charité chrétienne et leur extension," *Assemblée générale des catholiques, Première session, vol. I*, 122; *Assemblée générale des catholiques en Belgique. Deuxième session à Malines, 29 août-3 septembre 1864, vol. II* (Brussels: Comptoir universel d'imprimerie et de librairie V. Devaux et Cie/Paris: Régis Ruffet et Cie, 1865), 164.

79 *Assemblée générale des catholiques, Première session, vol. II*, 97, 98–99, 112.

80 *Assemblée générale des catholiques en Belgique. Troisième session à Malines, 2–7 septembre 1867* (Brussels: Comptoir universel d'imprimerie et de librairie Victor Devaux et Cie, 1868), 161. See also resolution VIII of the first section ('Oeuvres religieuses') and resolution VII, 1° of the third section ('Education et Instruction chrétienne'), in *Ibid*, 326, 330.

81 Jan De Maeyer, *De rode baron. Arthur Verhaegen 1847–1917* (KADOC-Studies, 18) (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 1994), 67.

82 See, for example, the intervention of Adolphe Dechamps: *Assemblée générale des catholiques, Première session, vol. II*, 79–82; *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 2 mars 1868* (Brussels: s.n., 1868), 9.

de Haussy (1789–1869) between 1847 and 1850 towards charitable foundations, the particular polarising dispute over Monastic Law (1857–1859), or the debate on educational funds and scholarships (1862). Catholics perceived all these as liberal attempts to restrain or even impede the funding of Catholic education as much as possible.[83] The publication of the papal encyclical *Quanta Cura* and the annex, the *Syllabus Errorum* (1864), caused emotions to run even higher.[84]

The social deepening of the liberal-clerical conflict led to the use of strikingly aggressive language regarding the *Société*. In 1864, several Catholic newspapers published a reaction by the Bishop of Bruges, Jean-Baptiste Malou (1809–1864), to the annual report of the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* which Eugène de Meeûs had presented at the second Mechelen conference. The Church leader expressed a wish that the numerous schools that received support from the *Société* serve in the battle against the "anti-Christian sects" that threatened civil society.[85] When covering the financial report of the *Société* of 1865, the Catholic newspaper *Journal de Bruxelles* stated that rationalists and freethinkers had declared a "war against religious education". Catholic papers complained that the tax revenues of Catholics were used in cities to finance public schools. The campaign seemed especially directed at the Brothers of the Christian Schools, as they were removed from municipal schools everywhere.[86]

Catholics became increasingly aware that the anticlerical side had started organising itself in order to obtain private fundraising for secularised schools. From 1854 onwards, Masonic lodges publicly promoted public education and commented on the question of compulsory education.[87] The opponent par excellence became the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*, launched in 1864.[88] In 1867, this association started collecting money from sympathisers. In 1872, this initiative, *Deni-*

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83 Gubin and Nandrin, "Het liberale en burgerlijke België 1846–1878," 286–301; Witte, "The Battle," 109–113.

84 Vanderstraeten, "Religious Congregations," 140.

85 "Société civile du crédit de la charité," *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 12, 1864, 2; "Société du crédit de la charité," *Le Bien Public*, March 14, 1864, 1.

86 "Société du crédit de la charité," *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 12, 1866, 1; "Société du crédit de la charité," *Le Bien Public*, March 13, 1866, 1.

87 Pierre Verhaegen, *La lutte scolaire en Belgique* (Ghent: A. Siffer, 1906), 31–35; Lory, *Libéralisme*, I, 267–301. See also : Jeffrey Tyssens and Hendrik Van Daele, "Orde, zorg en spaarzaamheid. Vrijmetselarij en onderwijs," in *Van wijsheid met vreugd gepaard. Twee eeuwen vrijmetselarij in Gent en Antwerpen*, ed. Jeffrey Tyssens (Brussels: Marot/Ghent: Tijdsbeeld, 2003), 143–147.

88 For the history of this organisation, see chapter 5 in this volume.

er de l'Instruction, was transformed into an organisation: the *Denier des Écoles*.[89] Despite the scepticism in liberal circles, fundraising associations emerged in numerous cities and municipalities during the 1870s when Catholic governments ruled the country. In 1875 the organisations in Brussels united in a *Fédération du Denier des Écoles*. Many other liberal fundraising associations in the provinces soon joined. Together they succeed in collecting nearly 83,000 fr in 1875, over 175,000 fr in 1876, more than 212,000 fr in 1877, and almost 234,000 fr in 1878.[90] With these funds between 1876 and 1879 they supported schools in Aalst, Ath, Mons, Bruges, Brussels, Dendermonde, Ellezelles, Frameries, Kortrijk, Lokeren, Ninove and Oudenaarde. The *Fédération* focused particularly on (secondary) girls' education, bilingual training and modern-day pedagogy.[91] Their reports mentioned that more than 85,000 fr on grants were disbursed in 1875 – 1876, over 96,000 fr in 1877 and almost 88,000 fr in 1878. The vast majority of these grants went to a model school for boys, founded by the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*, and a vocational school for girls in Brussels.[92]

A Catholic countermove was deemed more necessary than ever.[93] However, launching Catholic fundraising organisations took some time. In Ghent, Alfons Siffer (1850 – 1941) and Guillaume Verspeyen (1837 – 1912) took the lead in October 1876 with the creation of the *Katholieke Schoolpenning*, under the aegis of the *Commission Épiscopale des Écoles Chrétiennes de Gand* (which had already been installed as early as 1858). [94] The latter served as a means for collecting funds for

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[89] Lory, *Libéralisme*, I, 325 – 446. The name choice was seen as the liberal answer to the Catholic Peter's Pence. For a comprehensive history, see: Lory, *Libéralisme*, II, 521 – 585. See also: André Uyttebrouck, "Les grandes étapes d'une histoire de cent vingt-cinq années," *Histoire de la Ligue de l'Enseignement et de l'Éducation permanente 1864 – 1989* (Brussels: Ligue de l'Enseignement, 1990), 11 – 21; "Fédération du 'Cercle des Collecteurs du Denier des écoles'," in *Dictionnaire historique de la laïcité en Belgique*, ed. Pol Delfosse (Brussels: Fondation Rationaliste/ Editions Luc Pire, 2005), 122 – 124.

[90] Detailed numbers in Lory, *Libéralisme*, II, 540 – 541.

[91] *Ibid*, 546 – 548.

[92] *Ibidem*, 534; Baudouin Groessens, "Laïcité et l'enseignement primaire en Belgique 1830 – 1914. De l'affrontement au pluralisme" (PhD diss., Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, 2004), 173 – 183; Pol Delfosse and Marcel Paspesant, "De l'École Modèle de Bruxelles (1875 – 1879) à l'École Moderne de Barcelone (1901 – 1906)," *Cahiers Bruxellois – Brusselse Cahiers* 47, no 1 (2015): 56 – 73; Marianne de Vreese, "L'association pour l'enseignement professionnel des femmes et les débuts de l'école Bischoffsheim à Bruxelles, 1864 – 1868," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 22, no 3 – 4 (1991): 625 – 655.

[93] *Journal de Bruxelles*, April 10, 1873, 1.

[94] Bruno Boulange, "L'établissement de l'enseignement primaire catholique à Liège sous l'épiscopat de Monseigneur Doutreloux (1879 – 1901)," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 17, no 3 – 4 (1986): 314 – 315; Heyrman, "Bedrijfscultuur," 308 – 309.

the construction of schools.[95] In December 1876 a *Schoolpenning voor Katholiek Vlaamsch Onderwijs* ('School Penning for Catholic Flemish Education') was founded in Antwerp.[96] Subsequently, similar organisations followed elsewhere.[97] At the beginning of 1879 several prominent Catholics developed a plan under the impetus of former Prime Minister Jules Malou (1810 – 1886), to launch a national organisation that would coordinate the Catholic counter-offensive. The bishops of Tournai (Edmond Dumont, 1828 – 1892) and Liège (Théodore de Montpellier, 1807 – 1879) opposed this. They felt that it would interfere with existing initiatives, such as the *Commissions des Écoles des Frères de la Doctrine Chrétienne* or the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*. Moreover, and above all, they objected to it being presided over by laymen and assumed that that role should be reserved for the clergy.[98] The associations presenting themselves as *Katholieke Schoolpenningen* ('Catholic School Pennies') met for the first time on 31 August 1879 in Dendermonde. Two years later, on 17 December 1882, the statutes were approved for a *Fédération Belge des Deniers des Écoles Catholiques et Oeuvres Similaires*.[99]

In the meantime, however, the context had changed. In 1878, the Liberals took office, and in June 1879, a new primary education bill was adopted. Each municipality was now obliged to maintain at least one public primary school. Parents could ask for religious studies in these schools, but these courses had to be taught outside regular hours. The Catholics saw the primary education bill as a declaration of war and reacted immediately with aggressive rhetoric and a massive mobilisation of resources. The bishops initiated a major campaign to found Catholic schools in as many municipalities as possible.[100] The outbreak of the school war in 1879 also had consequences for the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*. Initiatives such as the Catholic School Pennies attracted all the attention and proved successful fundraisers as they provided the necessary means to fund the building of new schools. Catholic publicist Pierre Verhaegen (1873 –

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95 De Maeyer, *De rode baron*, 155.

96 *Inventaris van het archief Katholieke Schoolpenning Antwerpen* (*Inventarissen en repertoria*, 2) (Leuven: KADOC, 1980).

97 Such as the *Denier des Écoles Catholiques* in Doornik, established on the 25 of February 1878 (Jean-Luc Soete, "La resistance catholique face à la loi Van Humbeeck dans l'arrondissement de Tournai (1878 – 1884)," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 11, no 1 – 2 (1980): 139 – 140) or the *Denier des Écoles Catholiques* in the city of Liège, established on 24 March 1879 (Boulange, "L'établissement," 314). On Catholic School Pennies, see: Pierre Verhaegen, *La lutte scolaire en Belgique* (Ghent: A. Siffer, 1906), 117 – 123.

98 Boulange, "L'établissement," 310 – 314.

99 *Ibidem*, 315.

100 Witte, "The Battle," 118 – 120.

1953) estimated that the investments for 1879 alone amounted to 40 million fr. With this money, 2064 schools were founded in one year.[101] Since the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* focused on providing structural support over the long term, it could not really benefit from this general mobilisation to build new Catholic schools.[102] The board of the *Société* claimed that the association had been prepared for a long time for this open confrontation between Catholic schools and "schools without God". They believed society would be ready to guarantee the continued existence of these new schools when financial support was needed. The *Société* thus adhered to its original intention: "it does not suffice to create schools, it is necessary to assure their future and prosperity".[103] The association continued the practice of issuing annual grants. Consequently, the *Société* receded into the background amid all the commotion surrounding the ideological conflict. Its modus operandi did not change. Year after year, the board of directors invited the shareholders on the general assembly to report on the results.

Conclusion

Our story ends with the school war of 1879 – 1884. By then, the confrontation between Catholics and liberals over education had escalated resulting in an aggressive Catholic offensive. The battle for the soul of the child remained ultimately a struggle for funds, something that should not be underestimated. Whether it was about the financing of autonomous (confessional or secularised) schools, or about subsidising public education or institutions authorised and inspected by the state, or whether it dealt with the mobilisation of funds in a network of kindred spirits, or with government investments, the dispute over education was a power struggle in which the financial dimension had both a binding and a polarising effect.

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101 Verhaegen, *La lutte scolaire*, 123, 130. In 1870, Catholic publicist Prosper de Haulleville (1830 – 1898) estimated the amount needed to cover all current expenses at approximately 5 million fr. Others presumed an amount of 7 or 8 million fr. According to de Haulleville, funding education could be viable, if in all large cities initiatives such as the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* existed and cooperated. See Prosper De Haulleville, *De l'enseignement primaire en Belgique* (Brussels: Comptoir universel d'imprimerie et de librairie Victor Devaux et Cie, 1870), 327 – 331.
102 *Société civile du crédit de la charité. Rapports lus à l'Assemblée générale des actionnaires, le 1 mars 1880* (Ixelles: François Matthyssens, 1880), 4 – 5.
103 *Journal de Bruxelles*, March 25, 1880, 2.

At the beginning of this chapter I observed that the financing of popular education, especially private initiatives, has up until now received very little attention. Many aspects deserve both in-depth and at-length research. The questions seem obvious: Who was involved? Can we reconstruct the flows of funds? How did public-private cooperation evolve? To what extent was free education guaranteed? What was the real impact? Were there differences between cities and the countryside, between industrial and rural regions? What was the part played by public relief, the parish clergy, the religious congregations, the local elite, or entrepreneurs? What was the public's view of all of this?

In this chapter, I focused on the ideas and actions of Ferdinand de Meeûs and his *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité*. By using his extensive network of entrepreneurs and investors, and his expertise as a banker, de Meeûs developed an original funding mechanism. To raise money he did not opt for conventional fundraising, such as foundations or collections, but for a more 'modern' approach. By raising capital through the issuance of shares and investment in industrial developments, he sought to generate resources in the long term for investing in charities. People who believed in the cause did not have to give away their fortune. The only thing participants renounced was a part of the profit they would have received if they had chosen to invest (directly) on the stock market. The modest but guaranteed interest rates offered a certain return anyway. Although capital was secured for the next 20, 30 or 50 years, or for an indefinite period, it remained their property in the form of bonds. A healthy financial policy pursued by the *Société* assured reimbursement for them or their heirs. In the meantime, they not only facilitated economic prosperity but also the moral education of the working class. Even Catholics who were reluctant or sceptical about stock market speculation could hardly raise objections to this formula. In a period when emotions ran high regarding disputes over the role of religious institutions in organising charity and education, Ferdinand de Meeûs formulated a 'business-wise' approach to the question of funding charity.

The numbers prove the vital importance of Ferdinand de Meeûs' position and contacts for the success of the organisation. After his death, the accumulation of capital came virtually to a standstill. Catholic circles were not enthusiastic about purchasing shares, much to the board of directors' frustration. They inevitably had to more or less freeze their grants. Nevertheless, the son and successor of the founder, Eugène de Meeûs, made every effort to revive interest. At the Catholic congresses in Mechelen in the 1860s, he was met with general approval. The *Société* was hailed as a model and a source of inspiration. However, this propaganda did not cause a rush on the shares. Despite all the recommendations for it, the example was not emulated.

The economic situation improved after 1873. Meanwhile, the context had changed drastically: it was the age of the School Pennies. Liberal as well as Catholic associations became engaged in a battle to gather as much financial support as possible for their own educational system. As a result, the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* receded into the background. The *Société* made the choice not to invest in school buildings and equipment. The grants were meant to keep schools running, by contributing to staff and operational costs. While the School Pennies set up sections everywhere, organised themselves together in national federations and played their part in the school war (1879 – 1884), the *Société* continued its practice. That the *Société* never achieved national relevance can be explained by a combination of factors. First, it used a method which was unusual and exceptional in the world of charity. Banks and the stock market seemed far removed from the more traditional approach of charity. Second, the formula itself required a different set of skills from those needed for organising the receipt of gifts and donations. One had to be well informed in order to raise money and invest profitably. Third, the *Société* complemented other initiatives. It held on to a long-term perspective and left short-time investment programmes to occasional fundraising. Fourth, the organisation continued as a family business. The *Société* set its own course and showed no intentions of associating with, or integrating in, the Catholic organisational network. It presented its results and gained standing and respect for its aims and efforts while maintaining its independence.

Could an association such as the *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* make a real difference to popular education? The principles at least were clear: the organisation focused on industrial growth poles and sought to educate working-class children in confessional schools. This served a broader societal goal of moralising workers and tackling pauperism. At the same time, it supplied the business enterprises in these regions with disciplined workers over the next generations. Moreover, the most promising pupils could be selected and trained to later assume responsibility on the factory floor. The amount the *Société* spent on annual grants was not negligible, but not spectacular either. They ensured the deployment of dozens of clerics who educated several thousand children each year, for the most part free of charge. In provinces such as Hainaut and Liège, this was not insignificant. For a congregation such as the Brothers of the Christian Schools, this support resulted in a reliable and sizeable source of income of more than 900,000 fr over a period of 28 years. Compared to the overall amount of grant money delivered by the liberal *Fédération du Denier des École*s in 1875 to 1878, the efforts of the *Société* were within the same range. But compared to the investment of the Catholic School Pennies in the midst of the school war, the grants from the *Société* seemed rather modest.

The *Société Civile du Crédit de la Charité* survived the school wars and continued working. On 24 July 1922, it was converted by the notary Victor Scheyven in Brussels into a non-profit association under the name *Le Crédit des Oeuvres Ouvrières et de la Charité*. [104] Its aims remained the same: "to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of Christian schools and care institutions for the elderly and disabled people, especially in the mining regions in the provinces of Hainaut and Liège, and in Brussels". In 2004, the statutes were amended and the name changed to *Crédit des Oeuvres*.[105] To this day the board is still in the hands of the de Meeûs d'Argenteuil family.

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[104] Published in the *Belgisch Staatsblad* on 30 August 1922, no 573; *Le Crédit de œuvres ouvrières et de la charité a.s.b.l. 1855–1955* (Brussels, 1955), 19–20.
[105] Published in the Annexes of the *Belgisch Staatsblad* of 9 March 2005.

Christina Reimann

5 Putting the Rural World on the Road of Progress? Experiences of Failure by Local Activists of the Belgian Education League (c. 1865 – 1884)

"Just as last year, our circle is sleeping", wrote an education activist from the small town of Veurne in West Flanders, in a letter to the General Council of the Belgian *Ligue de l'Enseignement* ('Education League') in Brussels.[1] This was the type of message that Charles Buls (1837–1914), secretary general of the Belgian Education League, read often ever since his association had begun to found branches in different localities all over the country. However, many local circles knew of a short period of enthusiasm and vibrant activity that found expression in their early messages to the centre. So did the branch in Veurne. In February 1869, shortly before his announcement of the "sleeping circle", the correspondent in Veurne had reported on a very successful public seminar in town, which had taken place on a Sunday and attracted a big audience. He enthusiastically set about expanding the local circle's activities from Veurne to the countryside.[2] This spatial expansion was exactly what the founders of the Belgian Education League, Charles Buls and other freethinkers from Brussels, had had in mind when they set up the association in 1865. Members living in the same locality were encouraged to create local circles to "initiate discussions" about education reform and "serve the League's interests" in the provinces while regularly reporting to the General Council in Brussels.[3] In a letter to a local circle in 1866, Buls claimed that his "biggest desire" was the League's decentralisation and its local members' participation.[4] By building up a structure of local associations, the Belgian *ligueurs* followed their model organisation, the Dutch *Maat-*

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1 M. Nihoul to Charles Buls, Veurne, 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Archives of the Ligue Belge de l'Enseignement (Ar.LB), Brussels, Belgium. Recently , the archives of the Ligue were transferred to the city archives of Brussels (Archives de la Ville de Bruxelles). All municipalities formally recognised as "*villes*" by Royal Act in 1825 will be referred to as 'towns' or as 'cities' if they have more than 100.000 inhabitants.

2 M. Nihoul to Charles Buls, Veurne, 13 February 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

3 Ligue belge, Circular, 10 June 1865, 101/102 Assemblée générale, Ar.LB.

4 Charles Buls to secretary of local circle, Brussels, 08 October 1866, 202 Conseils généraux, Ar.LB.

schappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen ('Society for Public Welfare'), founded in 1784.[5] Between 1815 and the Belgian independence in 1830, the *Tot Nut* tried, albeit without meaningful success, to establish circles in the Southern parts of the Netherlands.[6]

Nor did the Belgian Education League achieve its decentralisation plan. This chapter argues that attempts to establish local circles can altogether be regarded as a failure. It thereby partly counters earlier interpretations according to which the Belgian League was a national organisation that was sustained by firm roots in the localities.[7] While the Belgian *Ligue de l'Enseignement* has been the object of extensive research,[8] its lack of local embeddedness has not yet been under close scrutiny. This is a shortcoming insofar as such an analysis opens new perspectives on the Belgian education reform movement as a whole. Most importantly, new insight can be gained by integrating living testimonies from local activists stored in the League's archives but that have not yet been looked into by historians. This chapter therefore sets out to tell the story of the Education League's failure to integrate the countryside as it was experienced by the local activists. It shall zoom into the living worlds of these actors by using their letters to the association's centre in Brussels. These accounts depict how local activists un-

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5 Carmen Van Praet and Christophe Verbruggen, " 'Soldiers for a Joint Cause'. A Relational Perspective on a Local and International Educational Leagues and Associations in the 1860s," *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 130, no. 1 (2015): 17.

6 Van Praet and Verbruggen, " 'Soldiers for a Joint Cause'," 8–9.

7 Christophe Verbruggen and Carmen Van Praet see the Belgian Education League, in line with the *Tot Nut* and the French and Italian Education Leagues as " [...] fine examples of nationally organized but locally embedded socio-cultural structures of sociability [...]". See: Van Praet and Verbruggen, " 'Soldiers for a Joint Cause'," 22.

8 Jacques Lory's study on primary education contains a detailed and source-based presentation of the Belgian Education League. See: Jacques Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire (1842–1879)* (Leuven: Editions Nauwelaerts, 1979). Éliane Gubin has written on the connections between the League and feminist education movements. See: Éliane Gubin, "Libéralisme, féminisme et enseignement des filles en Belgique aux 19e–début 20e siècles," in *Politiques, imaginaires et education. Mélanges en l'honneur de Jacques Lory*, eds. Jean-Pierre Nandrin and Laurence van Ypersele (Brussels: Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, Cahiers n° 13–14, 2000), 151–174. Detailed and well-documented self-presentations of the League can be found in the volumes edited by the *Ligue Belge de l'Enseignement*. See: *La Ligue de l'Enseignement et la défense de l'éducation publique avant 1914* (Brussels: Ligue de l'Enseignement et de l'Education Permanente asbl, 1986); *Histoire de la Ligue de l'Enseignement et de l'Éducation permanente, 1864–1989* (Brussels: Ligue de l'Enseignement, 1990). For a transnational and timely comparison of education debates, see: Jeffrey Tyssens, "Onderwijsconflict en -pacificatie vanuit een comparatief perspectief. België, Nederland, Frankrijk," in *Het schoolpact van 1958. Ontstaan, grondlijnen en toepassing van een Belgisch compromis*, eds. Els Witte, Jan de Groof and Jeffrey Tyssens (Brussels: VUB Press, 1999), 39–86.

derstood their unsuccessful endeavours to mobilise fellow townspeople or villagers for the cause of popular education. An analysis of these letters helps to explain why the otherwise successful and lively Education League did not develop a lasting sociability in the provinces. It will also tell us about the spatial configuration of the 'school war' (1879–1884) and its precursors, by assessing how the national struggle about secular and Catholic education took place outside of Brussels.[9] This chapter argues that it was not least because of a social and cultural divide and mismatch between the capital and the provinces in general and the rural regions in particular that the *Ligue de l'Enseignement* failed to establish a long-lasting network outside Brussels. The League's representatives in the provinces were not able to bridge the gap between the ideological-driven centre of the League, which was embedded in the liberal-minded bourgeoisie, and the rural and provincial population strongly influenced by the Catholic clergy and for the most part taken up by familial maintenance. The local activists were themselves caught between these two mind-sets, a sentiment that marked their experience of their failure.

The notion of experience, as developed by John Dewey, will be used as an analytical tool to interpret the written accounts of local education activists. This chapter proceeds from Dewey's premise that "every genuine experience has an active side which changes in some degree the objective conditions under which experiences are had".[10] An experience being therefore situated at the intersection between the subjective and the social,[11] this analytical perspective allows this chapter to assess the failure of the Education League in the provinces both within its socio-political context and at the individual level, as represented by grassroots activists. A genuine experience ("*Erfahrung*") develops from lived experience ("*Erlebnis*") by being reinterpreted and placed within a meaningful context. In this way, experience becomes a dynamic and continuous process.[12] The act of reporting and writing about lived events is an integral part of the creation of experience, which also comprises the perception and interpretation

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9 For a detailed assessment of the sharp conflict between liberals and Catholics, and the Catholic resistance against the liberal reforms in and around the town of Tournai, Hainaut, see: Jean-Luc Soete, "La Résistance catholique à la Loi van Humbeeck dans l'arrondissement de Tournai (1878-1884)," *Revue Belge d'Histoire Contemporaine* 11, no. 1–2 (1980): 119–169.

10 John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997[1938]), 15.

11 André Zeitler and Jean-Marie Barbier, "La notion d'éxpérience, entre langage savant et langage ordinaire," *Recherche et formation* 70, no. 2 (2012): 107–118, 109.

12 Zeitler and Barbier, "La notion d'éxpérience," 109.

of an initial event.[13] In line with Dewey's definition, this chapter focuses on the individual 'making-sense-of-one's-world'-aspect of experiences while also considering a closely linked feature, namely the socially constructive character of reality, on which notions of experience also rest.[14]

In total, this investigation takes into account all 28 local circles which between 1865 and 1884 communicated with the association's centre in Brussels. Source material consists of letters and reports received by the General Council as well as of circulars and letters sent out by the central committee. Unfortunately, response letters from the General Council to the local activist are, with some rare exceptions, not contained in the League's records.

Contextualising the birth and failures of the Belgian Education League

The *Ligue de l'Enseignement* was one of the most visible associations within the education reformist movement in late 19th-century Belgium. With its petition campaigns, its public conferences and meetings, its visibility in the national media, and thanks to their well-known spokesmen, the League became the strongest voice on behalf of the liberal-progressive education reform movement. It strove for an in-depth reform of the 1842 Primary Education Act and for the introduction of general, public education that should be secular, free of charge and compulsory. The League professed an aim to spread primary education among the working classes and to foster the education of women and girls, while also presenting itself as representative of the teachers' interests. When it started its activities in 1865, the *Ligue* stood in favour of a decentralised, civil society-based education system, but quickly pivoted to support for a centralised and state-focused system. The 1879 Education Act, enacted by the Liberal government under Walthère Frère-Orban (1812–1896) and with the League member Pierre van Humbeéck (1829–1890) at the head of the new Ministry for Education, implemented large parts of the League's agenda. Most of these reforms were reversed when the 1884 elections brought the Catholic party back to power. As the League lost its strong voice in education politics, it tried to safeguard the secular

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13 Ulrike Wunderle, "Wissenschaftsgeschichte als Erfahrungsgeschichte (Tübingen, 01–02.12.2000)," H-Soz-u-Kult, last modified November 11, 2001, https://www.hsozkult.de/confer encereport/id/tagungsberichte-12.

14 See: Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Constitution of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (Newburyport: Open Road Media, 2011).

public schools, which the League believed were threatened by the Catholic government. While its standing in the national public sphere was vanishing, the *Ligue* remained connected within a transnational network of education reformists, maintaining close contacts with the French and English national education leagues in particular.[15] The League grew again in importance during the interwar years[16] and still exists as a francophone organisation today.[17]

M. Nihoul's message from 1869, quoted at the start of this chapter, observed that the local circle of Veurne had been "sleeping" over the last two years, a summary of the League's situation outside of the capital. Yet, like the circle in Veurne, many local branches experienced some moments of enthusiasm and vibrant activity. But the bulk of the reports the local activists sent to the General Council in Brussels contained representations and justifications of their failure. The circles in the city of Liège[18] and in the town of Dendermonde in East Flanders were dissolved as early as 1872. While some branches, such as the ones in the municipality of Waterloo and the city of Antwerp, were revitalised when the Liberals came to power in 1879, the League's sparse activity outside of Brussels completely vanished from 1880 onward. League records do not contain any trace of the existence of local circles after 1883. So in fact, the Belgian Education League was a Brussels organisation. Most of the League's branches and, in particular, the League's General Council, were formed by the liberal-minded political and intellectual elite of the Brussels bourgeoisie. Even before Charles Buls, the League's founder, its long-time secretary general, and finally president, was elected mayor of Brussels, the League cultivated a close relationship with the capital's administration.[19]

The association's failure to mobilise followers outside the capital coincided with the politicisation of the countryside in late 19th-century Europe. In Belgium as in other European countries, political parties, associations and mutual societ-

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15 Christina Reimann, *Schule für Verfassungsbürger? Die Bildungsligen und der Verfassungswandel des späten 19. Jahrhunderts in Belgien, England und Frankreich* (Münster/New York: Waxmann, 2016), 12–27.

16 Jeffrey Tyssens, *Strijdpunt of pasmunt? Levensbeschouwelijk links en de schoolkwestie, 1918–1940* (Brussels: VUB Press, 1993), 241–257.

17 https://ligue-enseignement.be. Visited on 21/07/2017.

18 For more detail on the Liège branch, see: Léon. E. Halkin, "La section liégeoise de la Ligue de l'enseignement en 1865–1866," in *Mélanges offerts à G. Jacquemyns* (Brussels: Editions de l'Institut de Sociologie, 1968), 415–419.

19 Tyssens, *Strijdpunt of pasmunt?*, 236.

Figure 5.1: Pierre van Humbeéck (1829–1890), a long-time member of the League's General Council who became the first Minister of Public Education in 1879 (Liberas/Liberaal Archief)

ies were penetrating the rural areas organisationally and ideologically.[20] The *Ligue de l'Enseignement* was one of the many organisations that since the mid-century had endeavoured to expand its networks and activities beyond the capital and the urban centres.[21] The *Willemsfonds*, for example, an association

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20 Gunther Mai, "Die Agrarische Transition. Agrarische Gesellschaften in Europa und die Herausforderungen der industriellen Moderne im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 33, no. 4 (2007): 489.

21 For the case of the Belgian Workers' Party, see: Guy Vanschoenbeek, "The Workers' Party Against the Farmers' League. Social Democracy and the Peasantry in Belgium, 1893–1914," in *Urban Radicals, Rural Allies. Social Democracy and the Agrarian Issue, 1870–1914*, ed. Aad Blokland (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002), 145–161.

founded in 1851 in Ghent with the aim of promoting the Dutch language, also started to erect local circles starting in 1862[22] – a coincidence that had an impact on the League's decentralisation project in Flanders. The politicisation of the Belgian provinces also consisted of the step-by-step democratisation of the local elections. Unlike on the national level, municipal elections were expanded by law in 1836; especially in the smaller wards, local election campaigns integrated and mobilised an increasing number of inhabitants.[23] At the same time, the consolidation of the Belgian territorial nation-state was fostered by the establishment of a dense railway network.[24] Cheap railway ticket prices enabled people living in the countryside to commute to urban industrial centres and to maintain their rural living style while working in the industries.[25] Especially with the advent of the agricultural crisis, which started in 1873, the Belgian industries attracted a growing number of workers. However, despite improved infrastructure and increased mobility, the mental and cultural gap between farmers/villagers and city dwellers grew as the century progressed.[26] The mismatch between the capital and the provinces in general and the rural regions in particular played its part in the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*'s failure outside Brussels.

In fact, the Education League was far more successful in urban centres than in smaller towns or rural areas. A municipality's size was crucial insofar as competition with an already existing association was more likely to hamper the establishment of a local circle in smaller municipalities – a fact that was even relevant for the city of Antwerp where the the local bourgeois freethought society initially resisted the League's initiative of setting up a local circle.[27] The finally established branch in Antwerp 'woke up' anew after the elections of 1878 that brought the Liberal Party to power on the national level; it continued its work

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22 Van Praet and Verbruggen, "'Soldiers for a Joint Cause'," 18.

23 Éliane Gubin and Patrick Lefèvre, "Lens, un canton rural en Hainaut vers 1850," in *La Belgique rurale du Moyen-Age à nos jours. Mélanges offerts à Jean-Jacques Hoebanx* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1985), 321–351, 346.

24 On the integration of nation-states through infrastructure, see: Charles S. Maier, "Consigning the Twentieth Century to History. Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era," *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 3 (2000): 807–831; Jörg Ganzenmüller and Tatjana Tönsmeyer, eds., *Vom Vorrücken des Staates in die Fläche. Ein europäisches Phänomen des langen 19. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne: Böhlau-Verlag, 2016).

25 Vanschoenbeek, "The Workers' Party Against the Farmers' League," 146–147.

26 Henk De Smaele, *Rechts Vlaanderen. Religie en stemgedrag in negentiende-eeuws België* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2001), 375–376.

27 Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire*, I, 350–351, 391.

until the 1880s, longer than any other local circle.[28] The local circle in the industrial city of Liège was by far the most active before it announced its dissolution in 1872 due to a lack of financial resources.[29] It had prepared petitions,[30] held regular meetings and kept close contact with the General Council in Brussels.[31] However, even though those local branches in Liège and Antwerp were relatively successful when compared to other local circles, they were still insignificant compared to the association's centre in Brussels.

Except for Luxembourg and Limburg, local circles were established in every province, with a concentration in the provinces of Walloon Brabant[32], Hainaut and Liège, the industrial regions in the centre of the country. Flanders was less integrated into the League's network. One major reason for this was that, on the background of a strengthening Flemish movement, the League appeared as outrightly francophone. Publicly as well as with – even Flemish – correspondents its leading figures communicated almost exclusively in French while their project of fostering the Dutch language was soon relegated to the background.[33] As the organisation increasingly refocused on Wallonia, the Council almost completely neglected the Flemish language, which the League had once set out to protect.[34] Another factor that hampered the establishment of local circles in Flanders was the presence of the *Willemsfonds*. Like the League, this association set up popular libraries[35] and took initiatives to improve popular education such as conferences coupled with music concerts.[36] In the *Willemsfonds*' founding city of Ghent, the League was unable to establish a local circle because of the *Wil-*

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28 Local circle in Antwerp to General Council, Antwerp, 13 March 1881, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

29 Local circle in Liège to Charles Buls, Liège, 1872, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

30 Local circle in Liège to Charles Buls, Liège, 20 November 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB; Local circle in Liège, Annual Report 1868-1869, Liège, 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

31 Local circle in Liège, Annual Report, Liège, 7 June 1868, 501,II Sections locales, Ar.LB.

32 In 1995, the province of Brabant was split into Flemish Brabant, Walloon Brabant and Brussels Capital Region. In the rest of this chapter we will refer to the current provinces.

33 On the relationship between the League and the Flemish movement see: René Robrecht, "La Ligue et le mouvement flamand," *Éduquer* 35 (2001): 26–27.

34 Member in West Flanders to General Council, 1867, 202 Conseils généraux, Ar.LB.

35 For the League's actions in favour of public libraries, see: Bruno Liesen, *Bibliothèques populaires et bibliothèqeus publiques en Belgique (1860 – 1914). L'action de la Ligue de l'Enseignement et le réseau de la ville de Bruxelles* (Liège: Editions du C.L.P.C.F., 1996).

36 Luc Pareyn, "Het Willemsfonds en de volksontwikkeling," in Marcel Bots e.a., *Het Willemsfonds van 1851 tot 1914* (Ghent: Liberaal Archief, 1993), 185–221; Jos Daelman, "De volksbiblioheken van het Willemsfonds," in *Het Willemsfonds van 1851 tot 1914*, 223 – 250.

lemsfonds' resistance as the latter thought the League too francophone.[37] None-theless, the League started cooperating with the *Willemsfonds* in Ghent,[38] as did the local circle in Bruges, which only survived thanks to this collaboration as well as to the liberal dominance in this town.[39] In fact, a municipality's liberal orientation reflected in its local politics and in its social and cultural public life favoured the Leagues' endeavours to a large extent. Thus, Flemish liberal strongholds like Ypres in West Flanders or places with a rich liberal associational life such as Menen hosted comparatively long lasting, more or less dynamic local circles despite the general restrictions to the League's activity in Flanders.[40] However, this explanation should not be overstretched, as the opposite could be also true, as shown by Kortrijk in West Flanders where the local circle was relatively long lasting despite the town having been continuously governed by Catholics since 1864. Thus, in order to understand the failure of the many local activists, one has to look beneath the level of political, religious or language issues into the actors' individual, locally embedded experiences that were sometimes unrelated to the socio-political conditions.

I shall also argue that the League's failure to expand outside Brussels cannot simply be explained as an effect of the association's centralising statutes, although these surely contributed to inhibiting the development of independent reform action in the peripheral areas.[41] According to the League's constitution, all local branches had to transfer at least one third of their incoming membership fees to the centre in Brussels. Local representatives sitting in the meetings of the General Council were only given a non-voting position. The League's weakness outside the capital – as well as the insignificance of its Brussels branch – was also connected to its generally low degree of internal democracy.[42] All regular members were excluded from the decisions taken by the General Council. This body, composed of 33 members who were annually elected by the members' General Assembly, was responsible for all of the League's business. Among its members, the Council elected a bureau of seven members who dealt with the League's daily business. The same centralised structure was established in the local circles, prompting one member of the local Brussels circle to complain

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37 Carmen van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres* en de sociale kwestie in de negentiende eeuw. Tussen lokaal en internationaal" (PhD diss., University of Ghent, 2015), 343–345.

38 Van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres*," 346.

39 Local circle in Bruges, Annual Report 1876, Bruges, 29 August 1876, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

40 De Smaele, *Rechts Vlaanderen*, 385–389.

41 Tyssens, *Strijdpunt of pasmunt?*, 239; Reimann, *Schule für Verfassungsbürger*, 100–103.

42 Reimann, *Schule für Verfassungsbürger*, 103–106.

about the regular members' passivity and suggest a reform of the circle's internal organisation.[43] Still another member, from Brussels as well, pointed to the League's "anti-democratic" character as the reason for his withdrawal.[44]

However, the League's failure in the provinces in general and in the rural areas in particular was also due to specific local conditions. People experienced the association as a series of fundamental mismatches between the association's Brussels-based identity and life outside the capital, in villages and in smaller towns. While a number of local activists were conscious of the League's centralised structure and the negative effects of that centralisation on their own work,[45] they largely blamed local circumstances – their lived experiences – for the failure of local League operations. This chapter therefore considers how local activists presented and justified their failure within the context of tension between the League's agenda and local living and working conditions. The first part assesses the positive experiences some *ligueurs* depicted, positive experiences embedded in their living conditions and the local power structures. Subsequently, I shall analyse the local activists' daily experiences that complicated and sometimes hindered the League's establishment in the provinces: the power of the Catholic clergy and the particular rhythm of social and political life in villages and small towns.

The Belgian League's inability to embed itself in the provinces becomes even more apparent when compared to the French *Ligue de l'Enseignement*, which was deeply entrenched in small towns and in the countryside.[46] At different points in this analysis, I shall therefore compare and draw parallels between French and Belgian developments. The French Education League was initiated by Jean Macé (1815–1894), the director of a boarding school and founder of a public library in Alsace; he was a teacher, a journalist and an author of pedagogical literature.[47] As the director of a public library, he came into contact with the Belgian Educa-

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43 Member from Brussels to Local circle in Brussels, 1873, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

44 A. Vancauberge to Charles Buls, Brussels, 23 December 1880, 800 Personnes physiques, Ar.LB.

45 Local circle in Gembloux, Circular, Gembloux, 27 January 1875; Local circle in Liège, Annual Report 1868–1869, Liège, 1869, 501,I Sections, Ar.LB.

46 The most extensive work on the French Education League is the unpublished PhD thesis by Jean-Paul Martin: "La Ligue de l'enseignement et la République des origines à 1914" (PhD diss, Institut d'études politiques, Paris, 1992). See also Martin's numerous articles on the League, in particular:"La Ligue de l'enseignement, la loi de 1901 et le champ politique républicain," in *Associations et champ politique*, eds. Claire Andrieu, Gilles Le Béguec and Danielle Tartakowsky (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2001), 459–475.

47 For a short portrait, see: Richard J. Johnston, "Jean Macé and the Fight for Public Education in Nineteenth-Century France," *Paedagogica Historica* 12, no. 1 (1972): 59–80.

tion League and joined the association. Since meeting at the General Assembly of the Belgian Ligue in Liège in 1866, Jean Macé and Charles Buls corresponded intensively with one another about their endeavours to promote popular education. In 1868, inspired by the Belgian Education League, Macé decided to start an equivalent movement in France and succeeded in doing so despite the politically hostile context of the authoritarian Second Empire.[48]

Winning over local elites: The establishment of circles in the provinces

Between 1865 and 1869, several local circles of the Belgian Education League experienced a short period of enthusiasm, which was not least constituted of their exuberant reporting about it. Reporting to the General Council in 1866, a correspondent from the village Nederzwalm, East Flanders, boasted that: "Everyone is waking up; the League has become a conversation topic in the pubs, in the streets, and at the dinner tables".[49] The establishment of local circles was primarily made possible thanks to the personal network of Charles Buls.[50] Buls' social contacts were rooted in his engagement in liberal circles, Freemasonry, and the freethought movement. Most of his correspondents in the provinces also identified themselves with the liberal milieu; some of them were members of those liberal associations that in 1875 were to form the *Fédération des Associations Libérales.*[51] In La Hestre, a village in the province of Hainaut, Buls' contact person professed that a local circle would be easily set up because he could recruit members among the "notabilities of the Liberal Party in the surrounding municipalities".[52] Thanks to Buls' close bonds to liberal newspapers, in the capital as well as in the provinces,[53] a number of journalists and owners of local newspapers were among the League's supporters, helping to spread the League's

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48 Edouard Petit, *Jean Macé, sa vie, son œuvre* (Paris: Librairie Aristide Quillet, 1919), 212–219.

49 Member in Nederzwalm to General Council, Nederzwalm, 9 July 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

50 A. Frings to Charles Buls, Lincent, 21 September 1866, 501,I Sections locales; Albert Feemans to Charles Buls, Louvain, 26 October 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

51 Éliane Gubin, Jean-Pierre Nandrin, "La Belgique libérale et bourgeoise," *Nouvelle Histoire de Belgique. Vol. 1: 1830 – 1905* (Brussels: Editions Complexes, 2005), 41.

52 Member in La Hestre to Charles Buls, La Hestre, 9 March 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

53 M. Gislain to Charles Buls, Nil St. Vincent, 28 September 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

education programme.[54] Journalists were also among the initiators of local circles, as in the town of Péruwelz, Hainaut.[55] In fact, Buls' social network and his contacts with the press in particular were crucial for the association's establishment. The same holds true for the French League whose initiator, Jean Macé, had been a journalist himself during the Second Republic. Thus, when he started the education reformist movement in the late 1860s, he could rely on the support of liberal newspapers.[56] Facilitated by a considerable liberalisation of the press laws in 1868, liberal newspapers, for instance *L'Opinion National*, were willing to publish Macé's texts, beginning with his 1866 call for the foundation of a French Education League based on the Belgian model.[57] The editorial staff of *L'Opinion National* also worked as an intermediary between Macé and his early followers who, in the context of a repressive regime, sent their first letters of support to the newspaper's address.[58]

In addition to the liberal and journalistic milieu, the Belgian League's General Council communicated and cooperated with many other associations. Some, such as Masonic lodges – the League was in close contact with the Brussels lodge *Les Amis Philanthropes* – expressed ideological support for the League's programme. Others were directly concerned with popular education and, in some places, these associations even turned into branches of the League, such as *De Toekomst* ('The Future') in Antwerp or the *Vrienden des Vooruitgangs* ('Friends of Progress') in Bruges[59] which then closely cooperated with the *Willemsfonds*. This branch had quite a bit of success thanks to its network: in 1876 it professed to having "a loyal audience assisting our seminars".[60] This joint work was not a given. In Liège, the circle seemingly did not cooperate with the many societies which, according to a local member, were busy organis-

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54 M. van der Flancken to Charles Buls, Péruwelz, 31 January 1867; Member in Bruges to Charles Buls, Bruges, 8 August 1865; M. Gislain to Charles Buls, Nil St. Vincent, 20 August 1866; Correspondent in Liège of *Journal des étudiants*, Liège, 21 November 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

55 Editor of *Echo de la Frontière Belge* to Charles Buls, Péruwelz, 11 November 1865, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB

56 Reimann, *Schule für Verfassungsbürger*, 67–68.

57 Jean Macé, "La Ligue de l'Enseignement en Belgique," *L'Opinion National*, 15 November 1866.

58 This becomes apparent from Macé's correspondence stocked in the archives of the *Institut Catholique* in Paris.

59 Van Praet and Verbruggen, "'Soldiers for a Joint Cause'," 17.

60 Local circle in Bruges, Annual Report 1876, Bruges, 29 August 1876, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

ing evening courses for working-class townspeople.[61] It was an important aspect of the Belgian League's self-conception that a local circle was started from scratch and inaugurated with a ceremony organised by the General Council. Such a ceremony took place in 1868 in Dendermonde in East Flanders: The inauguration speech was given by Raymond Dedeyn (1834–), a member of the League's General Council. Then, the League's president, Jules Tarlier (1825–1870), a professor at the University of Brussels, installed the circle's provisional committee. Finally, Auguste Couvreur (1827–1894), an eminent liberal politician and member of the national parliament, gave another speech. The ceremony took place in the big town hall of Dendermonde, but no local elected representative or education activist actively took part in it.[62] The same holds true with regards to the inauguration of the local circle in Uccle, Brussels,[63] and the circle in the town of Namur, inaugurated in 1869.[64] The exclusion of local representatives from the inauguration ceremonies is emblematic of the unequal relationship between the League's General Council and its local branches. Local groups were not considered to be autonomous actors – they were appendices of the association's centre in Brussels.

The permanent local entrenchment of the French League can partly be explained by the fact that, from the beginning, the association lacked a central body. Jean Macé, who had to leave Paris after Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte's coup d'état in 1851, coordinated the League's first steps from his exile in the village of Beblenheim close to Colmar in Alsace. Because of the legal and political restrictions under the Second Empire, it was impossible to establish a genuine civil society association with an organisational centre in the capital. Instead, thanks to his contacts in the milieu of education reformists, Macé relied on the establishment of rather small and informal local circles that were spread all over the country.[65] Local education associations had started to spring up in the 1860s when the Second Empire regime slightly released its grip on civil society organisations and even started to encourage private initiatives for the establishment of popular education.[66] Along with the foundation of new local circles,

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61 P. Desguin to Charles Buls, Liège, 21 April 1868, 501,II Sections locales, Ar.LB.

62 General Council, Invitation, Brussels, 25 January 1868, 501, II Sections locales, Ar.LB.

63 Local circle in Uccle, Invitation, Uccle, 14 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

64 Local circle in Namur, Invitation, Namur, 8 March 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

65 On the associational landscape, which came into being in the 19th century despite the hostile regimes, see: Maurice Agulhon, *Le cercle dans la France bourgeoise* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1977). On the associational life on the countryside, see: Maurice Agulhon and Maryvonne Bodiguel, *Les associations au village* (Le Paradou: Actes Sud, 1981).

66 Agulhon and Bodiguel, *Les associations au village*, 12.

Macé helped to found societies like the *Société Franklin*, the most important among the many public library associations.[67] Thus, by the time the League was finally institutionalised under the Third Republic in 1881, there were already 350 local associations which were merely reorganised as a federation with a centre in Paris.[68] Whereas local associations up until 1881 constituted the very essence of the French Education League, the Belgian *ligueurs* in Brussels had in mind a clear hierarchy between the association's centre and the local branches. According to the Belgian League's statutes and its practice, local circles had to regularly report to the General Council, follow its instructions, and were not supposed to act independently, for example to invite speakers to their seminars or other events.[69] The control that the General Council exerted on the local circles can, especially when compared to the French League, be interpreted as one reason for the League's failure to grow real roots in the provinces. While in France, in the context of a repressive regime, education reformists were forced to adapt to local social and political patterns, this applies much less to the Belgian activists who could eventually rely on the increasing influence the League was having in Brussels.

The hierarchical relationship between the central committee and the local branches is even more remarkable if one takes into account the fact that most local activists had the same socio-political background as the members of the General Council in Brussels. This body and the committees of the local circles were characterised by their members' elitist, upper middle-class, or even noble backgrounds.[70] The committee's composition in Veurne, West Flanders, is representative in this regard: Its president was a medical doctor, its vice-president a deputy of the public prosecutor, and the secretary and its representative agent were employed by the local secondary school. The first members of the circle were a lawyer and a music composer.[71] The local circle in Perwez, Walloon Brabant, was driven by an aristocrat,[72] and in the big municipality of Gembloux,

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67 Katherine Auspitz, *The Radical Bourgeoisie. The Ligue de l'Enseignement and the Origins of the Third Republic, 1866–1885* (New York/Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 63.
68 Pierre-Emmanuel Raffi, *Le temps des cercles. La Ligue de l'enseignement à Paris 1866–1881* (Paris: Imprimerie Idéalia, 1993), 132.
69 General Council, Circular to local circles, Brussels, 8 November 1868, 501,II Sections locales, Ar.LB.
70 Tyssens, *Strijdpunt of pasmunt?*, 236.
71 Local circle in Veurne to General Council, Veurne, 27 August 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.
72 Charles Buls and Jules Tarlier, Circular, Brussels, 30 December 1868, 501,II Sections locales, Ar.LB.

Namur, the first committee of the local circle was composed of "government officials".[73]

The initiators of local circles focused their attention almost exclusively on local elites. They did so in two respects. First, the circles were administered by people with high social standing; second, the local committees tried to establish bonds with local political notabilities.[74] Local reformers thought it was of primary importance to attract "people of influence",[75] "distinguished people" and people of "some authority" who would support and thereby legitimise their movement.[76] The mayor's attitude towards the Education League played a decisive role for many local activists.[77] He was perceived as the central contact person for the inauguration of a local circle, free public lessons, or public libraries.[78] Activists believed that the political and social elite needed to approve of the circle's activity for education reform to attract some attention. In the town of St-Ghislain near Mons in Hainaut, Adolphe Laduron reported to Charles Buls the following: He had met Antoine Debruyn, who sat in the provincial council and was a member of the Education League's branch in the town of Mons. This politician had promised to circulate the League's recent petition among his colleagues, a petition that had already received the signatures of most "public figures" and the entire municipal council;[79] all "men of influence" in the town were represented on it.[80] In the East Flemish town of Dendermonde, the liberal municipal administration supported the League's education model – some coun-

73 Local circle in Gembloux to General Council, Gembloux, 24 August 1875, 501 Section locales, Ar.LB.

74 M. Gislain to General Council, Nil St. Vincent, 16 July 1866, 501,I Sections locales; Municipal administration Dendermonde to Local circle in Dendermonde, Dendermonde, 18 January 1868, 501,II Sections locales, Ar.LB.

75 General Council, Circular, Brussels, 10 May 1869; M. Nihoul to Charles Buls, Veurne, 13 February 1869; Local circle in Waterloo, Annual report, Waterloo, 7 May 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

76 M. Behaers to Charles Buls, Nederzwalm, 25 february 1868, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

77 M. Gislain to General Council, Nil St. Vincent, 16 July 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

78 Editor of *Echo de la Frontière Belge* to Charles Buls, Péruwelz, 11 November 1865; Local circle in Liège to Mayor, Liège, 31 January 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB

79 Adolphe Laduron to Charles Buls, St. Ghislain, 03 July 1866, 800 Personnes physiques, Ar.LB.

80 Adolphe Laduron to Charles Buls, St. Ghislain, 21 August 1866, 800 Personnes physiques, Ar.LB.

cillors were even part of the circle's committee – and made the city hall available for the circle's events.[81]

In fact, having a hall at their disposal was of crucial importance for the local circles, which contributed to their feeling of depending on the local elite's favour.[82] The branch in Liège as well as the one in La Hestre, Hainaut, had to give up their work because they lacked the necessary financial support – not least to rent a hall for free evening classes.[83] It was an exceptional case when a local branch, like the one in the town of Herstal, North of Liège, professed that it was independent from the municipal government, which had broken its promise to actively support the League.[84] The activists perceived their forced submission to the local power structures as one of the main reasons for their failure to mobilise fellow townspeople, in particular members of the working classes. [85] Working people did not join the League in any considerable numbers, as members or as attendees of the 'popular evenings' that the association offered as an alternative to the *cabaret*.[86] Yet, a certain number of school teachers, whom the League consciously attempted to empower, welcomed and identified with the association.[87] Teachers had something to gain: They complained about their poor working conditions and precarious economic situation and believed that the League could offer them some support in achieving these demands.[88] The teachers, male and female, also lamented their dependence on the local clergy which, according to them, had been established by a royal decree of 1863.[89] This degree prescribed that the teachers' salary had to take into account the number of children who (regularly) attended classes. Teachers feared that the Catholic clergy

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81 Local circle in Dendermonde, Annual report 1867-1868, Dendermonde, 21 July 1868; Local circle in Dendermonde to Charles Buls, Dendermonde, 08 January 1868, 501,II Sections locales, Ar.LB.

82 Local circle in Liège to Charles Buls, Liège, 7 February 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB; Local circle in Liège, Annual report 1868-1869, Liège, 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

83 Member in Leuven to General Council, Leuven, 14 June 1868, 501,II sections locales, Ar.LB; General Council, Circular, 10 May 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

84 Member in Herstal to Charles Buls, Herstal, 12 December 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

85 Member from Brussels to Local circle in Brussels, 1873; Local circle in Bruges, Circular to employers, Bruges, 30 November 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

86 Local circle in Péruwelz, Circular, Péruwelz, 30 September 1888, 607,I Œuvre nationale, Ar.LB.

87 Member in Bruges to Charles Buls, Bruges, 8 August 1865, Sections locales; M. de Dyck, Report on schools in West-Flanders, 18 November 1865, 601 Sections Commissions, Ar.LB.

88 François-Joseph Lagage to Charles Buls, Vimy, 8 January 1868, 401 Service de renseignement, Ar.LB.

89 Teacher in Liège to General Council, Liège, 27 December 1865; Teacher in Nederzwalm to Charles Buls, Nederzwalm, 7 November 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar. LB.

would use its power to reduce the number of pupils by convincing parents to send their children to the confessional schools, thus reducing teachers' income.[90]

Exposed to hostilities: The perception of the Catholic clergy's supremacy

The Belgian Education League's main objective was to reform the education act of 1842,[91] a legal compromise between Liberals and Catholics from the time of unionism (1830–1846).[92] Since 1846, the Liberals had been arguing against the law, which included the Catholic clergy's right to inspect the public schools and thereby exert influence on the public school teachers.[93] The young 'progressive' liberals, many of whom were assembled in the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*, strongly opposed the clergy's intervention "*à toute autorité*" in the public schools.[94] It stood against their idea of a 'progressive' education which had to be secular, based on scientific knowledge and on a civic moral independent from religious dogma.[95] The Catholic clergy, the League professed, was the major enemy of their endeavour to "spread the progress of science among the masses, to ameliorate people's material and moral conditions through education, and thereby prevent social upheavals".[96] The Catholic church – if we be-

90 Teacher in Waterloo to Charles Buls, Waterloo, 1865, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB; Teacher in Waterloo to Primary School Section, Waterloo, 11 November 1865, 601 Sections Commissions, Ar.LB.

91 For a detailed presentation of the Education Act of 1842, see: Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire*, I, 1–125.

92 Starting with the Liberals' coming to power in 1847, governments implemented programmes without discussing them with political adversaries as had usually been done in the times of Catholic-liberal unionism. See: Gubin and Nandrin, "La Belgique libérale et bourgeoise," 49.

93 For a general overview of the relationship between Church and State in 19th-century Belgium, see: Roger Aubert, "Kirche und Staat in Belgien im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Beiträge zur deutschen und belgischen Verfassungsgeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert*, ed. Werner Conze (Stuttgart: Klett, 1997), 5–25.

94 Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire*, 51; Local circle in Liège to General Council, Liège, 26 September 1865, 601 Sections Commissions, Ar.LB. For more on these progressive liberals, see: chapter 1/introduction to this volume.

95 Jean Stengers, "Der belgische Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im europäischen Vergleich*, eds. Dieter Langewiesche and Jürgen Kocka (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988), 415–439, 432.

96 Local circle in Namur, Circular, Namur, 8 March 1869; Correspondent in Beauraing to Jules Tarlier, Beauraing, 27 November 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

lieve what Buls reported to Macé in 1867 – reacted by excommunicating the League's members.[97] As a correspondent from La Hestre put it, the foundation of local circles had "fanned the flames of hatred" between the liberal and the Catholic camp in the municipalities.[98] Local activists experienced the Catholic clergy's social supremacy – even though it might not have been as strong and systematic as professed by the progressive liberals[99] – in two different ways. First, the public school teachers complained about their dependence on the clergy; they felt the churchmen's pressure when doing their daily work and thought that the clergy became especially watchful if a teacher was a member of a local League circle. Second, the initiators of local circles saw their business hindered by direct attacks from the clergy as well as by the general influence it exerted on the rural people. The opposition between the Catholic clergy and the liberal-minded supporters of the League determined the local activists' self-perception and the way they conceived of their individual and collective actions. The antagonism provided the main interpretative pattern, which gave sense to their lived experiences and to their reporting about it.

As stated in its statutes, the League was committed to improving public school teachers' working and living conditions and protecting teachers from the clergy's social pressure. The case of the public school teacher François-Joseph Lagage was emblematic of the Belgian League's efforts in this regard: employed in a public school in the village of Nimy-Maisières near Mons, Lagage had refused to accompany his school children to Mass and had therefore been suspended from his job – by the Minister of the Interior.[100] In 1867, the Education League sponsored a campaign initiated by the municipality's inhabitants to protest this suspension. Most importantly, the League signed a petition addressed to the Minister of the Interior.[101] The General Council also gained the support of the local newspaper *L'Organe de Mons* and published its demands over a period of four years.[102] Many teachers who joined the League apparently believed in the association's capacity to liberate them from their perceived subjection to the

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97 Charles Buls to Jean Macé, Brussels, 8 April 1867, 99Z Carton 6, Archives of the Institut Catholique (Ar.IC), Paris, France.

98 Member in La Hestre to Charles Buls, La Hestre, 9 March 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

99 Lory, *Libéralisme et instruction primaire*, 51.

100 François-Joseph Lagage to Mayor, Nimy-Maisières, 20 September 1865, 401 Affaire Lagage, Ar.LB.

101 Petition to minister of the Interior, Nimy-Maisières, 17 February 1867, 401 Affaire Lagage, Ar.LB.

102 Central Council to Editor of *L'Organe de Mons*, Brussels, 14 August 1869, 607 Personnes morales, Ar.LB.

Catholic clergy.[103] This hostility strengthened the link between public school teachers and the Education League.

Some local activists saw the attacks from the clergy as an encouraging and motivating factor – and as a testimony to their significance.[104] In most cases however, intimidation from the pulpit was considered dangerous, if the League was to maintain its local position.[105] Many local correspondents wrote of their fear of losing their social standing as a result of clerical animosity towards the League. Some reported direct, libellous attacks against League members in general and against teachers in particular. Some teachers felt unable to combine membership in the League with the jobs upon which they relied financially.[106] According to one teacher from Waterloo, Walloon Brabant, a public school teacher who had a family had only two alternatives: "either to vegetate or to fall on his knees before the clergyman and to stress religious topics in his classes".[107] This formulation encapsulates the twofold constraints that shaped most local peoples' experience of the school conflict. Their respective roles in private and public life appeared inconceivable if not placed within the meaningful context of the clergy-liberals opposition. It was therefore by pointing to the clergy's supremacy that many local activists explained away their inability to organise local associational life. [108]

It became common practice in the reports to the General Council to justify the circle's unsuccessful endeavours as the result of an atmosphere of general hostility, which the activists fostered by their reporting of lived experiences.[109] Constant reference to 'dangerous' working conditions not only gave significance to their – also failed – actions, but they also made their initiatives appear more

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103 Teacher in Nederzwalm to Charles Buls, Nederzwalm, 7 November 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

104 M. Vandervelde to Charles Buls, Kortrijk, 5 February 1869; M. Nihoul to Charles Buls, Veurne, 13 February 1869, Ar.LB; Correspondent in Nivelles to Charles Buls, Nivelles, 13 February 1869; Local circle in Menen, Annual report 1868-1869, Menen, 31 December 1869; M. Nihoul to Charles Buls, Veurne, 13 February 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

105 M. Robert to Charles Buls, Perwez, 19 August 1866; M. Gislain to Charles Buls, Nil St. Vincent, 24 September 1866; Local circle in Bruges, Annual report 1876, Bruges, 29 August 1876, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

106 A. Frings to Charles Buls, Lincent, 21 September 1866; Local circle in Uccle, Invitation, Uccle, 14 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales; M. Loppens to Charles Buls, Ypres, 12 October 1866, 800 Personnes physiques, Ar.LB.

107 Teacher in Waterloo to Charles Buls, Waterloo, 1865, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

108 Editor of *L'Indépendant du Luxembourg* to General Council, Arlon, 25 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

109 M. Loppens to Charles Buls, Ypres, 14 August 1866, 800 Personnes physiques, Arl.LB; Local circle in Liège, Annual report 1868-1869, Liège, 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

intriguing; many local activists were seemingly longing for attention from the League's centre. In the municipality of Nil-St.Vincent, Walloon Brabant, Charles Buls' correspondent referenced "slippery grounds" that obliged the League's sympathisers to be "very cautious and not to touch on political or religious subjects".[110] A correspondent from Perwez asked Charles Buls to use his contacts with the liberal newspaper *Liberté* to enable him to publish an article. The published satire was meant to punish the clergy for having ridiculed the Education League. The local priests were not named or attacked directly. Instead, they were alluded to by similar-sounding names, so that the author could not be blamed for any insult.[111]

However, unlike the letter by the correspondent from Perwez, most of the reports from the provinces did not display any spirit of resistance. This was not the case in France. Jean Macé's correspondents, while being conscious about the repressive character of the Second Empire, hoped for its liberalisation;[112] others were less optimistic but were used to resisting the regime by circumventing the legal and political restrictions.[113] They constantly tried to find ways around the legal restrictions.[114] While Belgium possessed a liberal constitution, the League's local activists, especially in villages, felt unable to act out their formal freedoms because of their experience of pressure exerted by local Church representatives. In fact, Belgium was not only one of the most liberal states in Europe, but also among the most Catholic countries north of the Alps where the Church made ample use of the opportunities created by the constitutional system. The reports Belgian bishops sent to Rome about the state of their diocese from the mid-1840s to the early 1860s emphasised the restoration of moral order in the countryside and the power of Catholicism to reduce and even marginalise dissent.[115] Thus, the churchmen's general influence was perceived as inhibiting the work of local League circles because it made the local populations passive, uninterested in education questions. The resignation of a correspondent from the town of Arlon in the province of Luxembourg is representative in this regard. In a letter from 1867, he expressed regret that the people in Arlon were entirely "indifferent" towards the League's objectives because the Jesuits controlled the so-

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110 M. Gislain to Charles Buls, Nil St. Vincent, 30 June 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

111 M. Gislain to Charles Buls, Nil St. Vincent, 24 September 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

112 M. Waller to Jean Macé, Voisinlieu, 29 November 1866, 99Z Carton 2, Ar.IC.

113 E. Heutte (?) to Jean Macé, Pont-Audemer, 16 November 1867, 99Z Carton 6, Ar.IC.

114 Editor of *Coopération du Journal du Progrès Social* to Jean Macé, Paris, 2 January 1867, 99Z Carton 6, Ar.IC.

115 Vincent Viaene, *Belgium and the Holy See from Gregory XVI to Pius IX (1831 – 1859)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 9, 171.

cial life "as in many other localities".[116] This social control was experienced and depicted in an even more virulent manner in the context of the school war. The impositions that this national conflict brought about in the villages is encapsulated by a reported episode from Perwez. When the local circle's secretary suffered from typhus, some country priests called his illness a punishment from God directed against the League in general.[117]

Even the relatively successful circle in Liège, which counted 180 members in 1866,[118] reported to the General Council that they "were fighting, among other things, against the public's indifference" and were "unable to defeat it".[119] Indifference, the social evil that the Education League had set out to combat, was also considered a hostile force in its own right.[120] But many activists blamed the Catholic national governments of the 1870s for having caused people's apathy[121] and fear.[122] Ironically, the antagonism from the French state, where it did not stamp out the movement, turned out be rather favourable to the development of a grassroots activities, which remained vital simply because they had to fear the government's repression.

In Belgium, in 1878, a number of local activists were convinced that with the new Liberal majority in the national parliament, the fear and passivity might vanish, allowing them to recruit more members.[123] Indeed, the circles in Antwerp, Namur and Waterloo started over in 1878.[124] At the same time, the Catholic party's success in the municipal elections was considered a major reason for the

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116 Editor of *L'Indépendant du Luxembourg* to General Council, Arlon, 25 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

117 M. Combeau to General Council, Perwez, 27 November 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

118 Local circle in Liège, Report at General Assembly, Liège, 28 June 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

119 Local circle in Liège to General Secretary, Liège, 28 August 1866; Local circle in Liège, Annual report 1868-1869, Liège, 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

120 Karl Grün to Charles Buls, Liège, 22 January 1869; L. Bekaers to General Council, Nederzwalm, 7 January 1867; Local circle in Antwerp to General Council, Antwerp, 13 March 1881; Local circle in Liège, Report at General Assembly, Liège, 28 June 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

121 Local circle in Gembloux to General Council, Gembloux, 24 August 1875; Local circle in Gembloux, Circular, Gembloux, 27 January 1875, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

122 Member in Veurne to Charles Buls, Veurne, 22 August 1875; M. Loppens to Charles Buls, Ypres, 12 October 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

123 *Ibid*.

124 In Namur: local circle in Namur to Charles Buls, Namur, 20 December 1878; in Waterloo: local circle in Waterloo, Invitation, Waterloo, 1881; in Antwerp: local circle in Antwerp to General Council, Antwerp, 8 July 1878, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

local circles' loss of members,[125] among other difficulties. "Things turn into a critical stage", reported a correspondent from Gosselies near Charleroi when referring to changes in the municipal council.[126] The composition of the provincial executive was also seen as relevant to the local circles' development, because this committee chose the public school inspectors.[127] Along with the Catholic clergy, local *ligueurs* saw the "powerful aristocracy" as inhibiting the expansion of "progress" through education.[128] Additionally, "revolutionaries" and "democrats", some of whom were members of the League and who were ready to allow people to vote before they were sufficiently educated, acted against the League's endeavours.[129] In fact, hostile forces dominated the local activists' minds and daily experience. This atmosphere of antagonism profoundly marked their correspondence with the General Council, as activists tried to make their difficult situation understood. While the local actors identified with the League's conception of 'progress through education', they considered the clergy's power overwhelming and felt unable to implement the League's agenda. But it was not simply powerful locals who stymied reform; correspondents pointed to reasons linked to the social life in villages and small towns to explain their failure.

Social life in villages versus plans made in Brussels

"On the countryside, you have to take the people as they are", stated Buls' correspondent in Nil-St.-Vincent in 1866, as an introduction to his reported endeavours to counter the clergy's attack with satirical newspaper articles.[130] Local activists often explained how their activism was made difficult because of the assumed particularities of rural people. Reformers went to some length to depict their living conditions, describing the circumstances in villages and small towns along with their ideas about the mindset of rural people, all of which served to

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125 Local circle in Menen, Annual report 1868-1869, Menen, 31 December 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

126 Local circle in Gosselies, Annual report, Gosselies, 14 August 1868, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

127 M. Loppens to Charles Buls, Ypres, 12 October 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

128 Member in Leuven to General Council, Leuven, 14 June 1868, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

129 Local circle in Liège to Charles Buls, Liège, 07 February 1869; Member in Liège to Charles Buls, Liège, 21 March 1868; G. Berger to Charles Buls, Wavre, 27 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

130 M. Gislain to Charles Buls, Nil St. Vincent, 24 September 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

justify their failure to recruit members or to attract an audience to seminars and other events. Research has shown how 19th-century liberals and socialists in Ghent and Antwerp and in the capital Brussels regarded the surrounding countryside as backward territories which had to be civilised.[131] After liberal street protests against the Catholic government in 1871, the internationally renowned economist Emile de Laveleye (1822–1892) described in an article how the political crisis was the symptom of a more fundamental imbalance in modern Belgian society which affected all Catholic countries:

> Always and everywhere rural people have had a different way of life and state of mind compared to city dwellers. The countryman lives isolated [...]. He opposes new ideas, mistrusts them. The working conditions of the peasant make him conservative, superstitious, and submissive to the clergy. [....] In the cities, on the contrary, new ideas penetrate quickly. Discussion, the exchange of ideas, [...] predispose the mind to change and progress.[132]

The local correspondents of the League insisted on the exhausting character of rural people's daily lives as the reason for their indifference towards education opportunities and the League's initiatives. In order to attract some followers, the local circles had to adapt to their town's daily life. The association also had to accommodate the rural seasonal rhythm. Therefore, the League's actions in the provinces and those in the capital were sometimes difficult to coordinate – not in the least because differences were overemphasised by the local activists. In the municipality of Gembloux, the local circle suspended its business at the end of June 1875 and only started again in November. According to the local chairman, given "the heat, the agricultural work, and the holidays", it was pointless to organise any conference at this time of the year.[133] The local branch in Gosselies, close to the industrial centre of Charleroi in Hainaut, suspended its activities until October, calling the month of August an "inopportune season" where no genuine public life was taking place.[134] The inhabitants of Liège, who often combined a job in the industries with life on the countryside, were said by the local chairman to be out of town during the entire month of September, travelling or doing agricultural work. An assembly which the General Coun-

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131 De Smaele, *Rechts Vlaanderen*, 356–357, 367, 371.

132 Emile de Laveleye, "La Crise de 1871 en Belgique, les causes et les périls de la situation," *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 2e période, vol. 197 (1872): 257. See also: De Smaele, *Rechts Vlaanderen*, 373.

133 Local circle in Gembloux to General Council, Gembloux, 24 August 1875, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

134 Local circle in Gosselies, Annual report, Gosselies, 14 August 1868, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

cil, unfamiliar with Liège's calendar, had scheduled for September had therefore to be postponed.[135] Local activists felt that actors in Brussels were acting completely unaware of their daily routines and constraints. This lived experience, alongside a certain degree of actual ignorance, perpetuated the continuous communication difficulties between the centre and the rural areas. Thus, a correspondent from Kortrijk in West-Flanders explained to Buls how conferences, if they are meant to integrate rural people, had to be organised to accommodate the daily routines of town residents. Conferences had to be planned for the days of the weekly market and scheduled for eight in the evening, just before the inhabitants of the surrounding localities who had done their shopping in the town would take their coaches back home.[136]

The League also had to adapt to the increasingly politicised public life in the municipalities. To legitimise the local circle's occasional inactivity and not without pride, correspondents pointed to the fact that public attention had been absorbed by another socio-political event, municipal elections in most cases. Election campaigns absorbed all attention and dominated public life so completely that it was pointless to organise other events while an election was ongoing.[137] In the town of Verviers in the province of Liège, the correspondent reported that "at the end of the month, minds were entirely occupied by the municipal elections" as well as by the local choir competition. This was why the visit of a representative from the Central Council had to be rescheduled.[138]

Sometimes, local elections also collided with the League's projects in a very practical sense. The circle in Bruges reported that during the provincial election campaign it had been unable to organise seminars and meetings because the local meeting place had been occupied by the liberal associations.[139] Some local circles, such as in Liège, were disturbed by the bad sanitary conditions in the towns, which could hinder the organisation of assemblies.[140] In Perwez, too, the circle's activity was inhibited when its general secretary contracted typhus.[141] The local *ligueurs*' perception of their fellow villagers and the supposi-

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135 Local circle in Liège to General Secretary, Liège, 28 August 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

136 M. Verbeke to Charles Buls, Kortrijk, 16 February 1869, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

137 Local circle in Antwerp to Charles Buls, Antwerp, 27 October 1878, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

138 Local circle in Verviers to General Council, Verviers, 24 February 1874, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

139 Local circle in Bruges, Annual report, Bruges, 7 October 1868, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

140 Local circle in Liège to General Secretary, Liège, 28 August 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

141 M. Combeau to General Council, Perwez, 27 November 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

tion of their intellectual inferiority was another reason for the League's failure in the provinces. Correspondents identified a specific mindset and often alluded to the assumed simplicity, even backwardness of rural people.[142] According to a correspondent from the small town north of Liège, the people in Herstal were simply unfamiliar with the idea of uniting forces to pursue a common goal.[143] Another stated that the animosities and rivalries among people in small towns hindered the circle from flourishing because "those who might be interested in participating refrain from the circle because it had not been their own idea."[144]

Reformers also connected this assumed backwardness with a lack of local interest in free seminars and public lectures. Several local chairmen considered their fellow villagers as not yet 'ripe' for the League's political claims; many statements were simply too 'progressive' for them. As in fact, the meaningful context in which local activists placed their lived experiences were not only constituted by the clergy-liberals antagonism and the constraining living conditions on the countryside, but also, or perhaps particularly so, by the liberal-progressive ideology driving the Education League's project. Yet, they often felt obliged to differ from these principles, which further hampered their identification with the association. This aspect was particularly relevant given that the General Council chose the speakers for the local circles' public events. In this respect, the local chairman from Waterloo recommended that his colleagues in Brussels choose a speaker also able to address agricultural topics. He insisted that the speech had to be "amusing"; the speaker had to "entertain" the audience and bear in mind that he was not talking to "savants".[145] A correspondent from the small town of Wavre, Walloon Brabant, reported a scene that was emblematic in this context. A distinguished French orator, the republican Noël Madier de Montjau (1814–1892), had given a "brilliant speech" at the local circle. However, ignoring the circle's convention not to address political and religious topics, Madier de Montjau had shocked the audience with "remarks far too advanced for the people from a town such as Wavre". His comments on the Catholic Church and on republicanism had alienated the audience. In order to avoid losing his membership, the correspondent had to promise not to invite the speaker again. However, contradicting his own words, the local activist concluded his letter by stating that "we are as advanced as M. Madier", but that such "extremist

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142 See Stengers, "Der belgische Liberalismus im 19. Jahrhundert," 431.

143 Member in Herstal to Charles Buls, Herstal, 12 December 1866, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

144 Editor of *L'Indépendant du Luxembourg* to General Council, Arlon, 25 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

145 Local circle in Waterloo, Circular, Waterloo, 25 October 1865, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.

remarks" threatened the League's survival in the town.[146] He tried to explain the circle's difficulties by pointing to local people's backwardness while at the same time repudiating such backwardness.

In its annual report from 1867, the local circle in Waterloo mentioned that it was probably the only circle "soundly entrenched in a rural municipality".[147] In fact, the local activists demonstrated an awareness of the deep social and cultural divide between the General Council and the local branches. The association's central body also occasionally acknowledged this divide; in 1868, it invited the chairmen of all local branches to a banquet in Brussels in order to reunite the association and to demonstrate unity[148] by employing a type of sociability adapted to the habits in small towns and rural regions. This capital-province divide had no direct equivalent in France, especially during the first years of the French Education League's existence. The fact that Jean Macé did not coordinate his project from a Parisian centre but from a village in Alsace surely made the establishment of local associations easier. His personal immersion in the rural world facilitated communication between the different branches of the League, a pattern of adaptation that the Belgian League seemingly lacked. The perceived cultural distance between the members of the General Council and the activists in the rural areas in particular contributed to the League's failure to entrench itself outside Brussels.

Conclusion

The local activists' experience was not in accord with the social and cultural practices of the Education League in Brussels where its representatives mostly communicated with government officials and with the capital's press. Reformists' experiences were deeply affected by local power structures, which they understood as dominated by the Catholic clergy. They were confronted with a rural mindset that seemed to clash with most aims and demands of the Education League. The League's plans for establishing a secular and state-sponsored education system was at odds with the lived experiences in the provinces. A primary education that would be compulsory for children and offered to adults in their free evenings, an education that would be underpinned by rationalist and nationalist thinking and by an ideology of progress, an elementary education that would

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146 G. Berger to Charles Buls, Wavre, 27 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.
147 Local circle in Waterloo, Annual report, Waterloo, 7 April 1867, 501,I Sections locales, Ar.LB.
148 General Council, Invitation, Brussels, 2 September 1868, 501,II Sections locales, Ar.LB.

form the future citizens of a 'democratic country' – so ran the League's ideas, to which very few people in the provinces eventually could subscribe. In fact, while the local activists had some success with gaining the support of local 'notabilities', they were unable to interest their fellow villagers or townspeople in the Education League's project to improve – and secularise – popular education. Therefore, according to the central committee's ideology of progress, country folk had to be considered as 'backward'. However, it would be mistaken to deduce from the often quoted 'lack of interest' of rural people that the education debate only took place in Brussels. Rather on the contrary, in small towns the school conflict was experienced by some as a risk to their private, social and professional lives. Local activists formed and expressed their experiences of their failing endeavours by referring to interpretative patterns such as the clergy-liberals antagonism, the specific living conditions of the countryside and the liberal-progressive ideology. Their experiences also took shape through the reporting and depicting of lived experiences in the many letters addressed to the League's General Council.

Due to the experiences of local actors, the objective to convince people of the importance and power of secular education was increasingly pursued in Brussels only. In contrast to its French equivalent, the Belgian League did not, in the long run, rely on the integration of the provinces or accommodate the rural areas with their specific circumstances. Instead, the League came to believe that its agenda was sufficiently represented by the General Council in Brussels – supposedly an embodiment of the nation as a whole. The central and provincial actors both perceived and through their communication perpetuated the gap and the hierarchy between the capital and the provinces. The French Education League, on the contrary, until the final installation of the Third Republic, depended on its decentralised character to escape repressive measures from the Second Empire. In the end, ironically, this repression produced a democratic organisational structure built to last.

Jeffrey Tyssens

6 Schools of Decency and Discipline. Social Reform and People's Restaurants in the Low Countries (1860s–1914)

In one of the most famous songs of Bertolt Brecht's *Dreigroschenoper*, leading characters Macheath and Ginny Jenny admonish the well-to-do gentlemen who try and moralise the poor before more essential needs are fulfilled:

> Now all you gentlemen who wish to lead us
> Who teach us to desist from mortal sin
> Your prior obligation is to feed us:
> When we've had lunch, your preaching can begin.
> All you who love your paunch and our propriety
> Take note of this one thing (for it is late):
> You may proclaim, good sirs, your fine philosophy,
> But till you feed us, right and wrong can wait![1]

Were the good sirs who wanted to moralise the 19th-century poor in order to solve the epoch's social ills unaware of that basic truth of the last line in the original, "*Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral*"? Certainly not all of them were that naïve. One can even say that quite a large group of social reformers of very different ideological inclinations were well aware that food was a problem not only for the indigent but equally for the labouring poor. From the earliest surveys onwards[2] this conclusion had been reached and it is clear that this awareness was widespread. No wonder then that those who were to create the cheap popular restaurants we will study in this chapter were explicit about this part of their motivation. Dr. Camille Moreau (?–1919), a liberal physician implied in one such initiative in the Walloon industrial town of Charleroi in 1886, qualified the work-

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1 Bertolt Brecht, *The Threepenny Opera. With the author's notes and a foreword by Lotte Lenya. English book by Desmond Vesey. English lyrics by Eric Bentley* (New York: Bentley, 1964), 66–67. Obviously, the German original has much more punch: "Ihr Herrn, die ihr uns lehrt, wie man brav leben / Und Sünd und Missetat vermeiden kann / Zuerst müßt ihr uns schon zu fressen geben / Dann könnt ihr reden: damit fängt es an. / Ihr, die euren Wanst und unsere Bravheit liebt / Das Eine wisset ein für allemal: / Wie ihr es immer dreht und immer schiebt / Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral". See: idem, *Ausgewählte Werke in sechs Bände* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2005), III, 144.
2 Michel Bonneau, *La Table des pauvres. Cuisiner dans les villes et cités industrielles 1780–1950* (Rennes: PUR, 2013), 165–189.

ers' diet as "insufficient and in all respects contrary to hygienic laws". He was also just as straightforward about the main reason for this, i.e. a family budget that proved too low.[3] But even the most daring representatives of the liberal left in the Low Countries, i.e. the social liberals in the north and the so-called "*progressistes*"[4] in the south, both groups visibly, be it unevenly present in the food reform movement which is at stake here, hardly risked touching the free evolution of wages, that sacred cow of the 19th-century's auto-regulated market. Other means thus had to be engaged to tackle 'the social question' in order to preclude severe disruption to society as it existed.

It is well known that all kinds of social ventures were fostered and sponsored by bourgeois or middle-class reformers[5], where usually a mix of philanthropy and self-help had to attain a gradual de-proletarisation of the labouring classes. By inculcating thrift and virtue and by spreading sets of practical skills, organisational ones among them, a basic accumulation of property (real estate most notably) and concomitant 'conservative' life stances could be reached for the good of all. Many of these ventures, such as cooperative banking[6], have been adequately studied. The same goes for the educational side of the matter. Indeed, the liberal left very definitely stood at the vanguard of the 'pedagogisation' of society.[7] It is well known that their ambitions for social reform were always connected with instruction and moral uplift of one sort or another. Interestingly however, it is only occasionally that an analytical link has been made between these uplifting/reforming endeavours and the fundamental problem of the poor man's diet we mentioned at the outset.[8]

With our investigation into a particular policy of procuring processed food for the poor, as we can observe it in Belgium and the Netherlands in the last third of the 19th century, we will first of all try to show how social reformers wanted to organise modern philanthropic alternatives for charitable food distribution

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3 *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 10, 1886, 2.

4 For more information on these progressive liberals, see: chapter 1/introduction to his volume.

5 For a view of the broad panoply that could be touched upon, see: Christianne Smit, *De volksverheffers. Sociaal hervormers in Nederland en de wereld 1870–1914* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2015).

6 Just one example among many: Toni Offermann, *Arbeiterbewegung und liberales Bürgertum in Deutschland 1850–1863* (Bonn: Neue Gesellschaft, 1979), 189–338.

7 Marc Depaepe, *De pedagogisering achterna. Aanzet tot een genealogie van de pedagogische mentaliteit in de voorbije 250 jaar* (Leuven: Acco, 1998). On the concept of pedagogisation/educationalisation, see: chapter 1/introduction to his volume.

8 We made some initial connections in: Jeffrey Tyssens, "Association, Patronizing and Autonomy: Belgian Masonic Lodges as Sponsors of a 'Cooperative' Movement in the 1860s and 1870s," *Journal for Research into Freemasonry and Fraternalism* 2, no. 2 (2011): 261–292. See also: Smit, *De Volksverheffers*, 261–265.

as it had existed in the past.[9] These largely under-researched initiatives, carried out as they were by some of the usual suspects of social reform but also by a number of unexpected, sometimes even rather ambiguous actors, indicate the extent to which there is a very specific food history-component to this larger history of social reform. But they also prove how these reformers' perspectives went beyond the very basics one might expect from such down-to-earth ventures to procure poor people with cheap food. Indeed, even here, where one might least expect it, ideas of moral uplift and practical instruction of the lower classes were never far away. We will take a closer look at two cases in each of the two countries in question, cases where social reformers started cheap restaurants for labourers from the 1860s onwards. What networks of people and organisations can be identified behind these new style caterers with their cheap meals? What principles determined their modalities of functioning, as opposed to more archaic food charities? For what kind of poor were these restaurants designed? In his seminal work on the transformations of the social question, French sociologist Robert Castel incisively analysed with regard to those poor how essential a set of divisions have been (and still are) for determining particular forms of social policy, notably between the labouring and the non-labouring poor, other varieties then again existing within these groups.[10] If traditional food distributions were not meant for workers but for a "*Lumpenproletariat*" of paupers, indigents, in short, for the lowest echelons of social hierarchy, was this still the case for the "*volksgaarkeukens*" or "*fourneaux économiques*" that emerged from the late 1860s, or had others been defined as the principle target group? We will then try to come to grips with the pedagogical features the reformers attached to or expected from the social catering facilities they had started.

People's restaurants in the South: The cases of Brussels and Charleroi

The wave of people's restaurants that started in Belgium in the late 1860s was largely produced by Masonic lodges. Their organisational interconnectedness enhanced a series of imitations from the original example in Brussels. Indeed, this first initiative was taken by the capital's *Amis Philanthropes* lodge, a constant

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9 For the distinction between charity and philanthropy, see: Giovanna Procacci, *Gouverner la misère. La question sociale en France, 1789–1848* (Paris: Seuil, 1993).
10 Robert Castel, *Les métamorphoses de la question sociale* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995).

spearhead of Belgian Freemasonry as a politically and socially active force. As Masonic lodges had done since their conception, *Les Amis Philanthropes* had had their proper charity, which was traditionally organised in the form of bread donations to the urban poor on the occasion of lodge festivities. But these charitable bourgeois did not distribute bread directly: as happened more often in 19th-century Brussels, bread tickets were given to particular poor selected by a city jury that had inspected their dwellings to assess their cleanliness and orderliness.[11] However, these tokens to acknowledge that a certain moral standard was being respected by the potential beneficiaries did not avoid deviations of the charity system. As was reported in February 1864 by *Amis Philanthropes*-member Auguste Jones (1808–1885), a well-known carriage manufacturer of downtown Brussels and an active philanthropist, some of these tickets had recently been sold on by the beneficiaries, thus not reaching the 'respectable' poor the lodge had wanted to help. To obtain more of a grip upon the actual food consumption by the target group, Jones proposed dropping the ticket distribution system altogether and organising a low cost restaurant for workers and modest employees with their respective families, or the *fourneaux économiques*, as it was often called back then.[12]

But Jones himself soon doubted the feasibility of his own proposal: he had suggested a similar formula to the capital's *Société Royale de Philanthropie* and now, he said, a Catholic political club had taken over his idea. But we have not found any trace that the latter eventually realised anything in this respect. If the Brussels *Association Constitutionnelle Conservatrice* considered such an endeavour at all, it must soon have been reminded that a Catholic charity was already in operation in the sector. The Brussels conference of the Saint-Vincent-of-Paul society had timidly broadened the food offer of an older soup kitchen and, in the early 1860s, had mobilised a French nuns' order, the *Filles de la Sagesse*, to run it and to later open a second site.[13] Whatever the cause of Jones' fears, other members of *Les Amis Philanthropes*, notably the lodge's Worshipful Master,

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11 Minute Book IX, Lodge meeting of 18 February 1864, Archives Les Amis Philanthropes, Brussels, Belgium. These "*prix d'ordre et de propreté*" had been launched by liberal minister Charles Rogier (1800–1885) in 1849 and had to be attributed by municipal commissions. Brussels rewarded a first set of families in 1853. See: *L'Indépendance Belge,* July 10, 1853, 2. For the relationship between morality/respectability and orderly households, as identified by "*les visiteurs du pauvre*", see: chapter 1/introduction to this volume.

12 Manuscript Lartigue (18 February 1864); Minute Book IX, Lodge meetings of 18 February & 10 May 1864, Archives Les Amis Philanthropes.

13 Situation des établissements de la Congrégation de la Sagesse Tome III, f° 336 e.s., FDLS HC 3, Archives of the Congrégation des Filles de la Sagesse, St.-Laurent-sur-Sèvre, France.

were adamantly in favour of effectively realising Jones' original idea, so as not to leave the sector entirely to the Catholic enemy.[14] It turned out that this was to allow the lodge to profit from a gap in the capital city's philanthropy. Indeed, in the *Petit-Château* quarter of downtown Brussels, a non-denominational soup kitchen had been operating since the mid-1850s and it had also slowly come to resemble the larger *fourneaux économiques*-formula[15], but, as the buildings of the *Petit-Château* kitchen were to be demolished[16], an opportunity arose to fill that void. Furthermore, the catering service of the *Petit-Château* and the nuns' kitchens of Saint-Vincent-of-Paul had all kept working in a more old-fashioned manner, i.e. only in winter months (even not necessarily every year at the *Petit-Château*) and largely by means of charity coupons distributed by aristocrats to the paupers they patronised.[17]

The Brussels Freemasons developed a blueprint for a far more modern type of *fourneaux économiques*.[18] First of all, they broke with the traditional seasonal workings of the soup kitchens (i.e. limited to about four months from December until March or April) and started a permanent catering service with a relatively large menu. It was considered of utmost importance to break with the charity formula.[19] Indeed, food would no longer be donated to the poor, but processed in a market context: the meals were to be sold for cash, with large scale purchases

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14 Manuscript Lartigue (10 May 1864); Minute Book IX, Lodge meeting of 10 May 1864, Archives Les Amis Philanthropes.

15 Decision of the Comité du Petit-Château, 22 November 1855 ; Comité des soupes, ancien Petit-Château. Rapport de la Commission administrative au Comité (Winter 1854–1855), S 112–10, Fonds Bienfaisance Publique, City Archives of Brussels, Brussels, Belgium.

16 In 1869, the *Petit-Château* committee decided not to continue its organising activities, as the building had been torn down the year before and the Freemasons' *fourneaux économiques* had become active in the quarter, but it had not been dismantled: henceforward it only distributed food tickets for other cheap restaurants. See: *L'Écho du Parlement*, December 17, 1869, 1; *L'Indépendance Belge*, February 12, 1876, 1. One of the active members of the committee, Louis Geelhand (1820–1894), who was a key figure of the *Société Royale de Philanthropie* as well, was to be coopted in the management board of the Masonic initiative.

17 For the aristocratic and Catholic involvement in the endeavour, see notably: *Journal de Bruxelles*, September 1, 1866, 2; October 23, 1881, 2. At the end of the 19th century the kitchen's coupons were still distributed by dint of the Brussels *Cercle des Nobles*. See: *Journal de Bruxelles*, December 20, 1895, 3. On the seasonality and the focus on the indigent, see: *Journal de Bruxelles*, April 9, 1863, 1; January 15, 1868, 1; March 28, 1868, 2.

18 Manuscript Lartigue (21 January 1867 until 22 February 1868), Archives Les Amis Philanthropes.

19 In a most revealing way, the word 'charity', which was still used when the lodge started discussing the matter, was completely abandoned with plans becoming more elaborate. See: Jeffrey Tyssens, "Association, Patronizing and Autonomy," 265–266.

and production making prices considerably lower than in-family provisioning and cooking could allow. The *Amis Philanthropes* lodge went a step further still. Several of the members of the lodge's commission preparing this blueprint, notably the journalist and Liberal MP Auguste Couvreur (1827–1894), had been actively involved in the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales*[20], its international conferences (notably the 1863 conference of Ghent) having been important forums for spreading the idea of cooperation in liberal circles.[21] In the conferences most participants had looked at cooperative banking (in particular at the German Schulze-Delitzsch model) but it would not take long to broaden the perspective and to align the concept of the cheap restaurant with that same model.[22] A foreign example had helped to popularise the idea, i.e. the "*restaurant sociétaire*" of the French city of Grenoble as it had been founded in 1851.[23] The restaurant was well known in those days, notably by dint of a book its conceiver, Grenoble's (second republic) mayor Frédéric Taulier (1806–1861), had published on this and other social endeavours launched by the municipality's authorities.[24] It had gained some traction among Brussels' liberals and Freema-

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20 On this important laboratory of ideas, see: Christian Müller, "Designing the Model European—Liberal and Republican Concepts of Citizenship in Europe in the 1860s: The Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales," *History of European Ideas* 26, no (2011): 223–231; Christian Müller and Jasmien Van Daele, "Peaks of Internationalism in Social Engineering: A Transnational History of International Social Reform Associations and Belgian Agency, 1860–1925," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 90, no. 4 (2012): 1301–1306; Christian Müller, "The Politics of Expertise: Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales. Democratic Peace Movements and International Law Networks in Europe, 1850–1875," in *Shaping the Transnational Sphere. Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, eds. Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck and Jakob Vogel (New York: Berghahn, 2015), 131–151. All the chapters of part III ('Transnational Connections and Circulations') of this volume refer to the importance of the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales*. See also: chapter 1/introduction to this volume.
21 As an MP, Couvreur would play a key role in the elaboration of legislation facilitating the creation of cooperatives. See: Jean Puissant, "La cooperation en Belgique. Tentative d'évaluation globale," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 22 (1991): 35: Hendrik Defoort, *Werklieden bemint uw profijt! De Belgische sociaaldemocratie in Europa* (Leuven: Lannoo, 2006), 116.
22 The final proposition of the cooperative model seems to have come from a certain Cambier though. See: Manuscript Lartigue (21 January 1867), Archives Les Amis Philanthropes.
23 Anne Lhuissier, "Le restaurant sociétaire de Grenoble sous la Seconde République. De l'initiative politique à l'institution réformatrice," *Revue d'Histoire du XIXe siècle* 26–27 (2003) : 85–110; Anne Lhuissier, *Alimentation populaire et réforme sociale. Les consommations ouvrières dans le second XIXe siècle* (Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2007).
24 Frédéric Taulier, *Le vrai livre du people ou le riche et le pauvre. Histoire et tableau des institutions de bienfaisance et d'instruction primaire de la ville de Grenoble* (Grenoble-Paris: Maisonville & Hachette, 1860).

sons as well.[25] Now, the *Amis Philanthropes* Masons wanted to push things even further: they would start the initiative, gather the capital and run the economic restaurant in a first period, but then the reins and the shares had to be passed to the labour class consumers themselves in order to form a genuine cooperative restaurant.[26]

In November 1867, *Les Amis Philanthropes* approved the plans for the new social catering service and were quickly joined by the other lodge in the capital city, *Les Vrais Amis de l'Union et du Progrès Réunis*, to co-finance and collaboratively run this restaurant, aptly called *Les Ateliers Réunis*. In March 1868, the cheap eating facility was opened some hundred yards from the site where the old soup kitchen had functioned, on grounds that had been provided by Brussels' city authorities. *Les Ateliers Réunis* was to be run by a large "*Conseil de Gérance*" but mainly by a smaller "*Comité d'Administration*" led by Auguste Jones.[27] Most members represented their respective lodges. The list denotes a lot of the usual suspects of reform associations like the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*, the Brussels society for vocational schooling of girls and think tanks such as the *Société d'Economie Politique*. The majority clearly reflected the bourgeois composition of the capital's lodges, but not exclusively. With the presence of e. g. bronze worker Frédéric Thys (1833 – 1881), one of the rare labour aristocrats having been admitted to the *Amis Philanthropes* lodge (he was initiated in 1861), a link was made to the working men's world as well.[28] On the management board, the Brussels city authorities had delegated the employee Théophile Absil to cover, for some extra salary, the day-to-day administration (he later became a Freemason too).[29] The venture clearly met with some success. The annual sales volume was quite con-

25 The book and its ideas had been treated during a conference in the Brussels *Association Libérale* in 1867. See: *Des sociétés de consommation. Conférence donnée à l'Association Libérale de Bruxelles, le 19 février 1867, par Gustave Duchaine, Avocat près de la Cour d'Appel de Bruxelles, docteur agrégé de l'Université Libre* (Brussels: Lebègue, 1967), 30 – 31.

26 In the meantime, they had also studied the operations of the *Rochdale Pioneers*. See: Manuscript Lartigue (25 March 1867), Archives Les Amis Philanthropes.

27 *Rapport sur les opérations de Société Coopérative Alimentaire Les Ateliers Réunis. Rédigé par le Comité spécial nommé en Assemblée générale du 30 janvier 1876* (Brussels: Imprimerie bruxelloise, 1876), 36.

28 Thys was one of the main personae of the *Association Générale Ouvrière* which was to play a role in the further development of the *Ateliers Réunis*, as we will explain later. See: Éliane Gubin, Jean Puissant and Jean-Paul Mahoux, "Question sociale et libéralisme. L'exemple de l'Association Générale Ouvrière (1858 – 1920)," *Huldeboek Prof. Dr. Marcel Bots. Een bundel historische en wijsgerige opstellen*, eds. Adriaan Verhulst and Luc Pareyn (Ghent : Liberaal Archief, 1995), 151.

29 Résolution du collège, January 7, 1881/Décision du conseil communal, January 10, 1881, S113.1 Fonds Bienfaisance publique, City Archives of Brussels.

siderable. As can be judged from a report concerning its activities until 1875, in the better years the first *Ateliers Réunis* establishment sold about 150,000 portions of soup annually, more than 130,000 portions of meat and some 285,000 portions of vegetables.[30] This was deemed sufficient enough to consider expansion and, indeed, in 1873 and 1883 respectively, new sites were opened in the 'Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-ter-Sneeuw' and the 'Marollen' quarters.[31] In the new distribution centers, sales would be more modest and in the original site the annual quantities of meals sold would gradually diminish as well, and it is quite likely that these *fourneaux économiques* survived mainly because they were allowed to deliver processed food to the public schools of the city.[32] However, whatever the cause may have been, the restaurants managed to maintain their activities until the drastic food measures demanded by the occupation of the country during the First World War.

The *Ateliers Réunis* were definitely important because they inspired imitations of their formula by a set of other Masonic lodges and liberal networks in Belgium. Furthermore, the venture obtained quite a lot of international recognition as well: after only a year of activities, the Brussels *fourneaux économiques* were already presented to a foreign audience and received an award during an exhibition in Amsterdam. The same was to happen in 1889 in the Paris world exhibition, where the *Ateliers Réunis* again won a medal as a valuable initiative of social economy.[33] But the cheap restaurant also had to face some criticism, interestingly by some prestigious liberal protagonists of this type of social reform institution. Indeed, in his 1871 book *Des institutions et des associations ouvrières de la Belgique*, Léon d'Andrimont (1836–1905), the ideologue of cooperative bank-

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30 *Rapport sur les opérations de la Société Coopérative Alimentaire Les Atelier réunis*, 19.

31 *Bulletin Communal de Bruxelles* (1872, I), 318; Eugène Van Bemmel, *Patria Belgica. Encyclopédie nationale* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1873), 192; *L'Indépendance Belge*, August 10, 1883, 2; Antoine & Yvon Leblicq, "Quelques souvenirs d'une enfance dans le quartier bruxellois des bas-fonds au début du XXe siècle," *Cahiers Bruxellois* 49, no. 1 (2017): 325. For some time in the 1880s, a site was also opened near the factories in the channel vicinity just outside town, but this facility did not last long. See: *Journal de Bruxelles*, January 1, 1885, 2.

32 *Bulletin Communal de Bruxelles* (1896, II), 421.

33 *Exposition Internationale d'Economie Domestique à Amsterdam 1869. Rapports du Comité Central de l'Association et des Jurys de l'Exposition* (The Hague: Imprimerie de l'Etat, 1869), 384, 378–379, 452–454, 766–774; *Exposition universelle de Paris 1889. Section belge. Groupe XI. Economie sociale. Section IX. Associations coopératives de consommation. Rapport présenté par M. Odon Laurent* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1889), 38–41; *Exposition Universelle de 1889, à Paris. Liste des récompenses* (Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1889), 755, 774; *Exposition Universelle Internationale de 1889 à Paris. Rapports du jury international publiés sous la direction de M. Alfred Pirard. Groupe de l'Économie sociale* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1889), II, 129, 135–136.

ing in Belgium, pointed out the weak spot of the *Atelier Réunis* formula: i. e. the cooperative part of the story. Indeed, the organisers hardly found any labourers-consumers to become shareholders. Hence, the restaurants remained only cooperative in name.[34] The lodge had already made the same observation before[35] but did not really find a solution. This only changed in 1886–1887 when the managing Freemasons eventually succeeded in attaining an agreement with the *Association Générale Ouvrière*, a kind of liberal labour society of qualified workers, to finally secure a cooperative reconversion of the *Ateliers Réunis.*[36]

Of the imitations of the *Ateliers Réunis* by Freemasons in other cities in Belgium, the one in Charleroi was one of the most interesting, even if it was a rather late initiative. Although the records of the lodge were lost during the Second World War, we can nevertheless confirm that the local *Charité* lodge was indeed behind a local cooperative restaurant that was founded in 1886.[37] The lodge had already paid attention to social matters for quite some time[38], but it is likely that the strikes and eruptions of violence stirring the Walloon industrial regions in March 1886 (the Charleroi vicinity being particularly touched by them[39]) had been a strong incentive to proceed. It is well known that the 1886 events had been a major shock to Belgian bourgeois society (however much it had been warned, by the *progressiste* liberals notably, that this kind of explosion was in the offing) and eventually led to a first wave of social legislation.[40] Less attention

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34 Léon d'Andrimont, *Des institutions et des associations ouvrières de la Belgique* (Brussels: Lebègue, 1871), 308.

35 It was mentioned by Gustave Jottrand (1830–1906), one of the members of the "*Conseil de gérance*": "we don't succeed in placing shares in the hands of the labourers". See: Manuscript Lartigue (March 26, 1870), Archives Les Amis Philanthropes.

36 *L'Indépendance Belge*, July 28, 1886, 1; Gubin, Puissant and Mahoux, "Question sociale et libéralisme. L'exemple de l'Association Générale Ouvrière ," 158–159.

37 The fact was explicitly mentioned during a commemorative ritual in 1893 by Léopold Fagnart (1849–1899), a left-wing liberal MP and active lodge member who had been implicated in the venture himself. See: *Bulletin du Grand Orient de Belgique 1892–1893* (Brussels: Grand Orient de Belgique), 130. On Fagnart, see: *Biographie Nationale. Volume 39* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1976), 349–361.

38 As the Worshipful Master of the lodge, it was precisely Fagnart who inspired intense study of the matter. See his masonic obituary in: *Bulletin du Grand Orient de Belgique 1899* (Brussels: Grand Orient de Belgique), 362.

39 There had been looting all around. In neighboring Jumet, a large manor had been set ablaze. In Roux, the army had fired on the crowds, causing several casualties. If Charleroi itself was less effected, a climate of fear reigned in the city. See: Pierre-Jean Schaeffer, *Charleroi, 1830–1994, histoire d'une métropole* (Ottignies: Quorum, 1994), 117; *L'Indépendance Belge*, March 27, 1886, 2; March 28, 1886, 2; March 30, 1886, 2.

40 Marinette Bruwier e.a., *1886. La Wallonie née de la grève?* (Brussels: Labor, 1990).

though has been given to local responses and it is precisely in this frame that the Charleroi *Société Coopérative d'Alimentation Économique* must be understood. High food prices had already gained liberal attention before[41], but now an encompassing solution was advanced. On 29 August 1886 a provisional committee distributed a letter announcing the creation of new *fourneaux économiques* in Charleroi. The group solicited disinterested financial participation to the initiative that had to serve "this so interesting class of our labourers" (sic) and convened a public meeting for early August 1886.[42]

If individual working class family budgets were not sufficient for adequate food, cooperation was deemed to be the solution. The goal was clear: a first restaurant with a take-away service, modelled on the ones working with such "vitality" in Brussels, Liège, Namur and Antwerp, had to offer "sane" and "substantial" food "at the best possible market conditions" to the workers.[43] The initiators had visited the *Ateliers Réunis* in Brussels and were very much inspired by their methods. It was immediately made clear that in the first five years of activity no dividends were to be expected by the stockholders: possible profits would be deposited in a reserve fund and ultimately reinvested in new sections of the restaurant. After those first five years, 60 per cent of the profits would go towards dividends, with the remaining 40 per cent still being deposited in the reserve fund. The shares were presumed to be of a sufficiently low cost (5 fr.) for workers to be able to buy them and get access to the direction of the initiative. The managing committee's members were not to receive any financial retribution for their activity.[44] The first eating facility, with a hall for 80 diners, was opened mid-October 1886 in a northern working class suburb of the city. In its first weeks of functioning, it was considered to be an outright success.[45]

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41 In 1885, meat prices were judged to be excessive (and blamed upon tacit price manipulations by the butchers collectively) and led to the idea of creating a low-price cooperative butchery (these "*boucheries économiques*" existed in other Belgian towns) but that proposition did not work out. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, December 22, 1885, 2; August 5, 1886, 2; August 8, 1886, 1.
42 *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 4, 1886, 3.
43 *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 4, 1886, 3.
44 *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 4, 1886, 3; August 9, 1886, 2; August 10, 1886, 2–3; November 12, 1886, 2.
45 At least sufficiently so as to incite neighboring municipalities like Châtelet and Dampremy to imitate the example. More precise data on these *fourneaux économiques* are largely lacking however. The Charleroi organisers quickly considered opening new branches in Charleroi itself. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, November 12, 1886, 2; November 15, 1886, 2; November 20, 1886, 2; December 6, 1886, 2; December 17, 1886, 2; December 18, 1886, 2; December 23, 1886, 2; December 29, 1886, 2; January 15, 1887, 2.

The provisional committee consisted significantly of *La Charité* members, all of whom belonged to the urban middle and upper middle levels of society: teachers, lawyers, physicians, engineers, industrialists.[46] It was headed by the lodge's Worshipful Master Léopold Fagnart (1849–1899), but the main administrative force was definitely Emile Tumelaire (1849–1927), an *athénée* teacher who later played a key role in the organisation of politically non-aligned mutual aid societies. Tumelaire was assisted by Charles Allard (1847–1913), Charleroi's city secretary, and Dr. Camille Moreau, a leading figure in the city's medical world and a representative of the country's hygienic movement. At the first meeting the committee was enlarged. Clearly, the same liberal and Masonic circles were well represented, but at that stage one Catholic politician was present as well, the later Christian-Democratic minister Michel Levie (1851–1939).[47] However, the liberal presence must have been too strong for his taste, as he only appeared once in this context. The final management board and the financial control commission still mirrored the original group of initiators, although now with the big industrialist and banker Louis Biourge (1829–1907) as the board's president and, interestingly, also with one miner, Gérémie Petit, as a member.

The composition of the subsequent committees showed how much the economical restaurant was embedded in an associative network linking Masonic and liberal spheres (notably the *Jeune Garde Libérale*). A number of public institutions of Charleroi were well represented and even more significant was the link to a broad set of charitable, social and adult education societies, where one invariably sees a set of names coming back time and again (Emile Tumelaire being at the heart of the network). First of all this included a number of city councilors and the city secretary, plus members of the administrative boards and staff members of the city hospital, the *athénée* and even the municipal abattoir. The principal organisers of the Charleroi kitchen were also board members of the *Société des Conférences de l'Ecole Industrielle* (later: *Société des Conférences Populaires*), an "*oeuvre de moralisation populaire*" established since the 1870s[48], where prop-

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46 The fragmentary data we dispose of (membership rosters having disappeared) already showed that 5 of the 15 committee members belonged to *La Charité* and one was initiated some years later. It is more than probable that the actual number was considerably higher. See: Correspondence La Charité-Grand Orient de Belgique, Boxes lodge correspondence, 16, Centre de Documentation Maçonnique, Brussels, Belgium.

47 Levie was to be active in the local Catholic cooperative *Les Ouvriers Réunis* as of 1891. See: Jean Levie, *Michel Levie (1851–1939) et le mouvement chrétien social de son temps* (Leuven: Nauwelaerts, 1962), 124–143.

48 Maurits De Vroede e.a., *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het pedagogisch leven in België. Deel I. De periodieken 1817–1878* (Ghent-Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 1973), 535–546.

aganda was produced in favour of the cooperative restaurant. The same goes for the charitable societies *Cercle Liégeois* and *Concorde* (which sometimes raised funds in favour of the dining facility) and the *Cercle de l'Oeuvre de Vêtements* of nearby Gilly. Some of the restaurant's board members appear in the local *Comité de Patronage des Habitations Ouvrières*. This is even more the case for the local mutual aid society *L'Espérance*, founded – once again – by the ever present Tumelaire[49] shortly after the restaurant: here again, a considerable overlap can be observed[50], notably with regard to the labour class members.[51]

The initiative did not please everybody however, a fact that would have important consequences. If the socialists globally seemed quite in favour[52], the *fourneaux économiques* met resistance from some local small food sellers[53] and more particularly from boarding house keepers in the quarter where the restaurant was initially located. The latter's collective action seems to have wrecked the first initiative: indeed, reacting to this unwelcome competition, boarding house keepers obliged their boarders to take their meals (at higher prices) at their boarding houses or else denied them lodging.[54] This proved to be an effective strategy. If the *fourneaux économiques* seem to have been well frequented in their earliest days[55], already by 1887 the clientele gradually abandoned them and a move had to be considered. In that same year, the committee opened a new experimental kitchen in an abandoned public building in the south of the

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49 On his role in this field, see: Francis Poty, *Charleroi* (Brussels: Présence et Action Culturelles, 1985) (Mémoire ouvrière, 3), 40–41.

50 *Gazette de Charleroi*, January 5, 1885, 2; November 9, 1885, 2; December 1, 1885, 2; October 10, 1886, 2; October 15, 1886, 2; November 15, 1886, 2; May 31, 1888, 2; October 29, 1889, 2; June 24, 1890, 2; January 21, 1891, 2; July 13, 1891, 2.

51 That goes for Edouard Falony (1861–1939), and also for his fellow miner and predecessor on the kitchen's original board, Gérémie (or Jérémie) Petit. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, May 31, 1888, 2. It is quite striking that *L'Espérance* was first active in the same quarter of the city where the *fourneaux économiques* had their earliest base. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, January 21, 1890, 2.

52 That was notably the case for the Charleroi high school teacher and journalist Eugène Hins (1839–1923). This former militant of the First International, also a Mason of the *Charité* lodge, used his *Au courant de la plume* columns (signed as *Diogène*) in the *Gazette de Charleroi* to give his support. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 8, 1886, 1. On Hins' journalism, see: Marc Mayné, *Eugène Hins: une grande figure de la Première Internationale en Belgique* (Brussels: Académie Royale de Belgique, 1994), 203. In a later stage, young miner and unionist Edouard Falony, the later socialist MP, became member of the management board. Just like Jérémie Petit, Falony was in the first team leading the *L'Espérance* mutual aid society. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, October 4, 1888, 2; January 21, 1890, 2.

53 *Gazette de Charleroi*, July 3, 1887, 2.

54 *Gazette de Charleroi*, July 12, 1893, 2.

55 *Gazette de Charleroi*, November 15, 1886, 2.

city, apparently again with some success in the early stages of activity.[56] But then again, the building had to be cleared in 1890 and the restaurant had to move, this time to a former hotel.[57] The precious little data we have on the restaurant's finances show that already by 1887 the restaurant had only broken even because a local theatre had organised a charity performance on its behalf.[58] In 1888 and 1889, the kitchen had to cope with losses, mainly because of the problems with the original northern suburb branch.[59] In the meantime, the shift to a cooperative did not function either, as the organisers complained:

> The 'Conseil d'Administration', however willing to do the good, cannot substitute itself to the necessary action of the cooperators. It can only trace the road and manage your interest with thrift. But it is not entitled to impose zeal and activity upon the other society members.[60]

If the organisers hoped that a final move to a permanent location would solve these problems,[61] it seems to have been an illusion, however much local charity tried to support the *fourneaux economiques*. In 1892, dissolution was considered for the first time and in May 1893, when the last funds had been spent, the committee decided to do just that.[62] At the same time, the Masonic core of the committee had opted not to drop its philanthropic endeavours altogether, but to re-orient them to what at first sight might seem to have been a more traditionally charitable venture that would operate on a smaller scale. Already in the summer of 1893, i.e. a month or two at most after the kitchen's closure, exactly the same network organised a centre which offered refuge to wandering labourers during the night, the *Oeuvre de l'Hospitalité de Nuit*[63], and quickly added a new food related charity to it, the *Bouchée de Pain*, that was to provide the lodgers with bread and soup.[64] As with the older style food charities, the initiative only func-

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56 *Gazette de Charleroi*, June 6, 1887, 2; July 23, 1887, 2

57 *Gazette de Charleroi*, October 15, 1890, 4.

58 *Gazette de Charleroi*, October 31, 1887, 2.

59 *Gazette de Charleroi*, October 24, 1889, 2.

60 *Gazette de Charleroi*, October 26, 1889, 2.

61 *Gazette de Charleroi*, October 26, 1889, 2.

62 *Gazette de Charleroi*, July 16, 1887, 4; May 9, 1893, 3; July 12, 1893, 2.

63 A similar centre had operated in the mid-1880s but eventually seems to have stopped working. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, November 6, 1886, 2.

64 *Gazette de Charleroi*, July 21, 1893, 2; November 9, 1893, 2; November 18, 1893, 2; November 17, 1894, 1; April 13, 1895, 2; January 22, 1896, 2; October 23, 1898, 1–2. In harsh winters, the food distributions were extended to all the poor that presented themselves at the centre's building. See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, January 9, 1895, 1.

tioned in the winter months. Interestingly however, the same committee completed its double charity with a more innovative third panel, the *Bourse du Travail*, which was to act as an employment office, notably for the wandering labourers (foreigners quite often) that were sheltered by the centre.[65]

People's Restaurants in the North: the Cases of Rotterdam and Leiden

The pioneering Dutch *volksgaarkeuken* was not created by an association or an associative network (as would usually be the case later on) but by an individual food reformer, be it one with a rather dubious profile. Frederik Nysiemus Boer (1818–1915) had started his career in the military, but when he resigned as a Lieutenant in 1851[66] and quickly married a salesman's daughter in Breda[67], his last city of encampment, he became active in food commerce in Rotterdam. He first acted as an accountant. Then, in 1853, he became an independent salesman and in 1860, he associated with a son of Johannes (or "Jan") Hendrik Nieuwenhuijs, an important Amsterdam tin can manufacturer[68], to engage in similarly modern forms of food trade, notably by merchandising all kinds of preserved food (dried, pickled, canned etc.) for colonial markets and ship crew provisions. It is quite probable that Boer's reconversion to the food business was not entirely unconnected with his earlier military activity: indeed, he had been a "*fourier*" for three and a half years[69], i.e. a non-commissioned officer responsible for a company's accounts, the quartering of the troops and, notably, for the distribution of food tickets.[70] His catering business career was not an overall success though.

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65 Els Deslé, *Arbeidsbemiddeling en/of werklozencontrole: het voorbeeld van de Gentse arbeidsbeurs (1891–1914)* (Brussels: Gemeentekrediet, 1991), 45.

66 *Nederlandsche Staats-Courant*, februari 12, 1851, 1.

67 Act number 35, Huwelijksregister 1851, 2 May 1851, Archief ambtenaar van de Burgerlijke Stand Breda, City Archives Breda, Breda, the Netherlands (accesible via www.openarch.nl).

68 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, May 21, 1853, 4; November 11, 1854, 4; December 15, 1855, 4; February 6, 1860, 5; March 19, 1865, 2; March 22, 1865, 4. For the Nieuwenhuijs family, see: *Nederland's Patriciaat. Vol. XXXII* (The Hague: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie en Heraldiek, 1946), 190–194.

69 Stamboeken Officieren 1814–1929, f° 18, Stamboeken der Officieren van de Koninklijke Landmacht en van de koloniale troepen in Nederland, 1814–1940, 375, National Archieves, The Hague, the Netherlands.

70 For a detailed overview, as noted in the *Pligten van den soldaat, korporaal, fourier, sergeant en sergeant-majoor*, published in: *Bijvoegsel tot het Staatsblad en Officieel Journal van het Koningrijk der Nederlanden (...), Tweede deel, vierde en laatste stuk* (Dordrecht: Blussé & van Braam,

His first enterprise ended in bankruptcy in 1856. He was fired as an accountant in another one. Later on, he had to combine his activities at Nieuwenhuijs with endeavours in the banking and ship equipment sectors.[71] Eventually, in 1876, a rather serious forgery affair led to his condemnation in court, a prison sentence of six years and the liquidation of his companies.[72] After his release, Boer relocated to Almelo (and to its vicinity later on), far from the western port city where his reputation was irretrievably spoilt, and tried to reinvent himself as a small entrepreneur, trading notably in breakfast biscuits and cattle insurance until an advanced age.[73]

The reason why Rotterdam was the first Dutch city where a modern type of *volksgaarkeuken* was launched seems to have been related to an important event in the city's medical history. Even if the sources are quite vague on Boer's actual inspiration, it is quite likely that he picked up the idea from a plea in favour of such a social catering service by a commission the city council had charged with day-to-day measures to cope with the severe cholera epidemic that raged in 1866 and that mainly affected the poorest parts of the population.[74] In November 1866, the commission (composed of the mayor, some city councilors and a team of physicians) presented a report suggesting preventive actions to physically strengthen the population and diminish potential infection. Based on English and German precedents, the commission suggested ameliorating the popular diet, specifically by creating *volksgaarkeukens*. This had to be done through private initiatives however, not by the public authorities themselves. Logically the commission welcomed Boer's subsequent initiative.[75]

But was Boer's cheap restaurant indeed a disinterested, purely philanthropic endeavour? He had surely been engaged in several charitable actions before[76]

1821), 1855 – 1857. See also: H.M.F. Landolt, *Militair woordenboek voor Nederlanders bewerkt* (Leiden: Sythoff, 1861), I, 157.

71 *Nederlandsche Staats-Courant*, January 16, 1853, 5; *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, January 12, 1856, 3; May 20, 1857, 3; June 15, 1857, 4; *Utrechtsch Provinciaal en Stedelijk dagblad*, March 12, 1866, 2; *Het bijblad van De Economist*, 1865, 402.

72 *Leidsch Dagblad*, November 22, 1876, 2; *Sumatra-Courant*, October 13, 1877, 3; *Nederlandsche Staats-Courant*, September 13, 1877, 5; *Weekblad van het Recht*, March 2, 1879, 2 – 3.

73 *Provinciale Overijsselsche en Zwolsche Courant*, December 24, 1891, 4; September 19, 1898, 10.

74 Bernard Woelderink, "De cholera-epidemie van 1866 in Rotterdam," *Rotterdams Jaarboekje* 7, no. 4 (1966): 302 – 318.

75 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, November 1866, 1, annex; *Verslag van de Commissie ter zake van de Aziatische Cholera te Rotterdam in het jaar 1867* (Rotterdam: van Waesberge & Zoon, 1868), 5.

76 Boer was behind food donations during earlier cholera epidemics and collected money for the *Werkinrigting voor Hulpbehoevende Blinden*. See: *Rotterdamsche Courant*, September 29, 1853,

and some observers of his catering experiment qualified him as "*een onderne-mend man en opregt menschenvriend*".[77] But we do have a suspicion nevertheless that Boer was eventually more of an "*ondernemend man*" than merely a "*men-schenvriend*", i.e. more of an entrepreneur than a philanthropist. First of all, his *volksgaarkeuken*, which started in September 1867, functioned under the aegis of his Nieuwenhuijsen firm, a formula that was completely at odds with the one taken by all the later kitchens.[78] As we have seen, this company was mainly selling dried vegetables, i.e. exactly what Boer used for the mass produc-tion of soups which, at least until the early 1870s, constituted 70 per cent of the food his kitchen sold.[79] We know as well that in that same time period, Boer was consulting with the military regarding large scale catering and tried to promote the use of (his?) dried vegetables in the army's soup kitchens.[80] Might this sug-gest that Boer was actually more concerned with profit than social reform? Boer prided himself with having more noble goals. In an early report on his catering activities, he suggested that he had even considered organising his *volksgaar-keuken* as a cooperative. There are no indications however that Boer was other-wise much engaged in this kind of social endeavour. It is not impossible that he knew of the initiative that had been studied for quite some time by the Brussels Freemasons and that was to be started some months after his own: indeed, Boer was a liberal and a Freemason.[81] But he does not seem to have pushed very hard in that direction.[82] A later tentative effort to raise capital for an enlarged "NV", a "*Naamloze Genootschap*", does not appear to have materialised either.[83] It is quite striking as well that the moderate profits Boer seems to have made from his social catering service did cause some gossip in town. Certainly not everyone

4; February 22, 1860, 4. He had also been decorated for his good deeds during the floods of 1861. See: *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's-Gravenhage*, September 25, 1861, 2.

77 *De hoofdartikelen der Twentsche Courant 1870* (Arnhem: Thieme, 1871), 16.

78 *Handelingen en Mededelingen –Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel*, 1874, 139. There seems to be one other exception to that rule: the popular restaurant Boer opened him-self in Delft until its take-over in 1870. See: *Delftsche Courant*, December 5, 1869, 4; April 10, 1870, 4.

79 *Handelingen en Mededelingen –Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel*, 1874, 139.

80 *Middelburgsche Courant*, March 8, 1868, 2; "Het menage beheer bij het 2de regiment infan-terie," *Militaire Spectator*, 1868, 620; *Militaire Spectator*, 1869, 440; Frederik N. Boer, *Open brief aan de WelEdel. Gestr. Heer M.W.C. Gori* (Rotterdam: Van Meurs & Stufkens, 1869), 7.

81 *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, January 17, 1868, 3; *Maçonniek Weekblad*, September 9, 1872, 3.

82 Frederik N. Boer, *Een Woord voor het Volk bij den naderenden winter. Tot de gegoeden dezer stad* (Rotterdam: Nijgh, 1869), 4.

83 *Nieuws van den Dag*, August 22, 1871, 2; *De Maasbode*, October 17, 1871, 3.

was as convinced of Boer's altruism as Boer was himself. For his detractors, the *volksgaarkeuken* must have been a mere commercial venture in philanthropic disguise.[84]

Whatever may have been the case, Boer did claim that with his new endeavour he wanted to improve the workingman's lot by offering cheap processed food. It is clear that at the start his *volksgaarkeuken* hardly differed from the old-style soup kitchens or "*soepkokerijen*". In the first weeks of its activities in autumn 1867, only soup was sold and the offer was limited to a take-away service. About a month later, however, a dining room was opened and the menu was gradually broadened in the following months. From the summer of 1868 onwards, six different plates were on offer permanently. An experiment with deliveries of the processed food to other sites seems to have been stopped quite rapidly due to lack of success.[85] But the central kitchen continued to work and eventually expanded spectacularly. In the first year of activity, more than 106,000 portions were sold. The second year this rose to 120,000 portions. But in the third year of activity (September 1869–September 1870), almost 320,000 portions were sold, i.e. the scale that was to be more or less maintained over the next years.[86]

It is thus no wonder that Boer's kitchen, whether genuinely philanthropic in purpose or not, raised quite some interest. A "*Modelgaarkeuken*" ('model restaurant') of his was shown during the 1868 Arnhem exposition of Dutch industry and art.[87] Boer's restaurant was included in the catalogue of the 1869 Amsterdam household infrastructure exhibition (but eventually not presented).[88] Documentation on its functioning was even included in the 1876 world fair in Philadelphia.[89] Many of the cheap restaurants that were created in the Netherlands in those years were directly and explicitly modelled on the one conceived by

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84 Frederik N. Boer, *Een Woord voor het Volk*, 6–7.

85 The opening of other dining halls in Rotterdam also met with an uneven response. See: *De Maasbode*, October 17, 1870, 3; July 23, 1872, 4.

86 These figures do not include the food offered for free (a limited amount), nor the meals sold to the military for about a month in 1868. See: Frederik N. Boer, *Een Woord voor het Volk*, 8; *De Economist*, 1870, Part II, 1087; *Handelingen en Mededelingen –Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel*, 1874, 139.

87 *Arnhemsche Courant*, March 31, 1870, 2.

88 *Internationale tentoonstelling van voorwerpen voor de huishouding en het bedrijf van den handwerksman. Amsterdam – 1869. Algemeene Catalogus* (Amsterdam: Schadd, 1869), 3; *Dagblad van Zuidholland en 's-Gravenhage*, August 31, 1869, 904; *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant*, September 14, 1869, 1.

89 *International Exhibition, Philadelphia 1876. Special Catalogue of the Netherland Section; Edited by authority of the Royal Commission of the Netherlands* (Amsterdam: van der Post, 1876), 69.

Figure 6.1: People's restaurant in Rotterdam, organised by Frederik Nysiemus Boer, ca. 1867 (picture included in Frederik N. Boer, *Open brief aan de WelEdel. Gestr. Heer M.W.C. Gori* [1869]).

Boer. He was very often invited as a consultant on the new ventures or was even included on the teams of founders or elected as a 'member-advisor' of management boards, as e. g. in The Hague.[90] Later he even consulted for the Ghent Freemasons when they were following the model for their own city.[91] By contrast to the individual Rotterdam pioneer, however, the subsequent *volksgaarkeukens* were always the product of a collective initiative of philanthropists who were usually related to older societies, which had some interest in this social catering service. As one might expect, one could often meet the *Maatschappij tot Nut van het Algemeen* ('Society for Public Welfare'), which was already well known for its educational activities and savings banks. The *Nut* was notably the creator of a restaurant that functioned in Amsterdam for more than a century.[92] The other one was the *Nederlandsche Maatschappij ter Bevordering van Nijverheid en Handel* ('Dutch Society for Promoting Industry and Trade'), a forum of industrialists and academics who were taking an active interest in social matters in the early

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90 Minute Book Direction 's-Gravenhaagsche Volksgaarkeukens, 27 December 1869, 3, Archief 's-Gravenhaagsche Volksgaarkeuken, City Archives of The Hague, The Hague, the Netherlands; *Statuten van de Naamloze Vennootschap 's-Gravenhaagsche Volksgaarkeukens* (S.l.: s.n., 1870), 1, 6.

91 Minute Book La Liberté 1866–1872, 1 and 21 December 1870, 1.0540, Moscou Records, Centre de Documentation Maçonnique; *Het Volksbelang*, February 25, 1871, 3.

92 I.H.v.E., "De volksgaarkeukens in Amsterdam," *Amstelodamum* (January 1961): 112.

1870s as well. This society was the the driving force behind the cheap restaurant in Utrecht notably.[93]

A very revealing example of a *volksgaarkeuken* following the examples of Rotterdam and The Hague is the people's restaurant in the university town of Leiden, particularly because of its origins in the hygienic movement of the day. Indeed, the idea behind it had matured in the *Vereeniging tot Verbetering van de Volksgezondheid te Leiden* ('Association for the Promotion of Public Health'), a hygienist society founded and led by university professor Johannes A. Boogaard (1823–1877), a Berlin educated physician.[94] Boogaard had succeeded in attracting a number of notable citizens to launch his initiative during a meeting in the building of the local department of the *Nut*.[95] The founding committee was composed of judges such as the kitchen's first president Fokko B. Coninck Liefsting (1827–1913), who later acceded to the country's highest court, lawyers like Coenraad Cock (1827–1908) or liberal academics like Joan T. Buys (1828–1893), people who were also often city councilors. A number of the founding members were employers with interesting profiles in social matters, such as Samuel Le Poole (1834–1891). Most of them were connected with all kinds of charities[96] and some of them, like Le Poole in particular, had distinguished themselves some years before by making a public request to the king in favour of limiting child labour.[97] The idea of opening a *volksgaarkeuken* had already been considered as early as March 1867, shortly after the foundation of the public health association.[98] But it took a while to mature. In 1868 and 1869, the people's restaurants of Rotterdam and The Hague were visited by Coninck Liefsting and then the project became more concrete.[99] A public appeal for

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93 *Handelingen en Mededelingen –Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel*, 1874, 139.

94 On Boogaard and his role in the hygienic movement with his Leiden society, see: Eduard S. Houwaart, *De hygiënisten. Artsen, staat & volksgezondheid in Nederland 1840–1890* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 1991), 328; L. Barendrecht, "De Vereniging tot Verbetering van de Volksgezondheid te Leiden, 1867–1900. Milieu-activisme en elitaire sociale bewogenheid in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw," *Jaarboek der Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis van Leiden en omstreken* 7 (1995): 103–127.

95 *Leydse Courant*, August 8, 1870, 1.

96 Interesting data on their networks in the charitable sector can be found on the fascinating site *Het Leidse Pluche:* https://www.oudleiden.nl/intro-pluche, last modified October 3, 2007.

97 Cor Smit, "Actie of onderzoek? De activiteiten van de Maatschappij ter bevordering van de Nijverheid en de Hervormde Diaconie tegen kinderarbeid," *Jaarboek der Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis van Leiden en omstreken* 6 (1994): 49–97.

98 *Leydse Courant*, December 20, 1871, 3.

99 *Verslagen van de Vereeniging tot Verbetering van de Volksgezondheid te Leiden II* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1870), 14.

potential investors was made in June 1870.[100] The economic restaurant opened in January 1871 in a converted warehouse on the Oude Rijn in the city center.[101]

The initiative was not a tremendous success however. Already by 1871, after just a couple of months of activity, a rumour was spreading that the *volksgaarkeuken* was to close down.[102] Apparently, the initiative had been met with hostility by some small shopkeepers who felt their trade threatened. Furthermore, the restaurant did not really seem to have a very good start with business figures remaining rather modest. After a while, the location of the restaurant was judged to be far from ideal, as the organisers found that they did not really reach their labour class target group, not even with the cheaper take-away offer.[103] Did workers have too little time to come to the cheap restaurant, as some presumed? Was it too far from their dwellings or places of employment? For some time the *volksgaarkeuken* experimented with a specially adapted food cart, transporting about 200 warmed-up portions, first to different locations in town, then only to a working class neighbourhood in the north of the city. But this did not really work out either. After about a year, the transport experiment was stopped.[104] Now and then, the press highlighted the rather weak accomplishments of the *Leidsche Volksgaarkeuken* in comparison to the others, in particular those in larger cities, but even the ones active in smaller towns like Groningen did a lot better. Those complaints seem to have come from stockholders who had invested in the kitchen's capital but only saw very moderate returns (in the more successful restaurants the dividend was usually about 5 per cent in Leiden; the by-laws had limited dividends to 4 per cent but sometimes only 2 per cent was paid out, sometimes even nothing at all).[105] The annual accounts showed that the number of portions sold was systematically decreasing. A fixed amount was purchased

100 *Leidsch Dagblad*, June 15, 1870, 1.

101 *Leydse Courant*, October 10, 1870, 3.

102 *Leydse Courant*, April 18, 1871, 2.

103 The take-away version of a portion that was consumed on site at 10 cts. was also sold two, then (because of the losses this price difference caused) one cent cheaper. See: Leidsche Volkskeuken. Tarief der Spijzen vanaf 1e April 1872, Folio Circulaires, LB 78041 and Notulen der bestuursvergaderingen, 18 March 1872, f° 21 v°; 10 January 1872, f° 20, 1, Archief NV Leidsche Volkskeuken (1870–1882), Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Leiden, the Netherlands.

104 Notulen der bestuursvergaderingen, 22 March 1871, ff° 15–16; 10 January 1872, f° 20; 7 February 1872, f° 20 v°, 1, Archief NV Leidsche Volkskeuken (1870–1882), Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken.

105 For a reader's letter on the matter, ironic as well as revealing, see: *Leydse Courant*, April 5, 1873, 3. For the dividends, see e. g.: *Reglement van de Naamloze Vennootschap De Leidsche Volkskeuken* (Leiden: Groen, 1870), 4; *Leidsch Dagblad*, April 2, 1878, 4; May 12, 1879, 3.

by a number of charitable organisations[106], but that did not suffice to keep the catering service running. Indeed, the charitable purchases never surpassed 6 per cent of the total business figures.[107] At the end of the decade, the managing board had to conclude that they were running a loss (it was observed for a first time in 1878) and eventually, in June 1881, a decision was made to close down the restaurant.[108]

The lack of success must surely have been related to the price level of the processed food on offer: however much the organisers had tried to keep it as low as possible, even those modest sums per portion were still relatively high for the poor labourers of Leiden[109]. The Coronel inquiry into the wages of the Leiden wool factory laborers some years before showed that the most modestly paid working men earned only 4.85 fl. a week, i.e. a daily budget of about 69 ct.: eating one portion of meat (15 ct.) and a portion of vegetables and potatoes (10 ct.) at noon immediately swallowed more than one third of that sum.[110] In this respect, it is quite revealing that at the beginning of the week, when there was still something left of Saturday's wages, the *volksgaarkeuken* sold considerably more than at the end of the week, when money was running out: sales volumes then systematically dropped by about one third.[111] Necessarily, labourers with families, even when earning more than the quoted example, were usually not all that keen to use these catering services. It is therefore more than likely that

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106 Notably the society *Uit Liefde*, a charitable society distributing food coupons to the poor, mainly in winter months, the *Elizabethvereeniging*, that distributed food among the indigent sick and weak, and the *Vereeniging voor Behoeftige Kraamvrouwen*, helping poor women with newly born children. See: Notulen der bestuursvergaderingen, 31 August 1871, f° 18; October 1871, f° 19; 20 June 1881, s.f°, 1, Archief NV Leidsche Volkskeuken (1870–1881), Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken; *Leydse Courant*, December 21, 1871, 3.

107 The percentage fluctuated between 4 per cent and 6 per cent: *Leydse Courant*, April 19, 1871, 2; December 21, 1871, 3.

108 Notulen der bestuursvergaderingen, 20 June 1881, s.f°, 1, Archief NV Leidsche Volkskeuken (1870–1881), Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken; Notulen der Vergadering, 25 July 1881, 2, Archief NV Leidsche Volkskeuken (1870–1881), Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken; *Leidsch Dagblad*, June 27, 1881, 3.

109 In a newspaper article promoting the start-up of the restaurant, Boogaard had shown himself to be well aware of the low wages in Leiden. See: *Leidsch Dagblad*, June 22, 1870, 2.

110 Quoted in: Annie Versprille, "Maatschappelijke zorg," in *Leiden 1860–1960*, eds. P.C.N. Baesjou e.a. (Leiden: Groen, 1962), 174. We compared it with the 1872 price list. See: Leidsche Volkskeuken. Tarief der Spijzen vanaf 1e April 1872, Folio Circulaires, LB 78041, Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken.

111 See: *Leydse Courant*, December 20, 1871, 3; December 21, 1871, 3; Voorlopig verslag van het bestuur der Leidsche Volkskeuken (6 December 1871), p. 3, 1, Archief Vereeniging tot Verbetering van de Volksgezondheid te Leiden, Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken.

the clientele came at least in part from other layers of society or, as can often be seen, was notably composed of bachelors. That raised its own kind of problems, because for this particular group, as one observer stated, the simple offer of processed food, however cheap and of good quality, was not all that attractive if it did not go along with an offer of lodging. Hence, the *volksgaarkeuken* found itself in rather unfavourable competition with the boarding houses of the city where both offers were combined. That proved to be decidedly more attractive to single men, even if the food was usually not better or was even worse. The result was that only a relatively limited amount of the bachelors in town effectively used the restaurant's services: contemporary observers did not fail to see this.[112] We did not find any traces of tied-in sales practices (the no-meals-purchased/no-lodgings-rented trick) as we did with the Charleroi case in Belgium, but it is nevertheless quite revealing that here again the boarding houses were able to push the people's restaurants aside, at least in smaller towns.

Durch das Fressen kommt die Moral?

All of this food reform very much presents itself, quite literally, as a mere bread-and-butter affair. In first instance it obviously was, whatever the motivation of the organising networks may have been: simply improving poor and monotonous working class diets, protecting public health at large by avoiding physical weakness in the lower classes, and, at least for some, helping to keep wages low by procuring cheap food. But it would be very reductive to only see this part of the matter. In both countries, the social reformers organising these *fourneaux économiques* or *volksgaarkeukens* also considered their institutions to be making a contribution to the global elevation of the proletariat, if only because it was impossible to improve oneself intellectually on an empty stomach. The initiators of e.g. the Charleroi *fourneaux économiques* were quite explicit about it: "One should not forget that material wellbeing engenders the moral good, and that all that tends to better the physical condition of the worker tends alike and as a way of consequence to elevate his moral and social condition".[113] In this respect, putting an end to the price increases of food for the working man was the first issue to tackle. The initiators of the *Leidsche Volksgaarkeuken* were

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112 *Leidsch Dagblad*, November 27, 1876, 1.
113 *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 4, 1886, 3; October 4, 1888, 2. At the foundation meeting in Charleroi, food was identified as the first of the human needs, before clothing and housing. See: *Gazette de Charlerloi*, August 10, 1886, 2.

just as explicit about that priority of good food before any attempt could be made at morally uplifting these people: "The numerous tentatives to raise the people intellectually and morally, however much we esteem them, all too often fail when healthy food lacks." They concluded that, "before the brain, it is the body that must be fed".[114] But no matter whether adequate food was a priority, they did not omit integrating their food catering services in a broader perspective regarding the moral and intellectual elevation of the poor man.

This comes as no surprise. Social reformers did not usually limit their engagements to one particular charitable pastime, but integrated various engagements with a coherent view of society and the ways that the disruptions caused by modern capitalism had to be mended. If a panacea for 'the social question' had to be found, it was to be of a double nature, i.e. association and education. As we noticed when reconstructing a number of the restaurant's foundation histories, the organisers of this social catering were often deeply implied in diverse pedagogical endeavours. For them, the people's restaurants, as a matter of course, would have to be learning environments too. The learning content differed somewhat between the north and the south, the latter being keener on spreading the cooperative idea than the former, but for the rest things were quite comparable. That was certainly the case for the more comprehensive social objectives linked to all of these endeavours. In both cases, a fundamental shift had taken place with regard to the target group these modern forms of social catering were aiming at. By contrast to e.g. old style soup kitchens which were mainly directed towards the needy (only a small percentage of their products were sold to the non-assisted), the *fourneaux* wanted to sell meals to solvent labourers (hence it was now the donated portions that were at the margins of the system).[115]

As reflected in the words of Frederik N. Boer, the target of social catering should be caught under the concept of "decent poverty", or "*fatsoenlijke armoede*" in Dutch.[116] Clearly, this was not a concept aimed at paupers of any kind, but on the contrary at working class people with a regular income, however modest. Both groups decidedly carried a very different social potential. An interesting example of this new way of focusing on the labouring poor, and more or less dropping the paupers as the core of their concerns, can be found in the group of Freemasons that would create the first *fourneaux* in Ghent. They clearly opted out of focusing on the indigent, notably with regard to a social housing

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114 *Leidsch Dagblad*, June 15, 1870, 1.

115 See a forthcoming article by Peter Scholliers and Jeffrey Tyssens in a book on food distribution in Belgium in the past and present.

116 Boer, *Een Woord voor het Volk*, 12.

project in the city, where they favoured property acquisition by the working class only, or even more specifically by those one could define as labour aristocracy:

> If one wants to make serious advances in spreading progress among the popular classes, one must start to convene, not the most needy, but quite to the contrary those workers who have already distinguished themselves from the masses by their intelligence, their morality, their habits of order and thrift [...] that fraction of the popular class so worth of interest and sympathy who makes the transition from the proletariat to the bourgeoisie.[117]

The audience that was to find a kind of learning environment within these new restaurants was surely to be more encompassing than merely this elite group, but still it was definitely only labourers and not the needy that could acquire moral and organisational skills in these institutions:

> [H]ere we have an occasion to teach to our labourers the mechanisms of cooperative societies, by means of an example that is rich in its results and easy to appreciate. They will see there what thrift can do for the benefit of families. They will get convinced that it is essential for them to take care of their own interests, and they will appreciate more than today how urgent it is for them to acquire the instruction without which it will be impossible for them, not only to run their own business, but even to understand why it is useful for them.[118]

Indeed for paupers, with no proper income available, such a program would simply be inconceivable. In a similar vein, the Brussels organisers considered their experiment to be a learning experience as such, where the lodges were to make the first step and then, by means of the practical example that had been set, the working classes could learn to deal with the principle of cooperative association.[119] External observers also stressed just this: a mere charity would be morally undermining, it was even rejected as an "*élément perturbateur*", i.e. a nuisance, but the sustained experience of the cooperative formula would permanently develop the "moral and intellectual faculties of its participants".[120] If in the Netherlands this cooperative objective was as good as absent, the reasoning was not all that different in the end. Here as well, notably in the words of the Leiden team, the modern *volksgaarkeuken* would appeal to a "sane sense of honour" of the "independent working man", precisely because

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117 *La Flandre*, September 10, 1869, 2.

118 *La Flandre*, September 10, 1869, 2; René Vermeir & Jeffrey Tyssens, *Vrijmetselarij en vooruitgang. De Gentse progressistenloge La Liberté (1866–1966)* (Brussels: ASP, 2016), 148.

119 *Société coopérative alimentaire Les Atelier Réunis. Première assemblée générale. Séance du 17 janvier 1869* (Brussels: Bols-Wittouck, 1869), 7.

120 *L'Économiste Belge*, April 4, 1868, 77

the charitable approach was not taken.[121] It was quite revealing to what extent the Dutch press could be explicit about the fundamental difference between the new *volksgaarkeukens* and the old-style *soepinrichtingen* or 'soup kitchens': the former were meant for labourers who wanted to acquire good and affordable food for cash, whereas the latter catered for the indigent who obtained its services for free, with all the moral considerations that were to be added to that fundamental distinction.[122]

But the distinction was not always that clear. Sometimes practices of the old soup kitchens were continued alongside the more modern 'food-for-cash'-approach. In Leiden, for example, food tickets for the *volksgaarkeuken* were put on sale in the city's bookshops, allowing the well-to-do to purchase them and hand them to the indigent of their choice.[123] In Charleroi, about 15 years later, the local liberals also had a vision that put the catering facility in a kind of symbiotic relation with existing charities, rather than acting as a competitor or a full-fledged alternative to it:

> [T]his economical institution can strongly help charity, but it is not exclusively charitable. Not everybody accepts alms, and among those who are hungry some prefer suffering to tending their hand. It is precisely to handle this legitimate susceptibility that one has thought to alleviate misery without imposing shame, as one only accepts an obol reduced to the strict minimum. This will not stop those who want to do charity to the poor who do not possess that obol, to cover their charity in the forms of tickets to consume at the establishment.[124]

In any case, the format was presumed to avoid any diminishment of the beneficiary's dignity and to have a permanent effect comparable with a rise in wages.[125] The pedagogical features of the *fourneaux économiques* themselves had already been stressed in the Grenoble restaurant which had proved so much of an inspiration. Indeed, Taulier's book, which was some kind of a manual for the Brussels initiative, was very explicit on the matter. For Taulier, "the alimentary association [was] a school of decency, of discipline, of respect by all for all, by everyone for him/herself." Taulier stressed the good order and calm reigning at the ticket selling counter and in the dining rooms and pointed at a kind of mutual education of decent behaviour, with table manners and the like, that grew almost

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121 *Leidsch Dagblad,* June 15, 1870, 1.

122 *Arnhemsche Courant*, August 3, 1870, 3.

123 Notulen der bestuursvergaderingen, 31 August 1871, f° 19, 1, Archief NV Leidsche Volkskeuken (1870 – 1881), Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken.

124 *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 9, 1886, 2.

125 *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 8, 1886, 1.

spontaneously from the everyday functioning of the restaurants: "How much a man is elevated in his own eyes by this exchange of conveniences which he himself practices and of which he is the object".[126] Something similar was stated by Léon d'Andrimont, who had observed the earliest Belgian restaurants for the book on working class institutions quoted previously:

> Through the contact with a neighbour who sometimes is better educated than oneself, one cares to imitate him; a point of honour is at stake and one takes care to arrive gradually at a better demeanour. It would be most daring if one were to permit oneself to hurt one's neighbour's feelings by inconvenient words or gestures! The view of this large dining hall at the time of the main meal is really surprising: one would think oneself in a good bourgeois home.[127]

The moral properties of the day-to-day functioning of the *fourneaux* were obviously echoed in the rules of conduct. In Grenoble, one of the striking features was the presence of a strictly separated dining room for women or families.[128] Such a gender line was not to be found in the by-laws of the Belgian and Dutch examples, but it does however seem that not much of a female clientele was expected in the dining facilities: interestingly, when women were mentioned, it was usually when referring to the take-away options.[129] These were usually presented as proof that these social catering facilities were not a threat to family cohesion.[130] Whether or not that was the case, the dining halls all established strict guidelines for behaviour, limiting drinking, sometimes also prohibiting smoking or loud conversation.[131] Even the decoration of the dining rooms could support moralising and instructional aims. In Brussels, the 1868 facility of the *Atelier Réunis* had been furnished by François Wilbrandt (1824– 1873), the well-known Brussels opera decorator, with that specific goal: one wall was covered with "maxims of family morals"; a second one with scenes from Belgian history; a third one with images of caring for domestic animals.[132]

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126 Taulier, *Le vrai livre du people*, 249.
127 d'Andrimont, *Des institutions et des associations ouvrières*, 301.
128 Taulier, *Le vrai livre du people*, 247.
129 *Provinciale Drentsche en Asser Courant*, October 6, 1871, 2.
130 A Charleroi newspaper stated it as follows: "the institution of the economical kitchens has the simple goal of helping the working man and not to draw him out of his house and destroy the spirit of the family". See: *Gazette de Charleroi*, August 10, 1886, 2.
131 *Société coopérative alimentaire Les Atelier Réunis. Première assemblée générale*, 10, 24–25; Uittreksel uit het Huishoudelijk Reglement voor de Volksgaarkeuken te Groningen, 157, Archief Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nijverheid en Handel – Departement Deventer, Historisch Centrum Overijssel, Deventer, the Netherlands.
132 *Société coopérative alimentaire Les Atelier Réunis. Première assemblée générale*, 10.

On top of this, as we have already suggested, these social catering facilities operated in networks with educational institutions. In Amsterdam, the *Nut*-related people's restaurant served as a place to register for the evening courses the society offered.[133] Boer's first restaurant in Rotterdam had even attached a reading room to its dining facility. It offered several dailies (notably the liberal *Het Vaderland* and the *Rotterdamsche Courant*), as well as some periodicals and books.[134]

Interestingly, these social reformers were not only focused on what their form of social catering could teach the working classes, but also on the educational value of the kitchens' products themselves. One of the organisers of the *fourneaux économiques* in Ghent in the early 1890s, Georges Waelbroeck (1851–1917), a liberal attorney who served as the secretary of the city's hospices, was quite explicit about this point: "First of all, we ought to take care of his [the working man's] 'culinary education': the poor do not know how to eat".[135] It was a motive one could observe in several of our cases. Already with the first restaurant in Rotterdam, Boer remarked that his first clients were creatures of habit and stated that he tried to make their diets more diverse: "At first there was a strong drive towards eating potatoes and stew. Gradually then, by means of short comments and some reasoning, I succeeded to have much more pea soup consumed, haricots, rice soup and buttermilk porridge, than potatoes".[136] In Leiden too, the organisers considered the people's kitchen to be an experimental way of getting the working man "acquainted with healthy and sufficient food".[137] Just as Boer had done for Rotterdam, the Leiden organisers made some observations regarding the non-familiarity of their customers with particular soups, especially pea and bean soups, both of them being made with at least some meat and hence being a problem for the average working class family budget.[138] Interestingly, the gradual development of sound food habits among the labourers would eventually lead them to satisfy their own and their family's real needs "with abandonment of useless expenditures".[139] Even if it was not always explained what these superfluous expenses actually were, everybody must have known that hard liquor was inferred. Indeed, on other occasions, the food

133 *Algemeen Handelsblad*, September 29, 1871, 4.

134 Boer, *Een Woord voor het Volk*, 13.

135 *Société Libérale pour l'Étude des Sciences et des Œuvres Sociales – Bulletin n° 16*, 1892, 40.

136 Boer, *Een Woord voor het Volk*, 5.

137 *Leidsch Dagblad*, June 15, 1870, 1.

138 *Leydse Courant*, April 18, 1871, 2. Little had changed about 20 years later. See: Margreet van Es, "Etenstijds! Voedselconsumptie onder Leidse arbeidersrond 1890," *Jaarboek der Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis van Leiden en omstreken* 19–20 (2007–2008): 127–155.

139 *Leidsch Dagblad*, June 15, 1870, 1.

culture of the *fourneaux économiques* was explicitly presented as an alternative for the drinking joints where labourers were said to end up through lack of decent food. The *volksgaarkeukens* were even presented as more useful than the "*afschaffings-genootschappen*", i.e. the 'tee total' societies.[140]

Conclusion

Food had been an important component of traditional forms of charity. Feeding the indigent functioned by donating food, usually on an occasional or a seasonal basis. These donations were unrelated to the identification of a 'social question', nor to any social and economic analysis that could lead to a hypothetical solution of the latter. This was clearly not the perspective behind the modern *fourneaux économiques*, where the initiators wanted to offer more structural ways of dealing with food insufficiency, not for the indigent however but for solvent workers. Their philanthropic ventures were usually related to at least some kind of analysis of the ills of capitalist society, whether from a social or a hygienic point of view, for which structural and continuous provision of cheap food had to be part of any solution. Incentives for the labouring classes to opt for self-help formulas were seen as effective gateways towards a de-proletarisation of the latter, a perspective that was absent for the indigent. This fitted well with the citizenship model of "productive virtue"[141], where productive labourers could be integrated in large, socially useful middling orders, but not the idle and unproductive underclass. For them, traditional charity still had to do. But that was not the core business of the new-style catering facilities we have studied here.

The groups of social reformers in the Low Countries that focused on changing and ameliorating the eating habits of the working man were usually liberal in outlook, but not exclusively, at least not in the north. By contrast to the south, where the liberal left wing of the *progressistes* dominated the scene, the contribution of northern social liberalism was weaker as well. This surely explains alot of the differences with regard to the cooperative option: this was *the* big objective in the south, even if it only succeeded marginally to materialise, whereas the *volksgaarkeukens* in the north simply restricted it to the form of the *Naamloze*

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140 *Provinciale Drentsche en Asser Courant*, October 6, 1871, 2.

141 Siep Stuurman, "Le libéralisme comme invention historique," *Les libéralismes, la théorie politique et l'histoire*, ed. Siep Stuurman (Amsterdam: University Press, 1994), 28; S. Stuurman, *Wacht op onze daden. Het liberalisme en de vernieuwing van de Nederlandse staat* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1992), 370 – 371.

Genootschap, i.e. ordinary stock companies with shares bought by the better-off. This echoes more global observations of the somewhat reduced popularity of co-operative ideals in the north as compared to the south.[142] But this difference should not be overstated though. In the north as well as in the south, perspectives were very much comparable with regard to the uplifting potential of these low price dining halls or their take-away services: no moral or intellectual development of the labourers would be possible if they were not decently fed and furthermore an educational added value was to be expected from the catering activity in itself. Indeed, better eating habits and perhaps even better table manners and the like might be expected to spread by dint of its day-to-day activities.

Whether this actually worked out as planned, is another matter altogether. Globally, one might say that the image is rather ambivalent. Some of these ventures lasted for quite some time and could at least develop some outreach, but as far as limited sources permit any conclusions, it does seem that the original target group was only partly reached. Often, the price reductions the popular restaurants could realise through the scale of their food processing did not seem really sufficient to cater for low salaries. Hence, for working men with a family burden, certainly when they belonged to labouring subgroups with lower wages, social catering facilities remained relatively expensive. Consequently, in as far as the restaurants attracted a working class clientele, it must largely have been bachelors. But as we have seen, in the north as well as in the south, this could be a serious liability for these los price dining halls: in at least one of the cases we studied, the boarding house sector could get the upper hand and eventually wreck these new competing caterers. What then made for the sustainability of some of the others that lasted for several decades? They usually operated in larger cities, like Brussels or Amsterdam, where competition functioned in a very different configuration: there were larger potential groups of consumers, more qualified workers with better wages and, perhaps even more importantly, lower middle class groups, such as employees of all kinds or minor civil servants, who could also be attracted by the daily offer of cheap meals.[143] At least in the Brussels case, it also appears that, on top of this other composition of the clientele, systematic meal purchases by local authorities (for their schools, for instance) helped to guarantee sufficient sales figures in the long run.

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142 Stefan Dudink, *Deugdzaam liberalisme. Sociaal-liberalisme in Nederland 1870–1901* (Amsterdam: Stichting IISG, 1997), 90–96.
143 In one of the rare evaluations of the clientele, Boer noticed that in Rotterdam this was precisely what happened. See: Boer, *Een Woord voor het Volk*, 9.

Despite this, some questions can be raised about the realities of the moral uplift or the educational potential of these ventures, however explicitly and ambitiously the social reformers had attached these to their institutions. It seems quite likely that the implementation of the moral uplift schemes within the dining halls was largely a matter of wishful thinking or would prove to be, when other parts of their audience are looked at, a self-fulfilling prophecy. Obviously, it is near impossible to measure the instructional impact of these low price dining halls upon their customers. Even if the latter belonged to the working classes, ate their soups without slurping or making any noisy conversation between walls covered with all sorts of wisdom and edifying history lessons, that did not imply that they were gradually becoming the *petit bourgeois* many social reformers had in mind. On the other hand, it is quite likely that more than just a small part of the customers already belonged to petty bourgeois groups, who were long since supposed to carry with them the habitus these *volksgaarkeukens* and *fourneaux économiques* were supposed to foster.

Part III **Transnational Connections and Circulations**

Carmen Van Praet

7 The Opposite of Dante's Hell? The Transfer of Ideas for Social Housing at International Congresses in the 1850s– 1860s*

In 1855 two Belgian civil servants – Edouard Ducpétiaux (1804–1868) and Auguste Visschers (1804–1874) – published an influential report in which they registered information about 'social housing'. Assigned by the Belgian *Commission Permanente des Sociétés de Secours Mutuels* ('Permanent Commission of Benefit Societies'), they examined and compared several housing schemes in different European cities. They concluded that the act of building "healthy, convenient and economic houses" was one of the most powerful ways to solve the social question and to aid the working classes.[1] The issue of housing and hygiene problems of workmen in European cities in the 19th century was closely linked to expertise in health policy. With the advent of industrialisation, the question of developing adequate housing for the emergent working classes became more pressing than before. Moreover, the problem of unhygienic houses in industrial cities did not stop at the borders of a particular nation-state, sometimes literally, as pandemic diseases spread out transnationally. Historiography about social policy in general and social housing in particular, has often focused on individual cases because of the different pace of industrial and urban development, and is thus dominated by national perspectives.[2] However, transnational influences

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1 Edouard Ducpétiaux and Auguste Visschers, *Rapport de la commission permanente des sociétés de secours mutuels sur les combinaisons ayant pour but de faciliter aux ouvriers l'acquisition d'habitations convenables* (Brussels: Lesigne, 1855), 43.

2 See: John Burnett, *A Social History of Housing, 1815–1970* (London: Methuen, 1980); Myriam Cassiers, *Bruxelles, 150 ans de logements ouvriers et sociaux* (Brussels: Dire, 1989); Fabienne Chevallier, *Le Paris moderne: histoire des politiques d'hygiène, 1855–1898* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010); Jean-Pierre Flamand, *Loger le peuple: essai sur l'histoire du logement social en France* (Paris: La Découverte, 1989); Roger-Henri, *Les origines du logement social en France* (Paris: Les editions ouvrières, 1967); Geneviève Heller, *'Propre en ordre': habitation et vie domestique 1850–1930: l'exemple vaudois* (Lausanne: Editions d'en-bas, 1979); Colette Huberty, Marijcke Hoflack and Philippe Moureaux, *100 ans de logement social à Molenbeek: bilan et perspecives d'avenir* (Brussels: Le logement molenbeekois, 2000); Luc Joos, Guido Deseyn, Jo

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also played a vital role in the development of social policy.[3] Moreover, Aiqun Hu and Patrick Manning contend that international forces conveyed basic ideas while national forces determined the timing and the specifics of the adoption of international models.[4] Was this also the case for early housing models in the mid 19th century?

Desmedt and Marie-Louise Bisschops, *Volkshuisvesting in Gent. Tentoonstelling naar aanleiding van 80 jaar Gentse maatschappij voor huisvesting* (Ghent: Stad Gent, 1984); Joseph Melling, ed., *Housing, Social Policy and the State* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Richard Plunz, *A History of Housing in New York City: Dwelling Type and Social Change in the American Metropolis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); Richard Rodger, *Housing in Urban Britain, 1780–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Marcel Smets, *De ontwikkeling van de tuinwijkgedachte in België: een overzicht van de Belgische volkswoningbouw in de periode van 1830 tot 1930* (Brussels: Mardaga, 1977); Christianne Smit, "Symbols and Images of the Amsterdam Housing Issue," in Ilja Van den Broek, Christianne Smit, Dirk Jan Wolffram, eds., *Imagination and Commitment. Representations of the Social Question* (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 145–162; Jean-Marc Stébé, *Le logement social en France (1789 à nos jours)* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998); John Nelson Tarn, *Working-class Housing in 19th-century Britain* (London: Lund Humphries for Architectural Association, 1971); Annelies Tollet and Piet Janssens, *Vilvoorde City, meer bepaald in de Far-West: sociale huisvesting* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009); Auke van der Woud, *Koninkrijk vol sloppen: achterbuurten en vuil in de negentiende* eeuw (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2010); Anthony S. Wohl, *The Eternal Slum: Housing and Social policy in Victorian* London (London: Arnold, 1977); Gwendolyn Wright, *Building the Dream: A Social History of Housing in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983).

3 See: Christopher Alain Bayly, Sven Beckert, Matthew Connely, Isabek Hofmeyr, Wendy Kozol and Patricia Seed, "AHR Conversation; On Transnational history," *American Historical Review* 111, no. 5 (2006): 1440–1464; Patricia Clavin, "Time, Manner, Place: Writing Modern European History in Global, Transnational and International Contexts," *European History Quarterly*, eds. Laurence Cole, Philipp Ther and Lucy Riall, 40, no. 4 (2010): 624–640; Christoph Conrad, "Social Policy History after the Transnational Turn," in *Beyond Welfare State Models: Transnational Historical Perspectives on Social Policy*, eds. Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2011), 218–240; Klaus Kiran Patel, "Transnational History," in European History Online, last modified 3 December, 2010, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/theories-and-methods/transnational-history/klaus-kiran-patel-transnational-history; Hugh Heclo, *Modern Social Politics in Britain and Sweden: From Relief to Income Maintenance* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1974); Akira Iriye, "The Transnational Turn," *Diplomatic History* 31, no. 3 (2007): 373–376; Wolfram Kaiser, "Transnational Mobilization and Cultural Representation: Political Transfer in an Age of Proto-Globalization, Democratization and Nationalism (1848–1914)," *European Review of History* 12, no. 2 (2005): 403–424; Daniel T. Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Pierre-Yves Saunier, "Les regimes circulatoires du domaine social 1800–1940: projets et ingénierie de la convergence et de la différence," *Genèses* 71, no. 2 (2008): 4–25; Ian Tyrell, "Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History: Theory and Practice," *Journal of Global History* 4, no. 3 (2009): 453–474.

4 Aiqun Hu and Patrick Manning, "The Global Social Insurance Movement since the 1880s," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 1 (2010): 125–148.

Historiography generally considers two European capitals – London and Berlin – as trendsetters in the housing question since the 1860s.[5] These German and English attempts to resolve deficiencies in the housing of the poorer classes – e. g. the philanthropic housing enterprises of Sir Sydney Waterlow (1822 – 1906), George Peabody (1795 – 1869), Octavia Hill (1838 – 1912) or Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt (1843 – 1878) – are considered as the 19th-century 'philanthropic blueprints' for social housing.[6] This chapter, however, will focus on a small French city: Mulhouse in Alsace, where as early as 1853 a house-building association was founded which constructed a "*cité ouvrière*" (i. e. 'working class neighbourhood'). I will argue that this concrete example of Mulhouse spread transnationally as the best model to solve the housing problem on social international congresses in Europe during the second part of the 19th century. How did this model fit into the political and moral agenda of a group called 'hygienists', and how did it contribute to the conceptualisation and crystallisation of social policy? Can we argue that the circulation of ideas on housing schemes lay at the very basis of the development of social housing as a policy?[7] Some scholars have stated that "ideational processes" help construct the social problems most social policies are designed to address.[8] Moreover, these authors showed how ideas helped actors to define their interest and how they also shaped the understandings that underpin political action.

I will focus on the transnational circulation of the Mulhouse-model across borders by examining several archival sources: international newspapers, brochures, bulletins, reports of international congresses, administrative documents and the correspondence of the housing association. Firstly, I will outline the proliferation of social international congresses. In the second part of this chapter, I will examine the sources of inspiration of the Mulhousian entrepreneurs, especially the first Great Exhibition in London (1851) as a platform for the exchange of ideas. After that, I will look at the particularities of the Mulhouse model put

5 Van der Woud, *Koninkrijk vol sloppen*, 26.
6 Thomas Adam, "Philanthropy and the Shaping of Social Distinctions in Nineteenth-Century U.S., Canadian, and German Cities," in *Philanthropy, Patronage and Civil Society: Experiences from Germany, Great Britain and North America*, ed. Thomas Adam (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 18.
7 See: Adrienne Chambon, Marjorie Johnstone and Stefan Köngeter, "The Circulation of Knowledge and Practices across National borders in the Early Twentieth Century: A Focus on Social Reform Organisations," *European Journal of Social Work* 18, no. 4 (2015): 495 – 510.
8 Jal Mehta, "From 'Whether' to 'How'. The Varied Roles of Ideas in Politics," in *Ideas and Politics in Social Science Research*, eds. Daniel Béland and Robert Henry Cox (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 23 – 46; Daniel Béland and Mitchell A. Orenstein, "International Organizations as Policy Actors: An Ideational Approach," *Global Social Policy* 13, no. 2 (2013): 125 – 143.

forward by an international network of experts or 'hygienists'. In the final part of this chapter, I will focus on the transfer and local adaptation of the Mulhouse *cité ouvrière* by several Belgian cities. Convergences and divergences will be taken into account and I will consider the different factors that influenced the local transformations, ranging from personal choice to political situation and socio-economic circumstances.

Proliferation of social international congresses

With the advent of industrialisation, the question of developing adequate housing for the emergent working classes was a topical subject. In the 1840s, a series of reports of doctors from different countries revealed the dismal living conditions of the working class (e.g. Louis Villermé (1782–1863) for France, J. Heyman and Daniel Mareska (1803–1858) for Belgium, and Edwin Chadwick (1800–1890) for England). The abominable hygiene, the "moral degeneration" and health consequences prevalent in the slums were very much alike in every industrialising metropolis. It is not coincidental that the number of international congresses on hygiene and social topics expanded substantially in the course of the 19th century.[9] The topic of social housing was also tackled on an international scale by a group of young progressive doctors, labeled as 'hygienists'. They developed 'social medicines' to combat the new, imperceptible threats to society caused by industrialisation and urbanisation, e.g. industrial fumes, food adulteration, waterborne diseases and soil contamination.[10] In their opinion, the changing conditions made medical expertise vital.[11] This group of doctors called for reforms, first in medical science, then in society as a whole. They turned their attention to the natural environment and its possible connection with individual pathological problems.[12] Moreover, they feared that the poor environmental conditions could lead to the "degeneration" of mankind.[13] The hygienists advocated

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9 Nico Randeraad and Chris Leonards, "Transnational Experts in Social Reform, 1840–1880," *International Review of Social History 55* (2010): 215–239.

10 Karel Velle, "Medikalisering in België in Historisch Perspectief: een inleiding," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 64, no. 2 (1986): 266; Christophe Verbruggen, *Stank bederft onze eetwaren. De reacties op industriële milieuhinder in het 19de-eeuwse Gent* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2002), 6.

11 Jean-Baptiste Fressoz, "Beck Back in the 19th Century. Towards a Genealogy of Risk Society," *History and Technology* 23, no. 4 (2007): 342.

12 John K. Walton, *Histories of Tourism. Representation, Identity and Conflict* (Frankfurt: Channel View Publications, 2005), 91.

13 See Jo Tollebeek, Liesbet Nys and Henk de Smaele, eds., *De Zieke natie: over de medicalisering van de samenleving 1860–1914* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 2002).

better public health and recommended "well-ventilated, bright houses, healthy sewer systems and waterworks".[14] During the second half of the 19th century, hygiene was a leading force that was ready to take charge of everything, and the question of adequate housing was a vital part of it.[15] However, public health and social housing were not yet institutionalised in this period.[16] Moreover, the two concepts crystallised during discussions on the local, the national and even on the international level. It was not a coincidence that when 'the social question' was abundantly discussed at the local and national levels (in medical associations and public health boards), the number of international congresses on these topics expanded substantially as well. These international congresses increasingly offered the opportunity to stage, debate and interchange ideas about social challenges more efficiently.[17]

The earliest international congresses almost exclusively considered peaceful settlements of international conflicts. Gradually, from the 1850s onwards, international "Welfare", "Sanitary" and "Social Sciences" congresses, together with international congresses on other themes (e.g. prison reform, prostitution, education, alcoholism, slavery, political economy and statistics) outshined peace conferences. Although these conferences treated a broad array of themes, there were entanglements between them, as they were all linked to the social question.[18] The multiplication of international congresses must be placed within the trend of 'scientification' of the society during the second half of the 19th century. International gatherings were a manifestation of the construction of several fields of expert knowledge.[19] Whereas the international congresses in the 1850 – 1860s discussed a multitude of topics, the congresses in the 1870s-1880s became more specialised. The congresses organised by the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales* from 1862 to 1865 can be quoted as an example of the first type of comprehensive congresses. These international

14 Van der Woud, *Koninkrijk vol sloppen*, 71.

15 Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), 23.

16 Eddy S. Houwaart, *De hygiënisten: artsen, staat & volksgezondheid in Nederland 1840 – 1890* (Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij, 1991).

17 Stijn Van de Perre, "These Mutual Lessons of Nation to Nation. The International Philantropic Congresses of 1856, 1857 and 1862," *Conference paper Voluntary Action History Society Liverpool*, 2008, 1, https://www.canonsociaalwerk.eu/1849_Ducpetiaux/philantropische_congressen.pdf.

18 Jasmien van Daele & Christian Müller, "Peaks of Internationalism in Social Engineering: A Transnational History of International Social Reform Associations and Belgian agency, 1860 – 1925," *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire* 90, no. 4 (2012): 1300.

19 Peter M. Haas, "Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination," *International Organization* 46, no. 1 (1992): 1.

congresses promoted an encyclopedic approach to a holistic social reform project.[20] Also, since 1856 International Welfare Congresses were organised that dealt with a variety of topics – e. g. alcohol restrictions, charitable and philanthropic institutions, saving banks, sanitary ameliorations, public assistance, workman's associations, cooperative associations and house building associations. The adherents of the comprehensive congresses were doctors, lawyers, architects, manufacturers, engineers, academics, politicians, economists and owners or, in sum, a large group of people worried about, occupied by, and/or engaged with the improvement of the 'fate' of the workingman. From the late 1860s more specialised international congresses were organised, such as the International Medical Congresses. During these gatherings, different medical branches – ranging from surgery, anatomy and physiology to gynecology, obstetrics, ophthalmic sciences, dermatology, psychiatry and even homeopathy – were discussed and formed. Every part of the human body became an object of study. Not surprisingly, the list of members of the International Medical Congresses was almost exclusively composed of medical academics and doctors.

Moreover, society as a whole became itself became an object of study during the second part of the 19th century.[21] Besides the purely scientific International Medical Congresses, other social congresses were organised, in which the medical knowledge and discourse offered a 'solution to the social question'. Between 1876 and 1884, a conference aiming specifically at hygiene questions took place every two years. These sanitary and welfare congresses formed a transnational platform and a laboratory for hygienists. Unlike the exclusively scientific International Medical Congresses, the International Hygienic Congresses in the 1870s-1880s also hosted other actors. Hygienists, sanitary reformers and physicians gathered with lawyers, architects, civil engineers, economists and industrials to deal with the unhygienic conditions in the growing European cities. Their weapon of choice was not a microscope; it was statistics. They wanted to 'count' the world, in order to 'cure' it.[22] Statistics uncovered the causal relation

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20 Carmen Van Praet and Christophe Verbruggen, "'Soldiers for a joint cause': A Relational Perspective on Local and International Educational Leagues and Associations in the 1860s," *BMGN, Low Countries Historical Review* 130, no. 1 (2015): 12. For the importance of these conferences, see also: chapters 1, 3, 6 and 7 of this volume.

21 Tollebeek, Nys and de Smaele, *De Zieke natie*.

22 Nico Randeraad, *Het onberekenbare Europa. Macht en getal in de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 2006); Velle, "Medikalisering in België," 265; Dirk Jan Wolffram, "Deftige hervormers. Internationale congressen van statistici en hygiënisten in de 19e eeuw," in *Identiteitspolitiek. Media en de constructie van gemeenschapsgevoel*, eds. Marcel Broersma, Joop W. Koopmans (Hilversum: Velden, 2010), 113. For the growing role of statistics in the care for children, see: chapter 2 of this volume.

between cholera and unhealthy living conditions. Moreover, the predictable pattern of systemic observations contributed to the hygienists' belief that human society could be controlled and managed.[23] During these international gatherings, participants formulated what they saw as "universal knowledge about the social question" and distributed it by means of congress reports, brochures, essays and journals.[24] The conferees were influenced by other initiatives as they looked across their national borders for inspiration. The interchange of ideas and practices and the successful foreign examples were used as a lever to put pressure on policymakers at home. The international social congresses in the second half of the 19th century thus formed laboratories for social ideas.[25] But they were also hubs in a diffuse and unstructured network of hygienists and social reformers, or part of what Pierre Yves Saunier has called the "first circulatory regime" in the field of social policy, characterised by "the interchange of words and experiences, in order to resist, devise, support or change the response to problems stemming from the industrial and urban revolution".[26]

Philanthropic tourism: The fieldwork of social reformers visiting housing projects

The two Belgian commissioners Ducpétiaux and Visschers attended several international congresses, but besides that, they also visited several housing projects in different European industrial cities, such as Paris, Berlin, London and Mulhouse.[27] They thus took part in what was called "philanthropic tourism".[28] After their 'fieldwork' and after inspecting and examining different projects, they made recommendations about social housing. Ducpétiaux and Visschers noted that the Benefit Building Societies in Great Britain, which collected financial means for the constructions of houses, were a great example and they also referred to the *Gemeinnützige Baugesellschaft* ('Non-Profit Building Association'),

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23 Nico Randeraad, "The International Statistical Congress (1853–1876): Knowledge Transfers and their Limits," *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 54–55.
24 Wolffram, "Deftige hervormers," 112.
25 Anne Rasmussen, "Jalons pour une histoire des congrès internationaux au XIXe siècle: régulation scientifique et propagande intellectuelle," *Rélations internationales* 62 (1990): 120.
26 Saunier, "Les regimes circulatoires du domaine social," 17.
27 Ducpétiaux and Visschers, *Rapport de la commission permanente des sociétés de secours*, 4.
28 Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, "Du tourisme penitentiaire a 'l'Internationale des philanthropes'. La creation d'un reseau pour la protection de l'enfance à travers les congrès internationaux (1840–1914)," *Paedagogica Historica* 38, no. 2–3 (2002): 533–563.

a building company in Berlin. But the most significant enterprise of all, Ducpétiaux and Visschers thought, was a housing project in Mulhouse. This French *cité ouvrière* was, in their opinion, "the most comprehensive example" they had visited. How did this rather small industrial city obtain the status of an international example for these Belgian housing reformers?

During the first half of the 19th century, Mulhouse had developed a diversified economic base, characterised by textile and metallurgical enterprises. The city not only underwent important economic changes, but also 'suffered' – as the hygienists in the nineteenth century formulated it – from a demographic explosion: a tripling of the population from about 10,000 to 30,000 inhabitants in less than 50 years. Natural increase was not the only cause; the decisive factor was immigration.[29] Mulhouse expanded into one of the most advanced centres and was called "France's Manchester".[30] Hygienists and entrepreneurs stated that, as a result of this important demographic explosion, the living conditions of the working classes were "atrocious". The overcrowded quarters were havens for pandemic diseases such as typhoid fever, tuberculosis and cholera.[31] Louis Villermé – a leading French hygienist – visited Mulhouse in 1835 and 1836 and was appalled by the "squalor of the workers living in the town".[32] Doctor Villermé was not the only one concerned with the living conditions of the labourers. A group of large manufacturers of Mulhouse, gathered in the *Société Industrielle de Mulhouse* (SIM), was 'disturbed' by the situation as well. This association endorsed the dictum that 'a boss owes more than wages to his workers' and they sponsored charitable and philanthropic works, ranging from homes for the elderly to public baths and associations to prevent industrial accidents. The SIM also aspired to offer cheap, affordable and decent houses for the working classes. The factory-owners realised that the rents generally exceeded workers' wages and they wanted to dispense with the need for their employees to move to nearby villages. The industrialist André Koechlin (1789–1875) was the first to build low cost worker tenements in 1835.[33] Just like in other industrialising regions, these piecemeal philanthropic measures were adequate instruments of

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29 Arthur Borghese, "Industrialist Paternalism and Lower-class Agitation. The Case of Mulhouse, 1848–1851," *Histoire Sociale* 13, no. 25 (1980): 57–58.

30 *Northern Star*, July 3, 1847, 8.

31 Van der Woud, *Koninkrijk vol sloppen*, 87.

32 Robert Fox, "Science, Industry, and the Social Order in Mulhouse, 1798–1871," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 17, no. 2 (1984): 147–148.

33 Borghese, "Industrialist Paternalism and Lower-class Agitation," 81–82.

control.[34] Moreover, this philanthropic work was determined by a latent desire of the new industrials to integrate themselves into the leading circles of urban society.[35] Furthermore, the Mulhouse captains of industry also believed that they had to look for solutions to solve the social question in order to avoid direct state intervention, thus preserving their freedom and their interests.[36]

In search of good practices, the members of the SIM looked abroad at better housing solutions for their labourers. A deputation of the SIM visited the *Great Exhibition of Industry of all Nations* in London in 1851. During this trip to London, the deputies of Mulhouse were introduced to the cottage projects executed by the British architect Henry Roberts (1803–1876). Roberts was the honorary architect for the *Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes of London* (SICLC), a powerful association that made attempts to reform urban housing. In 1850, Henry Roberts wrote an essay called 'The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes', in which he described the advantages and the inconveniences of several building systems.[37] He observed that living together too closely in the large, cheap buildings that were intended to hold dozens of houses (e.g. tenement houses, barracks or union-houses) resulted in protests, disputes and irregularities. He argued that the aggregation of a large number of people on the same spot and in close proximity led to unfavourable results.[38] Roberts advocated for "separate, spacious and salutary" family houses with more privacy, in blocks of four, six or eight houses. For the Great Exhibition in 1851, Henry Roberts designed such a model-block for the SICLC in Hyde Park.[39]

After their visit to the Crystal Palace the Mulhousian entrepreneurs launched a competition for the building of affordable and decent housing for workers near the industrial site, which was won by the French architect and civil engineer Emile Muller (1823–1889).[40] The construction of Muller's design started in 1853, under the aegis of a brand-new association, the *Société Mulhousienne*

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34 Neil Thompson, "Social Movements, Social Justice and Social Work," *British Journal of Social Work* 32, no. 6 (2002): 711; Sandrine Kott, "La Haute-Alsace: Une région modèle en matière d'habitat ouvrier (1853–1914)," *La Revue de l'Économie Sociale,* no. 1 (1988): 35.
35 Adam, "Philanthropy and the Shaping of Social Distinctions," 17.
36 Sandrine Kott, "Enjeux et significations d'une politique sociale: la Société industrielle de Mulhouse (1827–1870)," *Revue d'Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine* 34, no. 4 (1987): 655; Sandrine Kott, "Des philanthropies aux politiques sociales. Solutions françaises et allemandes à la question sociale en Haute-Alsace (1850–1914)" (Master's thesis, Sorbonne Paris, 1991), 153.
37 Sharon Marcus, *Apartment Stories: City and Home in Nineteenth-Century Paris and London* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 234–235.
38 *Norfolk News*, October 20, 1866, 5.
39 Ann-Louise Shapiro, *Housing the Poor of Paris, 1850–1902* (Wisconsin: Madison, 1985), 163.
40 *Bulletin de la Société Industrielle de Mulhouse* 24, no. 116 (1851): 135.

des Cités Ouvrières (SOMCO).[41] There were 12 founder-shareholders in this house building association, and the mayor of Mulhouse – Jean Dollfus (1800–1887) – was the president. Even though Muller received much credit for this housing-model, his design of the industrial town certainly was inspired by and derived from Henry Roberts' conception.[42] In this housing model, attention was paid to the importance of a sewage system, to space and light, and to the circulation of fresh air.[43] (see Figure 7.1) Thus, the Great Exhibition in London constituted a site for international exchange. The transfer of Roberts' ideas was also facilitated by the fact that the president of France – Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte (1808–1873) – requested to translate the essay of Roberts into French. The library of the SIM possessed a copy Roberts' book on housing models and we can assume that Emile Muller consulted this work when he set up his own housing model. In fact, the French architect Muller even recommended Roberts' 'The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes' during international meetings as a "guiding manual" for everyone who wanted to improve the housing of the labourers.[44] The admiration was mutual: in a widespread publication in 1855 Roberts stated that the new project in Mulhouse blossomed to become an international model of a working class neighbourhood.[45]

The project in Mulhouse received international attention and the expectations were high, but the *cité ouvrière* project was certainly not the only housing project that circulated internationally in the 19th century as an example or model. During the social international congresses, it was common to put forward local and national reform ideas, initiatives, discursive experiences and practical examples as international solutions to the social question.[46] In September 1856, an International Welfare Congress was held in Brussels, and the founding fathers of Mulhouse – Jean Dollfus and doctor Achille Penot (1801–1886) – were on the guest list. In a discussion about housing the poor, the international conferees collected and exchanged information about six housing projects. First in line was a French housing project of Jules Emile Scrive (1837–1898) in Lille. Secondly,

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41 Janet Polasky, *Reforming Urban Labor. Routes to the City, Roots in the Country* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), 48.

42 Fox, "Science, Industry, and the Social Order in Mulhouse," 153.

43 Brochure of model houses for four families at the Great Exhibition, erected at the cavalry barracks in Hyde Park, p. 2–3, 02 B 31, Fonds Société Industrielle de Mulhouse, Municipal Archives of Mulhouse, Mulhouse, France.

44 *Congrès international de Bienfaisance de Bruxelles. Session de 1856. Compte rendu des séances* (Brussels: Aug. Decq, 1857), 100, 457.

45 Graham Towers, *Building Democracy. Community Architecture in the Inner Cities* (Bristol, UCL Press, 1995), 10.

46 Van Daele & Müller, "Peaks of Internationalism in Social Engineering".

two housing projects from Belgium were discussed: the project of the *Grand Hornu* erected by coal industrials in Hainaut and the project of *La Vielle-Montagne* set up by zinc industrials in Liège. Subsequently, a philanthropic and religious housing project in Groningen (Holland) and a model working class neighbourhood in Copenhagen (Denmark) were presented. The final project was that of Jean Dollfus and Achille Penot. They discussed the technical and practical aspects of the *cité ouvrière* in Mulhouse. Despite a lot of similarities between these six projects, the *cité ouvrière* in Mulhouse was the most eye-catching. It was particularly interesting because it combined two specific characteristics: first of all, the project had not been carried out by a single manager, but by a group of Mulhousian patrons gathered in a house building association (SOMCO). Secondly, the workers could eventually become owners of their rented houses after 15 years of mortgage payments (i. e. in practice by means of a monthly payment of 15 to 20 francs as installments or annuities). The method behind the plan was straightforward: the SOMCO bought land and built houses, taking advantage of buying wholesale and of building on a large scale.[47]After the International Welfare Congress in 1856, a British newspaper gave the following account:

> The system now most approved of by philanthropists and labourers is that of small dwellings, designed for the least possible number of households, in which privacy, as a rule, will predominate over a life in common. This is the system applied in the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse, in France, which has been adopted by the building societies in England, and has served as a basis for institutions of alike nature in the different capitals of Europe. What most recommends this system to the favour of the working classes is the idea it holds out the possibility of each person becoming an owner.[48]

The opposite of Dante's hell? Mulhouse, a utopian working class neighbourhood in France

The model in Mulhouse was in favour because it was congruent with hygienists' discourse: everything that could "cause the outspread of pandemic diseases" was cast aside. Doctor Penot strengthened this 'hygienic' discourse on the International Welfare Congress by showing that only a small amount of cholera cases were diagnosed in the *cité ouvrière* when a pandemic made a lot of victims in Mulhouse in 1854. However, the question of dwelling houses was treated as more than a purely sanitary one. The initiators in Mulhouse had economic mo-

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47 *London Daily News*, October 20, 1866, 5.
48 *Morning Post*, November 1, 1856.

tives as well, and one of the key motives of the industrial manufacturers was to increase productivity.[49] Thus, social housing was from its beginnings more than just a philanthropic act. Besides personal benefits for the factory-owners, better housing and urban planning were also means to control the working class and prevent social disorder. More specifically, from 1847 until 1851 Mulhouse experienced several uprisings.[50] The first riot broke out in June 1847 and was prompted by the high prices of food, which in their turn were caused by a potato blight in 1845 and poor weather conditions. The situation deteriorated after the fall of the July Monarchy of France in February 1848. The popular agitation became increasingly organised, indicating the pervasiveness of socialist republican propaganda among the lower classes.[51] This volatile situation was the catalyst for the industrialists in Mulhouse. Furthermore, during the international congresses, the importance of the 1848 revolution was presented as a warning of what could happen if the workers' needs were not met.[52] The paternalistic captains of industry in Mulhouse feared a social revolution, which would threaten and undermine their hegemony.[53] This urged them to take measures to improve the living conditions of their labourers. Moreover, in 1852 the national government of France issued two decrees in which 10 million francs were granted for the improvement of the working-class houses in the large industrial cities. Private persons and associations could receive subsidies and the Mulhousian house building association received in total 300,000 francs from the national government to execute Muller's designs.[54] More specifically, this subsidy of the central government had to be used to build roads, sidewalks and fountains, as well as to plant trees.[55] For the Mulhousian entrepreneurs the lines between personal benefits, philanthropy and social welfare, between discipline and humanitarianism, and between paternalism and emancipation, were thin and permeable.

During the international conferences the first social reformers and hygienists examined the best models to obtain an ideal bourgeois society according to an

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49 *Annales de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Gand* (Brussels: A. Lacroix, 1864), 541.

50 Fox, "Science, Industry, and the Social Order in Mulhouse," 151.

51 Borghese, "Industrialist Paternalism and Lower-class Agitation," 63.

52 *Annales de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Gand*, 558.

53 Borghese, "Industrialist Paternalism and Lower-class Agitation," 70, 75.

54 Ducpétiaux and Visschers, *Rapport de la commission permanente des sociétés de secours mutuels*, 15.

55 Achille Penot, *Les cités ouvrières de Mulhouse et du departement du Haut-Rhin. Nouvelle edition augmentée de la description des bains et des lavoirs établis à Mulhouse* (Mulhouse: Bader, 1867), 12.

elitist blueprint, e.g. a *cité ouvrière*, housing 'model' workers in 'model' dwellings. Like the entrepreneurs of Mulhouse, these international experts clung to upper class values and considered themselves as new moral authorities. In their opinion, the *cité ouvrière* of Mulhouse led to moral advantages, because the labourers were encouraged to maintain "the garden of their new house instead of going to the pub" and, because they could become owners, they would be less revolutionary.[56] The tension between social work as a force for social regulation and as a force for social development or emancipation was thus a constant presence.[57] The *cité ouvrière* in Mulhouse was a total concept, containing everything required for health, comfort *and* for social order. The industrial city contained blocks of four houses, each with an enclosed, small garden. The SOMCO also recognised the importance of clean water and installed a water distribution system. More 'social' buildings were constructed as well, such as a kindergarten, homes for the elderly, a hospital for disabled workers, public baths, places for laundry, a swimming pool, a popular library, a communal kitchen, a cooperative bakery and a grocery shop. There were also factory-schools, where young children were educated during their paid hours of work and also mutual aid funds were set up. When ill, the workers who engaged in the fund received 50 per cent of their wage, in addition to medication and a free doctor consultation. Some Mulhousian industrials also handed out retirement payments to their old, sick or invalid workers. In sum, the *cité ouvrière* in Mulhouse encouraged the three 'pillars' of progressive liberalism in order to solve the social question. Instruction was promoted by the factory-schools and the public library, while precaution and saving were stimulated by the mutual aid funds and by the possibility of attaining property. By extending these extra-legal benefits, self-help was stimulated. It was a liberal conception of helping the poor: by enlarging and encouraging the civil society, the social question could be 'solved' without direct state intervention. The initiatives in Mulhouse in the 1850s differed from the early century philanthropic initiatives set out to appease the workers. "Once a man becomes a owner," stated Mulhousian architect Muller, "he will blush to eat the bread of charity".[58] But even though the *cité ouvrière* of Mulhouse contained social emancipation elements, it still remained to some extent a paternalistic initiative.

Mulhousian doctor Achille Penot was not the only one attending international congresses to promote and to legitimise the *cité ouvrière* model. Other dele-

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56 *Congrès international de Bienfaisance de Bruxelles*, 95–99.
57 Thompson, "Social Movements, Social Justice and Social Work," 711. For more on this tension with regard to participatory initiatives, see: chapter 3.
58 *Morning Post*, November 1, 1856, 3.
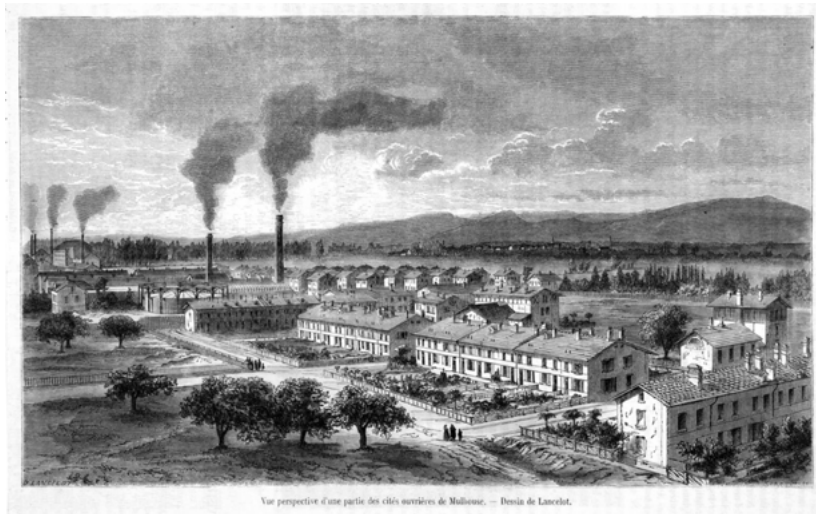
Figure 7.1: View on a part of the *cités ouvrières* of Mulhouse. (© Municipal Archives of Mulhouse)

gates of SIM and SOMCO were present at several international congresses as well. Jean Dollfus and Emile Muller attended the International Welfare Congresses in Brussels (1856), Frankfurt (1857) and London (1862), actively participating in the discussions on the housing question during these gatherings. Muller offered practical tips about the *cités ouvrières* at the International Welfare Congress in 1856. Again, Muller did not take all the credit for his project, emphasising that Henry Roberts was his source of inspiration. During his contribution, Muller also referred to several other house-building initiatives in Belgium (e. g. *Grand Hornu*, *Société John Cockerill*, *Société de la Vieille-Montagne*), and to measures taken in several industrialised cities (Berlin, Bremen, Amsterdam, The Hague, Geneva, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Turin, Rome, New York).[59]

Jean Dollfus made his international appearance during the debates of the International Welfare Congress in London (1862). He presented a long and exhaustive report (similar to that of doctor Penot in 1856), in which he enumerated all initiatives made by industrialists in Mulhouse (e. g. municipals schools, public baths, refuges for old and disabled workers, kindergartens, mutual aid funds, public library, cooperative grocery shops). Moreover, Jean Dollfus – dubbed by the press as "the humane employer" – also introduced a new regulation giving

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59 *Congrès international de Bienfaisance de Bruxelles*, 457–470.

women time off for childbirth and the subsequent six weeks without suspending their wages, in order to diminish the heavy rate of mortality among the infant children.[60] In 1862, the delegates of Mulhouse were pleased to state that the *cités ouvrières* had already found a lot of imitators.[61] The project in Mulhouse received a lot of international appreciation. After attending the International Welfare Congress in London in 1862, the Belgian liberal Gustave Rolin-Jaequemyns (1835–1902) stated that Mulhouse was the "opposite of Dante's hell": "Hope, redemption by work is the device that could be inscribed at the entrance of this good place. It is as beautiful as Utopia, as eloquent as a fact".[62] That same year, during the international congress of the *Association Internationale pour les Progrès des Sciences Sociales*, Ducpétiaux argued that the model of Mulhouse was very successful. By 1864, more than four fifths of the houses were owned by labourers. During the World Exhibition in 1867 in Paris, the SOMCO built a scale model of the model houses at 'Champ-de-Mars'. Many visitors from other European countries viewed the project from Mulhouse, and more than 15,000 booklets about the project were handed out to the visitors. During this World Exhibition, the SOMCO received a gold medal and architect Muller received a silver one.[63] For the captains of industry of Mulhouse, such international attention also had personal benefits and an economic motive: by spreading their model, other, foreign textile entrepreneurs could follow their example and in this way the international competition would be fairer.[64] The housing project in Mulhouse also implied a potential investment opportunity for entrepreneurs who wanted to diversify their deposits. By 1882, the SOMCO had built 1016 houses, of which 706 were redeemed by the labourers. Even in the literature, Mulhouse received the status of a utopian working class neighbourhood. For example, Vornsky, a major character in Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1877), visited Mulhouse in his search for a better society.[65]

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60 *Manchester Courier*, 20 December 1864, 3.

61 *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Londres. Session de 1862. Compte rendu des débats* (London: Trübner, 1863), 342–348.

62 Letter from London written by Rolin-Jaequemyns, 10 July 1862, 0043 D, Correspondance de Londres. Congrès international de bienfaisance, Private Archives of the Rolin-Jaequemyns family.

63 Société Mulhousienne des cités ouvrières, assemblée générale des actionnaires. 14e exercice: 30 juin 1866 au 30 juin 1867, Etats des constructions des cités et extraits des rapport Jean Dollfus (1854–1875, 1869–1881), A 1421, Fonds SOMCO, Municipal Archives of Mulhouse.

64 Kott, "Des philanthropies aux politiques sociales," 56.

65 Christianne Smit, "International Reform Literature: Indictment, Guidance and Inspiration," in *In Control of the City. Local Elites and the Dynamics of Urban Politics, 1800–1960*, eds. Stefan Couperus, Christianne Smit and Dirk Jan Wolffram (Leuven: Peeters 2007), 98.

Small-scale housing projects in Belgium influenced by Mulhouse

In contrast to France, the revolutionary breeze of 1848 did not break through in Belgium. This lack of social pressure could explain why social housing was not high on the political agenda in the second half of the 19th century. However, we can detect some minor measures. In 1849, the liberal Minister of the Interior, Charles Rogier (1800 – 1885), provided credits for 'slum clearances' and obliged the municipalities to found local "*Comités de salubrité*" ('health committees') in charge of examining the local situation and making proposals for improvements.[66] Rogier was also the driving force of the National Congress on Public Hygiene in Brussels in 1851, which commissioned Ducpétiaux and Visschers to write the abovementioned report on the housing question. Moreover, local governments especially felt responsible for the housing question, in particular for the *Bureaux de Bienfaisance* (i.e. Social Welfare Councils). In this part, we will examine how the transnational circulation of the Mulhouse-model had an impact on the development of social housing policy in Belgium. Convergences and divergences, the different factors influencing the local transformations and the effectiveness of the measures will also be taken into account.

29 April 1859. During a council meeting, the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* of Nivelles decides to invest financial reserves into building 12 "healthy" houses for workers. Inspirer of this idea was doctor François Lebon (1807–1900), who attended the International Welfare Congress in Brussels in 1856, where he became inspired by the reports of Penot, Dollfus and Muller from Mulhouse.[67] The architect of this first Belgian housing project was Raymond Carlier (1805 – 1883), who followed hygienic prescriptions conscientiously, e.g. the houses in Nivelles had an ingenious ventilation system. The project of Carlier in Nivelles showed a lot of architectural similarities with the houses in Mulhouse, but there was one important difference, determined by the local socio-economic context. When a labourer of Mulhouse registered for a house built by SOMCO, he had to have a starting capital. Consequently, the houses built by the SOMCO were mostly set up for a middle class of labourers, artisans and craftsmen. In Nivelles by contrast, the members of the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* stipulated that everyone, even a labourer without savings, could participate in the project, as helping the poor was one of

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66 Bernard Van Causenbroeck, *Rode Daken. De Goede Werkmanswoning 75 Jaar* (Ghent: Amsab, 1998), 11.

67 "Bureau de bienfaisance de Nivelles: projet de logements destinés aux ouvriers, 1859", University Library Ghent.

the main tasks of this local institution. Like Mulhouse, the housing of the poor by the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* of Nivelles had an important moral aspect: doctor Lebon stated that the selection of the 12 families was based on "their good behaviour, good morals and dedication to work".[68] The project in Nivelles was small-scale, but nevertheless innovative because of its accessibility. On 26 October 1884, 12 families were invited to the city hall of Nivelles for a solemn ceremony to celebrate their ownership of the houses after 23 years of "hard work and savings".[69] The housing experts of Mulhouse, Emile Cacheux (1844–1923) and Emile Muller, who published an international overview of housing schemes in the late 19th century, also acknowledged the importance of the system in Nivelles: "it was the first time that the principle of acquisition of property was introduced in Belgium".[70] Lebon was thus a pioneer in Belgium, and others soon followed his example. In 1860, the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* of Wavres built 12 houses for the working class, imitating Carlier's architectural and the financial principles.[71] Other local municipalities in Belgium followed: Hoei (1867), Melle (1867), Jodoigne (1868), Sleidinge (1870), Zomergem (1870), Morlanwelz (1873) and Blankenberge (1873).[72] These small-scale projects had some characteristics in common: the labourer could become owner of his rented accommodation by means of a repayment plan and the *Bureau de Bienfaisance* appointed inspectors to guarantee social order and hygiene. Furthermore, the workers who bought the houses were prohibited from selling liquor or opening a pub in the house and they were also required to maintain the garden.

24 June 1851. In the city counsel of Ghent, a pamphlet of city counselor Adolphe Burggraeve (1806–1902) – also professor medical sciences of the university of Ghent and head of the Civil Hospital – is discussed.[73] Like Mulhouse, Ghent was a dynamic textile-city that grew spectacularly in a short period.[74] Conse-

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68 François Lebon, *Des habitations ouvrières à Nivelles. Moyen pratique de faciliter aux classes laborieuses l'accès du capital et de la propriété* (Nivelles: Guignardé, 1878), 5, 11.

69 Hippolyte de Royer de Dour, *Essaie d'étude d'économie sociale. Les habitations ouvrières en Belgique* (Brussels: Société belge de librairie, 1890), 228.

70 Emile Cacheux and Emile Muller, *Les habitations ouvrières en tous pays* (Paris: Baudry, 1889), 209.

71 De Royer de Dour, *Essaie d'étude d'économie sociale*, 229–231.

72 "Rapporten van de Hoge Gezondheidsraad, 1867–1873"/volume 4 (Brussels: s.n., 1873), p. 65, 215–216, 254, 519–520, 561, Archives of the Ministery of Internal Affairs of Belgium, Brussels, Belgium.

73 Adolphe Burggraeve, *Projet de cités d'ouvriers pour la ville de Gand* (Ghent: De Busscher, 1851), 4.

74 For the situation in Ghent, see chapter 1/introduction to his volume.

quently, as early as the 1840s, two doctors – J. Heyman and Daniel Mareska – already noted that Ghent was "polluted, overcrowded, insanitary, and disease-infested". Just as Villermé did for France, they noticed that the "housing of the labourers was at its worst"[75]. Ten years later, Aldophe Burggraeve started visiting the slums in Ghent repeatedly and was time and again "appalled by the deprivation of the workers living there". In 1851, Burggraeve initiated the foundation of a house building association in Ghent, the *Société Anonyme pour l'Amélioration des Démeures de la Classe Ouvrière*. Proceeding from this association, Burggraeve wrote the above-mentioned pamphlet to the city council, in which he clearly endorsed the hygienists' discourse. Burggraeve looked for disturbing and unhealthy elements in the natural environment of the laborers and connected them with the pathological problems of this group. He listed all unhealthy quarters of the city of Ghent, marked by "overcrowding, pollution, infections, and the total absence of light and air". As a remedy, Burggraeve advocated improving or even demolishing the unhealthy quarters and building new and healthy *cités ouvrières modèles*. In his view, a perfect workers' district had public baths and lavatories, sanitary installations and water pumps and each house should also have its own little garden, because "it was a manner of moralisation and a useful distraction to keep the workers away from pubs and other immoral places". A kindergarten and a school were part of his plans as well, because "instruction would moralise the labourers from childhood on".[76]

In this project, Burggraeve vaguely referred to initiatives in France and England, yet he did not explicitly name the two influential architects Henri Roberts or Emile Muller. However, we can state that Burggraeve was influenced by the international trend for building private houses for the labourers. Just like Roberts and Muller, doctor Burggraeve opposed tenement houses – or what he called "*bataillons-carrés*" ('blocks of flats') – and he promoted separate, spacious and hygienic houses. Despite Burggraeve's efforts, his plans to build model working-class neighbourhoods were never realised.[77] Whereas Dollfus and the other shareholders in Mulhouse had enough political and socio-economic power to establish their house building association, Burggraeve had less influence. Firstly he was unable to find enough financial sponsors for his project and he did not receive any national state subsidies. Secondly, Jean Dollfus exer-

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75 See: Daniel Joseph Benoit Mareska and J. Heyman, *Enquête sur le travail et la condition physique et morale des ouvriers employés dans les manufactures de coton, à Gand* (Ghent: Gyselynck, 1845).

76 Burggraeve, *Projet de cités d'ouvriers pour la ville de Gand*, 7.

77 Andreas Stynen, "Proeftuinen van burgerlijkheid. Stadsnatuur in negentiende-eeuws België" (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2010), 348.

cised the role of mayor in Mulhouse, whereas Burggraeve played only a minor role in Ghent politics as city counselor and commissioner in local commissions on public health.

But Burggraeve continued his inquiries into social housing and attended several international congresses in the 1850s, among which the International Welfare Congress in Brussels in 1856, where the Mulhousian doctor Penot extensively described and glorified the Mulhouse project. During the congresses of the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales* in Brussels and Ghent (1862/1863), Burggraeve complied with the Mulhouse model. Moreover, he strived to re-establish a housing association in Ghent, this time inspired by the SOMCO. This shows how Burggraeve used the transnational circulation of ideas as a vehicle to influence local social policy development. However, just like Carlier in Nivelles, Burggraeve also did not adopt the Mulhouse Model indiscriminately. Burggraeve was not convinced by the idea of making every labourer owner of his house. In his view, this measure could lead to inconveniences, such as dependency to a factory-owner. The workers could also be inclined to take a loan on the house and becoming indebted to speculators, or the labourer might not have enough resources to finance the high maintenance costs.[78] In sum, Burggraeve stated that the Mulhouse model was too expensive and too luxurious, certainly for a city as Ghent, where the major parts of the labourers were poor factory workers.[79] In the adapted Ghent model, Burggraeve made a distinction between two categories of workers: "owner-labourers" and "share-holder labourers". The craftsmen who could become owners of their houses constituted the first category of labourers, while the factory workers were part of the category of shareholders: they did not have enough means to become owners, but they were members of the association and could therefore rent houses from the housing association and also receive an interest of 4 per cent and a dividend of 1 per cent from the association.[80] In 1864, Burggraeve published this idea in a collected work titled *Améliorations de la vie domestique de la classe ouvrière*.[81]

This time the association had an even broader outlook. It was not solely concerned with improving workers' dwellings, but would also make large acquisi-

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78 Adolphe Burggraeve, *Amélioration de la vie domestique de la classe ouvrière* (Ghent: De Busscher, 1864), 51.
79 *Annales de l'association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: congrès de Bruxelles* (Brussels: A. Lacroix, 1863), 509–511; Adolphe Burggraeve, *Études sociales* (Brussels: Lacroix, 1862), 262–265; A. Burggraeve, *Concours Guinard pour l'amélioration de la position matérielle et intellectuelle de la classe ouvrière en general et sans disctinction* (Ghent: s.n., 1887), 38.
80 *Journal de Gand*, January 23, 1864.
81 Adolphe Burggraeve, *Amélioration de la vie domestique de la classe ouvrière*.

tions of food in order to resell it to the associated labourers at a reduced price, following the principle of a consumers' cooperation society. This project, called the *Société Gantoise*, would also create public baths and lavatories, a health centre, kindergartens, evening schools and mutual aid and precaution funds. Not just the association, but the local government as well, had an important role to provide all the resources that contributed to salubriousness and public health. In 1866, Burggraeve published *Projet d'assainissement et d'embellissement de la ville de Gand*, in which he stated that the local government was responsible for clearing out the small streets and laying out large and spacious boulevards. The local government also had to provide good street lighting and clean water, and prevent air pollution.[82] But just like ten years earlier, Burggraeve's ideas and proposals were not put into practice and he remained unable to implement new legislation in his hometown.

Beside the housing projects in Nivelles and Ghent, the question of unhealthy slums was also discussed in Verviers in the 1860s, and again the model of Mulhouse influenced the social reformers in this Belgian town. In 1861, the *Société Verviétoise pour la Construction des Maisons d'Ouvriers* was founded. Moreover, the national government approved this association and it thus received the juridical status of a public limited company. Just like Heyman, Mareska, and Villermé, the project in Verviers materialised after a doctor, in this case André-Joseph Lepas (1826–?), stated that the living conditions of the labourers were at their worst and had a "deteriorating effect on the morals of these people".[83] Some industrials in Verviers felt responsible for this housing problem and directly contacted the captains of industry of Mulhouse. On 4 March 1861, the Chamber of Commerce of Verviers sent a letter to the SIM with a question for more practical information and advice about the SOMCO.[84] In July of the same year, the association built nine houses for workers. There were a lot of architectural and institutional similarities with the project in Mulhouse: the project in Verviers consisted of individual family homes with a little garden, attention was paid to fresh air and the labourers could become owners of their homes after a certain number of years. But in contrast to Mulhouse, this project in Verviers was not at all successful. One of the members of the board of the *Société Verviétoise*, Emile Bède, made a report about the problems of this organisation to inform other social re-

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82 Adolphe Burggraeve, *Projet d'assainissement et d'embellissement de la ville de Gand* (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1866).

83 André-Joseph Lepas, *Coup d'oeuil sur la situation de la classe ouvrière de Verviers* (Brussels: De Mortier, 1844),

84 Letter, 4 March 1861, Correspondance, registres de copies de lettres (1857–1861), 94 B 188, Fonds Société Industrielle de Mulhouse, Municipal archives of Mulhouse.

Figure 7.2: Portrait of Adolphe Burggraeve (1806–1902), Florimond Van Loo and Jozef Pauwels (1857), (Ghent University Library). Catalogue number: BIB.GRA.003541. This image is licensed under a Creative Commons license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/

formers.[85] First of all, the labourers in Verviers were not enthusiastic about this housing project, perceiving the houses to be too much like charity. Moreover, the cost for building the houses was too high. In 1867, the shareholders of Verviers visited the World Exhibition in Paris and appraised the model houses built by the SIM on the 'Champ-de-Mars'. In the summer of 1868, the *Société Verviétoise* again built four new houses, this time almost exactly modelled after the project in Mulhouse. Even though small changes were made to adapt the model to the social and cultural environment of Verviers, the problems were not solved, as we can read in Bède's report one year later. Bède inserted a model to make the investment in the labourer houses financially interesting for the entrepreneurs in Verviers. Contrary to the SOMCO, the *Société Verviétoise* could make profit. Just like the initiative in Nivelles, this housing association in Verviers became a model for other Belgian cities. In June 1867, the Belgian government passed a law by which building companies could receive the juridical status of a public limited company ("*naamloze vennootschap*").[86] On 21 September 1867, the *Société Liégeoise des Habitations* was created after the model of the *Société Verviétoise*.[87] That same year, housing companies were established in Brussels and Antwerp.[88]

In the late 19th-century, there were thus several housing projects in Belgium, but contrary to the successful international model of Mulhouse, these small-scale local projects were mere drops in the ocean. Several Belgian specialists and reformers became frustrated and wanted greater structural reforms. During a meeting of the Liberal Association in Brussels in 1864, the liberal Ernest Defuisseaux (1829–1886) advocated a proactive policy that would replace the emergency measures that were taken when a cholera epidemic broke out.[89] Although a number of housing models circulated and the project of Mulhouse was well known in Belgium, the housing theory was not put into practice until the late 1880s, when a new national law on workers' houses was enacted. In contrast to Mulhouse, there was for a long time no social pressure in Belgium to make structural changes or to formulate national housing laws. Whereas the interna-

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85 Emile Bède, *Note sur les travaux de la société verviétoise pour la construction de maisons d'ouvriers* (Verviers: Vinche, 1869).

86 Louis Bertrand, *Le logement de l'ouvrier et du pauvre en Belgique* (Brussels: C. De Paepe, 1888), 135–148.

87 J.K.W Quarles van Ufford, "Iets over arbeiderswoningen. Société anonyme liègeoise des maisons ouvrières fondée à Liège le 21 Septembre 1867 – Notice sur les travaux de la Société," *De Economist*," 22, no. 2 (1873): 876–877.

88 Léon d'Andrimont, *Des institutions et des associations ouvrières de la Belgique* (Brussels: Lebègue, 1871), 81.

89 Ernest Defuisseaux, *Conférence du 4 mai 1864 sur les habitations ouvrières* (Brussels: Decq, 1864).

tional congresses had no direct impact on Belgian national law in the 1850s and 1860s, they were nevertheless influential. When a violent strike broke out in March 1886, the national Belgian government organised a large national survey to obtain information about social and housing questions.[90] A workers' commission ("*Commission du Travail*") was initiated to investigate the working conditions of labourers and workmen's houses were closely inspected.[91] One of the research questions of this commission was to detect whether the Mulhouse Model was imitated in Belgium.[92]

As a result of these surveys, the national government promulgated a law on the housing of the labourers in 1889. The central goal of this housing law was to make the workers the owners of their houses, an idea that had already been transnationally spread in the 1850–1860s and that resembled the Mulhouse Model. In the housing law of 1889 it also stated that the legislator did not want direct government involvement in the building of houses for the working class. Just like in Mulhouse, public limited companies – or more generally the civil society – had to contribute to building housing for the poor.[93] Yet, the law also contained new elements, e.g. regional Patronage committees were founded, and a national savings bank, the *Algemene Spaar- en Lijfrente Kas* ('General Savings and Annuity Fund'), was involved in financing the enterprise. This savings bank would not lend money to private persons but to public corporations. The housing question was soon enclosed within the national context of pillarisation in Belgium.[94] Several house building associations emerged within every 'ideological pillar'. A lot of social, Catholic and liberal public corporations for housing arose in Belgian cities in the 1890s, and housing the poor became a type of policy-making. In 1894, the Catholic minister of Public Works and member of the Catholic Party of Belgium, Léon De Bruyn (1838–1908), detected the existence of 64 housing corporations in Belgium.[95]

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90 Willy Steensels, "De tussenkomst van de overheid in de arbeidershuisvesting: Gent, 1850–1904," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 8, no. 3–4 (1977): 477.

91 L. Denys, "Trends in de sociaal-ekonomische toestand van de Belgische arbeiders rond 1886," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 5, no. 3–4 (1974): 401.

92 "Enquête sur les habitations ouvrières. Séance du 27 avril 1886. Proposition de M. Beco, Rapporten van de Hoge Gezondheidsraad"/volume 7 (Brussels: s.n., 1887), p. 109–110, Archives of the Ministery of Internal Affairs of Belgium.

93 "Rapporten van de Hoge Gezondheidsraad"/volume 7 (Brussels: s.n., 1887), p. 128, Archives of the Ministery of Internal Affairs of Belgium.

94 For the phenomenon of pillarisation in Belgium, see chapter 1/introduction to this volume.

95 Léon Meerens, *Études pratique sur les habitations ouvrières en Belgique et le fonctionnement des sociétés d'habitations ouvrières dans leurs rapports avec la caisse générale d'épargne et de*

Conclusion

At social international congresses, it was common to put forward local and national reform ideas, initiatives, discursive experiences and practical examples as international solutions to the social question. International hygienists and other social reformers picked up the idea of Mulhouse, as they believed that "improved houses make improved men, women and children". The Mulhouse Model was in favour because it was consonant with hygienists' belief that human society could be controlled and managed. It was a total concept encompassing everything required for health, comfort and social order.

The paternalistic captains of industry in Mulhouse had several motives to set up these *cités ouvrières*. The factory owners realised that the rents generally exceeded workers' wages and wanted to prevent their employees from moving to nearby villages. There was also a latent desire of the new industrials to integrate themselves into the leading circles of urban society. They had economic motives as well, such as increased labour productivity. But probably the most important reason was the fear of a social revolution, which would threaten and undermine their hegemony. Better housing and urban planning were means to control the working class and prevent social disorder. In sum, by building 'decent and hygienic' houses for their own labourers, the social question could be 'solved' without direct state intervention, thereby preserving the factory owners' freedom and interests. In order to gain legitimacy, the entrepreneurs of Mulhouse promoted their model at international congresses and world exhibitions, published booklets with practical information and gave personal advice to sympathisers by means of letter correspondence. The international attention also had economic benefits: by popularising their model, other, foreign textile entrepreneurs could follow their example and international competition would be fairer.

The project in Mulhouse was particularly interesting because it combined two specific characteristics. First of all, it was not carried out by a single owner, but by a group of Mulhousian patrons gathered in a house building association. Secondly, the workers could become owners of their rented houses. The model also led to moral advantages, since it encouraged instruction, precaution and saving. We can conclude that the project of Mulhouse was internationally propagated as a model in the late 19th century. The interchange of ideas and practices and the successful foreign examples were used as a lever to put pressure on policymakers at home. But as the case of the Belgian cities proved, local

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retraite suivie de la loi du 9 août 1889 coordonnée et des arrêts et circulaires utiles à son interpretation (Brussels: Emile Bruylant, 1896), 44–48.

forces determined the timing and the specifics of the adoption of this international model. In contrast to Mulhouse, there was no social pressure to make structural changes or to formulate national housing laws in Belgium for a long time. Although actors in several Belgian cities used the transnational circulation of the Mulhouse Model as a vehicle to influence local social policy development, it was not a guarantee for success, as the case of Adolphe Burggraeve in Ghent showed. However, the circulation of ideas on housing schemes lay at the very basis of the development of social housing. The national housing law of 1889 clearly contained elements and ideas that had already been transnationally spread in the 1850s–1860s and that resembled the Mulhouse Model. At the end of the 19th century however, a remarkable shift took place. In the 1850s and 1860s, top-down solutions *for* the laborers were put forward. In the 1880s, however, the labourers themselves played a more active role, though the argumentation was simple and the focus on self-help remained: "Only the workman himself knows the best the needs of the proletariat, by showing him his character you make self-help possible".[96]

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96 De Royer de Dour, *Les habitations ouvrières en Belgique*, 131.

Amandine Thiry, Thomas D'haeninck & Christophe Verbruggen

8 (Re-)educational Internationalism in the Low Countries, 1850 – 1914

As Rita Hofstetter and Bernard Schneuwly have shown, 19th-century educational reform initiatives could not be separated from 'the social question'. After all, education was considered to be one of the most efficient instruments for reform.[1] If we want to understand the popular educational and reformist social initiatives and movements in Belgium and the Netherlands during the long 19th century, it is important to avoid investigating social reformers and experts in local or national isolation. Rather, one needs to approach them as part of a globalising field of discourse and practices. Transnational connections were of major importance for the development of teaching practices, educational science and the shaping of modern school systems.[2] Scholars have been exploring on these cross-border dynamics for over 30 years now, by looking at informal networks, topics of discourse and general institutional developments. Because of the huge number of associations and congresses, an extensive quantitative analysis was long thought to be unfeasible. However, by using collaborative research strategies, we are now able to go beyond a metaphorical use of 'network' as a concept. In this chapter, we advance a formal use of social network analysis (SNA) and concepts such as 'connections', 'exchanges' and 'networks'. This allows us to introduce an actor-centred perspective towards the broader field of social reform, and to look beyond the categories created and imposed by historians.

In the second half of the 19th century, countless transnational exchanges occurred in the field of education. This was partly due to the increasing mobility of teachers and students, but also the result of the emergence of educational exhibitions, the organisation of congresses, and the founding of international institutions and specialised international journals. These cross-border exchanges between academics, teachers, pedagogics, politicians and educational reformers engendered international networks that promoted scientific and professional collaboration and thus gave rise to a social and discursive field which we consid-

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1 Rita Hofstetter and Bernard Schneuwly, "Introduction: Educational Sciences in Dynamic and Hybrid Institutionalization," *Paedagogica Historica* 40, no. 5–6 (2004): 572.

2 Damiano Matasci, "International Congresses of Education and the Circulation of Pedagogical Knowledge in Western Europe, 1876–1910," in *Shaping the Transnational Sphere. Experts, Networks and Issues from the 1840s to the 1930s*, eds. Davide Rodogno, Bernhard Struck and Jakob Vogel (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), 218–238.

er to be 'educational internationalism'. The new educational sciences and New Education[3] in particular were major catalysts for the spread of knowledge and the institutionalisation of pedagogical internationalism in the 1920s.[4]

In this chapter, we will argue that educational internationalism was part of a wider trend of transnational circulation of intellectual and cultural goods in the second half of the 19th century.[5] As stated, this entails that educational internationalism cannot be separated from the upcoming philanthropic and reformist advocacy networks. Education was undoubtedly a crossroads for different domains of the social world.[6] By considering it as a subfield of social reform, we propose a revised and improved definition of the concept.

In the first part of this chapter, we indicate how, in the 19th century, educational internationalism was intertwined with the emergence of social reformist networks. After a brief sketch of the emergence of conferences and organisations and the (in comparison with the Netherlands) pivotal role of Belgium, we look at participation in international congresses, which we assume to be a strong indicator of transnational engagement. In the absence of international (non-)governmental organisations (which only emerged after 1870, and only by the turn of the century in the field of educational science), international congresses became the most important manifestation of "scientific internationalisation".[7] Scholars studying pedagogical reform and educational internationalism have already attempted to study these congresses. However, up until now, they have mainly focused on congresses that were strictly related to educational specialisms or dis-

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3 The term 'new educational sciences' is used to describe a movement of teachers, academics, and medical professionals that tried to put education on a scientific level, by combining methods of several newly found disciplines (e.g. experimental pedagogy, educational psychology and pedology) that emerged in the late 19th century. 'The New Education' was an international social movement with national variants (e.g. the German *Reformpädagogik*, the French *Education nouvelle*) of mostly teachers who attempted to use new educational methods to reform society. As Eckhardt Fuchs describes, there was much overlap between the new educational sciences and The New Education, both in terms of representatives as well as in goals. See: Eckhardt Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics: International Educational Congresses in the Early Twentieth Century," *Paedagogica Historica* 40, no. 5 & 6 (2004): 757–784.

4 For New Education, see: Marc Depaepe, *Zum Wohl des Kindes? Pädologie, pädagogische Psychologie und experimentelle Pädagogik in Europa und den USA, 1890–1940* (Weinheim/Leuven: Deutscher Studien Verlag/Leuven University Press, 1993).

5 Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics"; Matasci, "International Congresses of Education," 219–220; Marco Cicchini, "Un bouillon de culture pour les sciences de l'éducation? Le Congrès international d'éducation morale (1908–1934)," *Paedagogica Historica* 40, no. 5–6 (2004): 643.

6 Cicchini, "Un bouillon de culture," 643.

7 Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics," 758.

ciplines. Ekhardt Fuchs and others have followed a rather pragmatic approach, by creating typologies of congresses based on their issues, aims and topics, the extent to which they were scientific, and in their organisational structures. Of course, the major difficulty of this approach is that, in many cases, these categories overlapped.[8]

As Damiano Matasci has pointed out, there was a certain overlap between educational congresses and congresses related to social reform. In this chapter, we will take up his suggestion,[9] and use an actor-oriented approach to investigate the co-presence or co-membership (as participants were often referred to as members) between a much wider set of congresses. This indicates changes in personal interests in social and educational issues, as well as changes in social and organisational structures. It will also enable us to answer the questions to what extent international congresses on educational matters were socially connected and to what extent they were related to other social causes. Another interesting question to pose is whether the process of 'pillarisation' in the Low Countries also manifested itself on a transnational level in clearly distinct congress series, dominated by liberals and Catholics respectively?[10] Were educational internationalists divided into class-cutting, separate ideological expert communities?

In the second part of this chapter, we examine how 'educational internationalism' relates to the emergence of an international movement for the protection of the child. Stemming from a network of prison reformers born around 1800, this movement of child protection developed in the last quarter of the 19th century, along with a change in focus from juvenile delinquency towards unfortunate children who were abandoned or in danger and in need of protection. As Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat has argued, there was a shift from a logic of punishment towards a doctrine of social defence and re-education.[11] This transformation has recently been reassessed, from institutional[12] and practice-based per-

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8 Fuchs, "Educational sciences, Morality and Politics".

9 Matasci, "International Congresses of Education," 219.

10 For the phenomenom of pillarisation: see chapter 1/introduction to his volume.

11 Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, "Le mouvement international en faveur de la protection de l'enfance (1880 – 1914)," *Revue d'histoire de l'enfance "irrégulière". Le Temps de l'histoire*, no. 5 (2003): 207 – 235. See chapter 2 of this volume for a reconstruction of this evolution.

12 Eckhardt Fuchs, "From Punishment to Education: The International Debate on Juvenile Penal Reform before World War I," *Prospects* 45, no. 1 (2015): 113 – 126. See also: Joëlle Droux, "L'internationalisation de la protection de l'enfance : acteurs, concurrences et projets transnationaux (1900 – 1925)," *Critique internationale* n° 52, no. 3 (June 2011): 17 – 33.

spectives[13]. Yet, its intertwinement with educational internationalism and processes of institutionalisation and professionalisation has received less attention. Understandably, scholars of educational reform have already indicated that there was a thin cognitive line between the discourse on education in the strict sense of the word (teaching instruction, educational systems and educational methods) and discourse on youth work, youth charity, adult education, child protection and (last but not least) re-education. For instance, congress series on the protection of the child or juvenile delinquency also provided a forum for discussions about educational methods. One important question is to what extent this thematic coherence also resulted in social, institutional and even political-ideological ties and vice versa. Focusing on actors allows us to move from micro-configurations of actors to meso-level social configurations, which offer better perspectives for further research on the relation between 'education' and 're-education' as concepts of reform.

The intertwinement of educational and social reform

Without any doubt, congresses and associations were the most important agents and manifestations of intellectual cooperation in many fields of knowledge and in different domains. Between 1840 and 1914, more than 1500 congresses were organised in which a variety of social causes were discussed by a heterogeneous group of social experts, politicians and other international intelligentsia. They can be seen as laboratories of new expert knowledge,[14] and were – par excellence – sites where scientists, administrators, politicians, artists and other reform-minded elites of different countries met and exchanged ideas.[15] Not only did they offer a regular meeting place where scientists could share their most recent findings, but they also frequently led to the establishment of international scientific organisations. It was at these congresses that an international com-

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13 Jean Trépanier and Xavier Rousseaux, *Youth and Justice in Western States, 1815 – 1950* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
14 Nico Randeraad, "The International Statistical Congress (1853 – 1876): Knowledge Transfers and their Limits," *European History Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (2011): 50 – 65.
15 Thomas D'haeninck, Nico Randeraad and Christophe Verbruggen, "Visualizing Longitudinal Data: Rooted cosmopolitans in the Low Countries, 1850 – 1914," in *Online Proceedings of the First Conference on Biographical Data in a Digital World 2015*, no. 1399 (CEUR WS, 2015), 116 – 121, last modified 2 July, 2015, http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-1399/.

munity of scholars was created.[16] They were places where the "rooted cosmopolitans" of the 19th century connected the local, the national and the global.[17]

In his study of international educational congresses,[18] Ekhardt Fuchs devised a typology of (a selection of) international congresses based on the work of Claude Tapia and Jacques Taieb, who in their turn relied on the work of the *Union of International Associations* (UIA).[19] Although the UIA's two-part guide to "*Les congrès internationaux*" is definitely one of the leading reference books for the study of international congresses, historians have also criticised the work for its shortcomings and heuristic constraints.[20] As part of the efforts of our research consortium, the TIC-Collaborative,[21] we have made efforts to combine the UIA guide with several other reference books in order to refine the list of international congresses that took place in the long 19th century.[22] We focused on international congresses and organisations related to the field of social reform. Social reform can be understood as the wide variety of efforts taken by

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16 Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics," 758.

17 Sidney Tarrow, "Rooted Cosmopolitans: Transnational Activists in a World of States," in *Cornell Workshop on Transnational Contention, University of Wisconsin*, last modified 23 October, 2001, https://ssc.wisc.edu/~oliver/SOC924/Articles/TarrowMadison%20talk.%20REV.%20Oct.23. pdf.

18 Eckhardt Fuchs, "Educational sciences, Morality and Politics".

19 Claude Tapia and Jacques Taieb, "Conférences et congrès internationaux de 1815 à 1913," *Relations internationales,* no. 5 (1976): 11 – 35.

20 Chris Leonards, "Ter bestrijding van armoede, misdaad, oorlog en immoraliteit. Europese congrescultuur in de negentiende en vroege twintigste eeuw vanuit filantropisch perspectief," in *Filantropie in Nederland; Voorbeelden uit de periode 1770 – 2020* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2007), 49 – 62.

21 www.tic.ugent.be.

22 Alfred H. Fried, *Annuaire de la vie internationale* (Brussels: Office central des institutions internationales, 1905); Alfred H. Fried, *Annuaire de la vie internationale* (Brussels: Office central des institutions internationales, 1906); Alfred H. Fried, *Annuaire de la vie internationale* (Brussels: Office central des institutions internationales, 1907); Alfred H. Fried, *Handbuch der Friedensbewegung* (New York: Garland Pub., 1911); Pieter Hendrik Eijkman, *L'internationalisme médical* (Amsterdam: F. van Rossen, 1910); Pieter Hendrik Eijkman and Paul Samuel Reinch. *L'internationalisme scientifique (sciences pures et lettres)* (The Hague: WP van Stockum et Fils, 1911); Union of International Associations, *Les congrès internationaux de 1681 à 1899; liste complète* (Brussels: Union des Associations Internationales, 1960); Union of International Associations, *Les congrès internationaux de 1900 à 1919: liste complète* (Brussels: Union des Associations Internationales, 1964); Robert Doré, *Essai d'une bibliographie des congrès internationaux* (Paris: É. Champion, 1923); Winifred Gregory, *International Congresses and Conferences, 1840 – 1937; A Union List of Their Publications Available in Libraries of the United States and Canada* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1938); Winifred Gregory, *Second Catalogue of Publications of International Congresses and Conferences* (New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1939).

an engaged elite to deal with the social question. The 'social question', further-more, is a catch-all term scholars as well as contemporaries used to describe a wide set of tensions and conflicts that were caused by the processes of urbani-sation and industrialisation. Our thematic focus reduces the original list of the UIA, which consists of over 2000 international events taking place in the long 19th century, to a corpus of about 1500 congresses. Furthermore, we linked inter-national congresses to international organisations and provided both with tags of the major themes and topics. These tags are partially based on the categories used by Winifred Gregory.[23] This allowed us to compare congresses related to ed-ucation with congresses related to social reform in general. The graph below shows that a significant number of international congresses is related to educa-tional reform. This includes congresses that focused on the protection of the child, congresses of teaching professionals and series that focused on the vari-ous stages of formal education (preschool, elementary, secondary, vocational ed-ucation and higher education).

It should be noted that, before 1914, many congresses took place in the con-text of national and international exhibitions such as World Fairs.[24] The exhibi-tions of Paris (1867, 1878, 1889, 1900), Liège (1905) and Brussels (1910) in partic-ular have been important venues for congresses. Scientific or expert communities by definition have a durable or long-lasting character. Some of the singular congresses have been important, but the exponential growth of con-gresses in the last quarter of the 19th century is mainly due to the proliferation of series of (annual) congresses. Through them, people working in the same or re-lated domains had the opportunity to meet on a regular basis. Acknowledging the importance of the exchange of knowledge is vitally important to understand the dynamics that led to the institutionalisation of intellectual cooperation dur-ing the course of the 19th century. This concerns knowledge that was domain-spe-cific, but also knowledge about the members of the community (in the making) and organisational knowledge in general.[25] Many series of conferences could count on a permanent secretariat; which facilitated publications and the circula-tion of news and of domain-specific knowledge. Hence, it is no coincidence that many international organisations or bureaus have their roots in (series of) con-gresses. Since some (early) definitions of international organisations required meetings to be organised on a regular basis, there is even a certain degree of re-

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23 Gregory, *International Congresses and Conferences, 1840–1937.*

24 Anne Rasmussen, "Les congrès internationaux liés aux expositions universelles de Paris (1867–1900)," *Cahiers Georges Sorel* 7, no. 1 (1989): 23–44.

25 For this approach, see: Boyd W. Rayward, ed., *Information Beyond Borders: International Cul-tural and Intellectual Exchange in the Belle Époque* (New York: Routledge, 2016).
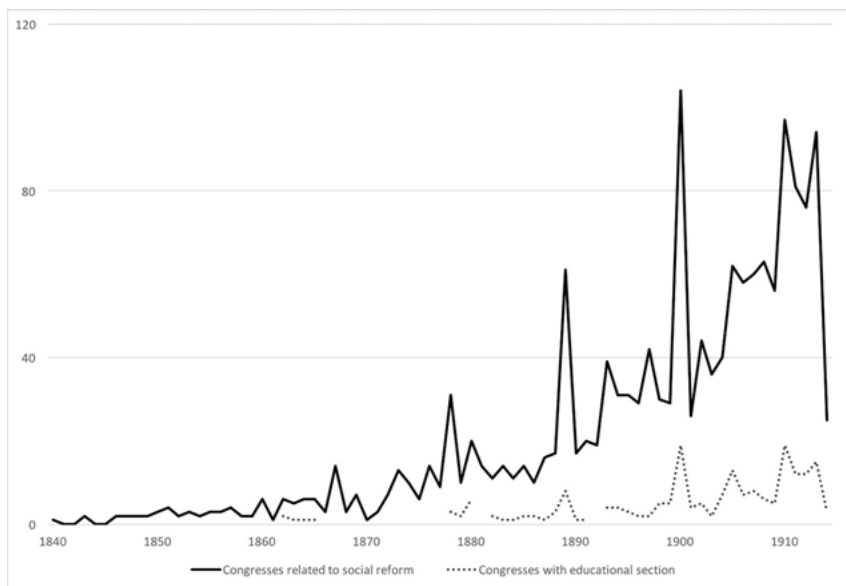
Fig. 8.1: Evolution of the number of international congresses related to social reform between 1840 and 1914 in comparison to congresses with an educational section. The data used for the analysis will become open linked data in 2019, see TIC website : www.tic.ugent.be.

dundancy. In this way, 19th-century congress series preceded both the governmental and non-governmental international organisations of the 20th century.[26]

26 Eckhardt Fuchs, "The Creation of New International Networks in Education: The League of Nations and Educational Organizations in the 1920s," *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 2 (2007): 199-209; Madeleine Herren, *Internationale Organisationen seit 1865: eine Globalgeschichte der internationalen Ordnung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009); Volker Barth, "International Organisations and Congresses," in *European History Online*, last modified 18 January, 2012, http://ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/transnational-movements-and-organisations/international-organisations-and-congresses.
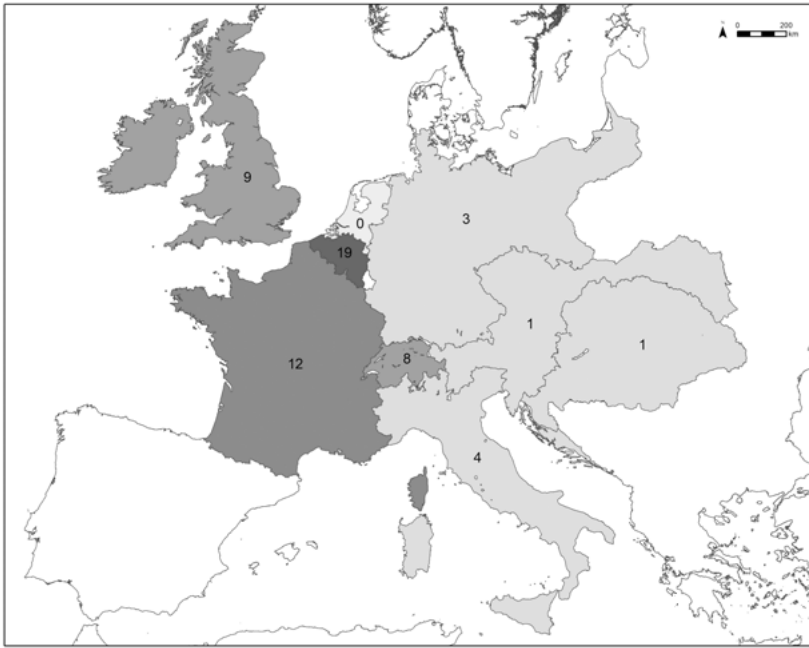
Fig. 8.2: Geographic distribution of the establishment of congress series and international organisations 1880 – 1914.

Founded in	Year	Name
Antwerp	1890	Congrès International sur le Patronage des Détenus et la Protection des Enfants Moralement Abandonnés
	1894	Fédération Internationale des Patronages
Brussels	1883	Comité Permanent des Congrès Internationaux pour l'Amélioration du Sort des Sourds-muets
	1887	Congrès International d'Éducation Physique de la Jeunesse
	1889	Congrès International de l'Enseignement Primaire
	1901	Congrès International de l'Enseignement Moyen
	1907	Union Internationale pour la Protection de l'Enfance du Premier Âge
	1908	Office International des Oeuvres d'Éducation Populaire
	1909	Office des Échanges Internationaux d'Élèves

Continued

Founded in	Year	Name
	1910	Association Internationale pour l'Étude des Questions relatives à l'Enseignement Technique Supérieur
	1912	Bureau International des Fédérations Nationales du Personnel de l'Enseignement Secondaire Public
Enghien	1910	International Association of Medical Inspectors of Schools
Liège	1881	Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique
	1905	Comité International de Psychologie Pédagogique
		Commission Internationale des Congrès d'Éducation Familiale
		Congrès International de l'Éducation et de Protection de l'Enfance dans la Famille
		International Commission for Agricultural Teaching
		International Institute of Public Art
Ostend	1909	Bureau International de Documentation Éducative

Figure 8.2 shows a striking difference between Belgium and the Netherlands. No less than 19 conference series and international organisations with an educational component or aimed at the protection of children were set up in Belgium. In the Netherlands, on the contrary, there was not even a single one. Setting up and coordinating international secretariats of congress series or organisations required a strong local anchoring and commitment. The first Belgian organisation that explicitly sought international supporters and established a transnational advocacy network to realise a national (secular) agenda was the *Ligue de l'Enseignement*.[27] At the time of the "*Kulturkampf*", foundations were laid for an expert community that would last well into the 20th century (e.g. the *Office International des Oeuvres d'Éducation Populaire*). In 1880, the *Ligue* organised the *Congrès International de l'Enseignement*, the first international congress fully dedicated to education. Pivotal figures were Freemasons Charles Buls (1837–1914), Pierre Tempels (1825–1923) and Alexis Sluys (1849–1939), who would go on to attend many international congresses related to educational questions.

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27 Carmen Van Praet and Christophe Verbruggen, "'Soldiers for a Joint Cause'. A Relational Perspective on Local and International Educational Leagues and Associations in the 1860s," *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 130, no. 1 (2015): 4–24. For the *Ligue de l'Enseignement,* see: chapter 5 of this volume.

These three people were also the driving force of the *Congrès International de l'Éducation Populaire* (Brussels, 1910) and the four *Congrès Internationaux de l'Oeuvre de l'Art Public* (1898–1910). These four congresses were organised by *L'Art Public*, founded under the name of *L'Œuvre de l'Art Appliqué à la Rue et aux Objets d'Utilité Publique*. In 1893, Charles Buls, Jean Robie (1821–1910), Jules de Borchgrave (1850–1927), Alfred Cluysenaar (1837–1902), Maurice Frison (1863–1938), Julien Dillens (1849–1904), Jef Lambeaux (1852–1908) and Edmond De Vigne (1841–1918) established *L'Œuvre de l'Art Appliqué* with the aim to transform the streets into picturesque and instructive museums.[28] *L'Art Public* was one of the many popular education initiatives the *Ligue* initiated (e.g. *Musée Populaire* and the *École Primaire Charles Buls*). It had a strong international focus: the four congresses of *L'Art Public* served to spread the League's ideals beyond Belgium and promote art as an instrument for instruction and social reform.

The organisation of international congresses was also highly dependent on the support of local and national governments. The first patronage congress of 1890 cannot be separated from the political agenda of the Catholic politician Jules Lejeune (1828–1911), Minister of Justice, and the ambitions of the liberal Antwerp city council. This prestigious event was supposed to stimulate the expansion of local patronage committees and promote the law on Conditional Conviction and Conditional Release of 31 May 1888 ("*condamnation et libération conditionnelles*") on an international scale.[29] In his report to King Leopold II (1835–1909),[30] Jules Lejeune presented the international congress of 1890 as an initiative of the patronage committee of Antwerp, Belgium's leading and most active patronage committee. In its "*Bureau Provisoire*", the key local players, among others the mayor of Antwerp, the governor of the province and the magistrate Eugène Hayoit de Termicourt, president of the committee and judge at the Court of First Instance, stood alongside high civil servants and national politicians. The members of the Antwerp committee were in charge of the practical or-

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28 Bruno Notteboom, "'Ouvrons les yeux!': stedenbouw en beeldvorming van het landschap in België 1890–1940" (PhD diss., Ghent University, 2009), 187–200.

29 Stef Christiaensen, *Tussen klassieke en modern criminele politiek. Leven en beleid van Jules Lejeune* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers, 2004), 496; Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, "La Belgique capitale internationale du patronage au XIXe siècle," in *Justice et Aide Sociale: 100 Ans d'évolution; Reflets et perspectives de politiques criminelle, pénitentiaire et sociale (1894–1994)* (Brussels: Bruylant, 1994), 281–337.

30 Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, *Les pénitenciers pour enfants en Belgique au XIXe siècle (1840–1914)* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Commission internationale pour l'histoire des Assemblées d'États, 1996), 77–78.

ganisations of the congress. The conference series and international organisation that was initiated in Antwerp during the 1890s has been important for the internationalisation in the field of the treatment of juvenile delinquency, as well as for the growing attention for concepts such as patronage and prevention, on both the national and international level.[31] Mary-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat argued that this indicates a growing concern for the child's health, education, re-education and moralisation. In the 1880s, the main view on juvenile delinquency went through a transition from punishment to protection via legislation and education. Children were no longer predominantly seen as guilty, but rather as children in danger who needed to be protected and re-educated.[32] The growing attention for all these different children in danger became a catalyst for several specialised educational institutions and training programmes, and also stimulated new educational sciences such as experimental pedagogy, educational psychology and pedology. Ovide Decroly (1871–1932) and others started testing and observing the intellectual capacity of children, their behaviour, and moral and physical deviations in order to classify these children in danger.[33]

The notion of patronage or protection is firmly rooted in a long tradition of Christian charity, based on a direct, personal relation between the givers and recipients of charitable support. In Belgium, charitable initiatives gained importance after the Belgian Revolution in the context of a Catholic réveil. As a complement to the penitentiary system, the authorities tried to establish so-called "*comités de patronage*" ('patronage committees') in 1835 and 1848, in order to accompany prisoners inside and outside the prison walls. The patronage organised by Willem Suringar (1790–1872) in the Netherlands as early as 1842 went beyond guiding or re-educating young delinquents or former detainees. Through personal contact, the rich were supposed to give moral, material and religious support to both parents and children.[34] Another, but still related, interpretation of Catholic patronage with an even clearer educational and re-educating mission appeared in Belgium in the middle of the 19th century when the *Société de Saint-Vincent-de-Paul* started several youth work initiatives. The Society also propagat-

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31 Dupont-Bouchat, "La Belgique capitale".

32 Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, "Du tourisme pénitentiaire à 'l'internationale des philanthropes'. La création d'un réseau pour la protection de l'enfance à travers les congrès internationaux (1840–1914)," *Paedagogica Historica* 38, no 2–3 (2002): 533–563.

33 Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics," 765. See also: chapter 1/introduction and chapter 2 of this volume.

34 H.D. Van Leeuw and Marco H.D. Van Leeuw, "Church, State, and Citizen. Charity in the Netherlands," in *Charity and Social Welfare: The Dynamics of Religious Reform in Nothern Europe, 1780–1920*, ed. Leen Van Molle (Leuven: Leuven University Press , 2017), 137.

ed individualised poor relief via home visits to provide material support and moral and religious teaching.[35] Belgian Catholics also saw a role for themselves at the international level.[36] *The Fédération des Patronages Catholiques*, established in 1893, contributed largely to the creation (in 1911) of an international Catholic federation, which subsequently became the *Fédération Internationale Catholique d'Éducation Physique et Sportive*.

The growing attention to non-formal education outside of school becomes clear when we look at the domain of 'family education'. The national government initiated the Liège congress of 1905 on family education (the first in a series). When in 1910, the *Commission Internationale des Congrès d'Éducation Familiale* formally established its headquarters in Brussels, this was also done with explicit support from the Belgian Catholic government.[37] On an international level, this was in line with Belgium's ambition to become an important focal point for intellectual cooperation. On the national level, gathering around the theme of family education was a good example of how intellectual elites were trying to get hold of education and upbringing outside the school and across party and political boundaries.

In any case, it is clear that every international organisation or congress series that was founded or administratively housed in Belgium had a strong local anchoring. This was also true for professional organisations that saw the light before the First World War. Without the organisational strength of the national Belgian association of primary school teachers, it would have been impossible to establish the *International Bureau of the Federation of Teachers*, which was created as a result of a congress in the context of the World Exhibition in Liège in 1905. In 1910, on the *Congrès International de l'Enseignement Secondaire* (Brussels), a temporary office was established to promote the interest of secondary education teachers. Two years later, it became the *Bureau International des Fédérations Nationales du Personnel de l'Enseignement Secondaire*. Both the *International Bureau of the Federation of Teachers* and the *Bureau International des Fédérations Nationales du Personnel de l'Enseignement Secondaire* were not

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35 An Hermans, "Negentiende-eeuwse patronaten: 'beschermplaatsen' voor volkskinderen," in *Vijftig jaar Chiroleven 1934–1984. Aspecten uit heden en verleden van een jeugdbeweging*, ed. M. De Vroede and A. Hermans (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1985), 13–28. See also: *De Vincentianen in België 1842–1992*, eds. Jan De Maeyer and Paul Wynants (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992).

36 See: Vincent Viaene, *Belgium and the Holy See from Gregory XVI to Pius IX (1831–1859): Catholic Revival, Society and Politics in 19th-Century Europe* (Brussels: Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 2001).

37 Herren, *Internationale Organisationen*, 199.

very successful, as they did not survive the First World War. However, in the 1920s, several new international teachers' organisations were established in Belgium, such as the communist *Education Workers' International* (1924, Brussels) and its counterpart, the *International Trade Secretariat* (1926, Brussels).

This brief overview of institutional developments and overlapping interests shows a confusing social and ideological landscape. At this point, our relational and actor-centred approach to the participation of Belgians and Dutchmen in international congresses comes into play. In our analysis, we include the selection of congresses with a clear educational scientific focus studied by Fuchs and Matasci, but also many other congresses where other social causes were discussed. We do so in order to show how educational internationalism was intertwined with related fields of social reform. We will start our longitudinal, relational approach towards the dynamics of intellectual movements by analysing multiple memberships, thus showing the evolution of networks and organisational exchanges. Mapping the multiple memberships of activists is a common way of studying the evolution of networks and organisational exchanges over time.[38] It has been used several times as an indicator of cultural transfers such as knowledge exchange by, for instance, Naomi Rosenthal et al., who managed to create a genealogy of causes in the 19th-century New York State, focusing on the multiple memberships of women active in social reform movements.[39] The number of mutual members or joint ties allowed the authors to make clusters of women's reform organisations. Their analysis not only revealed a genealogy of causes, but also allowed them to identify central and intermediary actors or 'brokers', core/periphery structures and, ultimately, differences between the organisational structure and culture of 1848 and 1900.

Co-presence or co-membership (as participants were often referred to as members) can reveal meaningful trends and indicate latent patterns.[40] Our main research interest lies in the internationalisation of the social question and the emergence and development of the institutional ties that were generated

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38 Mario Diani and Ann Mische, "Network Approaches and Social Movements," in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Movements* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 306–325.

39 Naomi Rosenthal, Meryl Fingrutd, Michele Ethier, Roberta Karant and David McDonald, "Social Movements and Network Analysis: A Case Study of Nineteenth-Century Women's Reform in New York State," *American Journal of Sociology* 90, no. 5 (1985): 1022–1054.

40 Our approach is elaborated in: Christophe Verbruggen, Thomas D'haeninck and Hans Blomme, "Mobility and Movements in Intellectual History: a Social Network Approach," in *The Power of Networks: Prospects of Historical Network Research*, eds. Florian Kerschbaumer, Linda Von Keyserlingk, Martin Stark and Marten During (Abingdon: Routledge Publishing, forthcoming).

by multiple memberships. Above all, we are looking for different and changing patterns of attending international congresses. Furthermore, it is also our aim to reveal change over time. Hence, we follow Claire Lemercier's example and assigned dates to the ties and nodes, which is a good way to include and study the dynamics of networks.[41] A change in the web of relationships indicates changes in personal interests and to what extent mobile intellectuals engaged in both discussions on educational issues and other social causes. It reveals the relevant social circles and (congress) fora in which the creation and circulation of ideas took place.

The central dataset we are using comes from TIC Collaborative, a Virtual Research Environment (VRE) for the study of 19th and early 20th-century international organisations and (scientific) congresses.[42] The database contains biographical information of over 22,000 social reformers, activists and experts and their affiliations with international congresses, as well as more than 400 non-governmental international and transregional organisations established before 1914. The VRE is powered by Nodegoat,[43] a web-based database management platform with a graphical interface. Above all, it is well-suited for the spatial exploration of data with the intention of raising new questions and discovering unexpected findings. Nodegoat is primarily concerned with the creation and contextualisation of single objects that move through time and space, but queries and selections can also be made for network analysis outside Nodegoat, or for a multivariate analysis in the context of a prosopography.

We focused on Belgian and Dutch participants in a large selection of thematically related international congresses between the first international penitentiary congress, held in Frankfurt in 1846, and the beginning of the First World War in 1914. We selected 283 congresses with a direct or indirect focus on education, women's rights or moral and cultural reform. In total, more than 7500 reformers originating from the Low Countries (the vast majority were Belgians), who together accounted for over 10,000 congress visits, are included in the dataset. Nineteenth-century congresses can be perceived as both events and organisations. They were often a first step towards institutionalisation, or functioned more or less as organisations by frequently providing a forum for experts to exchange their experiences and ideas. The latent patterns in the transnational so-

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41 Claire Lemercier, "Taking Time Seriously: How Do We Deal with Change in Historical Networks?," *Knoten und Kanten III, Soziale Netzwerkanalyse in Politik- und Geschichtswissenschaft*, eds. Marten Düring, Markus Gamper and Linda Reschke (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2015), 183 – 211.

42 www.tic.ugent.be.

43 https://nodegoat.net.

cial reform network we want to visualise refer to Belgian and Dutch reformers clustered by shared congress visits.

We use a hierarchical clustering technique in order to re-evaluate an entire network and group actors who share similar positions with regard to the totality of positions in the network together. Our activists were plotted in a two-step approach. First, the data was entered and pre-processed in Gephi. A projection technique, via the MultiMode Networks Projection plugin, was used to convert the two-mode network (persons and congresses) to a hierarchically clustered one-mode network of congresses. Second, we calculated the properties of the network (degree centrality and modularity) in Gephi via the size and colour of the nodes and vertices. The result of this can be seen in Figure 8.3.
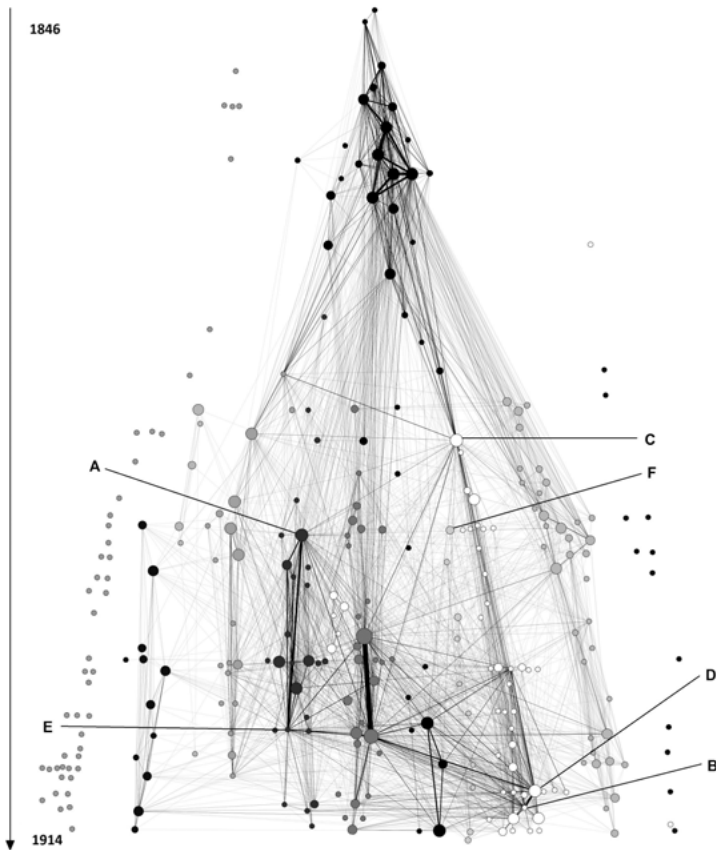
Figure 8.3: Co-membership of 283 congresses related to social reform (1846 – 1914). The data used for the analysis will become open linked data in 2019, see: TIC website: www.tic.ugent.be.

A.   Congrès International pour l'Étude des Questions relatives au Pa-
            tronage des Détenus et la Protection des Enfants Moralement Aban-
            données (1890, Antwerp)
B.   Congrès International de Pédologie (1911, Brussels)
C.   Congrès International de l'Enseignement (1880, Brussels)
D.   Congrès International de l'Éducation Populaire (1910, Brussels)
E.   Congrès International pour l'Étude des Questions relatives au Pa-
            tronage des Condamnés, des Enfants Moralement Abandonnés, des
            Vagabonds et des Aliénés (1905, Liège)
F.   Congrès International du Droit des Femmes (1889, Paris)

Cluster 1 (of 11 in total): white nodes (including B, C and D) group congresses mainly related
            to education and Freemasonry.
Cluster 2: black nodes (including A and E) group congresses held on peniten-
            tiary reform, charity and social welfare, patronage, and child protec-
            tion. We will refer to this cluster as the re-educational and child
            protection cluster.
Cluster 3: grey nodes (including F) group congresses related to women's
            rights, women's protection and feminism, mostly taking place out-
            side of Belgium

Figure 8.3 shows which congresses were visited by reformers from the Low
Countries. Almost 50 (black nodes, plotted left) were not visited at all, and 20
congresses (grey nodes, plotted right) are isolated, which means that they
were visited by only a few reformers, who did not visit other congresses. All con-
gresses are ordered chronologically, with the oldest above. The size of the nodes
represents the number of Belgian and Dutch delegates present at each congress
(degree centrality). Although the isolates and pendants do influence the density
of the network (0.063), we can clearly see a dense graph, which indicates a rather
strong presence of Low Country reformers in the network (both synchronically
and diachronically), as well as strong shared patterns of congress visits. Howev-
er, it is important to note that of all the congresses that were visited, over 30 per
cent were held in the Low Countries. Hence, the large number of visits from Bel-
gian and Dutch scholars is only to be expected.

Clusters of co-memberships at congresses give us a lot of insight into the dif-
ferent 'causes' that actors (which can be both persons and organisations) were
likely to share.[44] As a means to identify these clusters, we can use particular al-
gorithms to structure the network into several subgroups of densely intercon-

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44 Rosenthal et al., "Social Movements and Network Analysis".

nected nodes.[45] One accepted model to calculate this modularity (the strength of division of a network) is the Louvain method for community detection. Applying this algorithm to a specific dataset can help researchers to visually explore their networks and develop hypotheses for further research. In our case, modularity calculation means grouping those congresses together that were largely visited by the same Belgian and Dutch reformers. The colour of the nodes indicates the modularity class they belong to. Congresses that share a high amount of Dutch and Belgian participants will have the same colour and will be strongly connected to each other. The modularity structures the network into 11 clusters, one cluster that groups the congresses taking place in the 1840s to the 1860s, 5 clusters for the congresses between 1878 and 1889, and 5 more for the period until the First World War. The Paris World's Fair of 1878 was a major catalyst for the internationalisation of the social question. More than 30 social reform congresses took place that year. The increase in the number of modularity classes follows the expanding network, which indicates that the field of social reform went through a process of specialisation. The narrow lines between these later congresses that were grouped in different modules indicate that, over time, groups of Belgians and Dutch visited more congresses on one specific theme and chose to ignore others. This stands in stark contrast with earlier congresses, which had, generally speaking, a stronger link with each other (weighted network). Congresses taking place in the 1840s to the 1860s, on the other hand, are grouped into the same cluster, indicating that there was a certain core group of congress visitors. This observation expands on the analysis of Nico Randeraad and Chris Leonards who were able to indicate a congress elite of visitors to social reform congresses in the period 1840 to 1880.[46]

Our analysis reveals that educational congresses are grouped in several clusters and share several visitors with congresses related to various social issues. Cluster 1, which contains a large number of congresses organised between 1878 and the outbreak of the First World War, is a good example. It consists of a group of congresses on Freemasonry, education and school hygiene, with a peak around 1910 to 1912, when four congresses were visited by many Belgians and Dutchmen. The group also shows strong patterns of shared congress visits. For example, the *Congrès International de l'Éducation Populaire* (1910, Brussels) had 49 visitors originating from the Low Countries in common with the *Congrès International de Pédologie* (1911, Brussels). Several visitors, especially the prom-

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45 Vincent Blondel, Jean-Loup Guillaume, Renaud Lambiotte and Etienne Lefebvre, "Fast Unfolding of Communities in Large Networks," *Journal of Statistical Mechanics: Theory and Experiment* 2008, no. 10 (2008): 100 – 108.

46 Chris Leonards and Nico Randeraad, "Transnational Experts in Social Reform, 1840 – 1880".

inent figures, can be associated with Freemasonry, the Belgian *Ligue de l'Enseignement* or the *Ligue Belge du Droit des Femmes*. Within this "*nébuleuse réformatrice*", feminism and the locally rooted transnational women's movement occupied a central place, both institutionally, ideologically and in the framing of other issues. Hence, it is clear that they entered into an alliance with Freemasons and education reformers.[47] Congresses related to the women's movement and feminism are mostly part of cluster 3, but are also partially present in cluster 1. Cluster 3 is strongly related to both clusters 1 and 2.

However, several other clusters also contain congresses held on educational topics or congresses with one or more subsections in which educational topics were discussed. Cluster 2 groups together congresses related to juvenile delinquency, child protection, charitable work and re-education. In contrast to cluster 1, in which the main visitors were dyed-in-the-wool liberals, several of the prominent congress visitors in cluster 2 were Catholics. In this cluster, the penitentiary congresses play an important role. They have about 95 Belgian and Dutch attendances in common with the congresses on the patronage of juvenile delinquency and morally abandoned children. Aside from the fact that these congresses were attended by many representatives of local charitable institutions, they also shared a strong belief in the importance of education as the main stimulus for social progress. A similar conviction was already present at the international congresses related to social sciences and social welfare in the 1850s and 1860s, which had congress sections dedicated to education. In particular, the congresses organised by the *Association pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales* were a catalyst for the spread of educational models such as the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* ('Society for Public Welfare'), the Froebel Kindergarten or innovative practices for the education of the blind and deaf (see chapter 9 on Auguste Wagener).[48] In Figure 8.3, one can see that, although these congresses are grouped in a different cluster, there are many relations to be found between these international meetings and the first international educational congress held in 1880 in Brussels, and to some extent also to the two congress clusters discussed earlier.

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47 Christophe Verbruggen and Julie Carlier, "Laboratories of Social Thought: The Transnational Advocacy Network of the Institut International pour la Diffusion des Expériences Sociales and its Documents du Progrès (1907–1916)," in *Information Beyond Borders: International Cultural and Intellectual Exchange in the Belle Époque*, ed. Boyd W. Rayward (New York: Routledge, 2016), 123–142.

48 Van Praet and Verbruggen, "'Soldiers for a Joint Cause'. A Relational Perspective on Local and International Educational Leagues".

Ekhardt Fuchs and several other historians have argued that there were no sequences of regular meetings of educational science nor international organisations of pedagogues before 1914.[49] It is true that the start of the 20th century can be seen as a turning point in the professionalisation and scientification of the field of educational internationalism. Nevertheless, our analysis of the co-presence of Belgians and Dutchmen at international congresses indicates that the international educational congresses cannot be separated from a wider network formed by international reformist congresses and are deeply rooted in transnational networks that emerged more than half a century earlier. Thus, our actor-oriented approach shows a fairly strong intertwining in terms of social contact and personal interest between the early educational movements and various other social causes.

Education, child protection, re-education and welfare

In the first part of this chapter, we highlighted two groups of congresses: the first was connected to education, school hygiene and Freemasonry (cluster 1), and the second to juvenile delinquency, charitable work, child protection and patronage (cluster 2). This dynamic landscape formed by the interwoven social 'causes' (Figure 8.3) helps us define educational internationalism through and beyond the "hybridity" or "pluridisciplinarity" that was already observed by Hofstetter and Schneuwly.[50] Indeed, the intellectual division of labour and professionalisation of the educational sciences took shape in a landscape in which the boundaries were still permeable. In this second part, we zoom in on the intersections between educational internationalism (cluster 1) and the international movement for child protection (cluster 2).[51]

As illustrated in Figure 8.3, the Belle Epoque's interest in child protection budded within the penitentiary network when prevention of juvenile criminality became a central matter on the prison reform agenda. From 1895 onwards, a fourth section on children and juveniles was included in penitentiary congresses, while preventive and welfare institutions for children were discussed from

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49 Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics".

50 Hofstetter and Schneuwly, "Introduction. Educational Sciences," 569 – 589.

51 Dupont-Bouchat, "Le mouvement international," 207 – 235.

1878 onwards.[52] Child protection itself was closely connected to the issue of the 'patronage' of detainees, released detainees, vagrants and lunatics, as shown by the original titles of the congresses.[53] In most of these congresses, education and special schools were considered central instruments for crime prevention.[54] For children at risk, re-education outside the family was sometimes seen as "a necessary prophylactic against further neglect and future criminal behaviour".[55] The experiences of Ovide Decroly and Jean Demoor (1867–1941), who were involved in the founding of a special school for abnormal children in Brussels, were largely circulated by the periodicals and congresses related to child protection. Within the *Société de Protection de l'Enfance Anormale* and the *Société de Pédotechnie*, there were close relationships between doctors and jurists (notably the magistrate Arthur Levoz (1852–1910), who was mostly active in the field of patronage and child protection before becoming the general secretary of the Belgian *Ligue de l'Enseignement* between 1905 and 1910).[56] On the other hand, Ovide Decroly himself served on the editorial board of the *Bulletin de l'Office de la Protection de l'Enfance* after the Great War.[57] The main question now is whether these few examples suggest a deeper interplay between educational internationalism and child protection, and whether this relationship is visible in the co-memberships between the two clusters?

Cluster 1 and cluster 2 are connected by 60 individuals, a very tiny proportion of actors compared to the 3093 individuals who visited at least one congress of the two clusters (Figure 8.4). By comparison, the cluster 'Education' is formed by the co-memberships of 520 actors. Most big names of both movements (e.g.

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52 The childhood of criminals and the importance of home education were also stressed in the criminal anthropology congress of Paris (1889), to deny the existence of congenital criminals ("*criminel-nés*").

53 For instance: *IVe Congrès International pour l'Étude des Questions relatives au Patronage des Condamnés, des Enfants Moralement Abandonnés, des Vagabonds et des Aliénés* (the fourth International Congres for the Study of Questions relating to the Patronage of the Convicted, Morally Abandoned Children, Vagabonds and the Mentally ill) (Liège, 1905).

54 Cluster 2 also includes two international congresses "to improve the conditions of the blind" (Paris 1900, Brussels 1902), one international congress on the education of the deaf (Liège, 1905), and two international congresses against pornography (*Internationalen Kongress zur bekämpfung der unsittlichen literatur* 1904; *Conférence relative à la répression de la circulation des publications obscènes* 1910).

55 Jeroen J. H. Dekker, "Philanthropic Networks for Children at Risk in Nineteenth-Century Europe," *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 2 (2007): 240.

56 Sylvain Wagnon, "Le juriste Arthur Levoz (1852–1910) et les mutations de la protection de l'enfance en Belgique," *Les Études Sociales* 156, no. 2 (2012): 40.

57 Angelo Van Gorp, *Tussen mythe en wetenschap: Ovide Decroly (1871–1932)* (Leuven: ACCO, 2005), 41.

Adolphe Prins (1845–1919), Jules Lejeune, Henri Jaspar (1870–1939) but also Josefa Joteyko (1866–1928), Médard Schuyten (1866–1948)) disappear once we zoom in on these intermediate actors.[58] The new group includes few individuals interested in social reform in general, i.e. people who visited numerous types of congresses, for example the Nobel laureate and social democrat Henri La Fontaine (1854–1943), the socialist sociologist Hector Denis (1842–1913), social liberal intellectual Emile de Laveleye (1822–1892) and Dutch Lieutenant-Colonel Gustaaf Eugenius Victor Lambert van Zuylen (1837–1905). Despite their centrality within the overall network, they are situated at the periphery of the visualisation of the clusters of conferences dedicated to education and child protection, re-education and welfare (Figure 8.4). As the nodes representing de Laveleye and van Zuylen suggest, these two protagonists were particularly mobile and visited congresses which no other Belgian and Dutchman would attend.[59] The presence of de Laveleye can be explained by his interest in the patronage of prisoners, aside from his multiple other endeavours. In the early 1880s, de Laveleye was struck by the working of the patronage committee in Neuchâtel and fervently recommended to apply the Swiss model in Belgium. Hence, he also became the first honorary president of the patronage committee of Liège (1888).

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58 Raymond Buyse (1889–1974) and Jozef Verheyen (1889–1962) were too young to be included in the chronological framework of this contribution.

59 Michel Dumoulin, "Emile de Laveleye, passeur d'idées entre la France, l'Allemagne et l'Angleterre," in *Industries, territoires et cultures en Europe du Nord-Ouest, XIXe–XXe siècles, Mélanges en l'honneur de Jean-François Eck* (Roubaix: Archives nationales du monde du travail, 2015), 211–217. On de Laveleye and his intellectual mobility, see: Thomas D'haeninck, "Writing Letters: Emile De Laveleye's Correspondence Network," in *Unhinging the National Framework: Perspectives on Transnational Life-Writing*, eds. Babs Boter, Marleen Rensen and Giles Scott-Smith (Leiden: Sidestone Press, forthcoming).
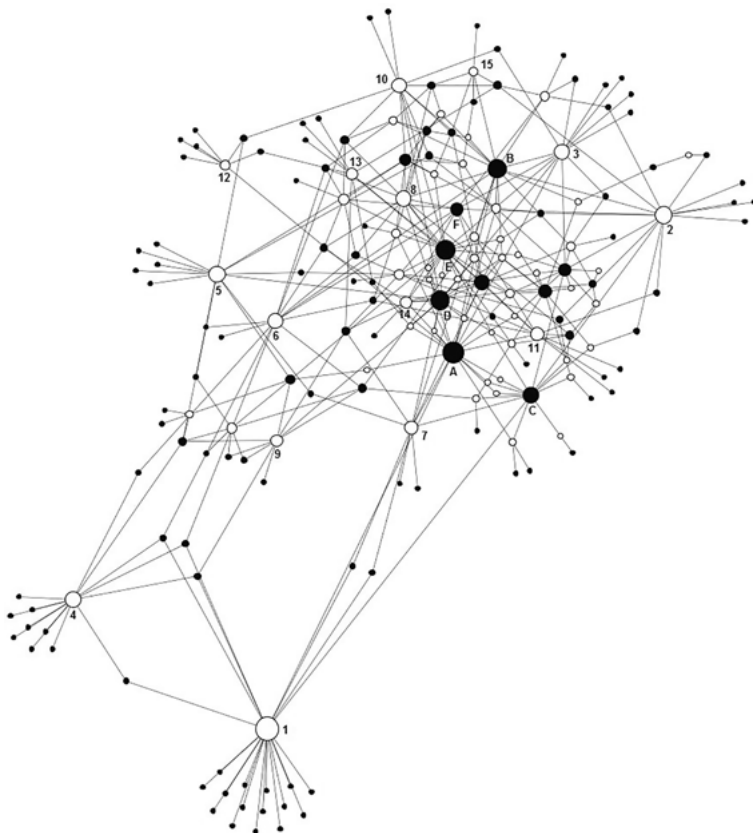
Fig. 8.4: The 60 actors connecting clusters 1 ('Education') and 2 ('Re-education and child protection') (black nodes: congresses; white nodes: persons)

A – Congrès International pour l'Étude des Questions relatives au Patronage des Détenus et la Protection des Enfants Moralement Abandonnés (1890, Antwerp)
B – Congrès International de Pédologie (1911, Brussels)
C – Congrès International de l'Enseignement (1880, Brussels)
D – Congrès International de l'Éducation Populaire (1910, Brussels)
E – Congrès International pour l'Étude des Questions relatives au Patronage des Condamnés,des Enfants Moralement Abandonnés, des Vagabonds et des Aliénés (1905, Liège)
F – Troisième Congrès d'Anthropologie Criminelle (1892, Brussels)

1 – Emile de Laveleye
2 – Victor Desguin
3 – Hector Denis
4 – Gustaaf Eugenius Victor Lambert van Zuylen
5 – Henri La Fontaine

6 – Gerardus Antonius van Hamel
7 – Pierre Tempels
8 – Jan Simon van der Aa
9 – Marie Popelin
10 – Emile Clément Waxweiler
11 – Arthur Levoz
12 – Victor Brants
13 – Henry Carton de Wiart
14 – Oscar Landrien
15 – Ovide Decroly

In this intermediary group, there were a lot of academics. The most important ones were part of a small circle from the Université libre de Bruxelles. They consisted of the founder of the Sociology Institute Emile Waxweiler (1867–1916), natural sciences and sociology professor Hector Denis, biologist Paul Héger (1846–1925), the founder of the Université Nouvelle Paul Janson (1840–1913) and philosopher Guillaume Tiberghien (1860–1901). Politicians (11/60) and magistrates (12/60) built bridges between welfare, child protection and educational matters, especially during the period between the first congress of patronage (1890) and the 1910 congress on popular education. Taken together, jurists, law professors and magistrates (judges and lawyers) represent a third (21/60) of the sample. Among the five penal and criminal law professors, three are from the Netherlands: Jan Simon van der Aa (1865–1944), Gerardus Antonius van Hamel (1842–1917) and David Simons (1860–1930). The relatively small proportion of Dutch people in the sample (10/60) can be explained by Belgium's leading position regarding child protection and patronage. As a result, only a few congresses took place in the Netherlands.[60]

By contrast, the rate of representatives of local charitable institutions (2/60) and school directors, teachers and inspectors (8/60) is relatively low. Among the five doctors in our sample, Victor Desguin (1838–1919) stands out, since he played an active role in the debates on school hygiene that were held on international congresses. In Antwerp, Desguin had established a system for medical school inspection in 1874, which he considered a model to be actively promoted abroad.[61] At the sixth International Hygiene and Demography Congress (Vienna, 1887), Desguin presented his model.[62] Some influential educational experts only

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60 Dupont-Bouchat, "La Belgique capitale".

61 Joris Vandendriessche, "Medische expertise en politieke strijd. De dienst medisch schooltoezicht in Antwerpen, 1860–1900," *Stadsgeschiedenis* 6, no. 2 (2011): 113–128.

62 Nico Randeraad, "Triggers of Mobility: International Congresses (1840–1914) and their Visitors," in *Mobility and Biography*, ed. Sarah Panter (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 69–71.

played a limited role in connecting the two clusters. One example is Ovide Decroly, who submitted a report on specialised schools for abnormal children at the International Penitentiary Congress in Washington (1910), but never attended it. Another example is the Belgian minister of Justice Henry Carton de Wiart (1869–1951), who successfully championed a law on child protection in 1912, and was an honour member of the *Congrès International de l'Éducation Physique* (1910). Overall, most of the actors represented in Figure 8.4 were either mostly active in only one (sub) field – even if they also visited congresses from the other cluster.

By zooming in on the two groups, some congresses appear to form bridges between the two clusters. Feminist congresses in particular played a considerable role in this respect. The feminine presence in our sample (4/60) is the result of the proximity of both clusters with a third one, which is related to women and women's rights (cluster 3 on Figure 8.3). As a result, both cluster 1 and cluster 2 included feminist congresses (*2e Congrès International des Oeuvres et Institutions Féminines* (1900) in cluster 1; *Congrès Féministe International* (1912), and *The International Woman Suffrage Alliance* (1913) in cluster 2). Isala van Diest (1842–1916), the first female doctor in Belgium, embodied the new generation of locally engaged women who attended the first patronage congress.[63] The intermediary position of these congresses can be measured statistically by calculating the betweenness centrality. As an isolated example from an older generation of congresses, the first patronage congress of 1890 has the highest betweenness centrality. It is followed closely by the first international congress of pedology (1911), the massive *Congrès de l'enseignement* (1880), and the *Congrès international de l'éducation populaire* (1910).

We should also underline the specific role of criminal anthropology as a go-between between child protection, patronage and pedology. The third congress of criminal anthropology (1892, Brussels) shared 39 Belgian and Dutch visitors with the first patronage congress (Antwerp, 1890), but also 11 visitors with the pedology congress of 1911 (Brussels) and 11 more with the *Congrès International de l'Éducation Populaire* (Brussels, 1910).[64] Half of the university professors of our sample visited the International Congress of Pedoloy in Brussels (1911). According to the words of its most renowned promoter, Ovide Decroly, pedology was a "pure science using the data of physiology, psychology and sociology".[65] Ovide Decroly strongly promoted his new science on international congresses. In

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63 Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, "Femmes philanthropes. Les femmes dans la protection de l'enfance en Belgique (1890–1914)," *Sextant*, no. 13–14 (2000), 81–118.

64 These shared visitors were partly the same (5 on the 11).

65 Cited in Van Gorp, *Tussen mythe en wetenschap*, 43.

his inaugural speech for the *Congrès International de Pédologie* (1911), he stressed that the science of pedology was strongly rooted in the tradition of international congresses. He stated that the current meeting would be a forum for the international circulation of knowledge. Decroly claimed that the event connected three international congresses that had taken place earlier: the *Congrès d'Hygiène Scolaire* (1903), the first *Congrès International d'Éducation et de Protection de l'Enfance dans la Famille* (1905) and the sixth *Congrès International de Psychologie* (1909).[66] The prominent role of pedology as a bridge between the two clusters is already clear by its high betweenness centrality. But the conference that marked the beginning of pedology was also strongly intertwined with various congress series beyond our sample (psychology). At this point, we must acknowledge a shortcoming in our study: the absence in the data of the congresses of the *Union Internationale de Droit Pénal* which "drew together the disciplines of penal law, anthropology, sociology, educational science and medicine into an interdisciplinary whole".[67]

Congresses and associations played a major role in what has been described as the "the canonisation of Ovide Decroly as a 'Saint' of the New Education". His trajectory and self-fashioning stand in stark contrast with the professional trajectory of the famous Dutch educational reformer Jan Ligthart (1859 – 1916), who actively participated in only two conferences: the 1911 conference devoted to pedology and the conference on moral education that took place in The Hague in 1912. Despite this, his school in Amsterdam attracted the attention of many European and American educational innovators, as well as dozens of foreign pedagogues who visited his school, including Auguste Ferrière (1879 – 1960), Ellen Key (1849 – 1926) and Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952). In return, Ligthart was invited on a tour of Sweden and Denmark at the invitation of the Stockholm school directors to discuss his ideas about modernising the educational system. His presence at the congresses in Brussels and The Hague coincided with growing attention to his work and ideas, but it is clear that centrality in conference co-membership networks was not necessarily correlated to prestige or influence within a particular field. Another important factor was the fact that his knowledge of English and especially French was insufficient to be able to participate actively without the help of interpreters in the pre-war international Francophone congresses and organisational life. Sometimes, information transfers were fairly straightforward, for example at conferences or through journals or world exhibitions, or, in the case of Ligthart, via study tours. At other moments,

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66 Van Gorp, *Tussen mythe en wetenschap*, 130.
67 Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics," 119.

however, "traveling libraries" of educational concepts and ideas followed a more convoluted path.[68] One example of another important progressive educator who followed a different international trajectory is the Belgian Catholic Edward Peeters (1873–1937). Peeters was an adept of Ligthart.[69] A few years after a study trip in the Netherlands where he had met Ligthart, and after having translated his work into French, Peeters started publishing *Minerva* (1909–1914), a journal that marked the beginning of the *Bureau International de Documentation Éducative*, founded in Ostend and moved to Geneva after the war.[70]

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have used an actor-oriented approach to educational internationalism in order to go beyond the institutional landscape formed by congresses and international associations. We focused on the co-memberships of Belgians and Dutchmen at international congresses and presented a dynamic picture of educational internationalism. Changes over time in a constantly shifting web of relationships indicate possible changes in status but, from our perspective, also changes in personal interests and organisational change. This approach ultimately reveals the relevant social circles through which the creation and circulation of ideas can be interpreted and understood. Our empirical findings have confirmed that, for the 19th century, educational reform was intertwined with the emergence of philanthropic and reformist advocacy networks. We have argued that educational internationalism should be seen as part of a wider trend of transnational circulation of intellectual and cultural goods.

These dynamics did not start at the end of the 19th century, but can also be found in the second half of the 19th century. Indeed, the start of the 20th century can be seen as a turning point in the institutionalisation, professionalisation and scientificising of education on an international level. Yet our analysis indicates

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68 See: Thomas S. Popkewitz, "Inventing the Modern Self and John Dewey: Modernities and the Traveling of Pragmatism in Education – An Introduction," in *Inventing the Modern Self and John Dewey: Modernities and the Travelling of Pragmatism in Education*, ed. Thomas S. Popkewitz (New York: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2005), 10.

69 For Edward Peeters, see: Marc Depaepe, "The Practical and Professional Relevance of Educational Research and Pedagogical Knowledge from the Perspective of History: Reflections on the Belgian Case in Its International Background," *European Educational Research Journal* 1 (2002): 360–379.

70 Jürgen Oelkers, "Reformpädagogik vor Der Reformpädagogik," *Paedagogica Historica* 42, no. 1–2 (2006): 19–20.

that, already in the 1850s and 1860s, social experts and activists met regularly at international congresses where they discussed educational matters. Their co-memberships of international congresses generated networks that facilitated a cross-border exchange of innovative ideas and practices in the fields of social and educational reform. Since education was of major importance in the emerging reformist advocacy network, it became the topic of a significant number of congresses.

Education was also seen as an instrument for various related social causes, including the prevention of crime, women's rights, the fight against poverty and juvenile delinquency. Several authors have indeed already emphasised that there was a lot of overlap between different fields of social reform and educational internationalism. However, the important nuance we want to make here is that there is not so much an overlap, but rather an overarching social reform field. The wind of social reform was powerful, but not powerful enough to question the social order itself. Most self-declared reformers did not engage (or at least not primarily) to eliminate poverty and social inequality and strive for equality of opportunity. Rather, they did this to administer and control the social question. In essence, many initiatives were still an expression of ancient forms of charity, as they were not aimed at fundamentally questioning the social structures themselves. They created a connection between the classic philanthropic model and the new social politics of care that was organised by the state.

Scholars of educational reform have drawn attention to the ubiquity of educational topics and the difficulty to distinguish expert knowledge on education from expert knowledge on re-education. We have zoomed in on the co-memberships between congresses grouped into the two clusters and we have found a rather small group of individuals bridging these clusters, which hardly resulted in social or institutional ties. Several of these intermediate figures were true cosmopolitans with a wide interest in social reform, who showed strong international mobility. However, within the cluster of education, much stronger connections were found with congresses related to Freemasonry and feminism. The cluster we labelled 'Re-education' was deeply intertwined with the fields of beneficence and charitable work, thus suggesting an ideological and religious distinction. Nevertheless, this distinction may not be overestimated. The casus of the *Congrès Internationaux de Patronage,* which was the result of a collaboration between Catholics and liberals, shows that (national) ideological frictions were sometimes transcended on the international level.

The limited number of connections between 'Re-education' and 'Education', especially in contrast with both domains' strong connections with other social causes, urges us to rethink the way in which educational internationalism has been defined. The centrality of some major international congresses (*Congrès*

de l'Enseignement, 1880) related to education in general, or to one aspect thereof (*Congrès International de l'Éducation Populaire*, 1910), or to the upcoming science of pedagogy (*Congrès International de Pédologie*, 1911) in the network also confirms the existence of a process of delineation, professionalisation and scientification of educational knowledge. However, rather than the emergence of a delineated social and discursive field of educational sciences and pedagogical movements, educational internationalism was, before the First World War, a crossroad of social experts and activists engaged in a variety of social causes.

Thomas D'haeninck

9 The Intellectual Mobility of Auguste Wagener (1829–1896) in a Transnational Network of Social Reform. A Cross-Border History

Auguste Wagener (1829–1896) was a prominent liberal politician and Professor of Philology at the State University of Ghent. He is an illustration of a first generation of mobile Belgians who attended international congresses related to social reform in general and (popular) education in particular. Wagener was a well-cultivated man and an influential person in the educational, political and cultural milieus of Ghent. As previous chapters in this volume have stated, recent research has shown that local educational and social reform practices cannot be dissociated from transnational connections and the international field of reformist knowledge that emerged during the second half of the long 19th century. In this chapter, I will show how Wagener's intellectual mobility made local ideas and practices intertwine with an international network of social and educational reformers. I will argue that individual agency is of vital importance for the transnational exchange of educational knowledge. In doing so, I will aim to contribute to the study of popular education in particular and social reform in general, and gain a deeper understanding of the different mechanisms that were at play in the exchange of knowledge beyond the borders of the nation state.

Auguste Wagener: Professor, politician and traveller

In 1850, Wagener was appointed as Professor at the State University of Ghent having studied at the Universities of Bonn, Liège and the Sorbonne, and after making an archaeological educational tour in Asia Minor. Together with Joseph Bidez (1867–1945) and Paul Thomas (1852–1937), he established the reputation of the Ghent philological school. Like François Laurent (1810–1887) and Gustave Callier (1819–1863), he was the kind of socially engaged academic that left his ivory tower, advocated social change and progress, and got involved in public

discussions.[1] Wagener's teaching soon interlaced with his social engagements. Already by 1850, his colleague professor Hubert Brasseur (1823–1890) had become involved in a heated dispute with the local clergy after contesting certain dogmatic theological principles in his course on morality. He even rejected the divinity of Christ. In his own lessons, Wagener advocated similar beliefs and openly supported Brasseur. As a result, he also became involved in a personal quarrel with the Bishop of Ghent, Lodewijk-Jozef Delebecque (1798–1864).[2] Later, his efforts as Alderman for Education to expand the growth of municipal schools in Ghent would again encounter Catholic opposition.[3]

Wagener was part of an engaged urban elite: he frequented the meetings of the *Société Huet*, was the first president of the *Société Littéraire de Gand* (which became later the *Cercle Artistique et Littéraire*), honorary president of the *Willemsgenootschap* ('Willems Society'), deputy-chairman of the *Société pour l'Encouragement des Beaux-arts de Gand*, member of the *Société pour le Progrès des Études Philologiques et Historiques*, and Ghent Alderman for Education and Fine Arts (1863–1877).[4] On a national level, Wagener was a member of the *Académie Royale de Belgique*. He was also active as a Liberal member of parliament between 1882 and 1886.[5] In short, Wagener was a classic example of the cultivated social liberal. He was also a child of his time: like many other engaged citizens of the time, he was a jack-of-all-trades across many social themes, as becomes clear by his numerous commitments and memberships.[6]

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1 See: Jan Art, "Wagener, Auguste (1829–1896)," UGentMemorie. Last modified April 21, 2015. www.ugentmemorie.be/personen/wagener-auguste-1829–1896; Paul Louis Désiré Thomas, *Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Auguste Wagener, membre de l'Académie* (Brussels: Hayez, 1898).
2 See: Emiel Lamberts, *De Heilige Stoel en de zaak Laurent-Brasseur (1856)* (S.l.: s.n., 1970). Wagener, however, never lost support of the university. See: Gustave Callier to Emile de Laveleye, 31 January 1856, MS 3640, Ghent University Library.
3 Kathleen Devolder, *Gij die door 't volk gekozen zijt ... De Gentse gemeenteraad en haar leden 1830–1914* (Ghent: Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde, 1994), 153–154; Wouter Dambre, *August Wagener (1829–1896): een leven voor het onderwijs* (Ghent: Archief R.U.G., 1987), 60–62.
4 Hilda Proot-Cocquyt, *Évolution d' un cercle d'agrément, 1879–1989: Koninklijke kunst- en letterkundige kring/Cercle royal artistique et littéraire* (Ghent: CRAL, 2005); Dambre, *August Wagener (1829–1896)*, 29; Michel Steels, *Geschiedenis van het stedelijk onderwijs te Gent: 1828–1914* (Ghent: s.n., 1978), 135.
5 Thomas, *Notice sur la vie et les travaux de Auguste Wagener, membre de l'Académie*; Franz Cumont, "Auguste Wagener," in *Liber Memorialis, Université de Gand*, vol. 1 (Ghent: s.n., 1913), 148–157. For more information on social liberals, see: chapter 1/introduction to this volume.
6 Carmen Van Praet, "Liberale *hommes-orchestres* en de sociale kwestie in de negentiende eeuw. Tussen lokaal en internationaal" (PhD. diss., University of Ghent, 2015).

Wagener was involved in several educational, political and cultural debates and has therefore become an object of study for historians. However, his international contacts have barely been studied and the role he played at international congresses (studied in chapter 8) have benignly been neglected. It has been pointed out that Wagener played a vital role in the *Société Littéraire de Gand*. He regularly invited foreign prominent figures such as Jules Simon (1814 – 1896), François-Désiré Bancel (1823 – 1871), Pascal Duprat (1815 – 1885) etc. to give presentations on cultural and artistic topics. However, the association's conferences also discussed social issues, for example how popular education could emancipate women and the working class.

Later, he was also in charge of the construction of the Ghent *Institut des Sciences,* a modern scientific laboratory based on the polytechnic schools in Heidelberg, Bonn and Berlin. Around 1880, several modern scientific institutes inspired by German models were constructed in Belgian university cities. They marked a change in view of education and introduced experimental methods as part of educational training.[7] Wagener played a major role in the modernisation of the infrastructure of Ghent University. Not only did he plea for the political and financial support to construct the *Institut des Sciences*, he also made an educational tour to study the polytechnic schools of Dresden, Berlin and several other German and Swiss universities.[8]

The importance of Wagener's cross-border connections goes beyond these concrete examples. He engaged in an emerging transnational discursive field of social reform and contributed to the cross-border circulation of social knowledge. In this chapter, I wish to introduce the notion of 'intellectual mobility' in order to critically examine Wagener's presence at international congresses. My understanding of 'intellectual mobility' follows Stephen Greenblatt's use of "cultural mobility" and adds the notion of 'expert performances' to it.[9] Thus, I see intellectual mobility as all the hidden and conspicuous human actions through which knowledge is spread. This can happen as a consequence of physical movements of people, but also through the circulation of texts, images and cultural goods. The places where knowledge and information are exchanged between mobile individuals, called "contact zones" by Greenblatt, are regarded as stages

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7 Robert Halleux, Geneviève Xhayet, Pascal Pirot, Jan Vandersmissen and Rik Raedschelders, *Tant qu'il y aura des chercheurs. Science et politique en Belgique de 1772 à 2015* (Liège: Luc Pire, 2015), 44 – 48.

8 Auguste Wagener, "Reisaantekeningen betreffende hoger onderwijs in Duitsland", Ghent University Library.

9 Stephen Greenblatt, "Cultural mobility: An Introduction," in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 1–23.

where expert performances take place. 'Expert performances', in their turn, are a wide set of practices that aim to influence and convince fellow experts, the general public and policy makers.[10] Hence, in order to truly understand these expert performances, we need to look further than what happened at these congresses and include other forms of intellectual mobility than merely the physical movement of a person in the context of these events. I will analyse how a specific rhetoric was used, how authority was claimed and, above all, how discursive fields became intertwined. In doing so, I will hope to contribute to our critical understanding of how ideas circulate in a transnational network.

The social question at international congresses

In the second half of the 19th century, the field of social reform in general and education in particular were invigorated by a wide range of cross-border intellectual dynamics. As stated in the previous chapter, educational internationalism cannot be dissociated from the philanthropic and reformist networks that were upcoming at the time. Wagener frequented several international congresses in the 1850s and 1860s and, like several other Belgians, was part of the 'congresses elite', which can be seen as a transnational community of social experts.[11] The series of meetings organised by the *Association Internationale pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales* (AIPS) in the 1860s played a major role in the transnational circulation of knowledge related to education.[12] Historians have argued that these four congresses were a catalyst for the dissemination of educational models such as the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* ('Society for Public Welfare').[13] At the four meetings held in Brussels, Ghent, Amsterdam and Bern, representatives of several locally embedded educational leagues and associations (among others Jean Macé (1815–1894), Luigi Luzatti (1841–1927) and Charles Buls (1837–1914)) met and built a transnational web of relations and ideas. Al-

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10 Lutz Raphael, "Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodische und konzeptionelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 22, no. 2 (1996): 165–193; Robert E. Kohler and Kathryn M. Olesko, "Introduction: Clio meets Science," *Osiris* 27, no. 1 (2012): 1–16.

11 Nico Randeraad and Chris Leonards, "Transnational Experts in Social Reform, 1840–1880," *International Review of Social History* 55, no. 2 (2010): 215–239.

12 For the role of AIPS in the transnational circulation of knowledge, see also: chapters 1, 6, 7 and 8 of this volume.

13 Carmen Van Praet and Christophe Verbruggen, "'Soldiers for a Joint Cause' A Relational Perspective on Local and International Educational Leagues and Associations in the 1860s," *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 130, no. 1 (2015): 4–24.

Figure 9.1: Portrait of Auguste Wagener (1829 – 1896), Florimond Van Loo and Karel de Kessel (1888), (Ghent University Library). This image is licensed under a Creative Commons license: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/

though men mostly took the leading role during the debates, the AIPS also provided a platform for female educationalists, such as Elise Van Calcar (1822–1904) and Baroness Bertha von Marenholtz-Bülow (1810–1893). It also distributed the works of Isabelle Gatti de Gamond (1839–1905). Even though the education of disabled people was barely discussed, a few pioneers for the education of the blind and deaf, such as Charles Carton (1802–1863) and Ramon de la Sagra (1798–1871), also attended these congresses. This engendered personal contacts that led to the circulation of specialist literature.

Wagener actively participated in the third section (art and literature) of the second meeting of the AIPS held in Ghent in 1863. This section was strongly philosophical and therefore deviated from the other congresses of the 1850s and 1860s, as well as from most of the other sections of the AIPS meetings. Rapporteur Paul Voituron (1824–1891), a lawyer from Ghent and a key figure of the Liberal Party, announced at the start of the event that the debates would take a different turn: "We understand more and more that practical problems can only be solved in the light of general principles that are studied by philosophy".[14]

This contrasted sharply with the earlier congresses, where the attendants reported on the current situation of legal, educational, or social issues, or discussed the pros and cons of certain reform models and practices. In Brussels, for example, the section started the debates with many papers on didactical methods for the education of the arts.[15] In Ghent, the Frenchman Louis Danel (1789–1875) was the only person to present a concrete didactical method (on popular music education), simply because it was agreed at the Brussels meeting that he should do so at the next meeting of the AIPS (i.e. the Ghent meeting).

As a Professor of Greek and Latin and Alderman for Education, one would expect Wagener to actively participate in the second section on education and instruction, where questions were raised on the role of the classical languages in modern education and the role of the state in stimulating (popular) educational practices. However, he was only involved in the third section on art and literature. Clearly, he did not think it necessary to participate in debates where practices and concrete models were compared. After all, these discussions often went astray, since speakers tended to dispute each other's thesis based on factual or contextual constraints.

Wagener joined the debate on the influence of the artistic genius on society. The question was raised on 15 September, but soon ran into a dead end as a re-

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14 *Annales de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Gand* (Brussels: A. Lacroix, 1864), 39.
15 *Annales de l'association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Bruxelles* (Brussels: A. Lacroix, 1863), 368–376.

sult of ideological differences. On the one hand, Charles Potvin (1818 – 1902) argued that societies evolved according to a cyclical pattern. He strongly believed that contemporary society went through a process of degeneration and that a new cycle, based on universal moral values, was imminent. As such, artists could guide society through this process by creating artworks of great moral value. On the other hand, Clémence Royer (1830 – 1902) strongly expressed her beliefs rooted in social Darwinism: man in general and artists in particular were determined by their environment and hence any notion of universalism or transcending morality should be rejected.[16]

On 16 September, Wagener opened the discussion. First, he apologised for his absence on the previous day during Royer's speech. Wagener stated that he wanted to go beyond the discord that had brought the debate to a standstill. In order to do so, he argued that the solution for the question can be found in Immanuel Kant's theorem of the division between an objective and subjective morality, a morality of the individual (the subject) based on his intuition and reason, which he uses to understand universal morality (the object).[17] Wagener combined this argument with the theory of "*Du beau, du vrai et du bien*" expressed by the French theorist Victor Cousin (1792 – 1867).[18] Cousin's work stated that art should not only be esthetical (*beau*) or show the artists' skill and knowledge of how to depict reality truthfully (*vrai*), but it should also be useful and strengthen public morality (*bien*). Therefore, Wagener argued, if the artist understands objective morality he could have a positive influence on society through his work. Others who also referred to Kant and Cousin strongly supported Wagener's long intervention in the debate.[19]

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16 *Annales de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Gand*, 402 – 406. For more on Charles Potvin, see: Christoph De Spiegeleer, *Een blauwe progressist: Charles Potvin (1818 – 1902) en het liberaal-sociale denken van zijn generatie* (Brussels: ASP, 2011). For more on Clémence Royer, see: Michael A Osborne, "Almost a Man of Genius: Clémence Royer, Feminism, and Nineteenth-Century Science," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 34, no. 4 (1998): 434 – 436. For Royer's translation of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, see: Michel Prum, "Charles Darwin's First French Translation," in *The Literary and Cultural Reception of Charles Darwin in Europe*, *vol. IV*, eds. Thomas F. Glick and Elinor Shaffer (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 391 – 400.

17 *Annales de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Gand*, 43 – 44. See also: Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1987); Henry Allison, *Kant's Theory of Taste: A Reading of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

18 Victor Cousin, *Du vrai, du beau et du bien*, 13me édition (Paris: Didier et Cie, 1867).

19 Walter Simon, "The 'Two Cultures' in Nineteenth-Century France: Victor Cousin and Auguste Comte," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 26, no. 1 (1965): 45 – 58.

Wagener reinforced his words by saying: "allow me to point out to the assembly that, after having been Professor in Moral Philosophy at the University of Ghent for four years, I can affirm, without presumptuousness, that I am not without knowledge on this subject".[20] This was more a way of emphasising his authority than of introducing himself to the attendees of the congress.[21] The majority of the latter were Belgian intellectuals who already knew Wagener. Furthermore, Wagener had also come to know several of the foreigners visiting the congress during his study travels or via correspondence. Therefore, this introduction can be seen as a stylisation of his 'expert-persona'. Although Clémence Royer almost immediately, and cynically, countered his words ("*monsieur le professeur de philosophie morale partout*"[22]) and rejected his arguments, especially his plea for the universal, Wagener's discourse convinced the majority of the other speakers. The Frenchmen Alexander Weil (1811–1899) and Pascal Duprat endorsed his argument and Odysse Barot (1830–1907) concluded that "Ms. Royer made a bold statement yesterday. She has abandoned it today".[23]

In order to make his point come across, Wagener wanted to avoid any association between universal morality and the appreciation of (religious) dogmatism, which Royer, but also Count Louis-Alexandre Foucher de Careil (1826–1891) and Odysse Barot, seemed to criticise him for. Hence, he highlighted his earlier dispute with Bishop Delebecque: "the bishop honoured me with a pastoral letter exclusively focused on me".[24]

Wagener was strongly convinced of this idea of two-part morality and he believed that subjective morality could be stimulated via education and impulses that stimulated people's capability to reason. Therefore, he argued in favour of all kinds of encouragement and pleaded for several measures that the state needed to take in order to stimulate public art and popular education. Although Wagener elaborated on his earlier argument, which most of the other attendants had agreed on, he hardly received any support at all for his belief in grant-in-aid

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20 *Annales de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Gand*, 408.

21 See: Stephen Hilgartner, *Science on Stage: Expert Advice as Public Drama* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000); Mineke Bosch, "Persona and the Performance of Identity. Parallel Developments in the Biographical Historiography of Science and Gender, and the Related Uses of Self Narrative," *L'Homme* 24, no. 2 (2013): 11–22; Mineke Bosch, "Scholarly Personae and Twentieth-Century Historians: Explorations of a Concept," *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 131, no. 4 (2016): 33–54.

22 *Annales de l'Association internationale pour le progrès des sciences sociales: Congrès de Gand*, 409.

23 *Ibid*, 444.

24 *Ibid*, 441.

for public art, nor for his proposal to reward eminent artists via public funds and art competitions. In his plea, he reflected on the influence of the Belgian state and local governments on the intellectualisation and civilisation of its citizens. Apart from the (hesitant) support of Pascal Duprat and the Belgian author Hendrik Conscience (1812–1883), Wagener was completely isolated. Conscience admitted that, given his particular situation – he had been on the payroll of the Belgian state many times – he felt obliged to support Wagener's statements on the benefits of the influence of the Belgian government.

The majority of attendants strongly believed in a free and liberal society. Other speakers countered Wagener and pinpointed the baleful influence tyrannies had exerted in the past by conducting and censoring artists and writers, and praised havens for creative geniuses and free spirits, such as the Greek poleis or Florence during the late renaissance.[25] Wagener tried to contest some of their historical facts and made counterarguments using Belgian examples, but without any success. Moreover, one of Wagener's critics, a German living in Brussels, explicitly contradicted him on the situation in Belgium, accused him of being blinded by patriotism and even scornfully laughed at him.[26]

At this pan-European forum for engaged intellectuals, we can see three rhetorical strategies come together in Wagener's discourse. First, he refers to his local and professional roots in order to style his expert-persona and build his image as a dyed-in-the-wool liberal and anti-dogmatist. His expert performance convinced the majority of the attendants and his argumentation on the influence of the artistic genius was included in the congress report. However, in his plea for state support for artists he referred to typical Belgian examples, which did not lend credibility to his thesis. Second, Wagener did not get involved in the debates on the local or national implementation of certain educational practices or on the practical difficulties or political opposition one could encounter when trying to advocate social or political reform. Moreover, Wagener was most convincing when he avoided references to concrete local practices, which, for an international audience, were rather vague anyway. Other speakers who did the same thing (refer to concrete but unfamiliar examples), shared the same fate. In the third section, for example, some speakers compared certain Belgian writers to the French decadents and were heavily criticised on an array of very specific facts. As a result, many discussions got bogged down. Third, Wagener supported his arguments with ideas and theories most of the attendants were quite

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25 *Ibid*, 451–453.
26 *Ibid*, 461–463.

familiar with. He referred to both the French (Cousin) and the German (Kant) philosophical tradition.

Wagener in the city council of Ghent

The idea that the individual, and by extension society as whole, could be intellectualised via certain stimuli and incentives, was a central part of Wagener's thoughts and actions in Ghent too. Social progress was more than a material struggle. It was also a moral question, in which education had to play its part.[27] Hence, Wagener professionalised the educational system and established several innovative educational practices. If we compare the situation in Ghent before and after Wagener's mandate as Alderman for Education, we can see that the numbers of students, educators and institutions almost doubled.[28] His merits, however, lay beyond a mere quantitative expansion. Wagener was also keen to innovate educational institutions and professionalise teachers' training. As inspector-administrator of the State University of Ghent (1878–1895), he introduced a Flemish department to educate future teachers who had to give courses in Dutch.[29] If we look at his time as administrator of the university, there are numerous instances of the influence of his foreign contacts and his study visits.[30]

It would be untrue to say that Wagener's policy as Alderman was strongly inspired by international ideas, but, from time to time, he did rely on his intellectual mobility (i.e. the meetings of the AIPS) in his discourse as Alderman. Thus, the discursive fields of the city council and a transnational network of social reformers became intertwined.

The implementation of Froebel's model of the "*Kindergarten*", a creative learning environment for toddlers and pre-schoolers, which became the oldest European educational movement, is a clear illustration of how ideas spread across borders and were purposefully used in local debates. The first pilot project in Ghent was launched in 1860, a few years before Wagener was elected and became Alderman for Education. After Brussels, Ghent was the first city in Belgium where a kindergarten modelled after Friedrich Froebel (1782–1852) was estab-

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27 Auguste Wagener, *Rapport de la commission de l'instruction publique et des beaux-arts sur l'augmentation de traitement du personnel enseignant des écoles communales* (s.l.: s.n., 1866).
28 Steels, *Geschiedenis van het stedelijk onderwijs te Gent: 1828–1914*, 204–205.
29 Ibid, 204.
30 Auguste Wagener, "Reisaantekeningen betreffende hoger onderwijs in Duitsland", Ghent University Library; Dambre, *August Wagener (1829–1896)*, 30–33.

lished.[31] Wagener attached a lot of importance to the Froebel method for the education of kindergarten teachers. He pleaded for special training schools.[32] This was long before the Royal Decree of March 1880, by which the national government organised temporary training courses in the method and before the journal *Le Journal-Froebel Belge* was founded in 1884.[33]

Belgium and the Netherlands were among the first countries in which the Froebel model was introduced, only a few years after Germany and the United Kingdom.[34] Froebel's ideas were mainly spread via the travels and publications of Baroness Bertha von Marenholtz-Bülow.[35] This Prussian upper-class lady established a reputation in the German states as a good friend of Adolph Diesterweg (1790 – 1866), a leading progressive-liberal from Berlin, who campaigned for the secularisation of education. She met Froebel in 1849.

In her opinion, the kindergarten was the start for every educational and social change. It was the place par excellence were a kind nature could be nurtured and where children could be made into responsible and civilised future citizens.[36] Her talks at the second *Congrès International de Bienfaisance* (Frankfurt, 1857) and the first meeting of the AIPS (Brussels 1862) were of major importance,

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31 The first Kindergarten was in Ixelles (1857), the second in Brussels (1858) and the third in St-Josse-ten-Node (1859). See: Carlos Martens, "Pedagogen uit Thüringen en hun invloed op het onderwijs in België," 2006, 14, https://www.uni-jena.de/unijenamedia/Pedagogen_uit_Thueringen___tekst.pdf.

32 Steels, *Geschiedenis van het stedelijk onderwijs te Gent: 1828 – 1914*, 177.

33 Steels, *Geschiedenis van het stedelijk onderwijs te Gent: 1828 – 1914*, 177; Carlos Martens, "Pedagogen uit Thüringen en hun invloed op het onderwijs in België," 15; Muriel Leblon, "La formation du personnel enseignant des écoles gardiennes en Belgique: le point du vue législateur (1880 – 1914) et la création de la première école normale Fröbel (1910)," *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis* 22, no. 3 – 4 (1991): 657 – 690.

34 Maurits De Vroede, An Bosmans-Hermans, and Henri Cammaer, *Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van het pedagogisch leven in België in de 19de en 20ste eeuw* (Leuven: KUL, 1973); Helen May, Kristen Nawrotzki and Larry Prochner, *Kindergarten Narratives on Froebelian Education: Transnational Investigations* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016); Evelyn Mary Lawrence, *Friedrich Froebel and English Education* (London : University of London Press, 1952); Johannes Froebel-Parker, *The Life of Frederick Froebel: Founder of Kindergarten by Denton Jacques Snider (1900)* (S.l.: Author House, 2013); Jean-Noël Luc, "La diffusion des modèles de préscolarisation: en Europe dans la première moitié du XIXe siècle," *Histoire de l'éducation* 82 (1999): 189 – 206.

35 Froebel Parker, *The Life of Frederick Froebel*, XV.

36 Edouard Ducpétiaux, *Congrès international de bienfaisance de Bruxelles: Annexes* (Brussels: Decq, 1857), 295 – 330.

since several of the key figures in the later spread of the Froebel model were present at these congresses.[37]

The international congresses on social and educational reform would continue to play a vital role in the spreading of the Froebel kindergarten. In the 1880s, there were sessions and papers organised at the international conferences on education in Brussels (1880) and London (1884) on "*la méthode Froebel*". At the end of the century, when more models for pre-school kindergartens found their way, Froebel was regularly mentioned in discussions on the education of toddlers at educational congresses, as well as on international congresses on the protection of the child.[38]

In 1866, Wagener presented his education policy and the planned budget to the Ghent city council. He announced two innovations: he proposed for popularising the idea of school saving and he wanted to further establish Froebel's kindergartens in Ghent. In order to do the latter, an initial introduction of the Froebel model had to be incorporated into the teacher training colleges in the city districts of St-Pierre-Alost and St-Pierre-Ayeghem. Although Wagener claimed that this innovative model had been successful so far, he neglected to refer to fruitful pioneering schools or give any other kind of specific information. As a conclusion to his address, he wanted to remind the city council of the following: "A few years ago, the *Assocation pour le Progrès des Sciences Sociales* held its second session in Ghent. The first magistrate of the city made an allusion to the children of our schools, who marched past the members attending the conference. 'We are going to show you', he said with reason, 'the most valuable possession of the city of Ghent, of which the city is most proud'".[39]

The members of the city council could relate to Wagener's references, since they had been present at the congress. Wagener thus legitimised his policy by associating it with successful foreign examples and international prestige. He continued his argument by claiming that these innovations were in line with the ideas of his predecessor Gustave Callier and that they needed to seize the op-

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37 May, Nawrotzki and Prochner, *Kindergarten Narratives on Froebelian Education: Transnational Investigations*; Nelleke Bakker, "Cylinders and Séances: Elise van Calcar and the Spirit of Froebel," *History of Education* 42, no. 2 (2013): 147–165.

38 This was part of what Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat has described as the emergence from the 1870s onwards of the idea of child protection as a major cause on an international level. See: Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, "Du tourisme pénitentiaire à 'l'internationale des philanthropes'. La création d'un réseau pour la protection de l'enfance à travers les congrès internationaux (1840–1914)," *Paedagogica historica* 38, no. 2–3 (2002): 53–563. See also: chapter 2 of this volume.

39 *Ville de Gand. Bulletin communal* (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1866), 66.

portunity presented by the first visit of King Leopold II (1835 – 1909) and Queen Marie-Henriette (1836 – 1902) to Ghent to show their pioneering work in the field of education.[40] The report was adopted.

Wagener showed a similar rhetoric, a few years later, in the city council on the question of whether the establishment of a "*Théâtre National*" in Ghent would improve the quality of the Flemish theatre. This matter was previously discussed at the Ghent section of the *Nederlandsch Tooneelverbond* ('Dutch Theatre Association'). The *Nederlandsch Tooneelverbond* was both a training school for actors and a national Dutch theatre company where the best actors and directors were financially supported to work on morally approved performances.[41] On the *Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkundige Congressen* ('Dutch Linguistic and Literary Congresses'), this covenant was promoted as an international vehicle for the entire Dutch-speaking area, that would bring the Dutch language and culture to new heights.[42] During the first years, Antwerp and Ghent were the only Flemish cities willing to contribute to this experiment. The liberal flamingant Emmanuel Van Driessche (1824 – 1897) pointed this out at the twelfth *Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkundige Congres* in 1872 in Middelburg. The congress showed its support for the *Nederlandsch Toneelverbond* in Belgium.[43]

Wagener was in favour of the establishment of a *Théâtre National* and regarded it as a way to improve the artistic quality of the local theatre companies, as well as a means to strengthen Dutch as a cultural language and educate and moralise the working class. He was certainly not the only member of the city council with this opinion. Julius Vuylsteke (1836 – 1903), for example, who cofounded the *Nederlandsch Tooneelverbond* and the Ghent section, also expressed

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40 *Ibid*, 56 – 66.

41 Ton Van Kalmthout, *Muzentempels: multidisciplinaire kunstkringen in Nederland tussen 1880 en 1914* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1998); Hans Van Maanen, *Het Nederlandse toneelbestel van 1945 tot 1995* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1997); Carlos Tindermans, "Het Nederlandsch Tooneelverbond. Een mislukt experiment in Nederlandse toneelsamenwerking," *Ons erfdeel*, no. 5 (1972): 41 – 58; Frank Peeters, " 'Te zijn of niet te zijn': Toneelletterkunde en theaterpraktijk als manifestatie van burgerlijke beschaving," in *Hoofdstukken uit de geschiedenis van de Vlaamse letterkunde in de negentiende eeuw. Deel 3* (Ghent: Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, 2003); Jeroen Jansen and Nicolaas Theodorus Johannes Laan, *Van hof tot overheid: geschiedenis van literaire instituties in Nederland en Vlaanderen* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2015).

42 *Programma van het elfde Nederlandsch taal- en letterkundig congres* (Leuven: Vanlinthout, 1869), 124.

43 *Handelingen van het XIIe Nederlandsch taal- en letterkundig congres, gehouden te Middelburg, den 3, 4 en 5 september 1872* (Middelburg: J. C. & W. Altorffer, 1873), 82 – 85.

his belief that the theatre enlightened society and the working class.[44] However, the proposition to appoint an additional artistic director for the Minard theatre, with the special assignment of promoting Dutch plays, was heavily criticised. Several members of the city council did not think highly of Dutch as a language for culture and fine arts. Liberal council member Octave Groverman (1831–1897) criticised it fiercely and illustrated the low quality of Dutch plays: "Instead of Mozart, the public has to endure '*Jaeksken met zijn fluitje*', accompanied by vulgar jokes and nonsense that rather belong in the barracks of St. Pierre than in a subsidised theatre".[45] Groverman pointed out that the working class was hardly ever present in the theatres of Ghent and he was concerned that subsidised companies would hold a monopoly without the obligation to meet certain artistic standards.[46]

Those in favour of subsidising the Flemish theatre had to counter both the criticism of the quality of the Dutch plays performed in Ghent and that of the principle itself of subsidising theatre companies. Julius Vuylsteke claimed that amateur theatre groups would not disappear when a theatre company received subsidies, as amateur groups still thrived in the Netherlands despite the existence of publically supported companies.[47] Wagener referred to the French politician Jules Simon, one of the key figures of the AIPS and also a frequenter of the meetings of the *Société Littéraire de Gand:* "Gentlemen, let me make a comparison: some time ago, M. Jules Simon once said in Ghent, and this word has frequently been repeated since, that the state has the duty to prepare its own dismissal. Well likewise, amateur theatre companies also have to prepare their own dismissal".[48] Wagener claimed that these words were in favour of the further professionalisation of the Ghent theatre companies. Even though Groverman pointed out that Simon's words were wrongly interpreted, Wagener's discourse convinced the city council. [49]

In both debates, we see Wagener referring to knowledge he obtained via his intellectual mobility. First, the arguments in his discourse were partially built on ideas and practices that circulated in a transnational network he was part of. He

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44 José Verschaeren, "Julius Vuylsteke (1836–1903). Klauwaard en Geus," *Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen. Tijdschrift over de geschiedenis van de Vlaamse beweging* 62, no. 2 (2003): 137–49; Bart D'hondt, *Van Andriesschool tot Zondernaamstraat* (Ghent: Liberaal Archief/Snoeck, 2014), 72–73.
45 *Ville de Gand. Bulletin communal,* 1871, 269.
46 *Ville de Gand. Bulletin communal,* 1871, 264–266.
47 *Ibid,* 289.
48 *Ibid,* 284.
49 *Ibid,* 298.

made these references in order to present his policy as coherent, realistic and well-considered, and he associated them with the success and prestige of foreign realisations. Second, Wagener linked his policy to people, practices and events that were well-known to his audience. Third, he positioned Ghent in an international tradition of (educational) innovation and responded to the city council's sense of honour and prestige.

Conclusion

This micro-analysis of Auguste Wagener's positioning in the selected debates has shown that his intellectual mobility lead to an intertwining of local and international discursive fields. The way Wagener relied on certain pieces of knowledge illustrates the complex process of performing expertise in a transnational network. In this process of persuasion, we see Wagener constructing his expert-persona by making associations with people, practices and events that were well known to his audience. At the meetings of the AIPS he referred to well-known German and French philosophers, while in the city council he talked about the renowned Jules Simon and a prestigious event that had recently taken place in Ghent.

The success of his words was not so much determined by their factuality, but rather by their power to persuade his audience. At the AIPS, Wagener referred to his local and professional background to claim expertise on morality and underline his non-dogmatic thinking, while in the city council he linked local practices to international prestige. These were two well-chosen references, which were in line with the prevailing views of his audience. I argue that Wagener's discourse aimed to construct his persona by its association with the familiar, the prestigious, the local and the international. Hence, whether these performances were persuasive or not was highly dependent on the specific nature of his audience. On the *Congrès International de l'Enseignement*, organised in Brussels almost two decades later (in 1880), Wagener participated in a debate on moral education and arguments similar to those he had successfully used in 1863 at the meetings of AIPS. However, many of the attendants were advocates of social Darwinism and Wagener's words were soon discredited and framed as out of fashion, and he himself was referred to as an old man who lived in the past.[50]

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[50] Paul Thomas, *Congrès international de l'enseignement: discussions; discours* (Brussels: Hayez, 1882), 301–325.

Hence, the circulation of knowledge in a transnational network is not a one-way street or a symmetrical transfer between interrelated intellectual milieus. Rather, it highly depends on individual agency. It is a process that is strongly determined by the position of individuals in certain groups and by the persuasiveness of their expert performances.

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